



## REPORT

**REPORT TO:** Mayor R. Bonnette & Members of Council

**REPORT FROM:** John Linhardt, Manager of Planning Policy

**DATE:** May 14, 2008

**REPORT NO.:** PD-2008-0031

**RE:** Community Improvement Plan: Status Update

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Report No. PD-2008-0031 dated May 14, 2008 regarding the status update on the Town's Community Improvement Plan be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the Halton Hills Community Improvement Strategy Discussion Paper (copy provided under separate cover) prepared by the MMM Group dated May 2008 be received and form the basis for discussions with a Stakeholders Advisory Committee and the public;

AND FURTHER THAT the Town proceed with Phase 2 of the Community Improvement Plan Program as set out in this report and in accordance with the Work Plan attached as Schedule One;

AND FURTHER THAT in response to the \$68,000.00 Green Municipal Fund (GMF) grant to undertake and complete a Community Improvement Plan Program and to meet FCM grant requirements, Council approve additional funding in the amount of \$20,900.00 with the necessary funding being derived from the Capital Financing Reserve;

AND FURTHER THAT the MMM Group and RCI Consulting (RCI) be retained to complete Phase 2 of the Community Improvement Plan as a sole source to an upset limit of \$91,000.00 under Section 8 a) of the Purchasing By-law.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Council approved Report No. PD-2007-0004 to retain the MMM Group and RCI Consulting to develop a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Strategy. The Strategy is

the first phase of this project and is intended to provide an overall context for a CIP. Tasks to be completed as part of Phase 1 include:

- Project initiation;
- Legislation and Background Policy review;
- Conducting a SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis;
- Preparation of a Discussion Paper
- Public Consultation
- Preparation of an overall CIP Strategy.

In addition to the foregoing, in August-September 2007, on the Town's behalf the consulting team submitted an application for funding assistance with the Green Municipal Fund (GMF) through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). This application, which set out a fully documented CIP Program that included both Phase 1 (CIP Strategy) and Phase 2 (Prepare Area Specific CIP/Comprehensive CIP), requested a GMF grant in the amount of \$68,000.00 constituting 50 % of the total eligible costs of \$136,000. It should be noted that the requested grant cannot exceed 50 % of the total eligible cost of the project.

In a letter dated March 25, 2008, FCM advised that the Town's application for a grant had been approved in an amount of up to \$68,000.00. This approval is subject to the execution of a performance based agreement, a copy of which has since been forwarded to the Town. Monies are to be provided in two installments based on the submission of appropriate supporting information as set out in the draft agreement.

The total cost of the Town's CIP Program is \$136,000.00. To date, the Town has provided \$47,100.00 in funding. When combined with the \$68,000.00 GMF grant, an additional \$20,900.00 in funding is required. FCM has also advised that they require assurances that the balance of the necessary funding has been secured.

The purpose of this report is to:

- briefly summarize the Discussion Paper prepared by the MMM Group dated May 2008;
- highlight the next steps in the process including Phase 2 of the Community Improvement Plan;
- update Council on the funding needed to complete the CIP Program as well as our intent to partner with the Region of Halton to submit an application for a Rural Economic Development (RED) grant from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in the amount of approximately \$50,000 to help defray the CIP study costs; and,
- set out recommendations regarding the retention of consulting expertise for Phase 2 of the CIP Program.

## **COMMENTS:**

### **Community Improvement Plan Discussion Paper**

The Discussion Paper is divided into five sections. The first section is of an introductory nature and outlines the overall purpose of the Town's Community Improvement Plan strategy, which may be summarized as follows:

- to identify how the Community Improvement Plan powers contained in the *Planning Act* could be used to support the Town's planning and economic development strategies;
- to identify targeted areas of the municipality where a CIP should be used;
- to discuss the types of municipal actions or financial incentive programs that could be implemented in specific geographic areas;
- to suggest priorities for implementation of the Strategy;
- to identify any areas where the Town needs to seek additional powers from the Province to achieve its community improvement objectives.

Section Two summarizes the legislative basis for the development of Community Improvement Plans, with a particular focus on the pertinent sections of the *Planning Act*. Other applicable legislation referenced in this section includes the *Municipal Act*, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the *Development Charges Act* and the *Brownfield's Statute Law Amendment Act*.

Section Three provides an overview of the provincial, regional and local policy context that has to be considered and could be supported by the preparation of a CIP Strategy for the Town. These include the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan and the Regional and Halton Hills Official Plans.

Section Four provides an overview of some of the recent community improvement plan initiatives undertaken by Ontario municipalities. These include municipal partnership, investment and incentive programs offered by St. Catharines, Chatham-Kent, Welland, Oshawa and Niagara Falls. Through a CIP, these municipalities offer a variety of strategies to stimulate private sector investment within defined areas including, but not limited to, Downtown Areas. Examples include: residential conversion and intensification grant programs (St. Catharines), residential grant or loan programs (St. Catharines, Niagara Falls) façade improvement programs (St. Catharines, Chatham-Kent, Niagara Falls) , tax increment programs (St. Catharines), planning and building fee rebates (St. Catharines, Chatham-Kent), development charge rebate/grants (Chatham-Kent, Oshawa) parkland dedication exemptions (Chatham-Kent), parking standards exemptions (Chatham-Kent), heritage tax relief (Chatham-Kent), heritage design studies (Chatham-Kent), and various brownfield incentive programs (Welland).

Section Five of the Discussion Paper deals specifically with Halton Hills with a particular focus on the following study areas:

- Guelph Street Retail Area
- Downtown Georgetown;
- Georgetown GO Station Lands;
- Downtown Acton;
- Agricultural lands; and
- Brownfield Sites

The aforementioned areas are examined through a community improvement criteria analysis which considers such matters as the: presence of vacant and underutilized lands or buildings; signs of disinvestment or underinvestment; municipal and community infrastructure; parking and traffic circulation; and the streetscape.

Representatives from the Town's consulting team will be present at the May 26, 2008 Council meeting to provide an overview of the Discussion Paper.

### **Next Steps – Phase 1**

With the release of the Discussion Paper, Phase 1 of the Town's CIP is nearing completion. The next steps during the month of June entail:

- meeting with a Stakeholders Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the Acton and Georgetown Business Improvement Associations, the Chamber of Commerce, the agricultural community and brownfield landowners. (Staff note that Council may wish to consider whether there should be political representation on the Committee); and,
- conducting a Public Open House.

Following the public consultation stage, the consulting team anticipates being able to finalize and present the CIP Strategy by August. This would conclude Phase 1 of the Town's CIP.

### **Next Steps – Phase 2**

Phase 2 – Preparation of Area Specific CIPs/Comprehensive CIP - would commence during the summer of 2008 with a completion date of January 2009. This phase entails the preparation of:

- detailed draft incentive programs for each of the key issue areas/CIPs;
- a detailed draft municipal leadership strategy which recommends actions and public realm improvements as permitted under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*;

- a monitoring program to help ensure that CIP program results are comprehensively monitored relative to defined targets and the goals and objectives of the CIP;
- an education strategy to assist landowners, developers and investors regarding the CIP, including the types of programs that are available;
- a CIP for each issue area/community improvement project area; and,
- a comprehensive implementation strategy.

During this phase, the Town would continue to engage the Stakeholders Advisory Committee as well as the public including a formal public meeting pursuant to the *Planning Act*.

### **Rural Economic Development Funding Opportunities**

The Region of Halton has recently agreed to partner with the Town in submitting an application for a Rural Economic Development (RED) grant from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in the amount of approximately \$50,000 to help defray the CIP study costs. On a preliminary basis, it is estimated that it will take approximately three months for OMAFRA to review the submission once received and render a decision.

### **Consultant Selection**

To date, the Town has retained the MMM Group and RCI to complete Phase 1 of the CIP Program. The consulting team has also made a successful submission on our behalf with the FCM for the GMF grant and is pursuing additional funding opportunities with OMAFRA. The FCM grant has been provided on the basis of the CIP Program in its entirety and in accordance with the work plan developed by the consulting team. Based on the foregoing, staff has concluded that the MMM Group and RCI are the logical choice to undertake Phase 2 of the CIP Program in light of their current retainer with the Town and their considerable background and experience in this topic area.

It should be noted that the retention of the MMM Group and RCI as a sole source is in keeping with Section 8 a) of the Town's Purchasing By-law. A specific recommendation regarding this matter has been included in the Recommendations section of the report.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The Town's Community Improvement Plan relates extensively to the following Strategic Directions:

- Foster a Healthy Community
- Preserve, Protect and Enhance Our Environment

- Foster a Prosperous Economy
- Preserve, Protect and Promote our Distinctive History
- Preserve, protect and Enhance our Countryside
- Achieve Sustainable Growth
- Provide responsive, Effective Municipal Government

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

As noted earlier in this report, the total cost of the Town's CIP Program is \$136,000 with the GMF grant covering 50 % of the costs. This grant is performance based with monies to be provided in two installments based on the submission of appropriate supporting information as set out in the draft agreement. For example, the final grant installment is payable upon completion of the study.

The Town has currently committed \$47,100.00 in funding to the CIP Program. When combined with the GMF grant of \$68,000.00 that provides \$115,100 in confirmed funding. An additional \$20,900.00 in funding is necessary to fully fund the CIP Program and to satisfy FCM requirements. The Finance Department has advised that the additional funding should be derived from the Capital Financing Reserve.

In the event that the Town's application for a RED grant with OMAFRA is successful, the Town's overall funding obligations for the CIP Program will be reduced considerably.

### **COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT:**

It is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Halton, the Acton and Georgetown Business Improvement Associations, the Chamber of Commerce and the Halton Federation of Agriculture.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:**

There is no immediate environmental impact associated with this report. Environmental implications will be further canvassed as part of the detailed reporting on the CIP Program.

### **CONSULTATION:**

Staff consulted with Finance Department, specifically the Director of Finance and the Manager of Purchasing, and the Region of Halton regarding this matter.

## **CONCLUSION:**

This report has:

- Provided Council with a status update on the Town's CIP Program including a brief summary of the Phase 1 Discussion Paper;
- Apprised Council of the Town's successful application for a GMF grant in the amount of \$68,000.00 for the CIP Program; and,
- Discussed the additional funding requirements to ensure that the CIP Program is fully funded while continuing to pursue other funding opportunities by partnering with the Region of Halton in an application for a RED grant through OMAFRA.

It is recommended that supplementary funding in the amount of \$20,900.00 be provided with the necessary funding being derived from the Capital Financing Reserve and that the MMM Group and RCI Consulting be retained to undertake Phase 2 of the CIP Program.

Respectfully submitted,

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John Linhardt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Planning Policy

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Bruce MacLean, BA, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Development

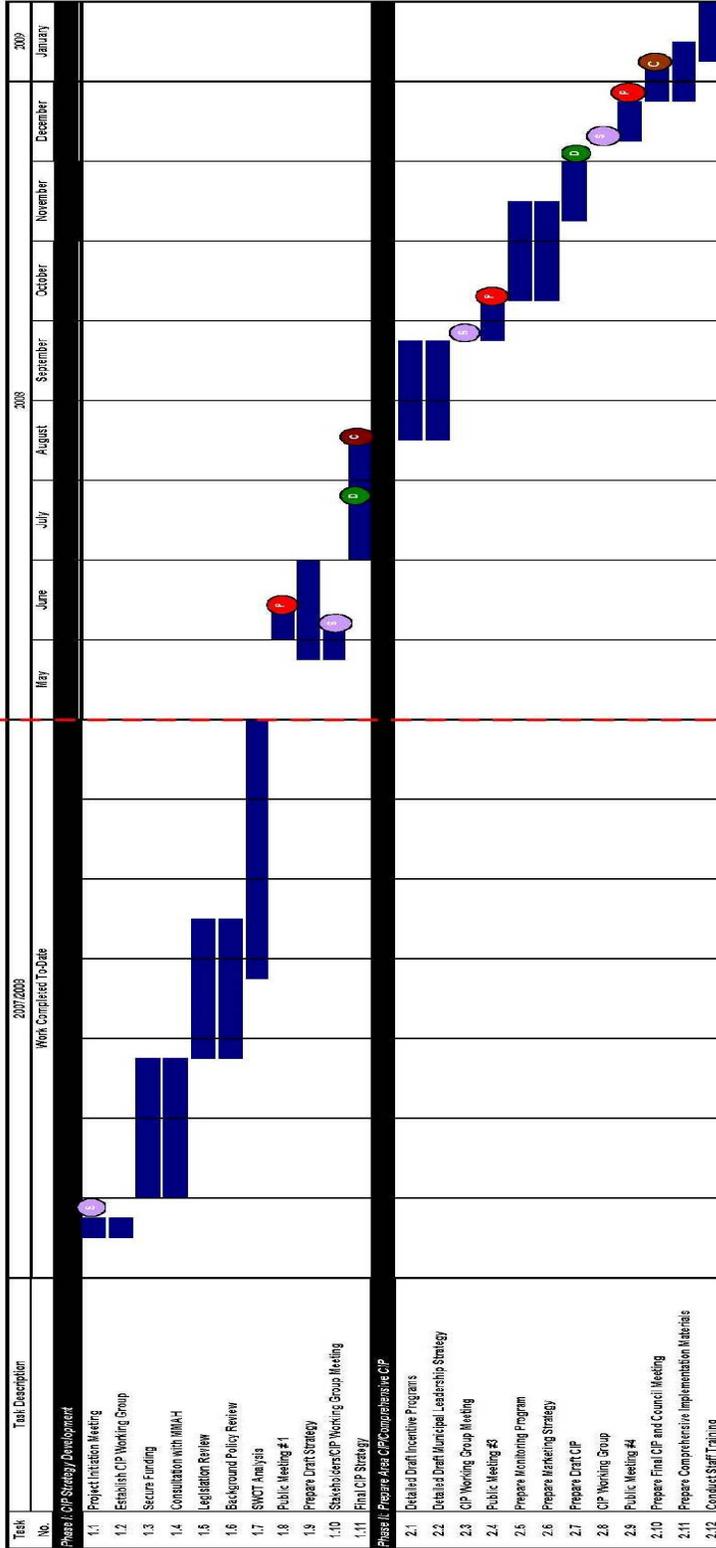
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D.Y. Perlin  
Chief Administrative Officer

# Schedule One to PD-2008-0031

## TOWN OF HALTON HILLS COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

### Schedule



- LEGEND:**
- Stakeholders CIP Working Group Meeting
  - Public Meeting
  - Deliverable
  - Council Meeting