

**STAFF REPORT:**                    **Planning**



**REPORT TO:**                    **Mayor & Members of Council**  
**MEETING DATE:**            **May 07, 2007**  
**REPORT NO.:**                **PL.07.60**  
**SUBJECT:**                    **Downtown Revitalization**  
**PREPARED BY:**            **Peter Tollefsen**  
   **Director of Planning**

#### **A. Recommendations**

**THAT Council does receive Planning Staff Report #PL.07.60, “Downtown Revitalization” for information purposes.**

#### **B. Background**

The Town of The Blue Mountains is experiencing rapid growth and therefore facing challenges of redevelopment of existing buildings, in brownfield locations and new development in greenfield locations. Hwy 26 is the main transportation route through the Town servicing the downtown areas of Craigleith , Thornbury and Clarksburg. Historically these are older areas of the Town containing uses and structures that, in some cases, may require revitalization.

A C.A.U.S.E report was prepared by a team of architects and landscape architects in 1999. Planning of the core areas was one of the major topics dealt with and the report outlined several goals for Thornbury and Clarksburg. The Town completed a Core Area Design Plan in 2001. The Study Area for Thornbury contained a portion of the Hwy.26 corridor area, however, it should be expanded as the Town has grown eastward and westward along King and Arthur Streets.

In 2002, the Municipality adopted a new Official Plan for the Town. One of the goals is to expand employment opportunities and the assessment base of the Municipality through the encouragement of economic development in all sectors of the local economy. Section 10 of the Plan is Community Improvement which states that: *“Community Improvement within the Town is intended to provide for the maintenance, rehabilitation and revitalization of residential and commercial areas to ensure suitable amenity, safety, environmental quality and service provision”*.

Through the Town's 2007 budget process, Capital funding was recommended for a "Planning and Urban Design Study" to examine the Hwy.26 corridor, to investigate the planning issues for future land use, with recommendations of urban design guidelines.

Prior to doing this work, a "Community Improvement Plan" (CIP) should be done. A CIP is a downtown revitalization process that helps organize key stakeholders, assess critical community needs, develop revitalization goals and prepare to implement a plan of action to achieve the Town's goals for community improvement.

Attached is information from a presentation made to Town staff on March 27, 2007 from representatives of Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and a Consultant on community improvement planning and revitalization.

The Community Improvement Plan area should include the downtown areas of Thornbury and Clarksburg as well as the Hwy.26 corridor through Thornbury and Craigeleith. The Community Improvement Plan should proceed by the following Guiding Principals:

1. Involve all stakeholders from the ground up, through community based planning;
2. Create a vision to showcase the area as a premier destination;
3. Encourage high performance buildings in compact mixed use neighbourhoods that reduce driving by making walking attractive options for traveling;
4. Take sustainable steps for this community through energy conservation to remain healthy over the long term;
5. Define an economic role for the downtown areas, by addressing planning goals of the Official Plan and Strategic Plan;
6. Protect and enhance the existing architectural, cultural and natural heritage of the area;
7. Facilitate creative urban design and streetscape improvements; and
8. Encourage downtown revitalization.

A Downtown Revitalization Workshop was held on April 26, 2007 in Collingwood, sponsored by OMAFRA and Community Futures Development Corporation.

There are two sources of grant funding for Municipalities to do a Community Improvement Plan. One is through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) / the Green Municipal Fund (GMF) and OMAFRA's Rural Economic Development (RED) program.

The purpose of this report is to request Council to authorize staff to retain a consultant to assist the Municipality in applying for grants from the above noted programs and retain a consultant to prepare a Community Improvement Plan.

Based on the minimum municipal funding requirements of these programs, if the Town applies to these programs and is successful, the costs to prepare a CIP would be split:

- 10% the Town
- 40% OMAFRA (RED program)
- 50% FCM.

The approximate cost to do a CIP would be \$165,000.

In accordance with the Town's Purchasing By-law, a Request for Proposal (RFP) has been posted, a copy of which is attached, with the deadline for submissions of May 03, 2007. The process of reviewing the submissions with a recommendation is not complete as of the writing of this report and a separate supplemental report with a resolution for Council will be presented Monday night.

### **C. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan**

By doing a Community Improvement Plan the town will encourage downtown revitalization that will help with Goal 5 – *“Ensuring long-term financial sustainability”*.

### **D. Budget Impact**

Funds were approved in the 2007 Capital Budget to do this work. The approximate cost for a consultant to prepare and submit both grant applications is \$15,000. Approximately \$6,000 of this amount will be paid by the FCM grant if the Town's GMF grant application is successful. In addition, there would be the Town's share of the work to do a Community Improvement Plan (approximately \$16,500) should we be successful in the grant applications. The total costs would be approximately \$31,500.

There will be future budget impacts with regard to municipal incentives programs contained in the Community Improvement Plan.

### **E. Attachments**

1. Downtown Revitalization – Action Planning to Mobilize Your Community – March 27, 2007 – OMAFRA

2. Tools to Promote Community Improvement and Smart Growth – RCI Consulting
3. Request for Proposal (RFP)

Respectfully submitted,

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Peter Tollefsen, Director of Planning