

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Community Improvement Plans

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool that allows a municipality to direct funds and implements planning policy initiatives toward a specifically defined project area. Section 28 of the Planning Act gives municipalities that have enabling policies in their Official Plans, the ability to prepare Community Improvement Plans. The Community Improvement Plans are intended to encourage rehabilitation initiatives and/or stimulate development. Once implemented, the plan allows municipalities to provide tax assistance, grants or loans to assist in the rehabilitation of lands and/or buildings within the defined Community Improvement Project Area.

First impressions count. You have to get customers to take notice and stop before they will come through the door.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this CIP is to create stronger economic bases, and cleaner and more appealing environments within the Township of Tay's communities; Port McNicoll, Victoria Harbour and Waubaushene. Implementation will start with the major communities of Port McNicoll and Victoria Harbour. This will be done by creating centralized and defined commercial cores in each settlement area. The Township will aid existing local businesses by creating a tax increment based grant program if the businesses approve of and abide by certain urban design principles and guidelines set forth in this CIP. This CIP aims to create areas to attract new commercial development within the CIP boundaries in accordance of the Township of Tay's Official Plan.

1.3 Rationale

In August of 2001, the Director of Planning and Development recommended that the Council authorize staff to direct the 2001 budgeted funds for a Community Improvement Plan for Port McNicoll and Victoria Harbour.

The number of businesses in the downtown core and central commercial areas of each settlement area have dwindled over several decades. In Port McNicoll, Victoria Harbour, and Waubaushene lands designated and zoned

for commercial development are under-utilized and a lack of available employment opportunity has become an issue. Waubauskene has not been as much of an issue as the other communities; however, having recently lost the grocery store in town, a major anchor to commercial opportunities, efforts to bring business back are warranted albeit not to the same degree. Consistent with the Township's Official Plan, this CIP seeks to develop a sustainable local economy for each settlement area which is compatible with the lifestyles of the residents.

Along with weak local economies, growth pressure is becoming an issue in the area. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe released in 2006 predicts that Simcoe County will have a 58.7% increase in population from 2001-2031 or roughly 275,000 new residents¹. Tay Township anticipates a 19.5% growth rate in a twenty year period, ending in 2024². Such significant growth rates require sufficient preparation of each settlement area, beginning with a sustainable economy that promotes live-work environments.

1.4 Goals and Objectives

The downtown is the place that gives people their first sense of the community and leaves a lasting impression. Our downtowns are the face and life blood of a community and reflect the community's values. A community's heritage is celebrated in its downtown through its buildings that tell a story of the community's past and its values are celebrated in the downtown's present.

A healthy and vibrant downtown boosts the economic health and quality of life in a community. A healthy downtown creates jobs, incubates small businesses, protects property values, and increases the community's options for goods and services. A healthy downtown reflects the health of the whole community.

Attractive facades, and the collective image of the downtown area, can significantly help sell the businesses and the business district to potential customers. The first impression is all you have to entice a visitor to your

¹ Places To Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. 2006. Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

² Tay Area Water System Class Environmental Assessment Project File. January 14 2005. R.J. Burnside & Associates.

business so the façade treatment is key. The quality of the façade is a reflection of what sort of experience a potential customer will have once they go inside.

Downtowns have an advantage over regional type developments in terms of their historical value and their compact, pedestrian friendly scale. Downtowns provide unique experiences that draw day trippers and tourists.

Downtown building facades are important elements in preserving and enhancing the small-town character of Tay's communities and revitalizing the business climate.

Streetscape and facade improvements are a visible sign that positive things are happening, and that building owners, business owners, local government and the community care about their downtown and their businesses.

The goals of the Community Improvement Plan for the Township of Tay include:

1. Building healthier, stronger downtowns and communities.
2. Encourage the upgrading and re-use of derelict land and buildings.
3. Protect, promote, enhance and celebrate the unique heritage of Tay Township, our people, family and buildings.
4. Encourage residents to shop locally and use the local services and provide employment opportunities for local residents.
5. Provide distinctive, attractive, walkable downtowns and build a strong sense of place and increase community pride.
6. Enhance the community improvement area's image and attract commercial investment. Support and help maintain local services, such as shops, restaurants, grocery stores, service industries such as banking, legal, personal service etc. Increase the tax base and diversify the local market. Bring expenditures from external sources into the local market.
7. Increases pedestrians and eyes on the street and reduce vandalism and crime.

The goals and objectives are an integral part of the Community Improvement Plan and have been used to guide the development of the Plan and identify the Project Areas.