



Community Improvement Plan Policy

Draft as of January 26, 2024, intended to replace Town of Saugeen Shores By-law 32-2021, By-law 33-2021, and By-law 34-2021

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Town of Saugeen Shores, located on the shores of Lake Huron in Bruce County. It is home to 15,908 residents ([StatCan, 2021](#)) spread amongst a number of smaller villages and with vast rural areas. The four key sectors that drive the economy are tourism, retail and food service, energy, and agriculture.

In 2021 the municipality approved its previous Community Improvement Plans that included the downtown cores of Port Elgin and Southampton as well as an Economic Development Community Improvement Plan. This document will replace these previously developed CIPs. This Community Improvement Plan enables additional opportunities that encourage the revitalization of existing buildings and redevelopment of properties within the municipality through a variety of financial incentives.

In 2022 Bruce County Council expanded incentive offerings available through Spruce the Bruce, the county’s community development incentive program. To gain full access to these grants the municipality took the opportunity to redevelop this policy to be more in line with existing municipal goals and county priorities.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is to adopt a program of financial incentives that encourage the redevelopment and improvement of private lands throughout the Town of Saugeen Shores. These redevelopments and improvements aim to enhance the character of the municipality and support the Town’s commitment to affordable housing.

The purpose of the financial incentives is to assist businesses and property owners in the redevelopment and improvement of their properties; and to assist developers in construction projects that address accessibility and affordability needs. In turn, projects supported under the CIP will contribute towards municipal goals defined in this policy and others.

The CIP applies to both settlement and rural areas of the municipality. Specific financial incentives are developed to target the different needs of each of these areas. This CIP will allow for increased businesses and property owners in Saugeen Shores to participate in Bruce County’s Spruce the Bruce Program.

The municipality can provide financial incentives within the defined Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs). It enables both the municipality and Bruce County to participate in or implement financial incentives that can support future development and investments.

The financial incentives offered within the CIPAs are at the discretion of the Town of Saugeen Shores

and Bruce County and are dependent upon budget considerations.

1.3. Methodology

The existing goals of the community created the strong foundation for this Community Improvement Plan (CIP) policy. The policy was created following a review of existing guidelines, planning documents, and the current incentive programs.

1.3.1. Guiding Documents

Local plans, reports, and studies were reviewed when building the foundation of this modernized Community Improvement Plan. Key guiding documents are summarized below.

1.3.1.1. The Town of Saugeen Shores Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The Town of Saugeen Shores’s mission “provides high-quality municipal services that allow the community to thrive today and in the future.”

The integrated strategy outlines four pillars with 11 directions which define what priorities are and what the municipality is trying to accomplish.

Pillar 1, Meeting the Needs of a Growing Community, contains direction 3, Promote Business Growth and Investment, that is supported through the Community Improvement Plan. It provides specific direction to implement the municipal community improvement plan to incent investment in the local economy for both new and existing businesses.

1.3.1.2. Saugeen Shores Strong Economic Recovery Strategy

The Economic Recovery Strategy Development Strategy was developed to support the recovery post COVID-19. The plan includes various actions. The more specific actions that directly relate to the modernization of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) include:

- Promote Bruce County’s new and revised grant programs designed to offer businesses additional financial support.
- Review and rewrite of Community Improvement Plan and incentives. Provide incentives for new business in town for existing businesses expanding.

1.3.1.3. Bruce County’s Spruce the Bruce Program (2022)

Bruce County’s Spruce the Bruce program offers financial incentives to eligible applications within a community’s CIP. These grants are enabled through municipal policies and offer improvements to designated downtown areas. The grants make designated downtown areas more attractive, distinctive, and pedestrian friendly. In 2022, the program was enhanced to target additional industries

and regional needs. Grant offerings extend past the downtown cores but are still within a designated community improvement project area (CIPAs). The additional grants support the revitalization of agriculture and tourism sectors and support redevelopment relating to business accessibility and nurturing mixed-use development.

2. Legislation

2.1. Ontario Municipal Act (2001)

Municipal activities are governed by The Municipal Act (2001), which is the principal statute that governs the administration of municipalities and sets out municipal powers. While the act provides opportunity to provide tax reductions related to heritage, municipal, or education purposed properties, it generally prohibits municipalities from providing incentives or bonuses to commercial enterprises. However, exceptions are provided where a municipality participates in a Community Improvement Plan (CIP), as part of Section 28 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990.

2.2. Ontario Planning Act (1990)

Section 28 of Ontario's Planning Act allows municipalities to prepare Community Improvement Plan (CIPs) to establish a framework for supporting and implementing programs to encourage development and redevelopment, in accordance with official plan policies. Whether the reasons are physical, social, economic, or environmental, a community improvement approach is a flexible, comprehensive, co-ordinated, and strategic framework for dealing with lands and buildings. For the purposes of carrying out a CIP, a municipality may engage in the following activities within the community improvement project area (CIPA):

- a. Acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (Section 28(3)).
- b. Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the CIP project area in conformity with the CIP (Section 28(6)).
- c. Sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in the CIPA in conformity with the CIP (Section 28(6)).
- d. Make grants or loans to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the CIPA, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole, or any part of the cost of rehabilitating such lands and buildings in conformity with the CIP (Section 28(7)).
- e. Eligible costs can be related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes, or for the provisions of energy efficient uses, buildings structures,

works, improvements, or facilities (Section 28(7.1)).

- f. The council of an upper-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of a lower-tier municipality and the council of a lower-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of the upper-tier municipality, for the purpose of carrying out a Community Improvement Plan that has come into effect, on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council considers appropriate, but only if the official plan of the municipality making the grant or loan contains provisions relating to the making of such grants or loans (Section 28(7.2)).

2.3. Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

CIPs help to achieve the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) objectives of healthy communities, a clean and safe environment, and a strong economy. Community improvement is supported through PPS policies for:

- a. Building strong healthy communities.
- b. Promoting efficient development and a mix of land uses.
- c. Ensuring that necessary infrastructure and public service facilities are available.
- d. Improving accessibility.
- e. Conserving heritage resources.
- f. Supporting green design.
- g. Encouraging residential intensification.

2.4. The Official Plan for the Town of Saugeen Shores (2014)

The Municipality's Official Plan policies under Section 6.2 qualify the municipality to prepare and implement Community Improvement Plan (CIP), and other mechanisms that are governed by Section 28. The official plan considers the entire Settlement Area as a Community Improvement Plan. The CIP allows for the establishment of several programs to implement the goals and objectives of official plan community improvement policies.

2.5. County of Bruce Official Plan (2010)

The Bruce County Official Plan provides guidance on local Community Improvement Plan (CIP) areas and programs. It encourages local municipalities to adopt CIPs in accordance with the county and local official plans. Furthermore, Bruce County's Official Plan has identified all areas of the community as having the potential to be identified as a community improvement project area by respective municipalities or by the county.

3. Goals and Objectives

Section 6.2 of The Official Plan for the Town of Saugeen Shores outlines the goal of the community improvement areas is to encourage businesses and industries to locate within the community to provide employment opportunities and increase assessment base. The Town also wishes to encourage retention of disposable spending dollars within Bruce County and Saugeen Shores in particular. CIPs can encourage the construction of affordable housing with the community improvement areas.

Financial incentives outlined in this plan may be offered to tenants or property owners to assist in meeting these goals. Grants available may change from year to year.

4. Project Areas

Section 28(1) of the Planning Act (1990) allows a municipality to define a community improvement project area (CIPA). The Planning Act defines a CIPA as “a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.”

The Official Plan considers the entire Settlement Area as a Community Improvement Area. The original project area covered the settlement area of Saugeen Shores as well as the downtown cores of Port Elgin and Southampton. This CIP now includes an expansion of these previous downtown CIPAs to encompass the entire municipal boundaries of Saugeen Shores. The downtown areas for Port Elgin and Southampton are defined priority project areas and continue to have specific incentives focussed on downtown development, as outlined in this policy.

The municipality shall designate the expanded CIP project area by by-law. The programs authorized in this CIP may be carried out within the community improvement project area (CIPA) as identified in Schedule A.

5. Incentive Programs

5.1. General Eligibility Criteria

To assist private landowners in enhancing their properties or buildings, the following incentives are offered to eligible applicants as indicated below, unless identified under [Section 5.3.3.](#), which outlines incentives and eligibility of Bruce County’s Spruce the Bruce Program.

5.1.1. Eligible Applicants

- a. The property in the application must be in a community improvement project area ([Section 4](#)) or identified for specific incentives ([Section 5.3](#)).

- b. Applicants must be the registered owner of the property, assessed owner, or an authorized agent. If a tenant wishes to apply, a letter from the registered owner approving the work to be done is required.
- c. General maintenance is not eligible for project incentives. The goal of the program is to encourage new projects that aim to revitalize existing buildings and redevelop properties.
- d. Applicants must comply with all provincial and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code, and zoning requirements. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all building and other required permits and must be in conformance with all applicable health and safety standards.

5.1.2. Applications

- a. Complete applications for the specific incentive must be submitted directly to the municipality, except for incentives offered through Spruce the Bruce, which must be submitted directly to Bruce County.
- b. Applications need to be submitted prior to any work commencing and cannot begin until an application is approved, and an agreement is reached.
- c. The municipality has the right to request additional submissions of drawings and/or plans to be included with the application and schedule a pre-application meeting to review the intended improvements and modifications.

5.1.3. Agreements

- a. Any application must be consistent with the official plan, Community Improvement Plan (CIP), and any other guidelines that may be implemented for the Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs). Priority will be given to those applications which most closely meet the program guidelines that will be developed with the framework as outlined in this plan.
- b. The applicant may be required to enter into an agreement with the municipality stipulating at a minimum:
 - Terms of the financial agreement.
 - Total amount of approved funding.
 - Timetable for provision of agreement and completion of the project.
 - An undertaking by the owner to satisfy all municipal and other relevant laws and requirements for the project.

5.1.4. Previous Projects

- a. Financial incentives cannot be retroactive. Any work commenced prior to the project receiving approval from the municipality will be ineligible.
- b. Properties are not eligible to receive funds for the same incentive program within five years, unless there is a new owner or tenant, or if the project scope is different.

5.1.5. Funding Payouts

- a. Municipal contributions will be issued after the following:
 - Project is complete and paperwork has been submitted.
 - Inspected by municipal staff (or the appropriate approval authority).
 - Necessary permits and licences have been issued.
 - Original paid receipts for materials or third parties for the work submitted.
- b. Funding will be payable within the timeframe established for the applicable program or the date of agreement, whichever comes first.
- c. The applicant cannot be awarded more than 100% of the final invoice, or whatever percentage is indicated for the specific incentive.
- d. Eligible project costs must be actual cash outlay to third parties acting at arm's length or outlined in an agreement with the Town which can be documented through original invoices or proofs of payment. Applicants will provide a minimum cash contribution to the project as outlined, under [Section 5.3](#). Where the municipal incentive is in kind, this may not be required.
- e. Where the municipal incentive is in-kind (i.e. parkland dedication) the issuance timing is subject to the approval of the Town of Saugeen Shore's Chief Administrative Officer or designate.

5.1.6. Funding Thresholds

- a. The total of any of the financial incentives shall not exceed 100% of the cost of improvements made to properties or lands. This includes a combination of both county and local municipal incentives.
- b. Where the project is expected to result in a substantial increase in the property's value, Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) can be considered in addition to other incentives.
- c. The total combination of funds available to one property may be set by the Town on an annual basis. This does not include any monies received from the county.
- d. The value of a grant, loan or in-kind incentive may be set by the Town on an annual basis.

5.1.7. Expiration of Funding

- a. Unless otherwise stated in the agreement, a maximum of one year is allowed for completion of a project after approval. Requests for extensions can be made to the municipality.
- b. No changes to work specified in the agreement are to be made for five years without municipal approval.

5.1.8. Tax Arrears and Other Charges

- a. Applicants must not be in default of any property taxes, local improvement charges, or any other municipal accounts receivable on the subject property at the time of approval or upon receiving final funding.
- b. Any outstanding orders (building, fire, zoning, etc.) must be satisfied prior to funding approval and upon receiving final funding. Exceptions apply where approval of the entity responsible for the outstanding order.

5.1.9. Transfers of Projects

- a. If there is change in ownership of a property, projects can be transferred, if the new owner is completing the same project on the same property. The existing agreement holder shall advise the municipality of the change to update the agreement. This agreement will need to be signed, with the same conditions, with the new agreement holder.
- b. Approved incentives allocated to a specific property are not transferable to any other property.

5.2. Forms of Incentives

Each year, council or its designated authority will determine which incentive programs are in effect [Section 5.3.](#), in what form the incentive will be provided, and the funding allocation based on the municipal budget. Financial incentives can be provided to properties in the Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPA) as indicated below or a combination of grants and loans.

5.2.1. Grants

Grants and grants-in-lieu are typically used as a matching program for related costs or fees, excluding taxes, to an eligible project. Awarded grants cover a portion of the capital cost of the improvement to an overall maximum amount. Costs may include necessary professional design fees, material, and labour but will exclude any taxes. Each grant category ([Section 5.3.](#)) will provide details of available funding.

5.2.2. Loans

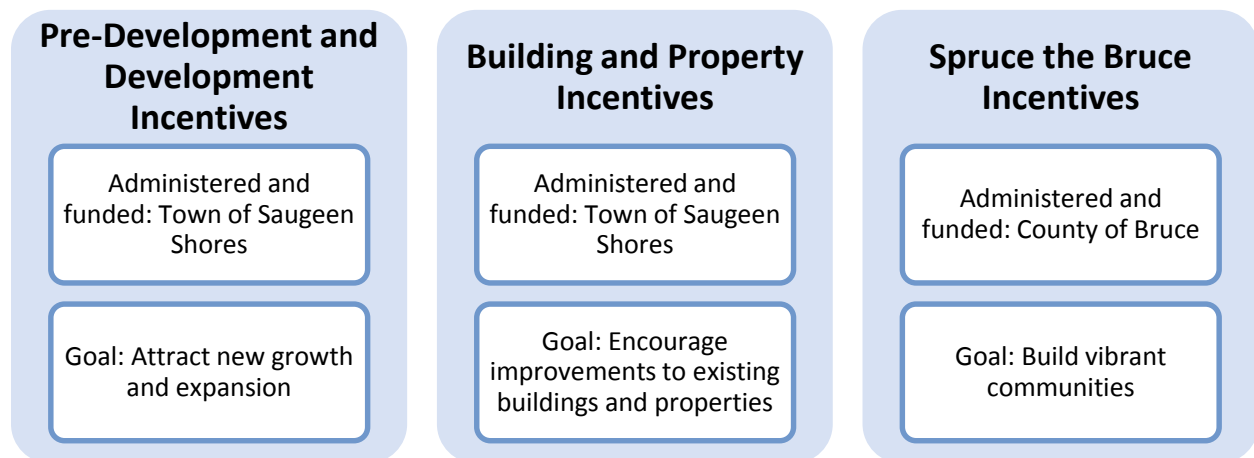
Where a proposed project satisfies the relevant municipal guidelines, a loan can cover a portion of the eligible improvement costs to a maximum amount. Loans are structured by the municipality based on

market conditions and amortized over a set number of years. The municipality has the right to set the interest rates at any rate and the agreement will stipulate the repayment schedule. Loans are only available to property owners and are registered as a lien on the property.

5.3. Incentives

Financial incentives offered to property, business owners, and developers are grouped into three categories based on their overall objective. Within each category, pre-development and development incentives, building and property incentives, and Spruce the Bruce incentives, multiple programs each with their specific goals and eligibility, are available for use.

Each year, council can endorse which financial incentives, based on categories or individual programs, to implement and the availability of municipal funding. Spruce the Bruce is the expectation, as this is funded and implemented through the County of Bruce.



5.3.1. Development and Predevelopment Incentives

Development and predevelopment incentives are led and funded by the municipality and have an overall goal of **encouraging affordable housing projects** and attracting new growth and expansion to the municipality-wide Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA). Program applications, approvals, agreements, and distribution of funding are all administered by the municipality. View [Schedule B](#) for a summary chart of all incentives. Where applicable, the following financial incentives can be provided in the following ways:

5.3.1.1. Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program

Purpose:

The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Program is intended to encourage the development and redevelopment of eligible properties by providing tax assistance equal to all or a portion of the property tax increase resulting from new property improvements.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- Applications must be filed prior to the start of any activity that would constitute development triggering a re-valuation by MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation).

Financial Incentive:

- An incentive equal of up to 100% of the municipal and/or county tax portion for up to ten years.
- This incentive may be offered on a declining scale, for example: Year one of the program, the grant to the property owner is equal to 100% of the tax increment. Thereafter, the grant decreases by 10% per year (e.g., year two = 90%, year three = 80%, and so on up to year ten).
- Bruce County may participate in this program, related to the county portion of a tax bill, subject to County Council approval.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Encourage attainable and affordable housing units.
- Adaptive reuse of a property to suit new uses.
- Major additions to a property, involving a significant increase of existing gross floor area.
- Infrastructure work including the improvement or reconstruction of existing on-site public infrastructure as may be required to service a proposed development.
- Façade, signage, and streetscaping improvements required as part of a proposed development.
- Professional services by an engineer, architect, or professional planner.
- Any combination of the above.

5.3.1.2. Municipal Fee Incentive Program

Purpose:

The municipal fee incentive program provides a rebate for fees associated with redevelopment, infill, and new development. Any fee included in Saugeen Shores's Fees and Charges By-Law (as amended) is an eligible expense for this program. Bruce County may participate in this program as subject to Bruce County Council approval.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.

- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- This will be a one-time contribution to the applicant to the cost indicated in the current fee structure/by-law.

Financial Incentive:

- An incentive equal up to 100% of applicable municipal fees.
- Can be paid in two installments, upon completion of any permit or application and the remaining after final inspection or completion of the project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Building or demolition permits.
- Site plan control applications.
- Official plan amendments (including zoning by-law amendments, minor variances, or severances of land).
- Other municipal fees in the current fee structure/ by-law.

5.3.1.3. Predevelopment Study and Design Program

Purpose:

The predevelopment study and design program are to offset the costs associated with preparing the necessary plans, drawings, or designs that outline the extent of the improvements being applied for.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- Projects must be in line with streetscape, façade, or other design guidelines set by the municipality.

Financial Incentive:

- Municipal matching incentive up to 100% of eligible net costs.
- Can be paid in two installments, upon completion of the study or design and the remaining after final inspection or completion of the project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Preparation of architectural or engineering plans and site plans for building improvements.
- Environmental site assessments.

- Business development related studies and plans such as, but not limited to, feasibility, traffic impact, or market analysis studies.
- Any other studies or designs that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.1.4. Municipal Property Acquisition and Disposition Program

Purpose:

The municipal property acquisition and disposition program is in place to allow the Town to acquire or dispose of lands within the Community Improvement Area redevelop lands or buildings that are determined surplus to the needs of the local municipality or the county at a reduced or minimal cost for sales, lease, rent, or redevelopment through a request for proposal (RFP) process. The local municipality and county may work together to identify lands that are surplus and to determine the best use for the surplus lands. Bruce County may participate in this program as subject to Bruce County Council approval.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Only land owned, or acquired by the municipality is eligible for this grant.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- Must follow relevant bylaws related to sale and disposition of municipal land.
- Additional eligibility criteria will distinguish the best use based on needs and will be identified in the RFP released by either the municipality or the county.

Incentive:

- Land to be awarded at a reduced cost or possibly at no cost.
- Land to be acquired by the municipality to support the implementation of this plan.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- The criteria, examples of projects, and other needs from the local municipality or the county will be included in the RFP.

5.3.1.5. Development Charges Program

Purpose:

The Development Charges Program is to assist with Development Charges payable at the time of building permit. This may include early or late payment, exemptions, or grants-in-lieu. This program does not preclude the amendment of the Development Charges By-law to exempt certain

developments or redevelopments.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- Development that would not be charged a development charge are not eligible for this program.

Financial Incentive:

- An incentive equal up to 100% of development charges payable on a project.
- This incentive is payable only at completion of the project, final inspections and payment of all development charges calculated before the incentive.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Redevelopment of existing buildings, including buildings that may contain residential units
- Residential development that would be charged development charges.
- Non-residential development that would be charged development charges.

5.3.1.6. Local Improvement Program

Purpose:

The Local Improvement Program is to assist with costs attributable to a project or the development of land.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- The applicant must enter into an agreement for approval of this grant.

Financial Incentive:

- An incentive equal of up to 100% of associated costs of local improvements.
- This incentive can take the form of the Town doing work on behalf of the developer without cost recovery from the developer.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Environmental site assessments and remediations.
- Development, redevelopment, construction or reconstruction of lands and buildings for

rehabilitation purposes.

- Development, redevelopment, construction or reconstruction of lands and buildings for energy efficiency purposes.

5.3.1.7. Parkland and Parking Relief Program

Purpose:

The Parkland and Parking Relief program allows the municipality to reduce or waive the necessary requirements related to parking or parkland.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).

Financial Incentive:

- An incentive equal of up to 100% of associated costs of parking relief or parkland dedication.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Parking requirement relief.
- Parkland dedication requirement relief.

5.3.2. Building and Property Improvement Incentives

Building and property improvement incentives encourage improvements to existing privately owned buildings and properties within the designated Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs). Program applications, approvals, agreements, and distribution of funding are all administered by the municipality.

5.3.2.1. Façade Improvement Program

Purpose:

The façade improvement program encourages the rehabilitation, repair, and/or exterior improvements to buildings and street-facing facades by offsetting the project costs for existing privately owned buildings.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2 or A-3).

- Property must be privately owned and must have a component of non-residential use.

Financial Incentive:

- Incentives of up to 100% of eligible net costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Restoration or redesign to the any street-facing or visible façades of the commercial building.
- Cleaning, exterior painting, masonry, sandblasting, and/or cladding of buildings.
- Restoration, replacement or installation of architectural details or exterior building accessories (e.g., awnings, shutters, trim, doors, windows, lighting, etc.)
- Installation or painting of murals or similar wall art on visible façade areas.
- Replacement of windows and doors with energy-efficient and/or accessible alternatives.
- Redesign of storefront or entrance modifications, including accessibility improvements.
- Professional services, fees, and related costs.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.2.2. Business Signage Program

Purpose:

This business signage program covers a portion of the project costs for new or existing public facing sign improvements or additions on buildings in the municipality.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- Property must be privately owned and must have a component of non-residential use.
- Back lit illumination signs are not eligible for funding.
- Signs for entities not located at the subject property are not eligible.
- Must comply with requirements set by the municipal or county by-laws.

Financial Incentive:

- Incentives of up to 100% of eligible net costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Restoration or redesign of signage that is visible from the public realm/right-of-way.

- Perpendicular signage installation/upgrades/replacement.
- Façade signage installation/upgrades/replacement.
- Free standing signage installation/upgrades/replacement
- Cleaning, painting, sandblasting and/or refinishing façade signage.
- Facade illumination for signage.
- Brick and masonry repair to accept signage bracket/fastenings.
- Professional services, fees, and related costs.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.2.3. Building Improvement/ Structural Program

Purpose:

The program covers a portion of the costs associated with renovating, restoring, improving, or updating buildings in compliance with the Ontario Building Code standards, Ontario Fire Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certifications.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- Property must be privately owned and must have a component of non-residential use or be part of a larger multi-residential development.
- Any improvements must meet or exceed the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Ontario’s Building Code, and other government regulations where applicable.

Financial Incentive

- Incentives of up to 100% of eligible net costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Upgrade existing buildings with Ontario Building Code standards.
- Address structural and life safety issues to create usable and efficient floor space.
- Improve property standards or preserve architectural significance.
- Rehabilitate existing apartments or build new apartments that enhance housing options.

- Improvements to barrier-free accessibility such as ramps, power-door operators, elevator access, lifts, lever door handles, tactile walking strip indicators, and other related devices.
- Construction of new buildings and/or infrastructure that meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards.
- Retrofit of existing buildings for energy efficiency such as replacement of doors, windows, insulation, appliances, heating, lighting fixtures, etc.
- Install alternative energy generating sources, such as solar or wind devices or install a green roof.
- Preserve or enhance employment opportunities.
- Remediate a brownfield site.
- Professional services, fees, and related costs.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.2.4. Property Transformation Program

Purpose:

The goal of this grant is to encourage upgrades to underutilized and/or vacant buildings or properties by repurposing the space to better suit the needs of the community with new usable residential or commercial activities.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- Property must be privately owned and must have or be in the process of establishing a component of non-residential use.

Financial Incentive:

- Incentives of up to 100% of eligible net costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Conversion of a vacant or unused buildings to provide multiple affordable housing units, or mixed uses such as housing and office or studio space.
- Property zoning conversion to transfer underutilized residential buildings or properties to mixed-use or commercial spaces.
- Remodeling of upper story space in a commercial property to residential units.

- Renovations of rear ground floor space to better suit new commercial and/or residential use.
- Professional services, fees, and related costs to study the feasibility and design.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.2.5. Start-up Business Program

Purpose:

To assist new businesses and companies established in the priority areas by providing funding to property owners and tenants. The financing of non-temporary leasehold or accessibility improvements for commercial spaces or live/workspaces aim to increase the marketability of property and rental units and foster long-term growth and success in the downtowns.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- Property must be privately owned and must have a component of non-residential use.
- A minimum one-year commercial space lease.

Financial Incentive:

- Incentives of up to 100% of eligible net costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Capital storefront and commercial space improvements.
- Change, repair, re-install of flooring, ceiling, walls, lighting, fixed cabinets, and other structurally permanent elements.
- Painting, repainting, or re-facing of interior platforms, walls, and any surfaces.
- Installation, replacement, repair, or restoration of masonry, brickwork or wood, windows, or other architectural features.
- Installation, repair or reinstallation of plumbing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), electrical, fixtures, cable, telephone, fibre, and other service-specific installations.
- Entranceway modifications that improve the appearance and/or access to the commercial unit(s).
- Demolition or removal of fixtures, structural, and non-conforming or hazardous materials.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.2.6. Streetscape Beautification, Signage, and Landscaping Improvements

Purpose:

For improvements related to the streetscape including but not limited to the replacing/adding of light standards, street furniture, sidewalk and lane treatments, parking, and signage.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The project must be located in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- Projects must be in line with streetscape, façade, or other design guidelines set by the municipality.

Financial Incentive:

- Incentives of up to 100% of eligible net costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Replacing/adding light standards.
- Street furniture including but not limited to benches, banners, planters, garbage/recycling receptacles.
- Public Art installations.
- Installation or improvement of sidewalks or walkways, lane, or parking treatments.
- Improved community signage.
- Professional services, fees, and related costs.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.2.7. Agricultural Diversification Program

Purpose:

To encourage on-farm diversified and agriculture-related uses through value-added experiences and exterior improvements on farms by reducing the costs.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1) where agricultural uses are permitted.

Financial Incentive:

- Incentives of up to 100% of eligible net costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Exterior signages, façade, or infrastructure improvements, specific to on-farm diversified uses.
- Sales of produce such as produce stands.
- Agri-tourism experiences or value-added activities such as barn tours, petting zoos, pick-your-own, on-farm dining, workshops, etc.
- Professional services, fees, and related costs.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.2.8. Commercial Accommodation Refurbishment Program

Purpose:

The Commercial Accommodation Refurbishment Program is intended support commercial roofed accommodators across the municipality. Incentives provided will be used to support the renovation or development of commercial properties related to converting existing spaces, adding guest units, enhancing the exterior of guest buildings, or supporting other needed upgrades and retrofits to better the guest experience.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All general eligibility criteria apply.
- The property or building must be within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1) where commercial accommodation uses are permitted.
- Property must be privately owned, zoned commercial and operated as a commercial entity.
- Buildings undergoing renovations must be permanent roofed accommodations such as a motel, hotel, lodge, resort, or tourist cottage rental establishment and will not include changes to trailer units, camping sites, yurts, bed and breakfasts, or short-term accommodation rentals.
- Any improvements must meet or exceed the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Ontario's Building Code and other government regulations where applicable.

Financial Incentive:

- Incentive of up to 100% of eligible costs upon completion of approved project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Conversion or rehabilitate existing or vacant or underutilized buildings to develop additional guest units and increase occupancy.
- Improvements to barrier-free accessibility such as ramps, power-door operators, lifts, lever door handles, and other related devices to public spaces such as main offices, guest rooms, suites, or houses.
- Retrofit of existing buildings for energy efficiency such as replacement of doors, windows, insulation, appliances, heating, lighting fixtures, etc.
- Restoration, redesign, or additions to any visible public spaces such as main offices, guest rooms, suites, or houses (e.g., exterior façade, entrances, lighting, patios, sun shelters, awnings, cabins, playgrounds, etc)
- Signage upgrades or replacement that is visible from the main entrance or roadway.
- Professional services, fees, and related costs to study the feasibility and design.
- Other improvements that meet the goals of the program, as approved by the municipality.

5.3.3. Bruce County-led Incentives

In addition to municipal programs, Bruce County’s Spruce the Bruce (STB) program offers a variety of grants to Saugeen Shore’s eligible property owners and tenants, municipalities, and specific community groups. These grants are administered and funded directly by Bruce County and based on a separate budget set by County Council each year. The general eligibility noted in the above sections does not apply to the STB grants, as each grant has its own eligibility requirements. View [Schedule D](#) for a summary chart of all incentives.

General Eligibility Criteria for Spruce the Bruce Grants:

- a. The applicant must be the tenant or the property owner. A letter of support from the property owner is required if the applicant is the tenant.
- b. The project should attempt to include elements from the applicable community toolkit, façade guidelines, or community brand guidelines, dependent on the grant category.
- c. The project must comply with municipal and county by-laws and have received appropriate permits and permissions.
- d. Project work must not have started (including purchasing any materials) until the application has been approved.
- e. Properties previously awarded grants are not eligible for additional funding under the same grant category unless:
 - The grant was provided more than five years ago; or

- Either the tenant and/or property owner changed since the last grant was provided; or
- The application is clearly for different physical elements of the building/property as determined by county staff.

5.3.3.1. Façade Building Improvement Grant

Purpose:

Updated, aesthetically pleasing, and well-maintained building facades create vibrancy in our downtown cores and encourage the public to stop, shop, and dine.

The Façade Building Improvement Grant provides funding for business and property owners to update and improve the exterior façade of their downtown commercial building.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All Spruce the Bruce specific eligibility criteria in section 5.3.3 apply.
- The building must be commercial or mixed-use (commercial-residential) and be located within the priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- A minimum of three major exterior projects from the eligible project list must occur. These can be a combination of grants funded under this grant category and up to one of the following categories: fascia signage, perpendicular signage, awning, and patio installation.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a façade building improvement project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Architectural feature improvements, or additions (e.g., beams, decorative molding)
- Brick or stone (or other masonry) installation, repointing, or restoration
- Exterior lighting / gooseneck lighting
- Painting storefront
- Permanent outdoor planters (e.g., windowsill)
- Siding installation
- Take-out window installation
- Windows and doors upgrades
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create physical improvements or upgrades to the commercial property's façade

Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- New building construction
- Roof repairs
- Greenery (e.g., plants, flowers, shrubs, etc.)
- Projects done to the rear / backside of building
- General maintenance repairs

5.3.3.2. Fascia Signage Grant

Purpose:

An updated and aesthetically pleasing fascia sign helps to showcase the business' brand and encourages customers to enter the shop.

The Fascia Signage Grant provides funding for business and property owners to install a new and updated façade (flat/fascia sign) on the exterior of the downtown commercial building.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All Spruce the Bruce specific eligibility criteria in section 5.3.3 apply.
- The building must be commercial or mixed-use (commercial-residential) and be located within the priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- Fascia signs must be attached to the front of a commercial building.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a fascia signage project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Fascia / façade / flat storefront sign
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create physical improvements or upgrades to the commercial property's fascia signage

Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- Backlit, neon, coroplast, vinyl banners, or freestanding signage

5.3.3.3. Perpendicular Signage Grant

Purpose:

Perpendicular signs increase awareness and visibility of a business and its offerings. The sign is attached to the front of the building and mounted so the face of the sign is perpendicular to the normal flow of the street and foot traffic, which creates pedestrian-friendly downtowns.

The Perpendicular Signage Grant provides funding for business and property owners to install a new perpendicular (blade / projecting) sign on the exterior of the downtown commercial building.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All Spruce the Bruce specific eligibility criteria in section 5.3.3 apply.
- The building must be commercial or mixed-use (commercial-residential) and be located within the priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- The perpendicular sign must be attached to the front of the building and mounted so the face of the sign is perpendicular to the normal flow of street and foot traffic.

Program Funding:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a perpendicular signage project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Perpendicular / blade / projecting sign
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create physical improvements or upgrades to the commercial property’s perpendicular signage

Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- Backlit, neon, coroplast, vinyl banners, or freestanding signage

5.3.3.4. Awning Grant

Purpose:

Awnings not only provide shelter from environmental elements but can also add an extra visual appeal to the building and improve aesthetics.

The Awning Grant provides funding for business and property owners to install an awning on the exterior of the downtown commercial building.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All Spruce the Bruce specific eligibility criteria in section 5.3.3 apply.
- The building must be commercial or mixed-use (commercial-residential) and be located within

a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of an awning project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Awning above windows, doors, and/or takeout windows
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create physical improvements or upgrades to the commercial property's awning.

5.3.3.5. Patio Installation Grant

Purpose:

An outdoor patio allows restaurants, bars, and cafes the opportunity to increase capacity and sales, but also add to the vibrancy of the downtown, encouraging more visitors and spending.

The Patio Installation Grant provides funding for business and property owners to install or expand an outdoor patio for their guests and visitors to enjoy food and beverage on. The patio may be a sidewalk patio, rooftop patio, or back patio.

Eligibility Criteria:

- All Spruce the Bruce specific eligibility criteria in section 5.3.3 apply.
- The building must be commercial or mixed-use and be located within the priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- If the patio extends onto municipal property, the applicant must submit an application and be approved for a patio permit with the municipality.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a patio installation project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Decking
- Fencing or railings
- Flooring / patio stones / brick
- Pergola for sun shelter
- Permanent planter boxes (e.g., attached to fencing)

- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create physical improvements or upgrades to the commercial property’s patio

Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- Patio furniture (e.g., tables, chairs, benches, etc.)
- Portable accessories (e.g., heaters, fire pits, speakers, etc.)
- Greenery (e.g., plants, flowers, shrubs, etc.)

5.3.3.6. Community Marketing Grant

Purpose:

By collaborating on marketing projects, businesses, municipalities, not-for-profits, and charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors can ensure a cohesive approach and expand their reach to new audiences and visitors. Helping to drive sales to local businesses and encourage involvement and attendance at community events helps to drive a vibrancy in the community.

The Community Marketing Grant provides funding for businesses or municipalities, not-for-profits or charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors to collaboratively develop a package itinerary or marketing campaign that stimulates the local downtown economy.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points b. to e. apply.
- The applicants may be a combination of businesses, or a combination of municipalities, not-for-profits or charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors.
- For businesses: a minimum of three businesses, with at least one being located within the priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3) collaborate and develop a package itinerary or campaign.
- For municipal and community partners: municipalities and community partners (not-for-profits or charities) collaborate and develop a marketing campaign to promote the business community and sectors.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a community marketing project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Completed package itinerary or marketing campaign
- Design and production of marketing collateral
- Paid promotion through marketing channels (e.g., detail, print, radio, etc.)

- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create visitor attraction to the downtown cores of eligible communities

Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- Projects that include collaborative partners located outside of Bruce County
- Projects that duplicate a role already fulfilled within the community or Bruce County
- Projects that generate advertising / promotional revenue for the applicants

5.3.3.7. Agri-Food Innovation Grant

Purpose:

Agriculture is one of Bruce County's key sectors. By supporting the implementation of innovative and value-added processes, agriculture operators can improve efficiencies, expand their markets, and increase profits.

The Agri-Food Innovation Grant provides funding for agricultural operators to improve or implement new value-added and innovative technologies, software, and hardware.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points a. and c. to e. apply.
- The agriculture property must be located within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- The project must comply with all necessary municipal, provincial, federal, and local food, and safety regulations, and have received appropriate permits and permissions.
- This grant cannot be combined with any other Spruce the Bruce grants.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of an agri-food innovation project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Infrastructure related to the following:
- Agri-tourism experiences (e.g., adding a corn maze)
- Bioproduct farming (as defined by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs (OMAFRA))
- Direct consumer sales (e.g., pick-your-own, roadside stands)
- Organic farming (e.g., free-range chickens)

- Small-scale food and beverage processing (e.g., making jam on-site from grown raspberries)
- Specialty crops farming (as defined by OMAFRA)
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that include value-added or innovative purchases or implementation to the agriculture operation

Ineligible Projects:

- Temporary, 'removeable', or consumable project materials or elements
- New building construction
- General maintenance repairs

5.3.3.8. Business Accessibility Adaptability Grant

Purpose:

Communities become more inclusive, safe, and welcoming when the accessibility of commercial buildings is improved, and barriers are removed. The goal is to create inclusive and AODA-friendly environments for all.

The Business Accessibility Adaptability Grant provides funding for business and property owners to upgrade or renovate the exterior or interior of their commercial building to remove or reduce barriers for people with disabilities.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points a. and c. to e. apply.
- The building must be commercial or mixed-use and be located within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- The renovations and upgrades must be compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a business accessibility and adaptability project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Automatic doors (exterior or interior)
- Accessible dressing rooms
- Accessible washrooms
- Wheelchair ramps

- Flat entrance (in place of stairs)
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create permanent renovations or upgrades to improve the accessibility of the exterior or interior of the commercial building

Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- Temporary or 'removeable' project materials or elements

5.3.3.9. Product and Experience Development / Enhancement Grant

Purpose:

Tourism is what drives visitors to explore Bruce County. By upgrading or creating new experiences and products for visitors, their length of stay and monies spent can increase, assisting the overall economy.

The Product and Experience Development / Enhancement Grant provides funding for tourism business and property owners of tourism establishments to improve the visitor experience by making upgrades and enhancements to their products, services, and physical location.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points c. to e. apply.
- The applicant must be the tenant or the property owner of a business whose products or services are demand generators directly related to tourism (accommodations, recreation and entertainment, food and beverage, travel services, and transportation). A letter of support from the property owner is required if the applicant is the tenant.
- The building or property must be located within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).
- This grant cannot be combined with any other Spruce the Bruce grants.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes), to support the completion of a product and experience development / enhancement project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Infrastructure related to physical improvements or additions to a building or structure (e.g., exterior façade, patios, cabins, docks, playgrounds, etc.)
- Infrastructure related to the development of new tourism products or services
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that develop or enhance existing or new products or experiences of the tourism property or business

Ineligible Projects:

- Temporary, 'removeable', or consumable project materials or elements
- New building construction
- General maintenance repairs

5.3.3.10. Residential Improvement Grant

Purpose:

Adding to the number of residential units available for rent will help increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing options for permanent residents. Focusing on downtowns and mixed-use zones will help rental tenants gain access to employment opportunities and using personal and professional services in the downtown without requiring access to a vehicle.

The Residential Improvement Grant provides funding for property owners to upgrade or renovate their mixed-use (commercial-residential) building to add new residential units or increase occupancy in existing units for long-term rental use.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points c. to e. apply.
- The applicant must be the property owner.
- The building must be mixed-use (commercial-residential) and located within a downtown core or mixed-use zone of a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a residential improvement project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Supplies and labour related to the development of a new unit or expansion of existing units
- Supplies and labour related to necessary building code or fire code requirements
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create permanent renovations or upgrades that add a new residential unit or increase the capacity of an existing residential unit of the mixed-use property

Ineligible Projects:

- Removable or temporary items (e.g., furniture, decorative items)
- Projects that do not result in a new residential unit or increase the occupancy of an existing

residential unit

- New building construction

5.3.3.11. Streetscape Beautification Grant

Purpose:

Streetscape Beautification projects help make a community's downtown more attractive, distinctive to their unique brand, and pedestrian-friendly, helping to drive community vibrancy and development. Uniquely branded physical elements help to highlight the character of a downtown.

The Streetscape Beautification Grant provides funding for municipalities or their entities, business improvement areas, or registered chambers of commerce to install or improve streetscape improvements in the downtown core that improve the vibrancy of the downtown.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points b. to e. apply.
- The applicant must be a municipality or their entities, a business improvement area, or a registered chamber of commerce.
- The project elements must be installed in and around the downtown core of a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).
- The applicant must submit a letter of support from the local municipality or local council.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a streetscape beautification project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Banners
- Benches
- Bike racks
- Flower containers
- Garbage and recycling cans
- Green space or public plaza enhancements
- Public art
- Seasonal decorations

- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create upgrades, additions, or improvements, or enhanced experiences to the streetscape within the community's downtown core

5.3.3.12. Community Signage Grant

Purpose:

Community Signage helps to improve visitors' experiences, while showcasing the community's unique brand.

The Community Signage Grant provides funding for municipalities, not-for-profits, or charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors, to install signage that improves the visitor experience.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points b. to e. apply.
- The applicant must be a municipality, not-for-profit, or charity with a focus or mandate to service visitors.
- Signage must be within Bruce County boundaries.
- The applicant must submit a letter of support from the local municipality or local council.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a community signage project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Gateway signs
- Interpretive or historical plaques
- Kiosk signs
- Route / trail markers (e.g., cycling, hiking, paddling areas, marinas)
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create upgrades, additions, or improvements, or enhanced experiences through signage within the community

Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- Signage not specifically benefitting the visitor's experience

5.3.3.13. Destination Infrastructure and Active Transportation Grant

Purpose:

By upgrading and investing in local destination infrastructure around core local attractions, visitor experience is enhanced and increases the likelihood of return trips. Investing in active transportation projects also helps engage residents and visitors and encourages active means of transportation.

The Destination Infrastructure and Active Transportation Grant provides funding for municipalities, not-for-profits, or charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors, to install or enhance infrastructure or make capital improvements that improve the quality of core visitor attractions or active transportation areas.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Specific Spruce the Bruce eligibility criteria from section 5.3.3 points b. to e. apply.
- The applicant must be a municipality, not-for-profit, or charity with a focus or mandate to service visitors.
- The project work must be within Bruce County boundaries, and at a core visitor attraction or an area determined by an active transportation plan.
- The applicant must submit a letter of support from the local municipality or local council.

Financial Incentive:

- A grant payment of up to 50% of eligible project costs (excluding taxes) to support the completion of a destination infrastructure and active transportation project.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Capital improvements such as upgrades and additions to public restrooms, parking areas, and lookouts.
- Other projects approved by Bruce County that create upgrades, additions, or improvements, or enhanced experiences through Destination Infrastructure and Active Transportation within the community

6. Program Implementation

6.1. Administration

The Community Improvement Plan policy is administered by the Town of Saugeen Shores, with exception to the Spruce the Bruce program which are administered by Bruce County. These programs are led by the municipality’s CAO and economic development staff with support from other departments for administration, review of applications, and funding disbursements.

6.2. General Budget

Council determines the amount of available municipal funding to be made for these financial incentives under this Community Improvement Plan (CIP) on an annual basis. The total of all grants and loans provided in this CIP shall not exceed the eligible costs to remediate, rehabilitate, revitalize, and redevelop the lands and/or buildings. Any improvements made prior to the adoption of the CIP are not eligible for financial incentives under the CIP.

Based on any number of factors, council or its designated authority may choose to operationalize the following if it still fit within the criteria of the program:

- Cease, reduce, or increase funding to one or more of the financial incentive programs.
- Create a maximum/cap of the percentage allocated for an individual incentive.
- Designate a maximum dollar amount allocated to a specific incentive.
- Assign a maximum amount to be used as a pool.
- Limit funds to specific incentive programs to support municipal goals.

Any adjustments to program funding or the amount of the annual budget will not require an amendment to this Plan.

6.3. Application Review and Approvals

Prior to application of the municipal-led incentive programs, potential applicants are encouraged to pre-consult with municipal staff to determine if their property and projects are eligible, discuss the application requirements, and to determine if other financial incentives are available.

Applications will be available to building and property owners or their tenants and will request elements such as project details, quotes, and designs of the of the proposed finished products.

Review and approval of applications is delegated to the CAO, economic development staff, or designate committee. The CAO, economic development staff, or designate committee are required to bring a recommendation to council for approval in the following situations:

- A Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is requested.
- A loan is requested.

Applications will be reviewed using an evaluation guide that sets out procedures on how applications are approved. Upon approval of a grant or loan, and prior to beginning the project, the applicant will be required to enter into an agreement with the municipality. A final report with copies of paid invoices and photos of the completed project will need to be returned before funds are released.

A summary of approved financial incentives will be provided to council based on the approved budget

for that year.

6.4. Phasing

Based on the municipal goals, planned projects, or other recently completed work for the community the municipality may choose to phase areas of the Community Improvement Plan as in Section 5.7.6 of the official plan. If there are planned studies or projects upcoming based on public infrastructure, that may impact the result of a proposed eligible project that the application may choose to defer their incentive to omit duplication of work.

7. Amending Policies

7.1. Timeframe

The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) shall remain in effect until council amends or repeals the by-law.

7.2. Amendments

Amendments to the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) would not normally be required if a municipality is discontinuing or cancelling a program; or if funding to a program is decreased. Decisions respecting funding allocations to CIP programs are typically part of the annual council budget process. However, amendments to the CIP may be required for a change or expansion in the geographic area to which financial or land programs outlined in a CIP apply; or a change in the eligibility criteria (i.e. the addition of new municipal assistance programs involving grants, loans, tax assistance or land; or, an increase to a financial incentive to be offered within a municipal CIP program).

7.3. Participation

To carry out the community improvement goals and actions of this plan, the municipality may participate and coordinate in grants or loans with other levels of government pursuant to Section 28(7.2) of the Planning Act (1990) for the purpose of carrying out a Community Improvement Plan.

8. Monitoring

Program monitoring shall occur on an annual basis to determine the following:

- a. Established targets from program uptake are being met.
- b. Desired outcomes for the downtown are being achieved.
- c. Program participants are completing their commitments.

d. Overall benefits of the program.

Schedule A: Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) Maps

Schedule A-1: Saugeen Shores Municipal-wide CIPA

Schedule A-2: Downtown Port Elgin CIPA

Schedule A-3: Downtown Southampton CIPA

Schedule B: Summary of the Development and Predevelopment Incentives

Incentive Program	Purpose	Additional Eligibility	Incentives
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Program	Encourage the development and redevelopment of eligible properties by providing tax assistance for the property tax increase resulting from new property improvements.	Privately owned properties in the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A1).	Up to 100% of the Municipal and/or County tax portion for up to ten years provided on a declining basis. County of Bruce may participate.
Municipal Fee Incentive Program	Reduction of municipal fees associated with redevelopment, infill, and new commercial development.	Privately owned properties or buildings in the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).	One-time Municipal fee reductions up to 50%. County of Bruce may participate.
Predevelopment Study and Design Program	Offset the costs associated with preparing plans and drawings that outline the extent of the improvements being applied for.	Privately owned properties or buildings in the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).	Municipality matches up to 50% of eligible project net costs. County of Bruce may participate.
Municipal Property Acquisition and Disposition Program	Redevelop lands or buildings that are determined desirable or surplus to the needs of the local municipality or the county.	Only applies to municipal owned lands or lands acquired by the municipality.	Land to be awarded at a reduced cost or at no cost or acquired for implementation of this plan. County of Bruce may participate.
Development Charges Program	Incentives equal to development charges payable on a new or	Project must be charged development charges	An incentive equal to 100% of development charges paid

	redeveloped project		
Local Improvement Charges Program	Offset costs of development or redevelopment of land.	Must enter into an agreement with the Town	Equal to costs of up to 100%, may include work completed by the Town with no chargeback.
Parkland and Parking Relief Program	Offset or waive fees related to parking relief or parkland dedication fees during development.	Must enter into an agreement with the Town	Incentive equal to 100% or waiving of costs related to parking relief or parkland dedication.

Schedule C: Summary of the Building and Property Improvement Incentives

Incentive Program	Purpose	Additional Eligibility	Incentives
Façade Improvement Program	Offset costs of rehabilitation, repair, and/ or exterior improvements to buildings and street-facing facades.	Buildings that are privately owned with component of non-residential use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.
Business Signage Program	Covers costs for new or existing public facing sign improvements or additions on buildings in the municipality.	Buildings or properties that are privately owned with a component of non-residential use within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.
Building Improvement/ Structural Program	Supports the improvements needed to renovate, restore, or update buildings and bring them into compliance with AODA, Ontario’s Building Code, or LEED certification standards.	Buildings that are privately owned with component of non-residential use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.
Property Transformation Program	Encourage upgrades to underutilized buildings or properties by repurposing the space to better suit the needs of the community with new usable residential or commercial activities.	Buildings that are privately owned with component of non-residential use or in the process of rezoning within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.

Start-up Business Program	Funding for non-temporary interior leasehold, accessibility, or other capital storefront improvements for commercial spaces.	Buildings that are privately owned with component of non-residential use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.
Streetscape Beautification, Signage, and Landscaping Improvements	For improvements that boost the visual streetscape and landscaping improvements in the core downtown areas.	The project must be located in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.
Agricultural Diversification Program	Encourage on-farm diversified and agriculture-related uses through value-added experiences and exterior improvements on farms.	Property with where agricultural use is permitted within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.
Commercial Accommodation Refurbishment Program	Supports commercial roofed accommodators across the municipality with incentives to be used for the renovation or development of commercial properties related to converting existing spaces, adding guest units, enhancing the exterior of guest buildings, or supporting other needed upgrades and retrofits to better the guest experience.	Permanent roofed commercial accommodations such as a motel, hotel, lodge, resort, or tourist cottage rental establishment within the municipal wide CIPA (Schedules A-1).	Municipality provides up to 100% of eligible project net costs.

Schedule D: Summary of Bruce County's Spruce the Bruce Incentives

Incentive Program	Purpose	Additional Eligibility	Incentives
Façade Building Improvement Grant	Funding for business and property owners to update and improve the exterior façade of their downtown commercial building.	Zoned commercial or mixed-use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Fascia Signage Grant	Funding for business and property owners to install a new and updated façade (flat/fascia sign) on the exterior of the downtown commercial building.	Zoned commercial or mixed-use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Perpendicular Signage Grant	Funding for business and property owners to install a new perpendicular (blade / projecting) sign on the exterior of the downtown commercial building.	Zoned commercial or mixed-use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Awning Grant	Funding for business and property owners to install an awning on the exterior of the downtown commercial building.	Zoned commercial or mixed-use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Patio Installation Grant	Funding for business and property owners to install or expand an outdoor patio for their guests and visitors to enjoy food and beverage on.	Zoned commercial or mixed-use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).

Community Marketing Grant	Funding for businesses or municipalities, not-for-profits or charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors to collaboratively develop a package itinerary or marketing campaign that stimulates the local downtown economy.	If businesses apply: a minimum of three businesses must collaborate, with at least one located in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Agri-Food Innovation Grant	Funding for agricultural operators to improve or implement new value-added and innovative technologies, software, and hardware.	Zoned agriculture within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Business Accessibility Adaptability Grant	Funding for business and property owners to upgrade or renovate the exterior or interior of their commercial building to remove or reduce barriers for people with disabilities.	Zoned commercial or mixed-use within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Product and Experience Development Grant	Funding for tourism business and property owners of tourism establishments to improve the visitor experience by making upgrades and enhancements to their products, services, and physical location.	For properties located within the municipal-wide CIPA (Schedule A-1) that are operating a business directly related to tourism.	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Residential Improvement Grant	Funding for property owners to upgrade or renovate their mixed-use (commercial-residential) building to add new residential units or increase occupancy in existing units for long-term rental use.	Zoned mixed-use within a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3).	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).

Streetscape Beautification Grant	Funding for municipalities or their entities, business improvement areas, or registered chambers of commerce to install or improve streetscape improvements in the downtown core that improve the vibrancy of the downtown.	Applicant must be a municipality or their entities with a letter of support from the municipality. Project installed in a priority CIPA (Schedules A-2, A-3)	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Community Signage Grant	Funding for municipalities, not-for-profits, or charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors, to install signage that improves the visitor experience.	Applicant must be a municipality or not-for-profit, or charity with a letter of support from the municipality who a focus or mandate to service visitors. Signage must be within Bruce County boundaries.	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).
Destination Infrastructure and Active Transportation Grant	Funding for municipalities, not-for-profits, or charities with a focus or mandate to service visitors, to install or enhance infrastructure or make capital improvements that improve the quality of core visitor attractions or active transportation areas.	Applicant must be a municipality or not-for-profit, or charity with a letter of support from the municipality who a focus or mandate to service visitors. Project must be within Bruce County boundaries.	County matches up to 50% eligible project costs (excluding taxes).