

TOWNSHIP  
OF CENTRE  
WELLINGTON

# COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRAM GUIDELINES



JANUARY 2024



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## GOALS & CIP AREA

The Township of Centre Wellington is taking innovative steps to encourage growth in the Township, through the development of incentives aimed at local and out of town investors. The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) will put Centre Wellington at the leading edge of providing incentives to developers to stimulate development in the community.

Over time, the CIP programs are expected to increase tax assessment, employment opportunities, and housing options in the Township's core as part of a longer-term plan to revitalize the downtowns.

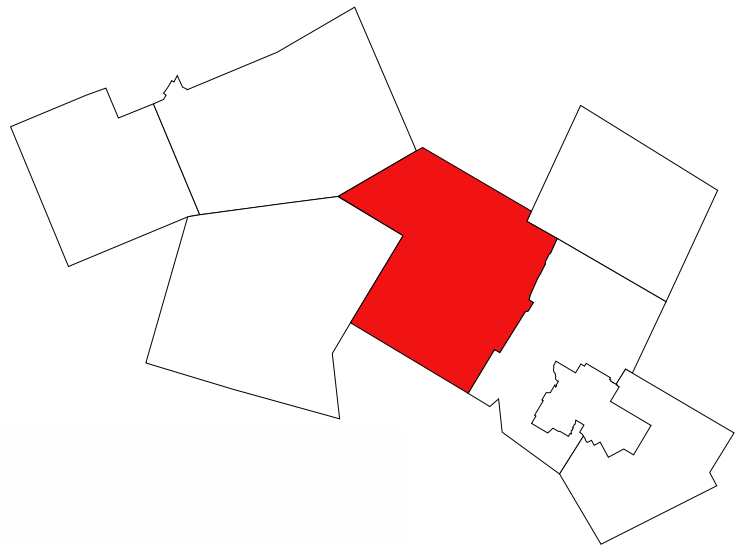
Put simply, the CIP programs are financial incentives offered by the Township to stimulate and support private sector investments in community development. Financial benefits such as tax breaks and grants are available to businesses engaging in projects that enhance the overall quality and functionality of a particular area.

All grants are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis and applications are typically reviewed monthly.

Please review the guidelines in their entirety prior to booking your mandatory pre-consultation meeting.

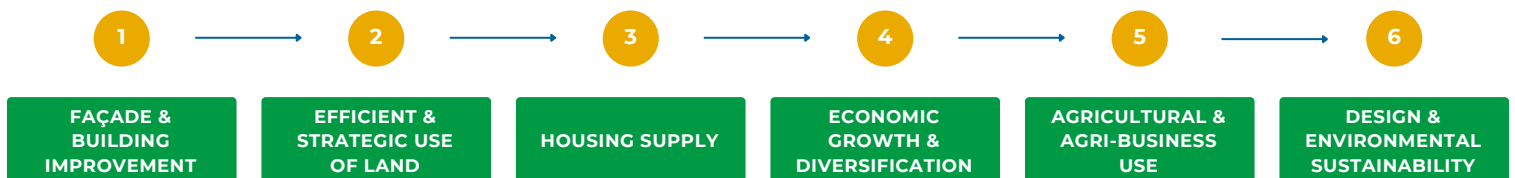
The Economic Development Coordinator is the main point of contact for the CIP program and can be reached at:

**(519) 846-9691 x304** or [economicdevelopment@centrewellington.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@centrewellington.ca).



*The Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) for this CIP will be the entire geographic area of the Township of Centre Wellington.*

## SIX GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### Where Can I Learn About the CIP Program Details?

General Program Requirements for the CIP Program, including eligibility, can be found in Section 6 of the Township of Centre Wellington CIP. All applicants are required to read this document in full and acknowledge understanding of this document within the application form. This document can be found on the project webpage at [www.centrewellington.ca/financial-incentives](http://www.centrewellington.ca/financial-incentives)

### Who Can Apply to the CIP Program?

Any eligible property owner or tenant within the CIPA may apply for the CIP Programs, except the Study Grant Program, which is eligible only to property owners. If the applicant is not the owner of the property, specifically for the Façade and Property Improvement Grant Program and Building Improvement Grant Program, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application. There is no fee to apply to the CIP Program.

### CIP Project Area

The Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) for this CIP will be the entire geographic area of the Township of Centre Wellington. Within this designated CIPA, there are nine “sub areas” where incentive programs may be offered. These sub-areas include:

1. Central Business Districts (CBDs) of Elora-Salem and Fergus;
2. Highway Commercial;
3. Industrial;
4. Mixed Use;
5. Residential;
6. Residential Transition;
7. Prime Agriculture;
8. Rural Employment Area; and,
9. Hamlet Area.

Sub Areas 1 to 6 are within the Township’s Urban Boundary. Sub Areas 7 to 9 are outside the Township’s Urban Boundary. To strategically target the achievement of the Community Improvement Goals of this CIP, not all incentive programs will be offered in all of these sub-areas. Furthermore, this CIP is not intended to incentivize development on greenfields. With the exception of the incentive programs that may be made available in Sub-Areas 7 to 9 as noted in Section 6.0, lands outside the Township’s Urban Boundary are not eligible for the incentive programs contained within this Plan.



## When Should I Apply?

All applications must be submitted to the Township prior to the commencement of any works or studies to which the financial incentive program will apply and prior to application for building permit.

Applications for all programs are evaluated and awarded on a first-come-first-served basis and are not subject to intake deadlines.

## How Do I Apply For a Grant?

Applicants will be required to attend a pre-application consultation with Township staff in order to determine program eligibility and understand the proposed scope of work and project timing, among other details. Staff may perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the building/property (as necessary). Before accepting an application, Township staff will screen the proposal and application. If the application is not within the Community Improvement Project Area, or if it is clear that the application does not meet the program eligibility criteria, the application will not be accepted. If Township staff determines that the application is not acceptable the application will be returned to the applicant with a letter explaining the reason for not accepting the application. Acceptance of the application by the Township in no way implies program approval.

Book a pre-application consultation by emailing [economicdevelopment@centrewellington.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@centrewellington.ca).

## What Else Will I be Required to Submit With My Application?

Staff have the discretion to request a range of background materials and/or studies based on the proposed scope of work, and/or funding program. This may include;

- a work plan and cost estimate for the feasibility study, design study and/or architectural/design drawings, prepared by a qualified professional as determined by the Township;
- a description of the planned project, including reference to any planning applications that have been submitted/approved;
- other documents as outlined for particular programs.

## How Will I Know if I'm Approved?

If your application is approved you will receive written notice and a grant agreement will be executed (signed and dated) by Township staff. A copy will be provided to the applicant with a letter which outlines the terms and conditions and the amount of the grant. If the application is not approved, you will also be advised by letter.

## Am I Eligible for Funding From More Than One CIP Incentive Program?

CIP Programs are stackable, and therefore applicants can apply to one or more programs. Please note that each grant has a maximum grant allocation.



## **Will I Need to Enter Into a Grant Agreement?**

All applicants will need to review the standard grant agreement and agree to all terms and conditions prior to submitting an application. This agreement will contain conditions to ensure that the project is initiated and completed in a timely fashion, and will protect the Township in the event that the project is not completed, and/or in the event that the terms of the agreement are not satisfied.

## **When Will I Receive the Grant Funds?**

Payment of the grant shall not take place until:

- The grant agreement has been executed by the applicant and the Township;
- Construction of the eligible works is complete;
- Township staff have inspected the completed works (as necessary) to ensure that the project has been completed in Accordance with the Program Application and Grant Agreement;
- Invoices clearly showing the amount paid for all eligible works and project completion survey has been submitted;
- Written verification that all contractors have been paid in full has been provided; and,
- Township staff are satisfied with all reports and documentation submitted.

Prior to issuance of the grant payment, Township staff will check to ensure that all program and grant agreement requirements (general and program specific) have been met. The actual amount of the grant will be calculated to reflect the actual costs of the improvement (as demonstrated through proof of payment).

If all program and grant agreement requirements have been met to the Township's satisfaction, then the Township will issue payment of the approved grant in conformity with the grant agreement.

Staff will monitor the project to ensure compliance with the grant agreement. Staff will take appropriate remedies as specified in the grant agreement if the applicant defaults on the agreement.

## **If I Meet the Eligibility Criteria, Will I Automatically Receive a Grant?**

All grant applications will be reviewed through a competitive/evaluative process, and eligible projects are not guaranteed to receive a grant. Projects will be evaluated on their ability to meet the intent of the Community Improvement Program, and may receive additional evaluation points if the project has the potential to stimulate spin-off economic activity, enhance the visitor experience, and/or increase the capacity for people to live and work downtown.

Applicants are also required to review the Urban Design Guidelines, which outlines Design Principles that should be incorporated where possible. Evaluation Criteria can be found on the CIP Project webpage at [www.centrewellington.ca/financial-incentives](http://www.centrewellington.ca/financial-incentives)



## **What is the Difference Between Repair and Improvement?**

The CIP Grant Program favours improvement projects that go above and beyond regular maintenance and repair to a property.

Repairs and maintenance relate directly to wear and tear or damage or maintenance of property. Example: Replacement of a part of a fence due to a fallen tree.

An improvement makes something better than it was originally or provides something in a new and more valuable form. Example: Replacing a worn chain-link fence with a high-quality wooden fence goes beyond simply repairing a portion of the damaged fence.





## APPLICATION PROCESS

### STEP 1: Mandatory Pre-consultation

Pre-consultation meeting between TCW's Economic Development staff and applicant. Applicant is provided with CIP program materials, guides, and resources.

### STEP 2: Application Submission

Applicant submits CIP application including required supporting documentation. Visit this [link](#) to access the online submission form, ensuring you have all required documentation ready before you start completing the form.

### STEP 3: Application Review & Evaluation

Applicant submits CIP application and all required supporting documentation. Staff screen the application to ensure conformity to program requirements. If deemed a complete application, staff will coordinate a review by the CIP Committee and a decision will be made. The committee typically meets monthly.

### STEP 4: Agreement

If approved, a pre-project site inspection may be conducted and before photos are taken (as needed), and CIP recipient is provided with the required window sign. Staff complete compliance checks and a legal agreement is executed. Applicants obtain any required permits/approvals necessary to complete the project. Project begins.

### STEP 5: Project Completion

Applicant notifies staff when the project is complete and submits invoices from contractors/consultants as well as proof of payment. A final project inspection is conducted if needed to ensure program and grant requirements have been met and after photos are taken. Staff complete final internal compliance checks and payment of approved grant amount is made to the applicant.

THINKING ABOUT...	then you may be eligible for...
A large project?	Any of the active programs
A small project?	Any of the programs, with the exception of the TIEG and Brownfields TAP
The viability of a project?	The Study Grant program
Improving your facade, property, or building?	The Facade & Property Improvements program and/or the Building Improvements program
Building rental housing?	The Rental Housing and/or the Rental Housing DC Deferral programs
A project on a Brownfield site?	The TIEG and the Brownfields TAP programs

## DON'T FORGET

**that programs are stackable, meaning you can apply for any of the active CIP programs that your project is eligible for**





## SEVEN INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

### Available in 9 Sub Areas

**Central Business District**

**Mixed Use**

**Prime Agriculture**

**Highway Commercial**

**Residential**

**Rural Employment Areas**

**Industrial**

**Residential Transition**

**Hamlet Areas**

### 1 Study Grant Program (Locations in all Sub Areas are eligible)

- A grant equal to 50% of cost of eligible studies (to a maximum of \$7,500 per study, two studies per project, and \$12,500 per project).
- Applicants must demonstrate a legitimate intention to undertake eligible community improvement of the property.
- Eligible studies include: professional urban design studies, heritage impact assessments, concept plans, structural analyses, site plan drawings, market analyses, evaluation of existing and proposed building systems, traffic impact assessments, and environmental site assessments.

### not active in 2024 Façade and Property Improvement Grant Program (Locations in all Sub Areas are eligible)

- A grant equal to 50% of cost of eligible front façade and property improvement works to a maximum grant per project of \$10,000.
- Maximum grant can be increased up to \$12,500 on a matching 50/50 basis for certain project types, including if the building is wider than 25 feet and/or has more than one storefront; if the project includes eligible side and/or rear façade improvement and restoration works that are visible from a public street or space, a laneway, parking lot, or the Grand River; if the building exterior and/or property has heritage features that are being restored.
- Eligible improvements include: repair/replacement of windows, doors, awnings; exterior and entrance modifications to provide barrier-free accessibility; repair, repointing, or installation of new masonry and brickwork; repair or replacement of cornices, parapets, eaves, etc; façade painting, cleaning, refinishing as acceptable to the Township; addition of new or upgrading of existing lighting fixtures; installation/improvement of exterior signage; landscaping features; permanent landscaping elements; addition of new lighting and/or upgrading of existing lighting not attached to the building; construction, expansion or upgrading of an outdoor commercial patio/café area; construction, consolidation, or improvement of parking areas and driveway access/egress.



### **3 Building Improvement Grant Program (Locations in all Sub Areas are eligible)**

- A grant equal to 50% of cost of eligible interior and exterior building improvement works to a maximum grant per project of \$10,000.
- Maximum grant can be increased up to \$12,500 on a matching 50/50 basis if the building interior has heritage features that are being restored.
- Eligible improvements include: exterior modifications to provide barrier-free accessibility; structural repairs to walls, ceilings, floors and foundations; repair/replacement of roofing, windows and doors; water/flood/weatherproofing; extension/upgrading of plumbing, electrical, HVAC services for the creation of retail, office or residential space; installation/alteration of required window openings to residential spaces; installation/upgrading of fire protection systems; energy efficiency retrofits and improvements; and, other similar repairs/improvements related to health, safety and risk management issues, as may be approved by the Township.

### **4 Rental Housing Grant Program (Locations in Central Business Districts, Highway Commercial, Mixed Use, Residential, & Residential Transit are eligible )**

- A grant equal to 50% of cost of renovating existing rental residential units to Code and/or constructing new rental residential units to a maximum of \$15,000 per unit, and a maximum of 4 units per property/project.
- Rental residential units created under this program must remain as rental residential units for a minimum of 20 years.
- Eligible projects include: renovations to existing rental residential units in a mixed use building to bring these units into compliance with the Building Code, Property Standards By-law and the Fire Code; conversion of excess commercial and/or vacant space in existing commercial, institutional, mixed use and residential buildings into one or more net rental residential units; intensification or redevelopment of an existing commercial, mixed use or residential apartment/multi-unit building that adds one or more net rental residential units; and, infilling of vacant lots (including parking lots) with two or more net rental residential units.

### **5 Rental Housing Development Charge (DC) (Locations in Central Business Districts, Highway Commercial, Mixed Use, Residential, & Residential Transit are eligible)**

- Under this program, the Township Development Charge (DC) for construction of new rental residential units is payable in 21 equal annual installments.
- Rental residential units created under this program must remain as rental residential units for a minimum of 20 years.
- Same eligible projects as the Rental Housing Grant Program.



## **6 Tax Increment Equivalent (TIEG) Program (Locations in all Sub Areas are eligible)**

- An annual grant for 5 years, equal to a percentage of the increase in the Township portion of property taxes that is generated by a "substantial project" (Year 1, 100%; Year 2, 80%; Year 3, 60%; Year 4, 40%; Year 5, 20%).
- The proposed and "as built" project must achieve the minimum evaluation score specified in the TIEG Program Evaluation Framework.
- Whether or not a project is considered a "substantial project" is at the sole discretion of the Township, but typically only includes projects that result in: Achievement of a minimum threshold increase in assessment value and property taxes as determined by the Township; Construction of multiple rental residential units and/or multiple affordable rental residential units; Construction of a significant amount of new commercial, industrial, or value added agricultural/ agribusiness space; Major rehabilitation/upgrading and/or expansion of an existing building; Creation of a significant number of jobs; Achievement of multiple goals of this CIP.

## **7 Brownfields Tax Assistance Program (TAP) (Locations in all Sub Areas are eligible)**

- Eligible properties must have applied for and be approved for a corresponding TIEG Program grant.
- Cancellation of part or all of Township property taxes for up to 3 years during the tax assistance period.
- Note - cancellation of part or all of the education property taxes is subject to approval by the Minister of Finance and cancellation of part or all of the County property taxes is subject to approval by the County of Wellington.

