

TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

DRAFT Community Improvement Plan

July 2026



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Prepared for:

Town of Fort Frances

320 Portage Avenue
Fort Frances, ON
T: 807-274-5323 ext. 1216
E: jburrows@fortfrances.ca

Prepared by:

WSP

2611 Queensview Drive, Suite 300
Ottawa, ON K2B 8K2
T: 613-829-2800

Cover Images: WSP



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respect and truly acknowledge that we are on Treaty Three territory, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe and the Métis Nation. We give gratitude and honour to the Ancestors, Elders, and all Anishinaabe and Métis People for sharing their resources and knowledge.

DRAFT

Photo Source:
Town of Fort Frances

1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Fort Frances has prepared a new Community Improvement Plan (CIP), which replaces the Town's CIP adopted by Council on February 10, 2003, and last modified December 22, 2008. The new CIP represents a renewed opportunity for the Town to support continued economic growth and vitality in Fort Frances, with a focus on enhancing support for business attraction, downtown revitalization, housing, and placemaking.

1.1 WHAT IS A CIP?

A CIP is a planning and economic development tool for municipalities use to promote community revitalization, and often serves as a catalyst for achieving economic, community planning, and urban development goals. Municipalities use CIPs to enable a wide range of policies and financial incentive programs that encourage private investment and support strategic municipal initiatives to revitalize targeted areas. A CIP assesses local needs, priorities, and circumstances within designated Community Improvement Project Areas – from large areas to specific streets and properties – that are usually in transition and in needs of maintenance, rehabilitation, development, or redevelopment.

CIPs can benefit a community in several ways:

- Stimulate private sector investment in targeted areas through grants and other incentives provided by the municipality;
- Promote revitalization and placemaking to attract tourism, business investment, and economic development opportunities;
- Support the development of affordable housing;
- Promote the cleanup and redevelopment of "brownfield sites" – vacant or underutilized former industrial or commercial properties that have some form of environmental contamination requiring remediation prior to redevelopment;
- Enhance streetscapes, landscaping, building façades, signage, and accessibility;
- Support energy efficiency improvements; and
- Encourage the effective use of community infrastructure.



Generally, CIPs are not intended to support development on “greenfield” properties (i.e., vacant properties that have no prior history of development and/or do not represent an extension of the built up area).

Under Section 106 of the Municipal Act, municipalities are prohibited from directly or indirectly assisting industrial or commercial enterprises. However, municipalities are exempt from these restrictions if they are exercising their authority under Section 28 of the Planning Act, to promote community improvement initiatives. Section 28 of the Planning Act enables municipalities to:

- Designate by by-law a specific property, area, or entire community covered by an Official Plan as a Community Improvement Project Area;
- Acquire, hold, clear, grade, or otherwise prepare land for community improvement;
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate, or improve buildings on municipal land;
- Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of municipal land;
- Provide grants or loans to owners, tenants and their assignees within the community improvement area to pay the whole or any part of identified eligible costs; and
- Provide property tax assistance for environmental remediation purposes.

A municipality's Official Plan must contain policies to enable the preparation of a CIP, and the municipality also requires a by-law designating a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA).

Under Section 28 of the Planning Act, once an area has been designated a CIPA, a variety of financial assistance programs to assist private property owners with understanding various building and property improvements may be implemented. CIPs may also be used to promote the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites, as well as the revitalization of commercial, industrial, institutional, and even rural areas. Under a CIP, a municipality may issue grants and loans to help support redevelopment and infill development projects by providing incentives to increase the assessed value of a property (tax increment equivalent grants), offering rebates on planning and application fees,





or providing direct grants or loans to help finance redevelopment and intensification projects.

Eligibility criteria are a key component of a CIP, and are tailored to the municipality. They establish the conditions by which an application for a financial incentive will be evaluated.

Many CIPs also integrate a “municipal leadership strategy” to identify municipally-led actions, programs, capital projects, and policies that may assist in revitalizing target areas and achieving community improvement goals. A municipal leadership strategy may address issues related to policy and regulatory gaps or conflicts (e.g., changes required to the Zoning By-law), streetscaping and public realm improvements or guidelines, or the implementation of key infrastructure projects.

A CIP's success requires a strong marketing strategy, monitoring program, and periodic reviews of the Financial Incentive Programs to determine their continued relevancy, as well as any required adjustments to better meet current and anticipated economic conditions and trends, and community improvement needs and opportunities.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE CIP

This CIP establishes a CIPA and related Program Areas, a vision and goals, and the recommended Financial Incentive Programs to meet the Plan's goals. It sets out an implementation framework for the Town to administer the CIP and monitor its results. The preparation of this CIP has been informed by the **Town of Fort Frances Final Community Improvement Plan Background and Recommendations Report (July 2026)**, which is available under separate cover.

This CIP is organized as follows:

- **Section 1.0** introduces the CIP and its purpose, provides a community profile of Fort Frances, and summarizes the community engagement activities which informed the development of the CIP;
- **Section 2.0** presents the vision and goals of the CIP;
- **Section 3.0** describes recommended municipal initiatives to complement and support the Plan;
- **Section 4.0** sets out the available Financial Incentive Programs and related eligibility criteria for private property and business owners, operators, and tenants;

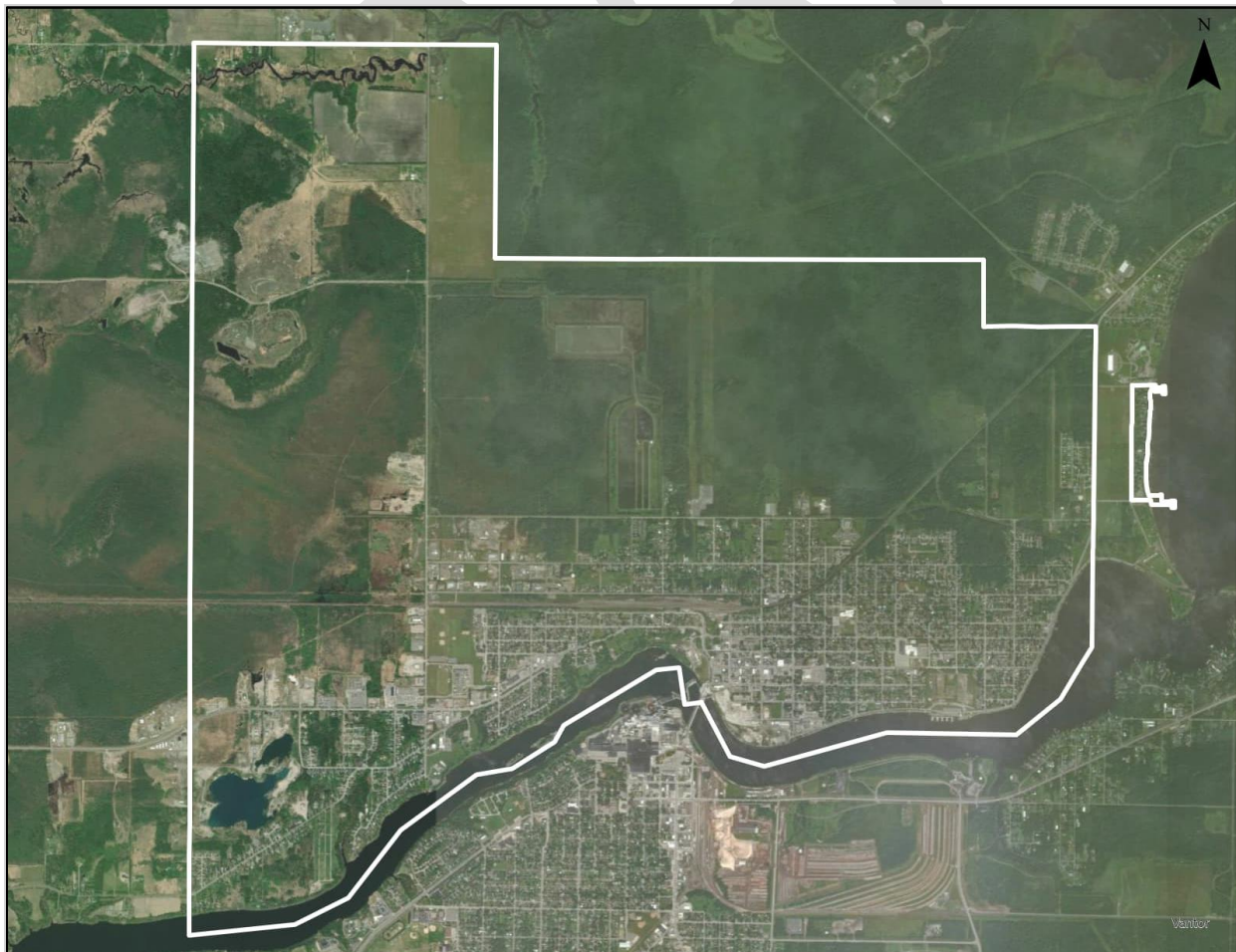


- **Section 5.0** details the implementation of the CIP, including administration, application requirements, a recommended monitoring / evaluation program and marketing strategy, and the processes for amending or adjusting the CIP; and
- **Section 6.0** concludes the CIP.

1.3 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Fort Frances is a single-tier municipality located in Northwestern Ontario on the Rainy River, directly across from International Falls, Minnesota, USA. The Town has a land area of approximately 25.55 km² (Statistics Canada, 2021), and is situated on the unceded and traditional land and territory of the Anishinaabe and the Métis Nation, on Treaty Three territory. The Town's municipal boundary is shown in **Figure 1-1**. Error! Reference source not found.

Figure 1-1: Town of Fort Frances Municipal Boundary Key Map (Source: Vantor)





The population of the Town of Fort Frances was 7,466 in 2021 (Statistics Canada), representing a decrease of approximately 3.5% from the 2016 population of 7,739. In 2021, the population of the broader Rainy River Census division, which includes Fort Frances, was 19,437, a decrease of 3.3% from 20,110 in 2016.

The 2021 Census documented 3,450 occupied housing units within the Town, of which 77.2% (2,665) were single-detached dwellings, 5.6% (195) were attached dwellings (i.e., semi-detached, row house, or apartment in a duplex), 15.2% (525) were apartments in a building that has fewer than five (5) storeys, and approximately 0.7% (25) were movable dwellings, though Town staff have confirmed there are more than 25 mobile homes within the Town. There were no apartments in buildings with five (5) or more storeys in the Town.

A total of 390 households (approximately 11% of the Town's total households) spend 30% or more of their income on shelter, exceeding the affordable housing threshold set by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and reflected in the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.

Fort Frances is the principal commercial and service centre for the Rainy River District and surrounding Northwestern Ontario communities. The Town's commercial activity is concentrated in the downtown core along Scott Street, which runs east-west from Central Avenue to the eastern commercial areas approaching Armit Avenue. This area is located along the Rainy River at the international gateway between Canada and the United States. Larger-format commercial and highway-oriented businesses are situated along King's Highway 11 running to the west end of Town to McIrvine Avenue, and near the Fort Frances–International Falls border crossing. Neighbourhood-scale commercial uses are distributed throughout established residential areas, and are generally comprised of home occupations or mixed-use developments.

Key industries in Fort Frances include forestry and forest products, transportation and logistics, tourism, and health and community services. Regional economic drivers include the Rainy River Mine northwest of Fort Frances, which supports employment and infrastructure investment across Northwestern Ontario. Additionally, cross-border trade and goods movement through the Fort Frances–International Falls gateway and the regional transportation network are significant contributors to the local economy.

Residential development in Fort Frances is primarily low-rise, defined by established neighbourhoods and a compact urban structure. The community features a well-



connected grid and modified-grid street network. The majority of the Town's development is focused within the southern part of the municipal boundary.

Since January 2021, the Town has processed seven (7) industrial building permits totaling approximately \$2,133,000 in project value, and issued 17 multi-unit residential building permits, representing a total construction investment of nearly \$700,000. These permits cover a range of projects, including new construction, building additions, and renovations.

There are a number of properties with significant opportunities for private development and redevelopment in Fort Frances:

- Former Fort Frances Mill properties – A Conceptual Land Use Plan for the former Mill Properties was completed in 2022, and envisions a mix of uses, including mixed use, residential, institutional, light industrial, and open space uses.
- Shevlin Wood Yard – The Shevlin Wood Yard and Gateway to Fort Frances Report was endorsed by Council on February 8, 2021, and provides an implementation plan for the future redevelopment of these lands. Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments were adopted by Town Council on June 29, 2026 to permit a range of uses, including residential (i.e., townhomes, apartments), mixed use, and commercial development.
- Vacant Town-owned industrial lands at 8th Street / Webster Avenue North – where the Town intends to prepare a Draft Plan of Subdivision to enable future light industrial development that will help to grow the Town's local economy.

Figure 1-2: Properties with significant development opportunities, Town of Fort Frances (Photos: WSP)



Former Mill properties



Shevlin Wood Yard



Town-owned industrial lands along 8th Street



1.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the course of the CIP Update project, Town Council and staff, local property and business owners / operators, agencies, and the general public have been engaged to ensure that the CIP reflects community needs and priorities and will result in tangible impacts on the quality of life and vitality in Fort Frances. Engagement activities and their results are summarized in the **Town of Fort Frances Final Community Improvement Plan Background and Recommendations Report (July 2026)**, available under separate cover, and included:

- **CIP Visioning Workshop, June 17, 2026:** Included a focused group of participants comprising members of Town Council and staff, as well as representatives from local external organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), and the Rainy River Future Development Corporation (RRFDC);
- **In-person Public Open House, June 17, 2026:** Held at the Town of Fort Frances Public Library Technology Centre, Shaw Community Hub to introduce the CIP Update project process and receive preliminary input from the community; and
- **Community Survey and CIP Prospective Applicant Survey, June 2 to June 21, 2026:** Made available online via Survey Monkey for residents and local property and business owners / operators to share input on the CIP Update project. The Community Survey received 54 responses and the CIP Prospective Applicant received six (6) responses.

In addition, the Town of Fort Frances established the Business Recruitment and Downtown Revitalization Committee in 2026, comprised of members of Town Council and staff, representatives / business owners from the BIA, and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, and the RRFDC. Independently from the CIP Community Survey and CIP Prospective Applicant Survey, the Committee undertook a Downtown Business and Community Survey, which received 178 responses. Although the Survey was not formally part of the CIP Update project, its results provided valuable insights into barriers, opportunities, and priorities related to businesses and investment in the Town. The results were reviewed and considered as part of this project.

The CIP Update project process will also include the following upcoming community engagement opportunities in late summer 2026:



- **Hybrid Virtual / In-person Public Open House:** To present the proposed Community Improvement Project Area and Draft CIP to the community, including a presentation outlining key elements of the Draft CIP, followed by an opportunity for community members to ask questions and provide comments.
- **Hybrid Virtual / In-person Statutory Public Meeting:** A requirement under the Planning Act, the Statutory Public Meeting will be held to present the Community Improvement Project Area and Draft CIP to Town Council and the public. Attendees will be able to make oral delegations to Council and/or submit written comments.

A combined Notice of Public Open House / Statutory Public Meeting will be published 20 calendar days in advance of the Public Meeting, as required under the Planning Act, along with the Draft CIP document for public review. Following this meeting, the Final CIP will be prepared with consideration of all comments received, prior to being presented to Council for consideration of adoption.

1.5 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AREA

The Town's current Official Plan (Council Adoption: January 13, 2025; Ministerial Approval with Modifications: October 30, 2025), includes Policy 9.3.1 c), which enables lands designated Mixed Use, Industrial Employment, and Highway Commercial to be designated as a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA). Policy 9.3.2 a) of the Town's Official Plan establishes the criteria for considering the establishment of a new CIPA as follows:

- i. Conditions of existing buildings;
- ii. Encouraging and incentivizing the construction of affordable housing through intensification, and housing forms that allow residents to age in place, and other housing needs of local residents, and of potential investors;
- iii. Land use issues;
- iv. Aesthetic issues;
- v. Transportation or infrastructure issues;
- vi. Natural or human-made environmental issues;
- vii. Social or community issues;
- viii. Economic issues; and



- ix. Any other relevant issues which create barriers to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of underutilized or dilapidated land/buildings.

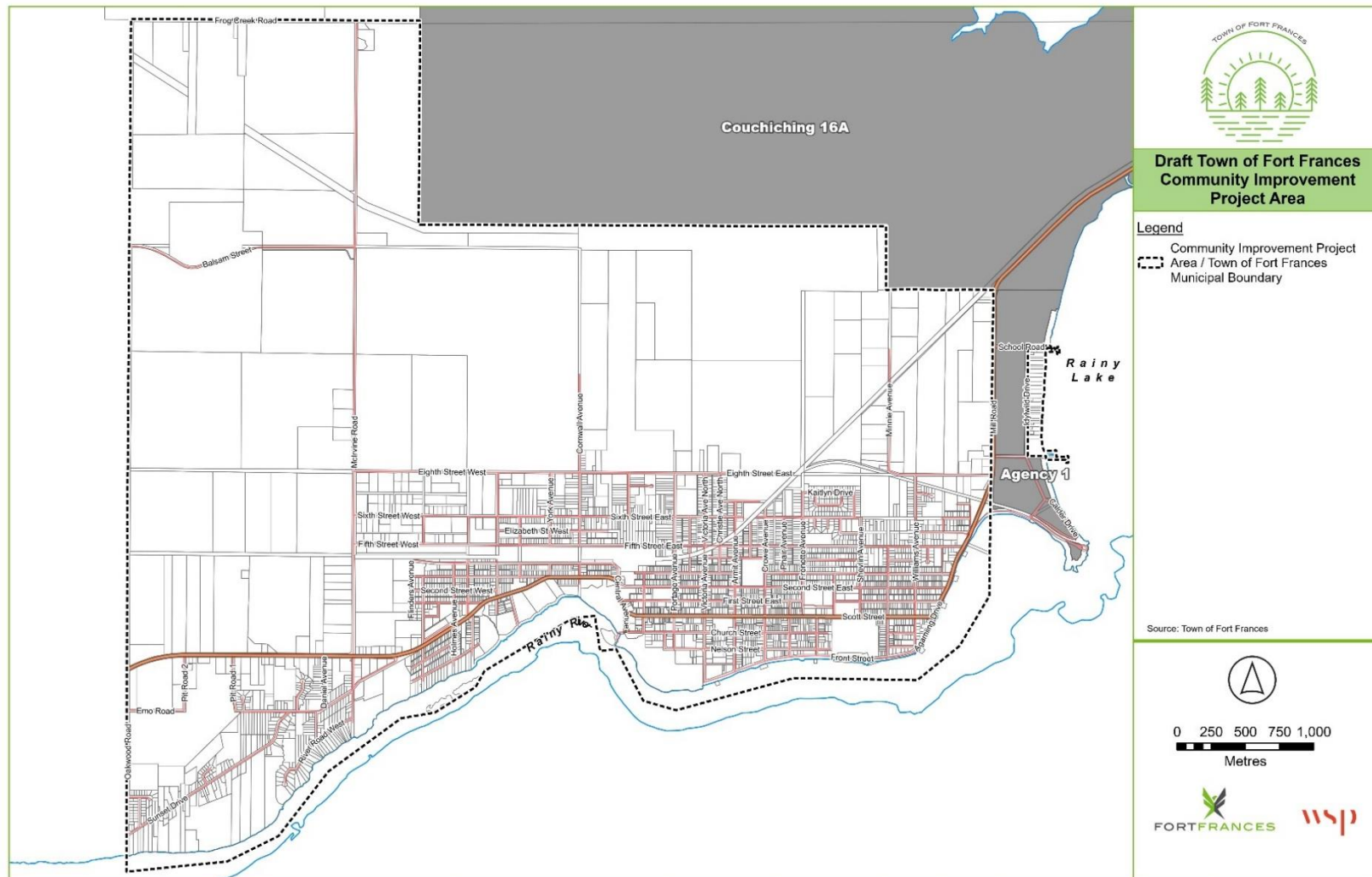
The CIPA for the new CIP (see **Figure 1-3**) is proposed to include all lands within the Town of Fort Frances municipal boundary, and would be designated by by-law.

The inclusion of all properties within the municipal boundary in the CIPA as eligible for Financial Incentive Programs maximizes the CIP's potential reach, economic benefits, provides equitable opportunities for private property / business owners, operators, and tenants and their projects. This ensures flexibility in the Town's ability to prioritize improvements that may be needed across the Town over the life of the CIP.

Accordingly, an Official Plan Amendment is required to amend Section 9.3.1 Community Improvement of the Town's Official Plan to enable the entirety of the lands within the Town of Fort Frances municipal boundary to be designated as a CIPA. At the time of preparing this Draft CIP, a Statutory Public Meeting was held on July 30, 2026, to consider a Town-initiated Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to amend these policies. The proposed OPA is anticipated to be presented to Council for consideration of adoption in early August 2026, followed by submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for final approval.



Figure 1-3: Proposed Community Improvement Project Area





1.5.1 PROGRAM AREAS

To focus certain types of community improvements in strategic and appropriate areas, a series of Program Areas are proposed where specific Financial Incentive Programs under this CIP would be available. The intent is to generally align the proposed Program Areas with particular land use designations in the Town's Official Plan (Approved by the Ministry of Municipal Housing and Affairs October 30, 2025).

The four (4) proposed Program Areas include:

- 1 **Town-wide Program Area** – encompassing the entire municipal boundary, where Financial Incentive Programs related to housing, municipal fees and property taxes, and brownfields redevelopment are available.
- 2 **East and West Gateway Program Area** – including properties located at the east and west gateways to the Town along King's Highway 11, which are primarily designated Highway Commercial in the Town's Official Plan and are envisioned to developed with a mix of commercial and tourism uses;
- 3 **Downtown / Mixed Use Program Area** – consisting of the downtown core and the Shevlin Wood Yard, where mixed use development is envisioned;
- 4 **Industrial Program Area** – comprising properties generally located north of the CN Rail and both sides of 8th Street, between McIrvine Road and Cornwall Avenue, which are designated Industrial Employment within the Town's Official Plan.

The proposed Program Areas are illustrated in **Figure 1-4**, with more detailed maps of the individual Program Areas in **Figure 1-5** to **Figure 1-8**.



Figure 1-4: Proposed CIP Program Areas

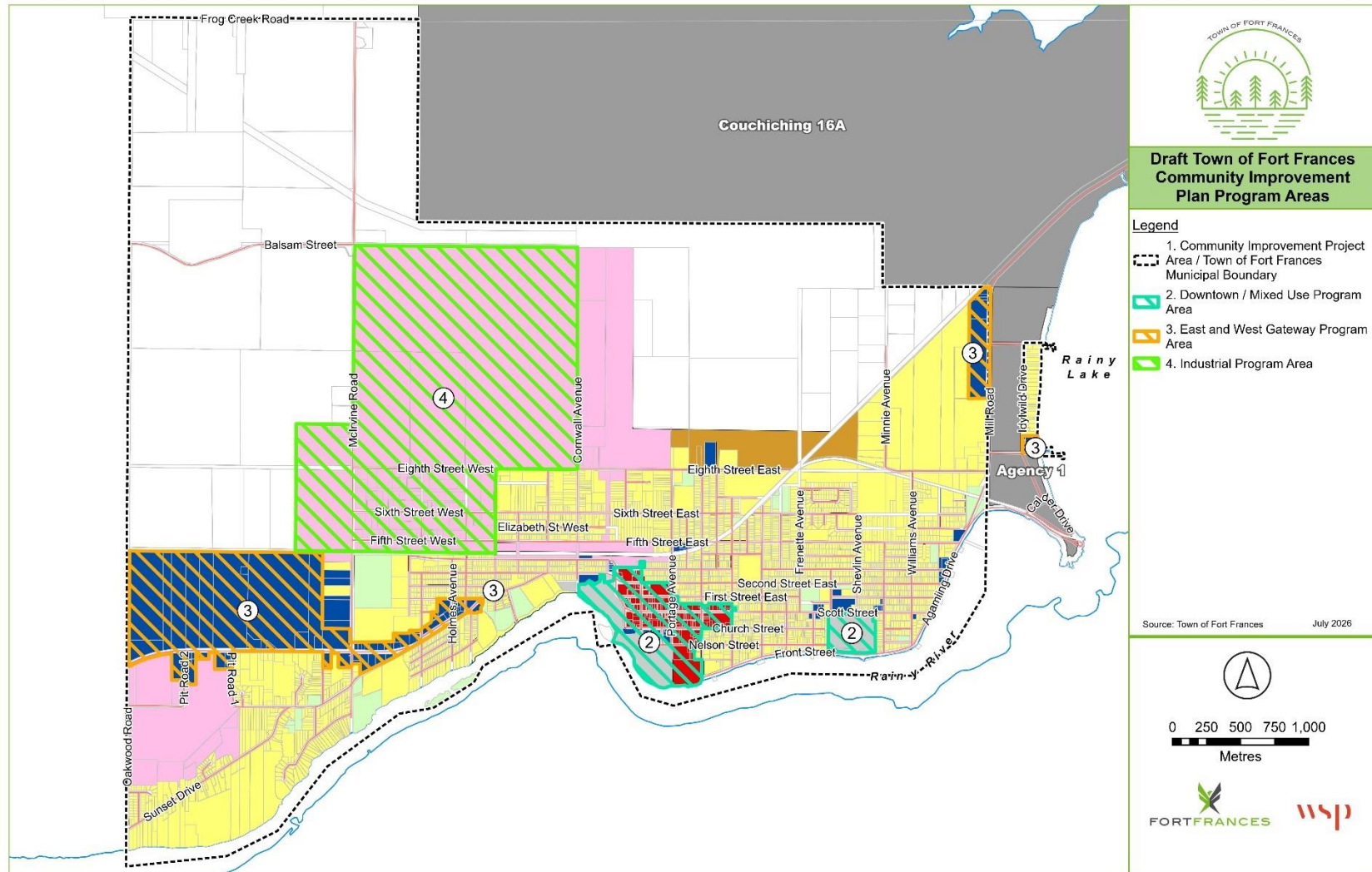




Figure 1-5: Proposed CIP Program Area - East Gateway

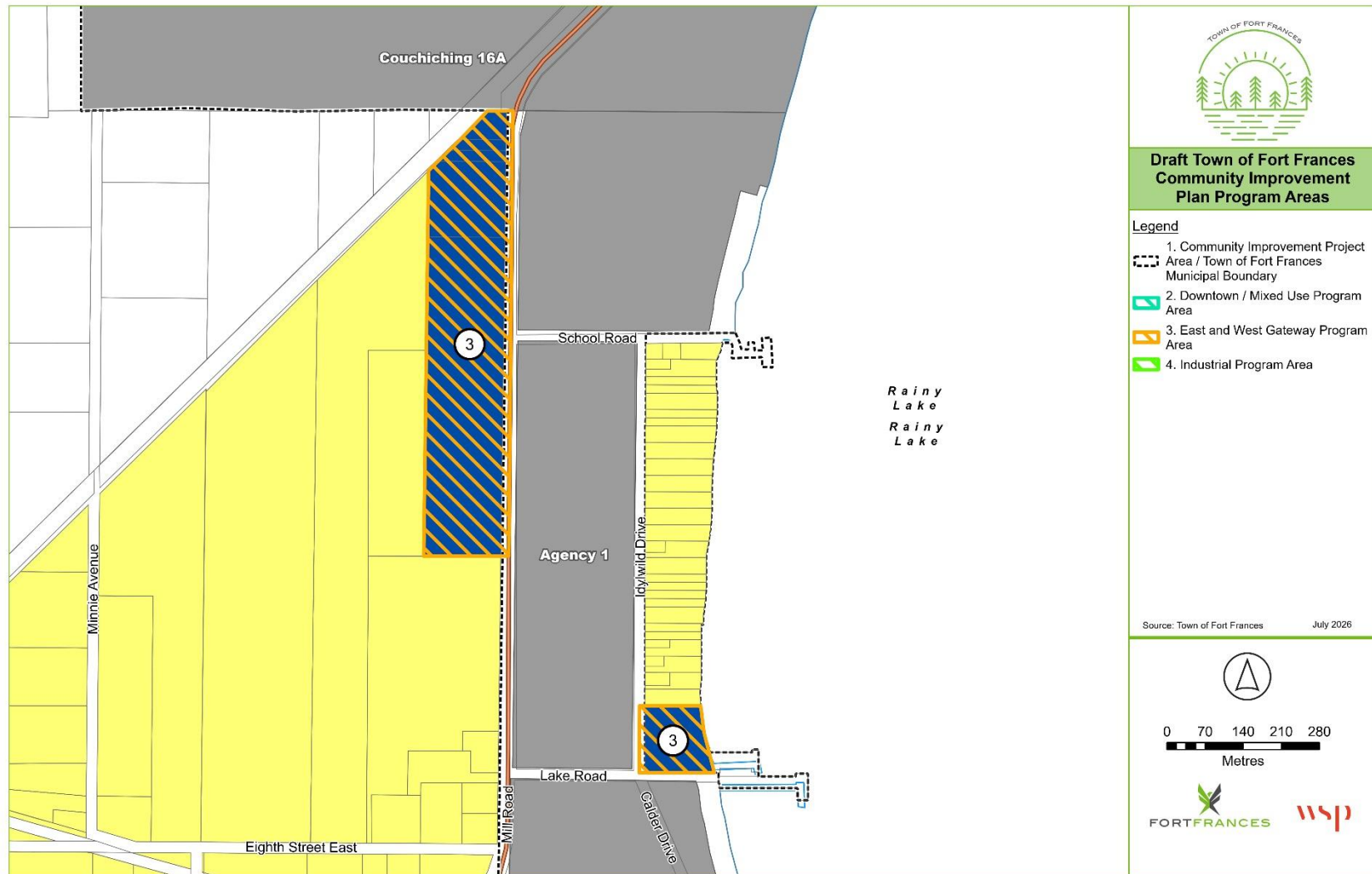




Figure 1-6: Proposed CIP Program Area - West Gateway

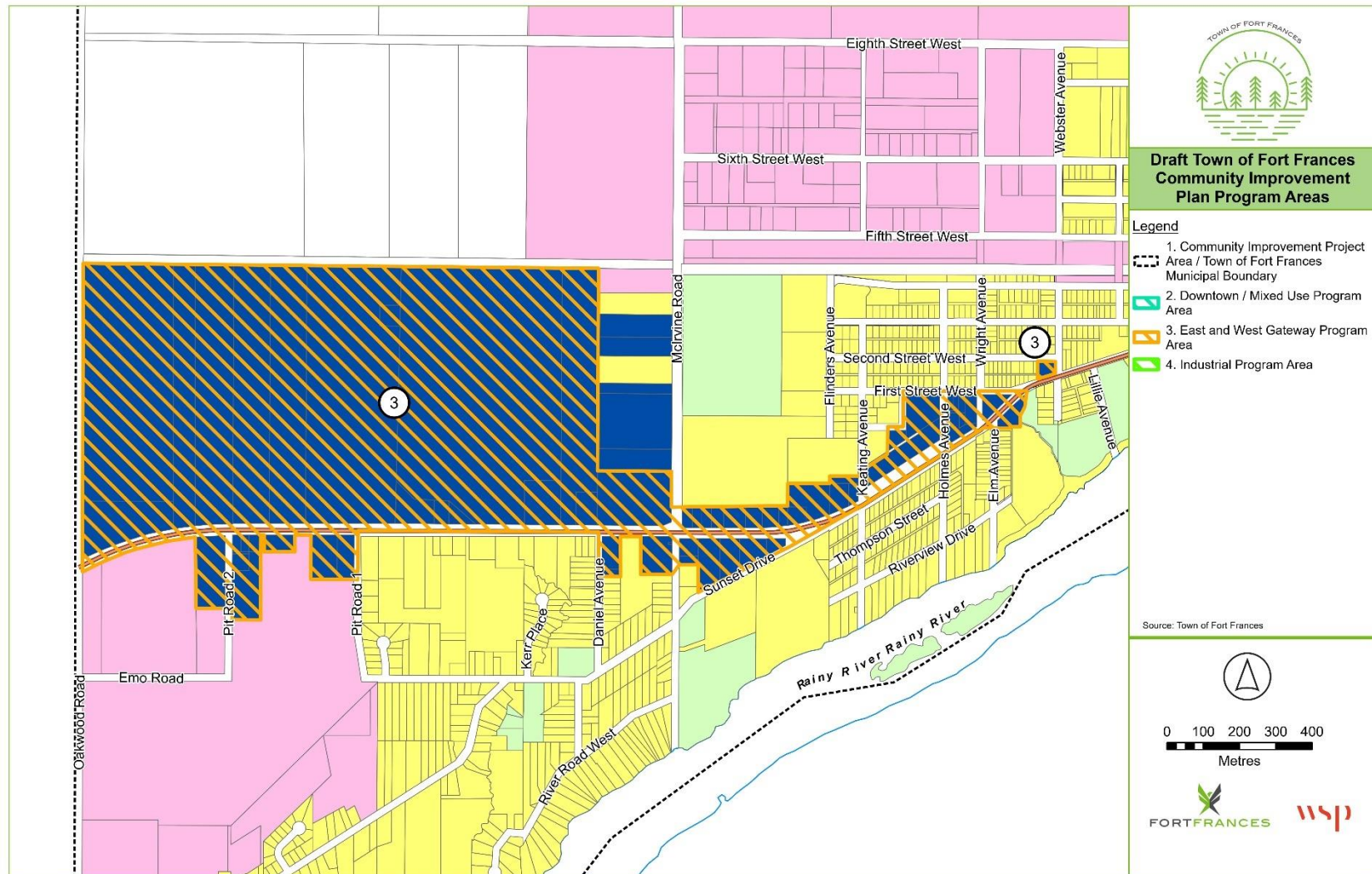




Figure 1-7: Proposed CIP Program Area - Downtown / Mixed Use

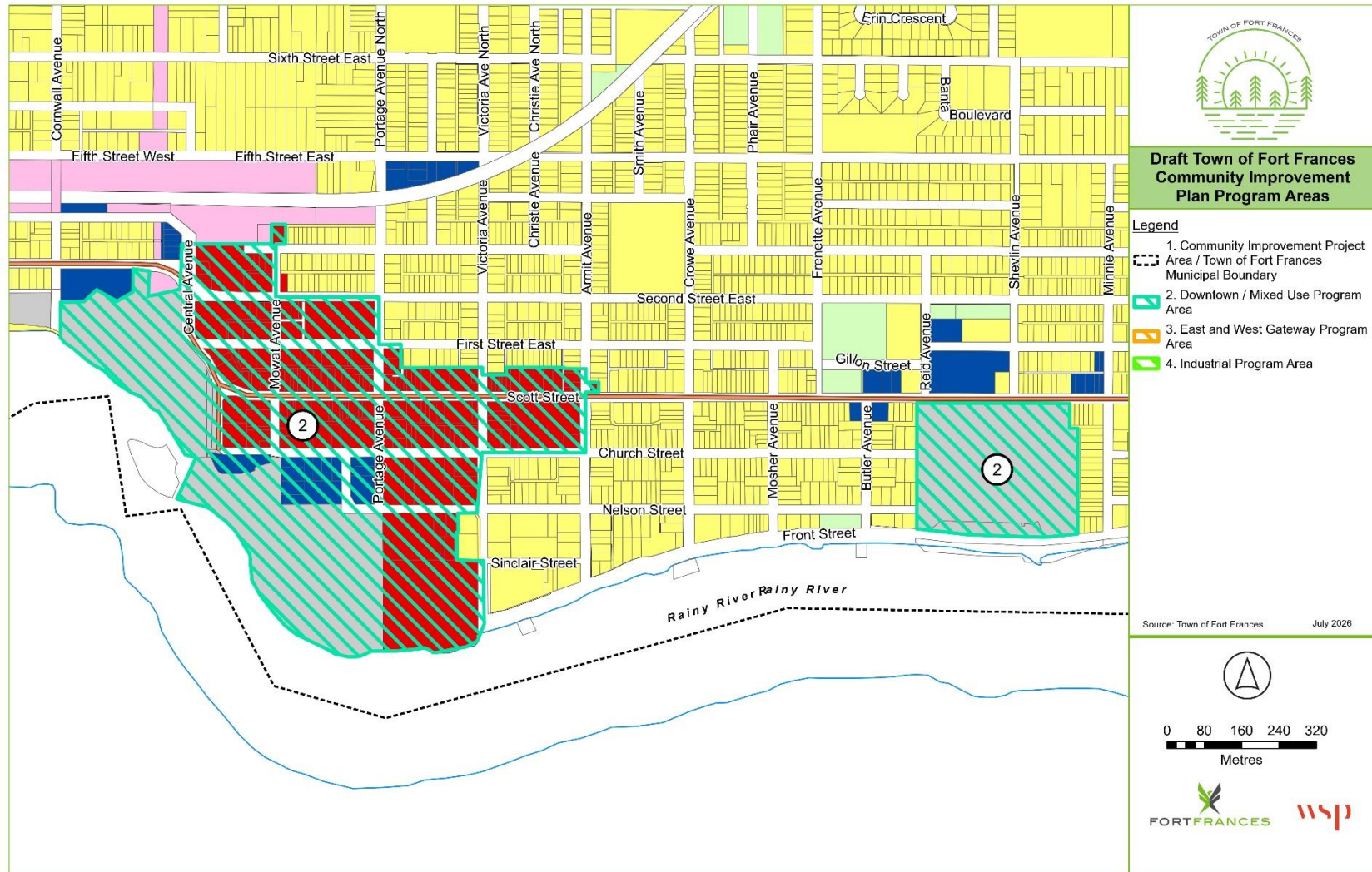
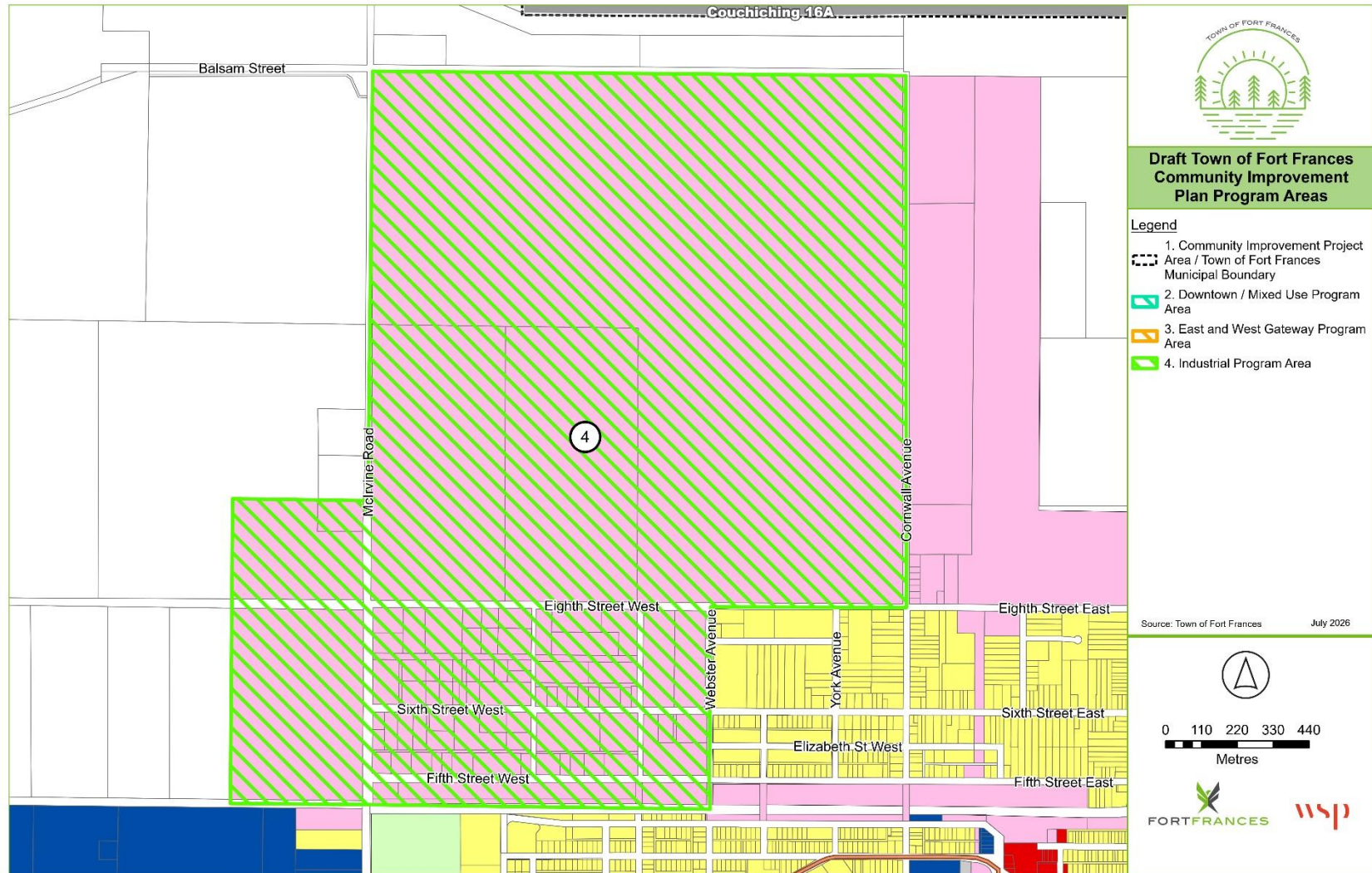
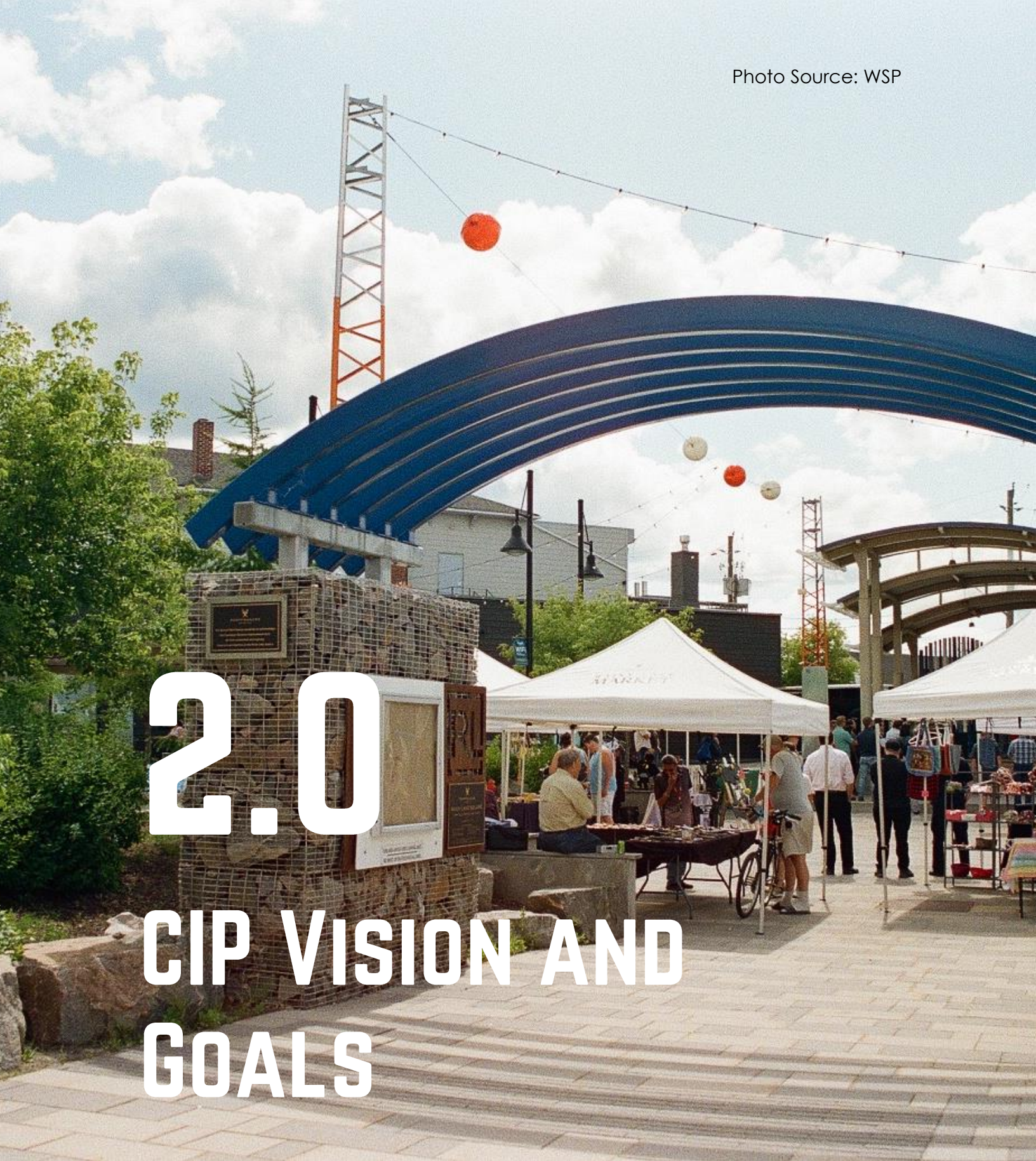




Figure 1-8: Proposed CIP Program Area - Industrial





2.0

CIP VISION AND GOALS



2.0 CIP VISION AND GOALS

2.1 VISION

A Vision Statement is a formal, aspirational statement that identifies what is important to a community, now and in the future. It provides a foundation for establishing the specific goals of the updated Town of Fort Frances CIP. The ideas provided by members of Town Council, staff, the business and economic development community, property and business owners / operators, and residents through engagement activities are reflected in the following Vision Statement for the CIP:

The Town of Fort Frances will grow and prosper as a gateway to the Rainy River District, strengthening its role as a welcoming and thriving destination for businesses, services, tourism and recreation, and investment opportunities.

2.2 GOALS

Building on the Vision Statement, the following goals represent the actions and outcomes the Town aims to achieve through implementation of the CIP. All proposed projects and applications for the Financial Incentive Programs must demonstrate how they directly support the realization of the CIP Vision and Goals.

- 1 Pursue the implementation of community improvements through a combination of municipal leadership and private investment.
- 2 Support the revitalization and beautification of the community and tourism growth, through improvements to the public realm and infrastructure, and private properties.
- 3 Prioritize the development of diverse housing options, commercial and industrial uses, and infrastructure upgrades to encourage continued growth in Fort Frances.
- 4 Encourage the development and redevelopment of municipally-owned and privately-owned vacant and/or underutilized lands and buildings throughout the Town.



- 5 Build on the work already completed by the Town for the redevelopment of significant properties, including the Shevlin Wood Yard and former Fort Frances Mill properties, by encouraging the development of mixed uses.
- 6 Enhance accessibility and community safety through streetscape improvements and revitalization efforts, with specific focus on the downtown core as the heart of the Town.
- 7 Encourage the continued development of commercial and tourism uses along key commercial corridors in Fort Frances, including the east and west gateways into Town along King's Highway 11.
- 8 Demonstrate commitment to the retention of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses in the Town through appropriate financial incentives and municipal investments, to positively impact the viability of businesses and their operations in Fort Frances.
- 9 Display judicious financial stewardship when prioritizing the approval of community improvement projects, with priority given to projects that provide community benefits and a high return on investment (i.e., incentive value awarded compared to the project's construction value) for the Town.



3.0

MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY



3.0 MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

The Town of Fort Frances will continue to advance the vision and goals of the CIP through improvements to public lands, infrastructure, policies, and regulations. These efforts intend to inspire and complement private investment by property owners who undertake improvement projects aided by the CIP Financial Incentive Programs, while fostering the creation of lively, vibrant, and welcoming spaces for Fort Frances residents and visitors.

Municipal infrastructure provides the foundation for the economic, social, and environmental health of the community by enabling the delivery of critical services. The Town of Fort Frances' Asset Management Plan (2018) (AMP) is a living document that continually evaluates the condition, performance, and lifecycle needs of municipal assets. This ongoing analysis directly informs and supports the Town in managing their infrastructure needs while ensuring timely investments to minimize repair and rehabilitation costs and maintain municipal assets.

The Town of Fort Frances has also developed the Strategic Plan 2023-2027, which will continue to guide Council and administration in directing resources and efforts to respond to the community's most important priorities. Strategic planning empowers the Town to be forward thinking and intentional in improving the delivery and long-term sustainability of municipal services, operations, and infrastructure.

To contribute to the implementation of the vision and goals over the lifespan of this CIP, the following municipal leadership initiatives and future improvements are recommended and/or anticipated to be undertaken by the Town, as documented in Council's budget and Town plans and studies:

- 1 Redevelopment of the Shevlin Wood Yard and Former Mill properties, including the continued undertaking of technical studies, Records of Site Condition, infrastructure design and installation, and exploring opportunities with development partners;
- 2 Initiation of large-scale future community planning projects, such as a Streetscape Beautification Plan and Industrial Land Development Plan, including a Draft Plan of Subdivision and servicing for the lands north of Sixth Street West and south of Eighth Street West;
- 3 Completion of the Scott Street Reconstruction, from Mosher Avenue to Armit Avenue;



- 4 Beautification efforts and improvements along the Town Riverfront and the Sorting Gap Marina;
- 5 Potential upgrades and expansion of sidewalk infrastructure, dependent on the Active Transportation Fund;
- 6 Repairs and redesign of certain roads and intersections, including signalization;
- 7 Installation of infrastructure to support an integrated, community-based microgrid system for the Town;
- 8 New Town-branded wayfinding and signage, including installation at key gateway locations in the Town along Highway 11 and the Fort Frances-International Falls International Bridge border crossing;
- 9 Exploring opportunities for the development of event spaces for cultural and recreational activities, including the continued utilization of Rainy Lake Square as a venue for outdoor events and gatherings, and development of a rentable food truck pad on Scott Street;
- 10 Encouraging and partnering on joint tourism initiatives that highlight the local area, including partnerships with local Indigenous communities; and
- 11 Identification and declaration of municipally owned surplus lands, to allow for their sale and disposition for future development.

Photo Source:
Town of Fort Frances



4.0 FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS



4.0 FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

This Section establishes a comprehensive set of Financial Incentive Programs that respond to local needs and opportunities in Fort Frances, informed by engagement with Town Council, staff, and the community, and a review of successful CIP programs in other Ontario municipalities. The purpose, description, and eligibility requirements for each Financial Incentive Program are outlined in this Section.

Unless otherwise stipulated under the individual programs and the General Eligibility Requirements detailed in **Section 4.1**:

- Applicants may apply for individual Financial Incentive Programs, or combine multiple complementary programs for a single site, development, or project;
- There is no limit on how many times a single property may be considered eligible to apply for the Financial Incentive Programs, provided that:
 - Any Financial Incentive Programs awarded in any given round of funding are not used to pay for the same eligible costs;
 - There has been a change of property ownership, business, and/or use of the property; and/or
 - The previously completed improvements funded through a prior Financial Incentive Program have reached the end of their lifecycle and require rehabilitation; and
- Eligible projects may also be augmented with other federal and provincial funding programs, where possible.

Any Financial Incentive Programs contained within the CIP are subject to approval and municipal budget allocations by Council on an annual basis. There are no guarantees of any Financial Incentive Program being implemented in any given year / round of funding, and selection is at the sole discretion of Council.

An overview of the available Financial Incentive Programs, and the Program Areas in which they are applicable, is provided in **Table 4-1**.

Further details on implementation and administration of the CIP, including how to make applications for Financial Incentive Programs, are included in **Section 5.0**.



4.1 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All applications for the Financial Incentive Programs contained in this CIP are subject to the following general requirements, as well as the individual requirements specified under each program in **Section 4.2** through **Section 4.16**. The general and program-specific requirements contained in this CIP are not necessarily exhaustive, and the Town reserves the right to include other requirements and conditions as deemed necessary:

- 1 The subject property must be located in the Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) as designated by municipal by-law at the time of the application;
- 2 All proposed projects must, in the opinion of Town Council, staff, and/or the CIP Administrators, generally contribute to achieving, and not conflict with, the vision and goals of this Plan as set out in **Section 2.0**;
- 3 Proposed projects must represent a permanent improvement to the property or building, and not a lifecycle replacement of existing materials or structures. Seasonal improvements (e.g., outdoor patios) are only considered eligible if specified under the individual Financial Incentive Programs. For clarity, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, trailers, sheds, and similar non-permanent elements shall not be considered eligible, unless otherwise specified under the individual Financial Incentive Programs;
- 4 Proposed projects shall be in accordance with, or exceed, the requirements of the Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and Property Standards By-law, as applicable to the property;
- 5 If a proposed project involves improvements to a designated heritage building and/or property under the Ontario Heritage Act or a non-designated building and/or property of cultural heritage value or interest listed on a municipal heritage register, or if the proposed project is located on a property that is adjacent to such buildings and/or properties, the proposed project improvements shall be required to maintain the heritage attributes of such buildings and/or properties, or complement and avoid adverse impacts on any heritage attributes on adjacent properties;
- 6 Where a proposed project is for affordable housing, the definition of “affordable” shall be consistent with the following definition provided in the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS 2024), as may be amended by the Province from time to time, and which is based on the definition established by the CMHC.
 - a. In the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of:



- i. housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 - ii. housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the municipality;
- b. In the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:
 - i. a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 - ii. a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the municipality.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regularly publishes the “Affordable Residential Units for the Purposes of the Development Charges Act, 1997 Bulletin”, which provides data on market-based (i.e., average purchase prices and market rents) and income-based thresholds for each municipality in Ontario which can be used to determine what constitutes affordable housing in Fort Frances.

The definition of “affordable” may change as required to comply with Federal and/or Provincial initiatives and amendments. Further, at the sole discretion of Council, an alternative definition of “affordable” may be applied to an eligible application that meets the eligibility criteria of this CIP. Eligible affordable housing projects may comprise a mix of affordable and market rent units;

- 7** Due to administrative costs, applications for grants less than \$500 shall not be considered;
- 8** An application for any Financial Incentive Program contained in this Plan must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable;
- 9** If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application;
- 10** An application for any Financial Incentive Program contained in this Plan must include plans, estimates, contracts, reports, and other details, as required by the Town, to satisfy the Town with respect to project costs and conformity to this Plan, as well as all municipal by-laws, policies, procedures, standards and guidelines, including Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Site Plan Control requirements and approvals;



- 11 As a condition of application approval, the applicant shall be required to enter into an agreement with the Town. The agreement shall specify the terms, duration, and default provisions of the incentive(s) to be provided;
- 12 Where other sources of government and/or non-profit organization funding (Federal, Provincial, etc.) that can be applied against the eligible costs are anticipated or have been secured, these must be declared as part of the application. Accordingly, the grant may be reduced on a pro-rated basis;
- 13 The Town reserves the right to audit the cost of any and all works that have been approved under any of the Financial Incentive Programs, at the expense of the applicant;
- 14 The Town is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including costs incurred in anticipation of a tax assistance and/or grant payment;
- 15 If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the Town, the Town may delay, reduce, or cancel the approved tax assistance and/or grant payment and require repayment of the approved tax assistance and/or grant;
- 16 Town staff, officials, and/or agents may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the Financial Incentive Programs offered by the Town;
- 17 Eligible applicants may apply for one (1) or more of the Financial Incentive Programs contained in this Plan, unless otherwise specified under the individual Financial Incentive Programs. No two (2) programs may be used to pay for the same eligible cost;
- 18 The total of all tax assistance and grants to be provided by the Town in respect of a subject property may not exceed the total eligible costs of the improvements to that property;
- 19 There are no specific restrictions on the number of applications that may be submitted by a property owner or tenant in relation to a specific property. The intent of providing this flexibility is to allow applicants to phase in components of their projects over time, should it be necessary. However, the Town may reject an application where it is of the opinion that the proposed works have already been undertaken as part of a previously approved application, except as specified under the individual Financial Incentive Programs where there has been a change of property ownership, business, and/or use of the property, or the previously



completed improvements have reached the end of their lifecycle and require rehabilitation;

- 20 The subject property must not be in arrears of any municipal taxes or other charges;
- 21 All expenses that are eligible for the Financial Incentive Programs contained herein must be paid in full with proof of payment provided; the amount of the incentive shall be reimbursed as a grant to the applicant. Grants shall only be paid out when the work has been completed, and proof of payment is submitted to the Town;
- 22 Outstanding work orders from any of the Town's Departments must be addressed prior to grant approval; and
- 23 Applications for Financial Incentive Programs must meet the eligibility criteria set out for each individual incentive program, as set out in **Section 4.2** through **Section 4.16**, as well as the general requirements for submitting applications as outlined in **Section 5.3** of this Plan.

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Table 4-1: Overview of CIP Financial Incentive Programs and Applicable Program Areas

Theme	Financial Incentive Programs			Program Area			
	Program	Program Highlights	Full Details	Town-wide	East and West Gateway	Downtown / Mixed Use	Industrial
Municipal	Planning and Building Permit Fees Grant	A grant to a maximum of \$4,000 or as determined at the discretion of Council, which may equal up to 100% of the Town's fees, to assist with the cost of various application and permit fees.	Section 4.2	●			
	Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	A percentage rebate on the annual municipal property taxes (municipal portion only) resulting from the increased assessment value generated by property development / redevelopment, which offsets the increase in municipal property tax resulting from property improvements.	Section 4.3	●			
Housing	Additional Residential Units Grant	A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per additional residential unit, or as determined at the discretion of Council.	Section 4.4	●			
	Downtown Residential Conversion and Intensification Grant	A grant of up to 50% of the cost of renovating existing residential units or the conversion of non-residential space to residential units, which are located on an upper storey or at the rear of a mixed use building in downtown Fort Frances, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per dwelling unit, or as determined at the discretion of Council.	Section 4.5			●	
	Multi-Unit and Affordable Housing Grant	A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per residential unit and a maximum of \$10,000 per affordable residential unit. The total maximum per property would be determined at the discretion of Council.	Section 4.6	●			



Theme	Financial Incentive Programs			Program Area			
	Program	Program Highlights	Full Details	Town-wide	East and West Gateway	Downtown / Mixed Use	Industrial
Building and Property Improvements	Accessibility Improvements Grant	A grant of up to 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to improve accessibility to existing commercial and mixed use properties and buildings.	Section 4.7		●	●	
	Beautification Grant	A grant of up to 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$1,500, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to assist with minor property improvements to enhance the overall visual appeal of their businesses, buildings, and properties in the downtown.	Section 4.8			●	
	Brownfields Property Tax Assistance Program	To encourage the remediation and rehabilitation of brownfield sites by providing a cancellation of part or all of the municipal property tax increase on a property that is undergoing or has undergone remediation and development to assist with payment of the cost of environmental remediation.	Section 4.9	●			
	Business Start-up and Vacant Commercial Buildings Activation Grant	A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$15,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to assist with the costs of leasehold improvements, and renovating or converting the interior of ground floor uses to a commercial use (e.g., retail stores, restaurants, entertainment venues, tourism businesses).	Section 4.10		●	●	
	Commercial / Industrial Property Improvement Grant	A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$20,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council, for interior and/or exterior improvements to commercial and industrial buildings and properties.	Section 4.11		●	●	●
	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Grant	A grant of up to 50% of CPTED costs, up to a maximum of \$7,500, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to support site security improvements.	Section 4.12		●	●	●



Theme	Financial Incentive Programs			Program Area			
	Program	Program Highlights	Full Details	Town-wide	East and West Gateway	Downtown / Mixed Use	Industrial
Building and Property Improvements	Energy Efficiency Improvements Grant	A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to assist existing commercial, industrial, and mixed use buildings with the purchase and installation of energy efficiency improvements and small-scale renewable energy systems.	Section 4.13		●	●	●
	Environmental Site Assessment Grant	A grant up to 50% of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of \$3,000 per study, two (2) studies per project / property, and a total maximum of \$6,000 per project / property, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to better understand the type of contamination of potential remediation costs for brownfield sites.	Section 4.14	●			
	Façade and Signage Improvement Grant	Façade improvements: A grant for up to 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$15,000, or as determined by Council. Signage Improvements: A grant for up to 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000, or as determined by Council.	Section 4.15		●	●	
	Sidewalk Patio and Pop-ups Grant	A grant of up to 100% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$3,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to support professional fees and/or construction costs associated with the design and installation of sidewalk patios and pop-up retail spaces.	Section 4.16			●	



4.2 PLANNING AND BUILDING PERMIT FEES GRANT

PURPOSE

To encourage development and redevelopment by offsetting the costs of required applications and permits.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Development of a vacant property or redevelopment of a property for commercial, industrial, residential (with a minimum of two (2) dwelling units), or mixed uses;
- 2 Major additions to a commercial, industrial, residential (with a minimum of two (2) dwelling units), or mixed-use property, involving an increase of at least 25% of the existing gross floor area;
- 3 Conversion of upper-storey space in a commercial or mixed use building to residential units;
- 4 Demolition of existing buildings on a private property, associated with the redevelopment of that property;
- 5 Professional services by an engineer, architect, or professional planner; and
- 6 Any combination of the above.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1 A grant of up to \$4,000 of the municipal fees or as determined at the discretion of Council, which may equal up to 100% of the Town's fees, to assist with the cost of any of the following fees:
 - Planning Act Applications, including:
 - Official Plan Amendments;
 - Zoning By-law Amendments;
 - Draft Plan of Subdivision/Condominium;
 - Consent;
 - Minor Variance;
 - Site Plan Control;
 - Demolition Permits;
 - Building Permits;



- Encroachment Agreement;
- Sign Permits; and
- Other municipal permits, as determined to be necessary and approved as an eligible permit cost by Town staff and/or Council.

2 In general, any projects which are eligible for other incentives outlined in this Plan will also be eligible for the Planning and Building Permit Fees Grant, if the applicant is required to obtain planning approvals and/or a building, demolition, encroachment, or sign permit.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3** In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include all properties within the Town-wide Program Area.
- 4** Only development including the following uses is eligible for this grant: commercial; industrial; residential (with a minimum of two (2) dwelling units); or mixed uses.
- 5** An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.3 TAX INCREMENT EQUIVALENT GRANT

PURPOSE

A percentage rebate on the annual municipal property taxes (municipal portion only) resulting from the increased assessment value generated by property development / redevelopment, which offsets the increase in municipal property tax resulting from property improvements.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1** Development, redevelopment, or adaptive reuse of a property / building for commercial, industrial, residential (with a minimum of four (4) new dwelling units created), or mixed uses;





- 2** Major additions, renovations, or improvements to an existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed use property / building, involving an increase of at least 25% of the existing gross floor area, or a minimum of four (4) new dwelling units created;
- 3** Conversion of upper-storey space in a mixed use or commercial building to a minimum of two (2) new residential units, or major renovations / improvements to upper storey residential space;
- 4** Streetscaping or landscaping improvements, in combination with any of the above;
- 5** Professional services by an engineer, architect, or professional planner; and
- 6** Any combination of the above.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1** The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is offered to eligible property owners only where the property assessment increases as a result of development, redevelopment, or major improvements, and there is a subsequent increase in municipal property taxes. For the purposes of calculating this grant, municipal property taxes include the municipal portion of the taxes only, and do not include education or any other special charges.
- 2** Grants will be equal to 100% to 20% of the increase in annual municipal property taxes resulting from property improvements, paid to the owner each year for a maximum of five (5) years (declining by 20% each year), or as otherwise determined at the discretion of Council and outlined in the Agreement. The total amount of all grant payments over the duration of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant shall not exceed 50% of the total eligible costs of the improvements.
- 3** The eligible development / property improvement works must be completed within three (3) years of application approval, or as stipulated in the Agreement with the Town.
- 4** Grants, as approved by Council, shall be provided upon successful completion of the work confirmed through a building inspection, as well as payment in full of the property taxes including the taxes for the incremental assessment increase. The amount of the grant in the first year cannot be calculated until the incremental assessment has been determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and provided to the Town, which may take up to two (2) years. Grants for subsequent years shall be paid annually to property owners within three (3) months of payment of the full property tax.

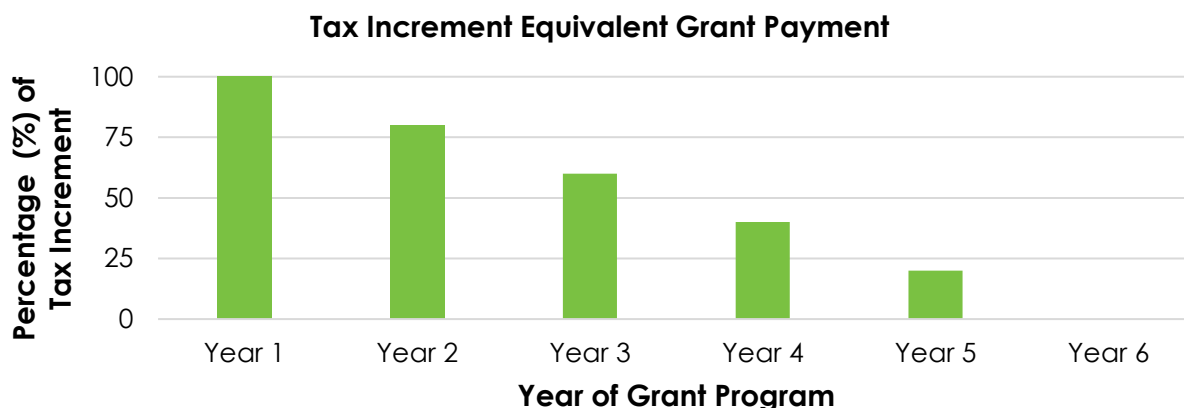


- 5 The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant shall not be paid and shall not accumulate for any year when taxes remain unpaid by the due date. Any failure to pay taxes in any year shall disqualify the owner for further grant payments.

EXAMPLE SCENARIO

A hypothetical property pays \$10,000 in annual municipal property taxes this year. If the property is redeveloped and a reassessment results in municipal property taxes of \$15,000 annually, the tax 'increment' is \$5,000 (i.e., \$10,000 + \$5,000 = \$15,000).

Council has approved a Tax Increment Equivalent Grant for the property, with a duration of five (5) years. In the first year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$5,000, representing 100% of the tax increment. In the second year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$4,000, representing a decrease of 20% from the previous year. The grant amount would continue to decrease by 20% each year in years 3, 4, and 5. The grant expires after five (5) years, based on the grant duration determined by Council. This example assumes that all eligibility criteria are met.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include all properties within the Town-wide Program Area.



- 4 The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant cannot be combined with any other Financial Incentive Program under this CIP.
- 5 In order to determine the suitability of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, prior to submitting an application for the program, the Town may, in its sole discretion, require that eligible applicants submit an estimate of the total potential value of the tax increment and the anticipated post-project property value assessment from MPAC, based on current assessment values and anticipated investment.
- 6 If the total value of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is significantly less than the applicant's estimated value, at the sole discretion of the Town, the applicant may be given the opportunity to withdraw their application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant program, and submit an application for one or more of the other incentive programs in this Plan as may be applicable to the project.
- 7 Should an eligible applicant be approved for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, and if the subject property is sold, in whole or in part, before the original grant period lapses, the original owner may not be entitled to receive the remaining grant payments, in accordance with the terms of the program agreement. The payments are also non-transferrable to the new owner, unless specifically stipulated as part of the Financial Incentive Program Agreement executed between the original owner and the Town.
- 8 The property owner is responsible for the entire cost of the development or redevelopment project.
- 9 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.4 ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS GRANT

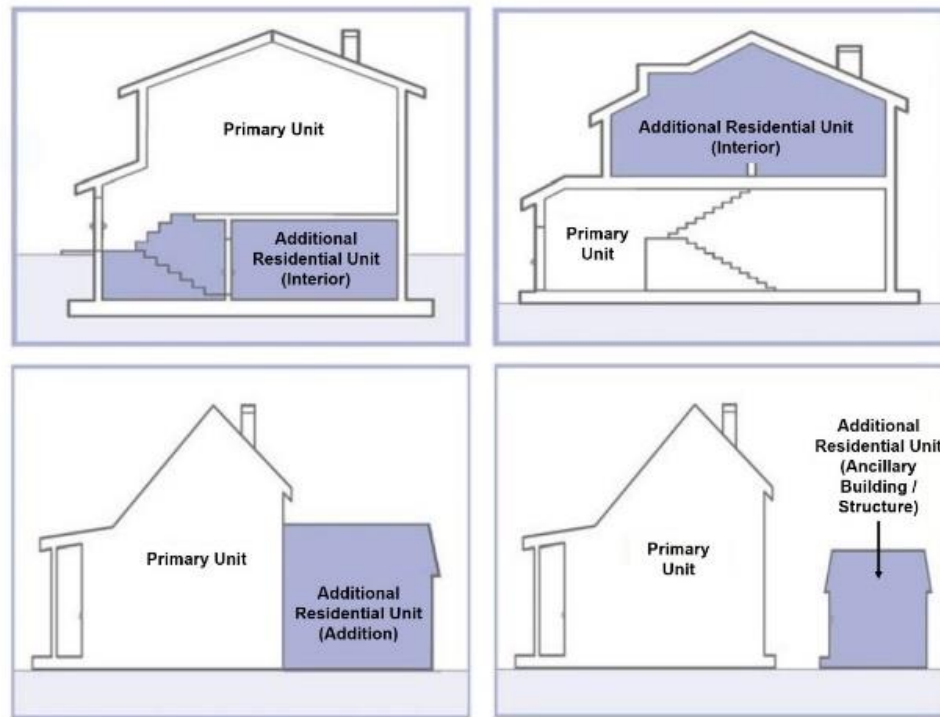
PURPOSE

To support the development of additional residential units on the same property as a single detached, semi-detached, or townhouse dwelling, in accordance with the policies in the Town of Fort Frances Official Plan and the provisions in the Town of Fort Frances Zoning By-law.





Figure 4-1: Examples of additional residential unit locations (Adapted from Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2019)



ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1** Plans, designs, and study costs, including:
 - Site Plans;
 - Structural Plans;
 - Architectural Plans;
 - Engineering Plans; and
 - Other site-specific plans or studies as required by the Town at the time of pre-consultation, or under the Planning Act.
- 2** Works related to compliance with the Ontario Building Code or Fire Code, including:
 - Safe egress;
 - Accessibility improvements;
 - Structural improvements;



- Electrical improvements;
- Ventilation improvements;
- Fire protection, including associated insulation; and
- Other similar improvements.

3 Materials costs, including:

- Construction materials; and
- Finishing materials.

4 Construction and labour costs, associated with the above eligible costs.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1** A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per additional residential unit, or as determined at the discretion of Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3** In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include all properties within the Town-wide Program Area.
- 4** Only additional residential units located within a single detached, semi-detached, or townhouse dwelling, or within a detached structure on the same lot as, and ancillary to, a single detached, semi-detached, or townhouse dwelling are eligible for this grant.
- 5** A self-contained additional residential unit with a private kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area must be created.
- 6** The additional residential unit being created must conform to any applicable requirements of the Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, Official Plan, and other Town By-laws.
- 7** An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.



4.5 DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION AND INTENSIFICATION GRANT



PURPOSE

To encourage the renovation and creation of new residential units and to improve the condition of existing residential units on the upper storeys or at the rear of existing mixed use buildings in downtown Fort Frances.

Figure 4-2: Example of upper storeys above existing commercial uses, Scott Street, Fort Frances, ON (Source: Google Streetview)



ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Plans, designs, and study costs, including:
 - Site Plans;
 - Structural Plans;
 - Architectural Plans;
 - Engineering Plans; and
 - Other site-specific plans or studies as required by the Town at the time of pre-consultation, or under the Planning Act.
- 2 Works related to compliance with the Ontario Building Code or Fire Code, including:
 - Safe egress;
 - Accessibility improvements;



- Structural improvements;
- Electrical improvements;
- Ventilation improvements;
- Fire protection, including associated insulation; and
- Other similar improvements.

3 Materials costs, including:

- Construction materials; and
- Finishing materials.

4 Construction and labour costs, associated with the above eligible costs.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1** A grant of up to 50% of the cost of renovating existing residential units or the conversion of non-residential space to residential units, which are located on an upper storey or at the rear of a mixed use building in downtown Fort Frances, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per dwelling unit, or as determined at the discretion of Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3** In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the Downtown / Mixed Use Program Area.
- 4** Existing or proposed ground floor/at grade residential units will not be eligible for this program. For clarity, upper storey and rear residential units in mixed use buildings are eligible for this program.
- 5** The applicant must be either a registered property owner, assessed property owner, or a tenant of a property to whom the owner has assigned consent to receive assistance under the CIP.
- 6** An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.



4.6 MULTI-UNIT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING GRANT



PURPOSE

To support multi-unit residential development consisting of four (4) or more new residential units (rental or ownership), a percentage of which must include affordable units.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 The development or redevelopment of properties and buildings to support the creation of a minimum of four (4) or more residential units (rental or ownership), of which 25% must comprise affordable residential units.
- 2 Plans, designs, and study costs, including:
 - Site Plans;
 - Structural Plans;
 - Architectural Plans;
 - Engineering Plans;
 - Traffic or Parking Studies;
 - Environmental Plans;
 - Interior Design Plans;
 - Market Analysis or Feasibility Studies; and
 - Other site-specific plans and studies as required by the Town at the time of pre-consultation, or under the Planning Act.
- 3 Works related to compliance with the Ontario Building Code or Fire Code, including:
 - Safe egress;
 - Structural improvements;
 - Electrical improvements;
 - Ventilation improvements;
 - Fire protection, including associated insulation; and
 - Other similar improvements.
- 4 Exterior property improvements, including:
 - Sidewalk upgrades;



- Lighting; and
- Landscaping.

5 Accessibility improvements, including:

- Ramps;
- Elevators;
- Automatic doors; and
- Alternative means of access and egress.

6 Utilities infrastructure upgrades, including:

- Sewer;
- Water; and
- Stormwater management.

7 Materials costs, including:

- Construction materials; and
- Finishing materials.

8 Construction and labour costs, associated with the above eligible costs.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1** A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$5,000 per residential unit and a maximum of \$10,000 per affordable residential unit. The total maximum per property would be determined at the discretion of Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3** In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the Town-wide Program Area.
- 4** Eligible residential developments must result in the creation of four (4) or more new residential units (rental or ownership), of which 25% must comprise affordable residential units.



- 5 Eligible affordable residential units must meet the definition of “affordable” as defined in the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 and outlined in **Section 4.1**.
- 6 The affordable residential units must be maintained as affordable, in accordance with the definition of “affordable” outlined in **Section 4.1**, for a minimum duration of 10 years.
- 7 For proposed development on the upper storeys of a commercial / mixed use building, the applicant must be either a registered property owner, assessed property owner, or a tenant of a property to whom the owner has assigned consent to receive assistance under the CIP.
- 8 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.7 ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS GRANT

PURPOSE

To improve accessibility to existing commercial and mixed use properties and buildings in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as amended.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Installation of new automatic doors;
- 2 Installation of new elevators or lifts;
- 3 Installation of new wheelchair access ramps;
- 4 Widening of public entryways;
- 5 Levelling or repairs to pathways/accesses and stairs;
- 6 Any other improvements designed to improve accessibility, subject to approval by the Town; and
- 7 Professional fees, materials costs, and construction and labour costs, associated with the above improvements.





PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1 A grant of up to 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the East and West Gateway and Downtown / Mixed Use Program Areas.
- 4 Accessibility improvements shall be in accordance with, or exceed, the requirements of the Ontario Building Code, as applicable to the property.
- 5 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.8 BEAUTIFICATION GRANT

PURPOSE

To encourage property owners to undertake minor improvements (e.g., window displays, seasonal displays and lighting, landscaped planters, etc.) to enhance the overall visual appeal of their businesses, buildings, and properties, contributing to a sense of place and community vibrancy in the Downtown.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Installation of aesthetically pleasing window displays to better showcase products and services;
- 2 Seasonal displays and lighting;
- 3 Landscaped planters;
- 4 Decorative window decals;
- 5 Artistic murals and other public art installations; and/or
- 6 Similar features, subject to approval.





PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1 A grant for up to 50% of the eligible costs, to a maximum of \$1,500, or as determined by Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the Downtown / Mixed Use Program Area.
- 4 Eligible properties must have a ground-level commercial uses to be eligible for this grant.
- 5 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.9 BROWNFIELDS PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

PURPOSE

To encourage the remediation and rehabilitation of brownfield sites by providing a cancellation of part, or all of, the property tax increase on a property that is undergoing or has undergone remediation and development to assist with payment of the cost of environmental remediation.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Environmental remediation costs, including any action taken to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property to permit a Record of Site Condition (RSC) to be filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the Environmental Protection Act;
- 2 Placing clean fill and related grading; and
- 3 Environmental insurance premiums.





PROGRAM DETAILS

1 Municipal Tax Assistance:

- The Town may pass by-laws to provide a deferral or cancellation of all or a part of the municipal taxes on a brownfield site during the assistance period, as defined in Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act.
- The total value of the tax assistance will not exceed the total eligible costs, which are defined in the eligibility requirements above. The level and duration of the tax assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Prior to passing the by-law approving the tax assistance, the Town will be required to notify the Ministry of Finance. Within 30 days of passing the by-law, the Town will also be required to notify the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Finance.

2 Provincial Tax Assistance:

- The Town may apply for the Provincial Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program, on behalf of the owner, to cancel or freeze all or a portion of the education component of property taxes.
- The application will need to be approved by the Minister of Finance, and may be subject to a different timeline than the approved Municipal Tax Assistance Program.
- The Town must offer municipal tax assistance in order for the owner to be eligible for Provincial tax assistance.

PAYMENT DETAILS

1 Municipal Tax Assistance:

- The municipal portion of the property tax assistance is limited to the Rehabilitation Period and Development Period of the project.
- The municipal portion of the property tax assistance will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Section 365.1 (1) of the Municipal Act.
- The municipal portion of the property tax assistance may start at the beginning of the Rehabilitation Period and run for a period specified by Council in a by-law, but shall not extend beyond the time periods outlined in Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act, which is the earlier of a) eighteen months, b) the date a Record



of Site Condition is filed, or c) when the total amount of tax assistance is equal to the eligible remediation costs (as defined above).

- The Development Period begins when the Rehabilitation Period ends, and concludes on the earlier of a) the end date specified in the by-law or b) when the tax assistance is equal to the eligible remediation costs.
- The duration of tax assistance may consist of both the Rehabilitation Period and Development Period, subject to the limitations for each period as described above.
- The implementing by-law is to specify whether the tax assistance will occur during the Rehabilitation Period, the Development Period, or both.

2 Provincial Tax Assistance:

- The exemption may commence at the start of the Rehabilitation Period, and continue through the Development Period, for a maximum time period as defined in the implementing by-law, and subject to program and termination requirements established by Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act.
- The education portion of the property tax assistance may be delivered on a different timetable from the municipal portion of the property tax assistance for the given property.
- The conditions imposed by the Minister of Finance for the education portion of the property tax assistance under Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act may differ from those outlined in this Plan.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the Town-wide Program Area.
- 4 The Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Program may not be combined with the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant.
- 5 Successful applicants may also be eligible for other Financial Incentive Programs, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible cost of rehabilitating the land and buildings.



- 6 The Town may require preparation of a business plan or feasibility study as a condition of approving tax assistance.
- 7 Application for Provincial tax assistance shall be at the sole discretion of the Town. Initially, the Town may wish to seek Provincial tax assistance on behalf of the owner on a pilot project basis only, and discontinue such applications in the future. Should the Town choose not to apply for Provincial tax assistance, such a decision shall not require an amendment to this Plan.
- 8 The applicant must demonstrate that the subject property is a brownfield site, which is determined through an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). The Town has the discretion to determine whether the subject property would be considered as a brownfield site.

4.10 BUSINESS START-UP AND VACANT COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS ACTIVATION GRANT



PURPOSE

To assist with the cost of leasehold improvements and renovating the interior of the ground floor of an existing commercial building, or converting the interior of the ground floor of existing buildings to viable commercial uses (e.g., retail stores, restaurants, entertainment venues, tourism businesses).

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Plans, designs, and study costs, including:
 - Site Plans;
 - Structural Plans;
 - Architectural Plans;
 - Engineering Plans; and
 - Other site-specific plans or studies as required by the Town at the time of pre-consultation, or under the Planning Act.
- 2 Works related to compliance with the Ontario Building Code or Fire Code, including:
 - Safe egress;
 - Accessibility improvements;



- Structural improvements;
- Electrical improvements;
- Ventilation improvements;
- Fire protection, including associated insulation; and
- Other similar improvements.

3 Materials costs, including:

- Construction materials; and
- Finishing materials.

4 Construction and labour costs, associated with the above eligible costs.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1** A grant of up to 50% of the cost of leasehold improvements and renovating and converting the interior of ground floor uses to a commercial use (e.g., retail, restaurant, entertainment), up to a maximum of \$15,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3** In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the East and West Gateway and Downtown / Mixed Use Program Areas.
- 4** Eligible commercial uses include retail stores, restaurants, entertainment venues, and tourism businesses.
- 5** The applicant must be either a registered property owner, assessed property owner, or a tenant of a property to whom the owner has assigned consent to receive assistance under the CIP.
- 6** The project must conform to any applicable requirements of the Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Site Plan Control.
- 7** An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.



4.11 COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT



PURPOSE

To assist with interior and/or exterior improvements to commercial and industrial buildings and properties, including interior retrofits, landscaping, paving, and streetscape improvements.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Plans, designs, and study costs, including:
 - Site Plans;
 - Structural Plans;
 - Architectural Plans;
 - Engineering Plans;
 - Interior Design Plans; and
 - Other site-specific plans and studies as required by the Town at the time of pre-consultation, or under the Planning Act.
- 2 Works related to compliance with the Ontario Building Code or Fire Code, including:
 - Safe egress;
 - Structural improvements;
 - Electrical improvements;
 - Ventilation improvements;
 - Fire protection, including associated insulation; and
 - Other similar improvements.
- 3 Exterior property improvements, including:
 - Sidewalk and pedestrian walkway upgrades;
 - Installation of active transportation infrastructure, such as bicycle parking (e.g., racks);
 - Paving of site accesses / egresses and parking areas;
 - Street furniture, such as benches or permanent planters;
 - Lighting; and
 - Permanent landscaping.



4 Accessibility improvements, including:

- Ramps;
- Elevators;
- Automatic doors; and
- Alternative means of access and egress.

5 Utilities infrastructure upgrades, including:

- Sewer;
- Water; and
- Stormwater management, including but not limited to, green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) installations such as bioswales, rainwater harvesting and reuse systems, rain gardens, etc.;

6 Professional fees, materials costs, and construction and labour costs, associated with the above eligible costs.

PROGRAM DETAILS

1 A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$20,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council, for interior and/or exterior improvements to commercial and industrial buildings and properties.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.

2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.

3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the East and West Gateway, Downtown / Mixed Use, and Industrial Program Areas.

4 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.



4.12 CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED) GRANT



PURPOSE

To facilitate the installation of site security improvements associated with commercial, mixed use (with ground floor commercial), and industrial buildings and properties.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Installation of security cameras and associated hardware and software;
- 2 Installation of exterior lighting;
- 3 Installation of retractable security gates at building entrances (e.g., in recessed doorways);
- 4 Installation of fences;
- 5 Installation of bollards or other parking lot security improvements;
- 6 Installation of mirrors;
- 7 Installation of shatter-resistant glass windows;
- 8 Creation of mural art on exterior walls as a graffiti-deterrent, in compliance with applicable Town policies and/or By-law regulations;
- 9 Installation of other recommended CPTED and improvements, subject to approval by the Town; and
- 10 Professional fees, materials costs, and construction and labour costs, associated with the above improvements.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1 A grant of up to 50% of CPTED costs, up to a maximum of \$7,500, or as determined at the discretion of Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.



- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the East and West Gateway, Downtown / Mixed Use, and Industrial Program Areas.
- 4 Improvements shall be accompanied by justification for inclusion, either through a CPTED assessment or targeted intervention to address existing or foreseen security vulnerabilities.
- 5 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.13 ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS GRANT

PURPOSE

To encourage property owners to improve energy efficiency of existing commercial, industrial, and mixed-use buildings, and to facilitate the installation of small-scale renewable energy systems.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Renovations to result in enhanced energy efficiency;
- 2 Purchase and installation of small-scale renewable energy systems (e.g., solar or wind);
- 3 Purchase and installation of energy-efficient lighting and lighting controls (e.g., timers or sensors); and
- 4 Purchase and installation of energy-efficient heating / cooling / ventilation products (e.g., central air conditioners, heat pumps, furnaces / boilers, windows and doors with the EnergySTAR certification).

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1 A grant of up to 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.



- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3** In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the East and West Gateway, Downtown / Mixed Use, and Industrial Program Areas.
- 4** Eligible properties must have a commercial or industrial use to be eligible for this grant.
- 5** An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.14 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT GRANT



PURPOSE

To promote the completion of environmental studies to better understand the type of contamination and potential remediation costs for brownfield sites.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1** Confirming and describing contamination at the site (partial or complete Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA));
- 2** Surveying designated substances and hazardous materials at the site (Designated Substance and Hazardous Materials Survey); and
- 3** Developing a plan to remove, treat, or otherwise manage contamination found on the site (Remedial Work Plan / Risk Assessment).

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1** A grant up to 50% of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of:
 - a. \$3,000 per study;
 - b. Two studies per property / project; and
 - c. A total of \$6,000 per property / project, or as determined at the discretion of Council.



- 2 The grant will be payable upon completion of the study. If the grant is being provided for two studies, it will be payable after both studies are complete.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties located within the Town-wide Program Area.
- 4 Phase I ESAs are not considered eligible studies under this grant. Applicants must complete and submit, for the Town's review, a Phase I ESA that demonstrates that site contamination is likely.
- 5 Applications shall include:
 - 6 A detailed study work plan;
 - 7 A cost estimate for the study; and
 - 8 A description of the planned redevelopment, including any planning applications that have been submitted/approved, if applicable.
- 9 All environmental studies shall be completed by a qualified person, as defined by Ontario Regulation 153/04: Records of Site Condition, as amended.
- 10 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any studies and associated site activities.

4.15 FACADE AND SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

PURPOSE

To encourage aesthetic improvements to building facades, as well as new attractive and pedestrian oriented business signage, to support continued maintenance of commercial building stock.

Examples from the City of Kenora of completed building façade and signage improvements which were funded in part by CIP grants are included in **Figure 4-3**, for illustrative purposes.





Figure 4-3: Completed Facade and Signage Improvement Grant Projects, Kenora, ON
(Photo sources: City of Kenora)

BEFORE



213 Main St. S., Kenora, ON

AFTER



613 Ottawa Street, Keewatin



103 Main St. S., Kenora, ON





ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1** Improvements to the front, rear, or exterior building facades that front onto a public street, including:
 - Façade restoration of brickwork, wood, masonry, and metal cladding;
 - Repair or replacement of entablature, eaves, parapets, and other architectural details;
 - Repair or replacement of windows and doors as a component of a broader façade project;
 - Repair, replacement, or addition of exterior lighting;
 - Repair, replacement, or addition of awnings, marquees, and canopies;
 - Replacement of façade elements that were originally in place during initial construction of the building;
 - Redesigned shop fronts; and/or
 - Similar other improvements/repairs, as may be considered and approved by Council in consultation with Town staff.
- 2** Replacement, repair, improvement, or installation of signage and associated lighting on building façades of commercial or mixed use properties.
Eligible signs include:
 - Primary signs attached to buildings, particularly those that form part of a building façade's sign board area, or that are located above a building entrance or porch;
 - Hanging signs, which may be used either as primary signs or as secondary signs, to complement the main building signage;
 - Stand-alone signs, associated with landscaping, located in front yards and standalone signs in rear yards;
 - Installation and replacement of awnings that contain the name of the business or otherwise form part of the business signage; and
 - Decorative window decals.
- 3** Professional fees, materials costs, and construction and labour costs, associated with the above improvements.



PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1 Building façade improvements: A grant of up to 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$15,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council.
 - a. Of the grant amount awarded, a maximum of 50% may be used towards professional, architectural, or heritage-related services for façade improvements.
- 2 Signage improvements: A grant of up to 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council.
- 3 Grants for building façade and signage improvements can be stacked.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the East and West Gateway and Downtown / Mixed Use Program Areas.
- 4 Only commercial and mixed use buildings with ground floor commercial uses are eligible for this grant.
- 5 Improvements shall comply with the Town's Sign By-law and the Ontario Building Code and Regulations.
- 6 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

4.16 SIDEWALK PATIO AND POP-UPS GRANT

PURPOSE

To provide businesses with the opportunity to utilize publicly owned sidewalks and/or on-street parking spaces to permit sidewalk patios and pop-up retail spaces.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- 1 Professional fees associated with the design of a sidewalk patio or pop-up retail space;





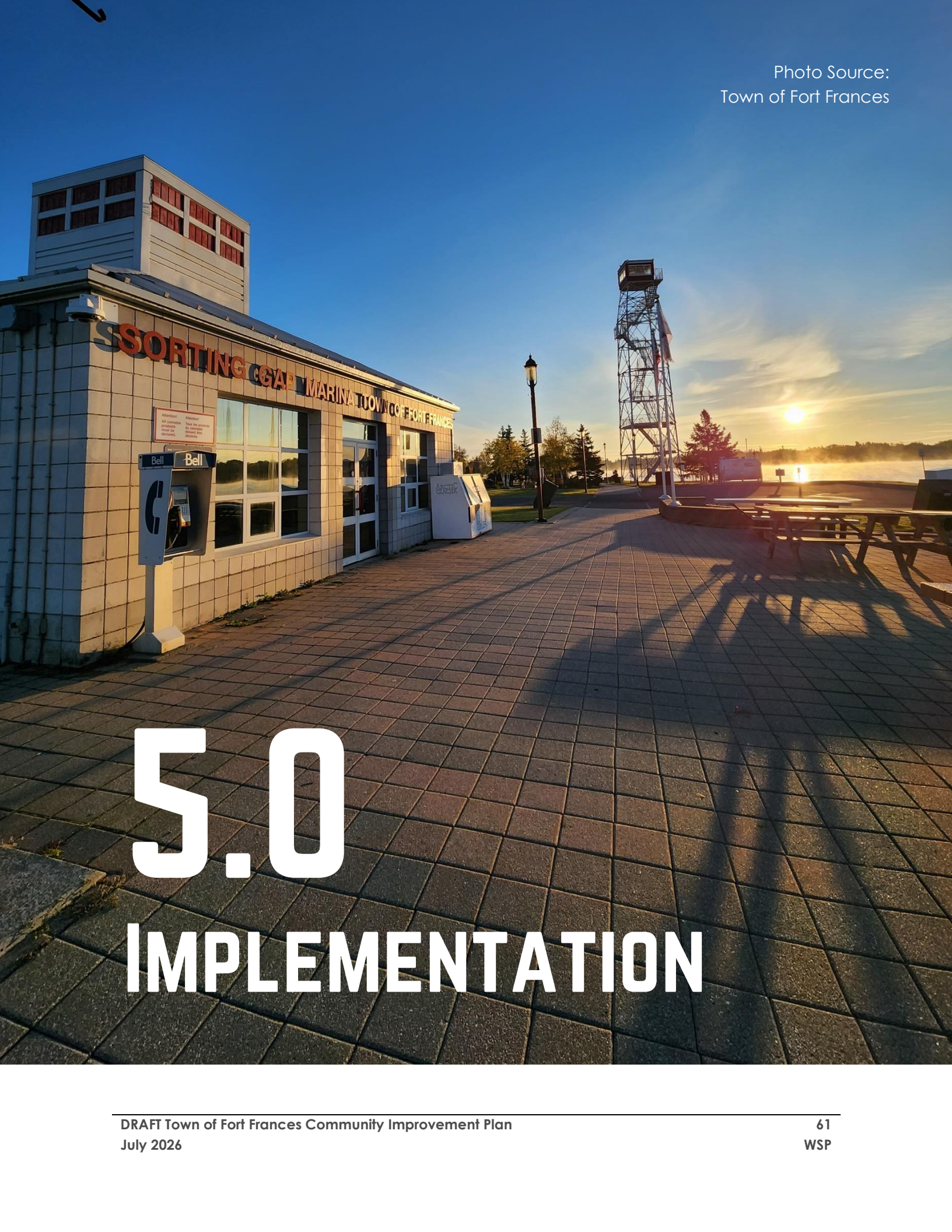
- 2 Construction and materials costs associated with the installation of a sidewalk patio or pop-up retail space;
- 3 Installation or improvement of a seasonal outdoor sidewalk café or patio, or pop-up retail space, provided that it is located adjacent to the sidewalk; and
- 4 Temporary patio elements to be located in a public right-of-way or parking area, including structural elements, decorative fencing and barriers, and outdoor heaters are also eligible.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1 A grant of up to 100% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$3,000, or as determined at the discretion of Council, to support professional fees and/or construction costs associated with the design and installation of the sidewalk patio and/or pop-up retail space.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 1 All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 4.1** shall apply.
- 2 Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 5.3**.
- 3 In accordance with **Table 4-1**, eligible properties include properties that are located within the Downtown / Mixed Use Program Area.
- 4 An application for this program must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a License of Occupation.
- 5 Permission for the installation of any site works under this program shall be subject to applicable Town policies and/or regulations (e.g., Encroachment Agreement).
- 6 Applicants shall be required to obtain a Business License, enter into an agreement with the Town, and provide a Certificate of Insurance for public liability (personal injury and property damage insurance) naming the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances as an additional insured.



5.0 IMPLEMENTATION



5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The successful implementation of the Town of Fort Frances CIP requires municipal leadership and a clear and comprehensive framework to guide the administration of the Plan. The Town will ensure that the Financial Incentive Programs achieve the intended vision and goals of this Plan.

This section sets out the interpretation, general administration structure, general eligibility requirements, application process, and other considerations related to the management of the CIP and its implementation in the Town of Fort Frances. It also includes a recommended monitoring and evaluation program.

5.1 INTERPRETATION



This CIP must be read and interpreted in its entirety, and in conjunction with the Planning Act, Municipal Act, and all applicable municipal planning documents for the Town of Fort Frances. The CIP shall be interpreted at the sole discretion of the Town of Fort Frances Council, in consultation with, or based on, advice from Town staff.

5.2 ADMINISTRATION

This Plan will be administered by the Town of Fort Frances, as part of the implementation of the Community Improvement policies in the Official Plan.

The Community Improvement Project Area to which this Plan applies shall be designated through a by-law adopted by Council.

This Plan is intended to remain in effect until such time as determined appropriate by Council. Council may review the Plan after 10 years to assess the degree of uptake and the overall success of the programs. Amendments or adjustments to this CIP may be made as described in **Section 5.6** of this document.

Financial Incentive Program applications shall be processed, subject to the availability of funding and CIP priorities, as approved by Council. Council may determine that the objectives of a particular Financial Incentive Program have been met, and decide to terminate or temporarily suspend funding, without the need for an amendment to the CIP.



Once Council is satisfied that this Plan has been carried out, it may enact a by-law dissolving the Community Improvement Project Area and rendering the Plan inoperative.

5.2.1 DESIGNATION OF ADMINISTRATORS AND APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Upon approval of this CIP, Council shall appoint a member or members of Town staff as the CIP Administrators, to manage day-to-day implementation and approval of applications. The responsibilities of the CIP Administrators would generally include: meeting with potential applicants for Financial Incentives Programs; coordinating applications; undertaking marketing activities; and monitoring and evaluation of the CIP's performance.

5.2.2 APPLICATION INTAKE

It is recommended that the Town consider one (1) application intake period annually, with the option for a second intake period later in the same year to provide flexibility and maximize opportunities for prospective applicants to obtain funding to assist with their community improvement projects. Providing two (2) annual application intake periods also recognizes that there is often a duration of validity for contractor estimates when prospective applicants are planning their community improvement projects. However, the Town may consider accepting applications on a continuous intake basis for the Housing Financial Incentive Programs, to assist with budgeting considerations.

5.2.3 FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM BUDGET

At its sole discretion, Council may establish a budget for Financial Incentive Programs as part of its annual budget process. The budget may be subject to the availability of funding and other budget priorities, and is therefore not specified in this CIP. Any unused portion of the Financial Incentive Program budgets may be carried over to the following year, or put into a Reserve.

Further, at its sole discretion and considering any recommendations made by the CIP Administrators through the annual Monitoring and Evaluation Program, in any given year Council may choose to allocate portions of the Financial Incentive Program budget to specific programs or Program Areas, or choose not to allocate funding to certain programs. Council may also prioritize the consideration of applications for specific Financial Incentive Programs or Program Areas, depending on the Town of Fort Frances and CIP implementation priorities in any given year.



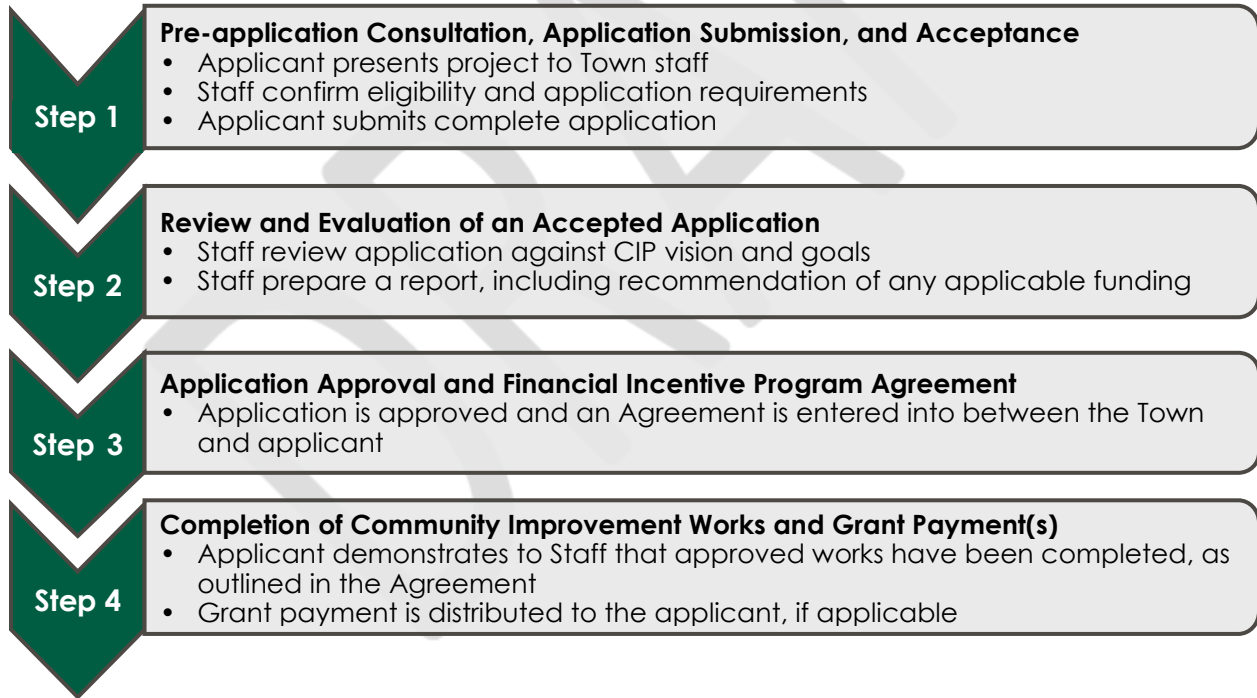
The Town may discontinue funding for any of the Financial Incentive Programs recommended in this CIP at any time, without amending this Plan. However, applicants with approved tax assistance and/or grant payments shall still receive said payment, provided that they continue to meet the general and program-specific requirements and the terms of any executed Financial Incentive Program Agreement entered into with the Town.

5.3 APPLICATION PROCESS



The recommended process for submitting a Financial Incentive Program application and the Town's process for accepting and evaluating applications is described below and illustrated in **Figure 5-1**.

Figure 5-1: CIP Financial Incentive Program Application Process Summary



STEP 1: PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION, APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE

- 1 Prior to submitting an application for one or more of the Financial Incentive Programs in this CIP, applicants are required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with the CIP Administrators to discuss their proposed community improvement project, and to confirm application and eligibility requirements.



- 2 Applicants shall submit a completed application form and all supporting materials, as confirmed at the pre-application consultation meeting. The supporting materials are encouraged to include, but shall not be limited to:
 - a. Photographs of the existing building and property condition;
 - b. Details of the project and proposed works to be completed;
 - c. Professional or conceptual drawings and/or plans;
 - d. Two (2) different cost estimates from non-associated contractors / companies for eligible work and/or materials, where possible. One (1) cost estimate may be acceptable at the discretion of the CIP Administrators;
 - e. A work plan for the improvements and timeline for completion; and
 - f. Any additional materials required to review the application, as determined by the Town.
- 3 Upon receipt of the application, the CIP Administrators will complete a preliminary screening of the application and supporting materials to determine whether the application is complete. Acceptance of an application does not guarantee program approval.

The application will be rejected if the application is not considered complete, or if the application clearly does not comply with the eligibility criteria.
- 4 The CIP Administrators and other Town staff, as applicable, may visit the subject property.
- 5 The Town will communicate their decision to accept or reject the application to the applicant.
- 6 The CIP Administrators will enter the accepted application into the Town's inventory.

STEP 2: REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF AN ACCEPTED APPLICATION

- 1 The CIP Administrators will generally review a complete application within two (2) weeks of it being deemed complete. The application will be evaluated against the CIP vision and goals, and the general and program-specific eligibility requirements.
- 2 The CIP Administrators will prepare and submit a recommendation for approval or rejection to the Approval Authority (i.e., Council or Council's designate), which will also be forwarded to the Town Treasurer. The two (2) week application review



timeline does not include approval time, which may be subject to Council's meeting schedule and budgeting process.

STEP 3: APPLICATION APPROVAL AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM AGREEMENT

- 1 Upon approval of an accepted application, a Financial Incentive Program Agreement ("the Agreement") will be prepared by the CIP Administrator, in consultation with other Town staff, and will be entered into between the Town and the applicant.

The Agreement will outline the nature of the works to be completed, the details of the applicable Financial Incentive Program(s), and a timeframe for project completion and grant payment(s). Both the Town and the applicant will be required to sign and date the Agreement. A copy of the Agreement will be provided to the applicant.

- 2 If the application is not approved, it will be returned to the applicant with a rationale for the decision. The applicant will be provided with an opportunity to revise their application to address the reason for refusal, in consultation with the CIP Administrators. If the applicant agrees, the application process recommences and a report to the Approval Authority will be prepared to reconsider the application.
- 3 Where the decision is rendered and an application is refused, the applicant shall have the right to appeal the decision to Council.

STEP 4: COMPLETION OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT WORKS AND GRANT PAYMENT(S)

- 1 Upon execution of the Agreement, the applicant may begin the approved community improvement works. In the case of grants, payment will occur once the approved works have been completed, as outlined in the Agreement, to the satisfaction of the CIP Administrators and/or Council.
- 2 Before the payment is issued subject to the payment schedule in the Agreement, the applicant may be required to provide the CIP Administrators with final supporting documentation, which may include but is not limited to:
 - a. photographic evidence of the completed works, satisfactory to the Town;
 - b. other documentation proving successful completion of the project according to program-specific eligibility criteria;



- c. original invoices for all eligible work completed, including the total amount paid for eligible works; and
 - d. proof of payment to contractors in full.
- 3** The CIP Administrators and other Town staff, as applicable, may perform a final site visit and inspection of the building or property, as necessary, to ensure the community improvement works have been completed in accordance with the Agreement.
 - 4** The CIP Administrators may take appropriate action as specified in the Agreement if the applicant defaults on the Agreement. If all program and Agreement requirements are determined to have been met to the satisfaction of the CIP Administrators, payment will be issued to the applicant for the approved incentive(s), in accordance with the general and program-specific eligibility and the Agreement.

5.4 MARKETING STRATEGY



The successful implementation of this CIP relies on an effective Marketing Strategy that is targeted to potential applicants, including investors and property / business owners, operators, and tenants, both locally and further afield. The Marketing Strategy is recommended to be prepared and launched by the Town immediately following Council adoption of this CIP. This section provides suggestions that the Town may wish to consider in developing and implementing the CIP Marketing Strategy.

TOWN WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Town should continue to maintain a dedicated CIP page on its website, which may include an overview of the benefits of a CIP, the CIP document, a summary of available Financial Incentive Programs, the CIP Application Form, and Town staff contact information. The Town may use its existing social media platforms to announce the formal launch of the CIP and continue to share success stories as community improvement works are completed.

The preparation of a short video, maximum 2 minutes in length, could be considered to highlight the key features of the Town, such as its strategic location, key services, etc., followed by an explanation of the CIP, the vision, and the Financial Incentive Programs



that are available for private sector investment. This video can be linked to other partner websites, such as the BIA, Chamber of Commerce, and Rainy River Future Development Corporation, and through social media feeds such as Facebook and YouTube.

LAUNCH PARTY

The Town could consider hosting a physical or virtual launch party leading up to the launch of available funding through the CIP, which could also include a social media presence and available Town staff and elected officials to promote the CIP and answer related questions.

PRINTED PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Consistent with the Town's Branding Strategy, the Town may develop publications using various mediums that provide an overview of the CIP and the available Financial Incentive Programs to be circulated, in hard copy and/or electronically, to all relevant property owners within the Community Improvement Project Area. Copies of printed promotional materials and the CIP document may be made available at the Town Municipal Office, on the Town's website, and at any other locations or distribution points considered appropriate by Town staff.

PROSPECTIVE APPLICANT MEETINGS AND INFORMATION PACKAGE

Town staff and elected officials may wish to offer targeted meetings and presentations to prospective applicants on the available programs through the CIP. A targeted CIP Information Package could be developed to be shared with prospective applicants, area developers, and realtors.

The Town may also identify target properties where improvements would be most desirable, and arrange meetings with property owners to ensure awareness of the CIP and encourage applications.

LOCAL INITIATIVES AND CONTESTS

To encourage economic activity in the Town, the Town's Planning and Development Department could consider local initiatives and contests on a Town-wide scale, such as those that encourage supporting and shopping at local retail, restaurants, and businesses in Fort Frances.



ANNUAL REPORTING

The Town may communicate the results of the Monitoring and Evaluation Program through the Town's website. This can serve to remind potential applicants of the program, promote the achievements of the CIP, and highlight successful projects.

CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Successful projects are recommended to be recognized, celebrated, and used in promotional material, which may include a "CIP Successes" section on the Town's CIP webpage showcasing past CIP applicants and their completed projects. The Town could also consider installing signs on the properties of CIP recipients, with their permission, and coordinating photo opportunities with Town Council. In addition, interviews with CIP participants could be conducted and recorded for use on the Town's website and social media, along with a timelapse of before / after photos, and professional photography.

5.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM



This CIP has been developed and designed to be flexible as a planning and economic development tool for the Town of Fort Frances. It identifies opportunities and provides incentives for private sector investment, as well as for municipal initiatives, to redevelop and beautify properties and spaces across the Town.

The CIP will remain in effect for 10 years, but it may be reviewed by Town Council after five (5) years from Council's adoption, to review the degree of uptake and the overall success of the programs. Amendments or adjustments to this CIP can be made as described in **Section 5.6**.

To ensure that this Plan achieves the desired results and remains current with respect to local and global market conditions, and to inform decision-making regarding the Town's implementation budget, the uptake and success of the Financial Incentive Programs should be monitored, evaluated and, if necessary, revised on a regular basis.

The recommended monitoring and evaluation program for this CIP includes the following main steps:



STEP 1: APPLICATION DATA SELECTION

The CIP Administrators should maintain a record of all pre-application consultations related to potential application submissions, even if the consultations do not result in a submitted application. In doing so, the Administrators shall have consideration for the confidentiality of any inquiries.

As applications are received, they should be listed by the Financial Incentive Program type in an inventory. In addition, comparable information regarding municipal leadership initiatives that are related to this Plan should be recorded as a separate category.

Carefully selected performance indicators will provide important information regarding the success of this Plan and its individual programs. For each Financial Incentive Program application received, the Town should record and monitor, on an on-going basis, the:

- Date of the pre-application consultation meeting;
- Subject property's tax assessment prior to the project's approval;
- Total construction value of the project;
- Requested financial incentive value, by program and in total;
- Details and purpose of the project, including the: number of new residential units being created; number of new jobs being created; square footage of residential, commercial, or industrial space affected or being created; number of trees to be planted; length of façade improved; etc., as may be appropriate;
- Appearance of the property prior to project initiation ("before" photos);
- Proposed concept plans for the property; and
- Relevant subjective information about the application (notably, whether the availability of CIP Financial Incentive Programs encouraged the applicant to undertake the project).

In addition, it is important to appropriately record and monitor sites where more than one (1) application has been submitted according to the Financial Incentive Programs (e.g., where an applicant applies for a Façade and Signage Improvement Grant and a Beautification Grant).



For unsuccessful applications, the Town should monitor, on an on-going basis, the:

- Number of unsuccessful applications; and
- Reason(s) for the application's refusal.

For each approved Financial Incentive Program application, the Town should monitor, on an ongoing basis, the:

- Approved value of grant(s), in total and by program;
- Amount of private investment leveraged by the financial incentives (i.e., construction value);
- New housing units created as a result of the project;
- New direct and indirect jobs created as a result of the project;
- Timing of completion of the project and payment of the financial incentives;
- Property tax assessment after the completion of the project, if relevant; and
- Appearance of the completed project ("after" photos).

As an outcome of a decision on a Financial Incentive Program application, the Town may survey the applicant to obtain feedback on the CIP process. Regarding each municipal leadership initiative, the Town will monitor the progress of each project on an annual basis. This may require annual communication with each department or individual responsible for advancing the initiative.

This information should be recorded and monitored, as it will provide valuable information in the Monitoring and Evaluation Report that will be presented to Council on an annual basis.

STEP 2: PREPARE ANNUAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

The Town should prepare an annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report that demonstrates the performance of the CIP to Council. The Report shall include the details of the information collected in Step 1.

In addition, the Report that shall also include, if necessary, recommendations regarding:

- Measures for avoiding any unintended outcomes of the CIP programs in the future;



- Funding of the Financial Incentive Programs for Council's consideration in budget deliberations or the funding or timing of any Town-initiated projects recommended in this document, or others that are recommended or developed after the adoption of this Plan;
- Potential for revisions to the Community Improvement Project Area, which may be passed by by-law;
- Potential for revisions to the CIP Program Areas, which would require an amendment to the CIP;
- Consideration of amendments or adjustments to the Plan, as described in **Section 5.6** of this document; and
- Administration of the Plan.

Furthermore, the annual Report should include a review, summary, and analysis of potential funding opportunities from the federal and provincial governments or other sources. The Monitoring and Evaluation Report should be made available on the Town's website for public review.

5.6 AMENDMENTS / ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CIP

As redevelopment and revitalization is achieved in the Town of Fort Frances over time and specific CIP goals may evolve, the Town may deem it necessary to amend or adjust this Plan. Revisions may also be necessary to address issues with specific Financial Incentive Programs, which may become evident as the programs are implemented. For example, grant values as set out in this CIP may need to be amended at the discretion of Council, to correspond to changing costs of community improvement projections over time.

Necessary amendments or adjustments to this Plan shall generally be identified through recommendations from the annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report, discussed in **Section 5.6**. This CIP permits adjustments; however, certain adjustments may require an amendment to this CIP, in accordance with Section 28(5) of the Planning Act. Requirements under the Planning Act and its Regulations must also be met, such as the need for a Statutory Public Meeting and related notice.



CIP AMENDMENTS

The following adjustments to the CIP require an amendment under Section 28(5) of the Planning Act:

- Change to the Community Improvement Project Area (as illustrated in **Figure 1-3**), requiring a by-law passed by Council;
- Changes to the CIP Program Areas where specific Financial Incentive Programs are available (as illustrated in **Figure 1-4**);
- Extension of the CIP beyond the intended 10-year planning horizon;
- Changes to the CIP vision and/or goals;
- Addition of a new Financial Incentive Program, or complete removal of a Financial Incentive Program;
- Changes to the types of eligible projects / costs or addition of new eligible projects / costs;
- Changes to eligibility criteria; and
- Changes to the value or calculation of financial incentives.

CIP ADJUSTMENTS

Minor administrative adjustments to the CIP may be permitted without an amendment. The following adjustments do not require an amendment under Section 28(5) of the Planning Act:

- Dissolution of the Community Improvement Project Area (as illustrated in **Figure 1-3**) (i.e., the Plan becomes inoperative), requiring a by-law passed by Council, once Council is satisfied this Plan has been carried out;
- Changes to the amount of annual funding provided for Financial Incentive Programs (total or program specific);
- Changes to the funding or prioritization of municipal leadership initiatives;
- Discontinuation of funding for one (1) or more Financial Incentive Programs; and
- Delegation of administration / approval of the Financial Incentive Programs to a committee or an individual, or a return of the responsibilities to Council, which generally requires a by-law, subject to Section 23.1 of the Municipal Act.



6.0 CONCLUSION



6.0 CONCLUSION

The Town of Fort Frances Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a strategic planning and economic development tool that will be implemented to achieve the CIP vision and associated goals to foster revitalization, growth, and economic prosperity in the Town.

The development of the Town's updated CIP was a collaborative effort between Town of Fort Frances staff and Council, with valued input from local organizations, including agencies and the business community, as well as residents.

The municipal leadership activities and Financial Incentive Programs set out in this CIP seek to position the Town as a leader in community development and revitalization within the Rainy River District and Northwestern Ontario's Sunset Country. The CIP reaffirms the Town's support for its existing business community, and encourages the growth of new business, investment, and housing in Fort Frances.

The CIP will require the continued dedication and effort of Town Council and staff to implement an energized marketing strategy, annual monitoring and reporting on uptake, review of Financial Incentive Program results, identification of lessons learned, and adaptation to evolving community conditions and priorities.

The Town of Fort Frances CIP represents the Town's commitment to its business community, residents, and prospective developers to encourage private investment opportunities. The Town is driven to look forward and invest in community improvements that will bring Fort Frances to the forefront as a destination and welcoming community in Northwestern Ontario.

