CITY OF BELLEVILLE

Affordable Rental Housing Community Improvement Plan and Updated Downtown Community Improvement Plan

Interim Report

January 2020 - 19-1699
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Introduction

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool that enables municipalities to establish financial incentives to encourage certain types of development or improvements within a defined study area. The City of Belleville is developing a new Affordable Rental Housing CIP while concurrently updating the existing Downtown and Brownfields CIPs, with the intention of consolidating all three CIPs into one Master CIP document. This report provides an overview of the work completed to date on the development of the Affordable Rental Housing CIP and the update to the Downtown CIP. This includes a summary of the data reviewed, key issues, opportunities and constraints, and initial recommendations for incentive strategies. A trend analysis was also conducted for the Affordable Rental Housing CIP, as it is a new document in order to identify potential incentive programs. A trend analysis was not conducted for the Downtown CIP, as the existing incentives are being reviewed to determine whether they require updates.

2.0 Key Issues: Identifying Community Improvement Needs

2.1 Housing Summit Goals

In March 2019, a Housing Summit was convened in the City in response to an identified affordable housing crisis in Belleville. The intention of the summit was to discuss the affordable housing issues and provide recommendations to Council for solutions. The Housing Summit concluded that there is a need to increase the supply of affordable rental units. As a result of the Summit, a short-term measure was implemented to reduce development charges by 50% for the creation of apartment units where the developer enters into an agreement with the City to charge rent at market rate or less, as defined by the County of Hastings, to a maximum of 1,000 units by 2025. Ultimately, the goal of the Affordable Rental Housing CIP is to further incentivize the creation of new units which increase the supply of affordable rental units in the city.

2.2 Stakeholder Input

The consulting team met with stakeholders and the public in December 2019 in order to discuss key priorities and needs that should be addressed for both the Affordable Rental Housing CIP and the

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1 The update to the Brownfields CIP is being undertaken by Sierra Consulting, and is not discussed in this report. The two consulting teams are in regular communication to ensure the work on all three CIPs is aligned for incorporation into the Master CIP.
update to the Downtown CIP. These are summarized below and a full copy of the Engagement Summary is provided in Appendix A.

### 2.2.1 Affordable Rental Housing CIP Stakeholder Meetings

The project team met with developers, landlords, members of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), and members of housing agencies and community groups. The following provides a summary of key themes that emerged from the meetings:

- Establish a coordinator role, or identify a key City contact person, to provide information about funding opportunities, education for developers and property owners, and assistance going through the CIP process;
- Fast track applications;
- Reduce parking requirements;
- Reduce or waive development charges and reduce permit fees;
- Affordable housing opportunities are needed near transit routes and commercial areas;
- There are some affordable units downtown but they are not in good condition;
- Make it easier for people to create new second units or legalize their existing ones;
- Incorporate affordable housing options into new subdivisions;
- The average market rate is still too high for a large proportion of residents; and
- Provide incentives specific to not-for-profit organizations.

### 2.2.2 Downtown CIP Stakeholder Meetings

The project team met with stakeholders, including members of the Belleville Downtown Improvement Area (BDIA), and the Façade Committee. The following key considerations were brought up during these meetings:

- There is a lot of support for the Façade Improvement Program, but there is little knowledge about the other Downtown CIP programs;
- Application timelines for incentive programs could be improved;
- Many properties in the existing boundary for the Façade Improvement Program have benefitted from the program;
- Consider expanding the Façade Program Boundary to allow other properties an opportunity to participate in the program;
- Consider including parts of North Front Street and across the Moira River in the Façade Program Boundary;
- Consider an incentive to help address the tax increase following building upgrades;
- There is a lack of available parking downtown, which is challenging for both developers and tenants;
- Want to balance the addition of new high end residential units, with meeting the housing needs of the marginalized people who live Downtown;
- Desire to reserve the main floor of buildings for high activity uses (e.g. not residential);
2.0 Key Issues: Identifying Community Improvement Needs

- Consider adding incentives for improving signage independent of the Façade Improvement Program;
- The design guidelines for the Façade Improvement Program only provide specific recommendations for older buildings; and
- The current lack of façade guidelines has afforded greater flexibility and has not been a problem.

2.3 Public Input

On December 11, 2019, a Public Information Centre (PIC) was held to provide the public with an opportunity to learn more about the project and to provide input on the CIPs. The PIC had a number of activity stations where feedback could be recorded. These are summarized below and a full copy of the Engagement Summary is provided in Appendix A.

2.3.1 Affordable Rental Housing

Attendees at the PIC were asked to identify priorities and locations for affordable rental housing. Outcomes are summarized below:

- **Affordable Rental Costs:** Participants were asked to indicate what they believed an affordable one-bedroom unit should cost. Responses ranged from $400 to $1,500 per month, with most responses falling between $750 and $1,000 per month.

- **Types of Affordable Housing:** Participants were asked to indicate the type of affordable housing that is needed in Belleville. The majority of participants indicated that additional apartment buildings were the top priority, followed by secondary units and converted dwellings. Rooming houses, detached dwellings, and tiny homes were also mentioned.

- **Proximity to Key Amenities:** Participants were asked to indicate where affordable housing should be located. Proximity to transit corridors, and schools and colleges received the most votes. Participants also indicated that being in proximity to new and existing residential areas, downtown, and commercial main streets were also recorded.

- **Locations:** PIC attendees were asked to identify key locations where affordable rental housing is needed on a map of Belleville. This can be seen in Figure 1. The following were suggested as locations where affordable housing should be provided:
  - Downtown, near services and food banks;
  - Near hospitals and doctors’ offices;
  - Accessible to jobs at the mall;
  - Near Loyalist College;

![Figure 1: Public Input on Key Affordable Housing Locations](image-url)
3.0 Affordable Rental Housing CIP Trends

2.3.2 Downtown CIP

Attendees at the PIC were asked to provide feedback on the existing Downtown CIP to identify areas for improvement. Outcomes are summarized below:

- **Boundary**: PIC attendees were asked to provide input on the existing Downtown CIP boundary. One person left feedback on the activity sheet indicating that the existing boundary for the CIP was appropriate.

- **Incentive Programs**: Participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the existing incentive programs. Many people were not aware of the existing Downtown CIP, but were supportive of programs to encourage the revitalization of Downtown. A comment was provided suggesting that the incentive program should provide support for the rebuilding of buildings damaged by fire.

### Affordable Rental Housing CIP Trends

This section of the report presents the findings of a trend analysis of other Affordable Housing CIPs. A trend analysis was not completed for the Downtown CIP as it is not a new document and the existing incentive programs will be reviewed to determine whether they require updating. As the Affordable Rental Housing CIP is a new City initiative, a review of best practices was undertaken to assess the incentives offered by other municipalities and contribute to the development of a short list of options for the City of Belleville.

One Affordable Rental CIP (Sault Ste. Marie) was identified for review, as well as three other CIPs that incentivize the creation of affordable housing in general. A summary table is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name*</th>
<th>Sault Ste. Marie</th>
<th>Cambridge</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
<th>Sudbury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax Increment Grant</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Fee Waiver</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Charges Program</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The three most common financial incentives identified are the Tax Increment Grant, the Municipal Fee Waiver and the Development Charge Deferral programs. Each of these incentives are discussed in this section.

### 3.1 Tax Increment Grants

A Tax Increment Grant (TIG) provides a tax rebate to applicants who develop, or redevelop, a property which results in a tax reassessment. The grant covers the cost of tax increases that result from the redevelopment or development. Taxes are paid in full and then the grant is paid to the applicant, once it has been determined what the pre and post development taxes are.

There are a variety of ways to apply the TIG. Some TIG programs only apply to redevelopment or rehabilitation of under-utilized sites (Cambridge; Peterborough) while others also allow the program to be used for new development (Sault. Ste. Marie). The programs provide a rebate of between 75% and 100% of the municipal portion of tax increase. Some municipalities provide the greatest amount of tax relief in the first year with the percentage covered by the incentive decreasing each subsequent year, while others provide a fixed incentive over a longer period. For example, Sault Ste. Marie provides up to 75% for the first year, 50% for the second and 25% for the third, while Cambridge provides up to 100% for fifteen years, before it begins decreasing.

Some programs offer additional grants as part of the TIG. For example, Sault Ste. Marie allows for the TIG grant to be extended by an additional year if the affordable housing development provides units which exceed the City’s barrier-free requirements.

The City of Belleville has a TIG program through the Downtown CIP and the Brownfields CIP.
3.2 Municipal Fee Waiver

Municipal Fee Waiver programs exempt affordable housing developments from municipal fees, including planning application fees, building permit fees and sign permit fees. This type of program requires no new capital for a municipality, as the fees will simply not be collected. Some of the CIPs reviewed however require the fees to be collected and then reimbursed the proponent. Some of the CIPs provide exemptions exclusively for the planning and building permit fees, while others also include cash-in-lieu, sign and minor variance fees. Sudbury provides the greatest incentive by also waiving fees for consents, site plan control agreement and demolition permits.

Sudbury is the one CIP that has a limit on the amount that can be waived per year for all applications. The waiver of planning fees for all applications cannot exceed $25,000 annually and the building permit fees for all applications cannot exceed $100,000 annually. The other CIPs do not stipulate an upper limit on this type of incentive.

The City of Belleville currently has a Municipal Fee Waiver program available through the existing Downtown CIP and Brownfields CIP.

3.3 Development Charges Program

This program is similar to the municipal fee waiver program, however development charges typically cannot be waived without an amendment to the Development Charges By-law. The two CIPs which have this program, Sault Ste. Marie and Peterborough, used different approaches to providing the incentive.

Sault Ste. Marie’s CIP defers the payment of the development charge for 20 years, following the issuance of a building permit. The development charges will need to be paid in full at the end of the 20 year period, however, if at any point during the 20 years the housing is no longer deemed to be affordable, then the development charges will be due.

The City of Peterborough created an Affordable Housing Partnership Reserve Fund. The City paid a total of $500,000 into the fund over a five year period. Assistance is provided in the form of a grant from this fund for new affordable housing projects.

3.4 Other Programs

The City of Sudbury offers three additional financial incentives to encourage the creation of affordable housing.

- **Feasibility Grant Program**: provides up to $5,000 to assist in the completion of feasibility studies, building renovation designs, or business plans to assist in the creation of affordable housing units. This program recognizes that there are additional costs associated with creating affordable housing and provides a grant to help stimulate the design and creation of more affordable housing.
3.0 Affordable Rental Housing CIP Trends

- **Residential Incentive Program**: provides $10 per square foot of new affordable residential space (up to $20,000 per unit) to stimulate the development of affordable housing in locations which meet the needs of tenants.

- **Second Unit Incentive Program**: provides 50% of the costs of an approved projects, up to $50,000, to create second units that would contribute to the affordable housing supply. This can only be applied for by non-profit or charitable institutions.

3.5 Complementary Affordable Housing Incentives

CIPs are one tool for providing incentives to increase the supply of affordable rental housing units, and they may be complemented by other municipal initiatives. The City of Peterborough for example, has a Municipal Housing Facility By-law which provides incentives to develop affordable rental housing for units at 90% of the cost of the average rental rate. This by-law existed prior to the creation of the City’s Affordable Housing CIP, which addresses housing at or below the average market rental rate, and it is common in Peterborough for these two programs to be stacked together.

The Municipal Housing Facility By-law provides a tax exemption for the development for up to 10 years where the City enters into a municipal housing project facilities agreement with the housing service provider. It also reimburses building permit fees, which are not included in the City’s CIP. The By-law is also able to exempt development from development charges, which a CIP is unable to do (it can only provide a grant towards some development charge costs).

The City of Peterborough acts as the service provider for provincial and federal programs in the County. This allows the City to include the incentives from provincial and federal funding packages for developments, which can further reduce rents to 80% of the average rental cost. It is common in the City of Peterborough for applications which have affordable housing to benefit from all three levels of incentives. While Belleville does not act as the service provider for the provincial and federal incentives, there is an opportunity for Belleville to consider creating a Municipal Facilities By-law for affordable rental housing. The City may wish to include a section in its CIP that indicates that the City will work towards creating a By-law to incentivize the creation of below average market rate housing, up to 90% of the average market rental price.

3.6 Implementation and Monitoring Best Practices

A key component to delivering an effective CIP, is ensuring that the creation of affordable rental housing has long term benefits and that the units that are developed utilizing the program do not turn into above market rate housing stock. Each municipality reviewed as part of this best practice review states that anyone wanting to participate in their Affordable Housing CIP has to enter into an agreement with the City. A summary is provided below of the various terms that municipalities and applicants enter into to participate in the program:
4.0 Opportunities and Constraints

A number of opportunities and challenges have been identified related to the creation of a new Affordable Rental Housing CIP and the update to the Downtown CIP.

4.1 Affordable Rental Housing CIP

Opportunities:

- Input received from the public indicated that there is a need for additional affordable housing units city-wide.
- The City has already adopted second unit policies to support the provision of additional housing options.
- A strong housing demand in Belleville\(^2\) means there will be more development occurring, providing an opportunity to encourage more affordable housing development as part of this growth.
- The County of Hastings recently completed a 5-year review of their 2014 Housing and Homelessness Plan which supports the development of the CIP and included a series of recommendations, including:

\(^2\) 3,330 new housing units are anticipated for Belleville by 2038 (City’s Municipal Comprehensive Review of Urban Serviced Areas, 2018).
4.0 Opportunities and Constraints

- incentivizing mixed density housing;
- reducing or eliminating fees; and
- working towards building a mix of affordable housing options in the City of Belleville through upper level government funding or through alternative funding models, e.g. public private partnerships.

- There is public and stakeholder support for the provision of more affordable rental housing in a variety of forms, including apartment buildings, secondary units and converted dwellings, as well as rooming houses and detached dwellings.
- Non-financial incentives could also be provided through the CIP, such as education for those looking to add a second unit to their dwelling.

Constraints

- Ensuring that developments that benefit from the incentive program(s) result in units that remain at or below average market rate in the long term requires documentation, monitoring and reporting, to ensure compliance.
- Incentives must be significant enough to be worth pursuing in order to get uptake in the program and achieve the desired outcome.
- Financing a range of incentive programs that will address a variety of housing typologies when municipal funds are limited; it may not be practical or possible to finance multiple incentive programs concurrently.

4.2 Downtown CIP

The following opportunities and challenges have been identified for the update to the Downtown CIP. Map 1, which shows all the properties which have participated in the Façade Improvement Program, also demonstrates some key opportunities for the Downtown CIP.

Opportunities

- Expand the Façade Improvement Program boundary to capture other areas of the downtown area that have historic façades.
- Improve the permit and fee reduction program and the tax rebate program so that they are worthwhile for developers to pursue to assist with the revitalization of Belleville’s downtown.
- Create new incentives to encourage more residential development downtown to accommodate growth through intensification.
- Link the CIP to the Courthouse District Urban Design Guidelines\(^3\) (2010) to provide greater direction for façade improvements.
- Expand the eligibility of the Façade Improvement Program to include façades with river frontage.

\(^3\) These are centred on the Courthouse District and surrounding blocks, provide guidance on how to reintegrate the former industrial lands along the western side of the Moira River into the downtown urban fabric.
4.0 Opportunities and Constraints

- Streamline the application process to reduce processing time for applicants.

**Challenges**

- Stakeholders indicated that the lack of availability of overnight parking is a major constraint to encouraging residential development downtown.
- Two of the three existing programs in the Downtown CIP have had limited uptake. The update must ensure incentives are worthwhile for developers to pursue in order for the City to see benefits from the program.
- Consideration for how the programs in the three CIPs (Downtown, Affordable Rental Housing, and Brownfields) may be stacked will be critical to ensure the financial viability of the programs, and the phasing of the programs over time.
MAP 1

Applications by Year
- 2002 - 2005
- 2006 - 2010
- 2011 - 2015
- 2016 - 2020

Service Layer Credits: Source Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community
5.0 Recommendations

Based on a review of the background documents, trend analysis, stakeholder and public input and identified opportunities and challenges, a series of recommendations can be developed for both the Affordable Rental Housing CIP and the update to the Downtown CIP.

5.1 New Affordable Rental Housing CIP Recommendations

The Housing Summit identified that a key issue facing Belleville is the lack of available affordable housing stock. The new Affordable Rental Housing CIP is intended to help address this issue by providing incentives to develop more affordable rental housing at or below the average market rate. Below are a series of recommendations for incentives that may be included in the new Affordable Rental Housing CIP.

Financial Incentives

- **Development Charge Rebate for Purpose-Built Affordable Housing Units**
  
  Development charge rebates are popular incentives as the development charges often amount to a significant proportion of development costs. To receive a rebate for development charges incurred for the construction of affordable housing units in a purpose-built building, the developer makes an application and enters into an agreement with the City to ensure the units will be provided at or below Average Market Rate (AMR). The agreement would be registered on title to ensure the units remain affordable in perpetuity. Once construction of the building commences, the developer would receive a rebate on the development charges that were levied as part of the development.
  
  This incentive could also be applied for if only a portion of units were made affordable, for example, if 5 units were at or below AMR in a 10 unit building, 50% of the overall development charges could be rebated.

- **Building Permit Fee Rebate**
  
  This incentive would apply to new builds, as well as any upgrades to existing buildings that result in the creation of a new affordable unit. A developer and/or homeowner would be able to apply for a rebate on building permit costs for units that are provided at or below AMR. An agreement would be registered to title to ensure the unit remains affordable.

- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**
  
  This program would shield a developer or homeowner from the municipal portion of tax increases as a result of the development of an affordable rental housing unit. The assessed tax value of the property prior to development would remain the same for a determined time frame.
5.0 Recommendations

(e.g. 10 - 20 years). Development that results in the creation of new units that are provided at or below AMR would be eligible to apply to this program. This program could operate in two ways:

- The applicant either pays their full taxes every year, and upon receiving proof that the units are still at or below AMR, the City will rebate the difference between the pre-development tax value and the re-assessed tax value back to the applicant; or

- The City forgoes the collection of any tax increases on units that applied to the program. The applicant simply pays the same tax amount each year, and submits documentation confirming that the unit(s) is (are) provided at or below AMR.

If the applicant fails to provide proof that the unit is affordable, then they will no longer be eligible to participate in the program and will be required to pay the full tax increase amount for all previous years.

- Second Units

This program incentivizes the creation of legal second units in the City, as a way of increasing the City's overall housing stock, however these units are not required to be provided at or below AMR, on the general presumption that the housing forms are typically lower rent (e.g., the cost of renting a basement apartment is presumed to be lower than the cost of renting a single-detached house). The intent is that by increasing the City’s overall housing stock and overall supply of housing, there will be housing options available. If units are provided at or below AMR, they may be eligible to apply to the other programs listed above. Two different incentives are recommended to encourage the development of second units:

- Rebates for Second Units in New Housing

Developers who purposefully build a new home with a second unit may be eligible to receive rebates for the building permit costs and development charges associated with the additional unit. The developer would still be responsible for all the building permit costs and development charges for the primary dwelling space. Within one year of closing, the new home owner could apply for a grant from the City. The unit does not need to be provided at or below AMR nor does it need to be rented during the time of application to be eligible for the grant. The intention of this incentive is to encourage home builders to suggest the inclusion of a second unit to prospective buyers.

- Existing Development

To reduce the cost of adding a second unit in an existing dwelling the City may provide a pre-qualified list of designers and architects for home owners to contact for assistance with design and approvals. The professionals on the list must have a Building Code Identification Number as validation of their minimum proficiency so that the City has some assurance of the designer’s ability to prepare accurate and reputable drawings, which will allow for expedient City staff review and processing of documentation. Following construction the applicant will provide the City with proof of completed work and the applicant will then receive a rebate. The intent of the guide would be to
encourage better quality building permit applications as a means of speeding up the building permit process, while also encouraging the creation of high quality rental units.

- **Accessibility Top Up**
  If any new unit at or below AMR is designed so that it is barrier-free the developer will be eligible to apply for a grant as an additional incentive to increase the supply of these units throughout the City. If a new secondary unit (regardless of whether it is affordable or not) is designed so that it is barrier-free, the developer or homeowner would also be eligible to apply for a grant. Barrier-free requirements will be accessed at the building permitting stage, and the applicant would receive the rebate upon proof of completion.

**Non-Financial Incentives and Recommendations**

- **Fast Tracking**: Fast track applications that will increase the City’s supply of rental housing at or below AMR so that they can be built sooner.

- **Education**: Prepare clear and informative materials for homeowners and developers on the various programs and how to benefit from them. The City may also choose to periodically host short info-sessions.

- **Informational Brochures & Application Forms**
  One-pagers should be developed for each of the incentive programs to provide the most important information quickly (e.g. eligibility, program requirements, timelines). These would be complemented by the creation of easy to use application forms, which should be provided as a fillable AODA compliant documents on the City’s website.

- **Staff Support**: Due to the increased workload that will result from the creation of a new CIP, additional support staff will likely be required to manage and process the applications.

### 5.2 Downtown CIP Update Recommendations

The existing Downtown CIP has experienced success with the Façade Improvement Program, however, other elements of the CIP have had little uptake. Below are a series of recommendations for updates to the Downtown CIP.

**Financial Incentives and Recommendations**

- **Façade Improvement Area Boundary**
  The intention of the Façade Improvement Program is to “encourage preservation of architectural traditions upon which the character of the downtown of the City of Belleville is based”. The Program aims to provide incentives to enhance the activation of buildings with frontage directly onto a street (a characteristic of the downtown), to preserve traditional buildings and to
maintain consistency in the design of existing buildings. Expansion of the boundary was considered for areas downtown where building façades may benefit from improvement (Church Street, Coleman Street, Moira Street W). However, as these areas do not contribute to the preservation of architectural features that exemplify the character of the downtown, and their inclusion in the program would not contribute to meeting the intention of the program, it is recommended that the boundary is not expanded. Additionally, there remains a number of buildings within the existing boundary that could benefit from this program (Map 1).

This program will be open to all properties located within the Façade Improvement Area boundary, however priority will be given to any properties that have not taken part in the program within the past 5 years. If a property has participated in the program in the past 5 years, they will still be eligible to apply, but applications will not be reviewed until after the first business day of September each year. Grants for these applications would be provided depending on budget availability.

- **Rear Building Façade Improvement**
  There is interest in improving the connection between the downtown and the Moira River, which is currently lined with parking lots. In order to help the downtown take advantage of its desirable waterfront location, the Façade Improvement Program could be expanded to incentivize the improvement of buildings with frontage onto the riverfront trail. Improvements to these façades would need to demonstrate their ability to activate the rear façade with specific (e.g. attract pedestrian activity and beautifying the area, by the addition of a river-facing patio on the rear of a restaurant).

- **Residential Development Fee Rebate**
  The Permit and Fee Reduction Program should be updated to address the emerging needs of the downtown, such as encouraging the creation of new residential units above commercial main floors. This incentive would provide a rebate on all planning and building permitting fees for any development which results in the creation of new residential units above a commercial ground floor.

- **Tax Rebate Program**
  The existing Tax Rebate Program should be updated to encourage residential development downtown area. Improvements that result in the addition of a residential unit, would be eligible to apply for a tax rebate on any increase in taxes that arise from the creation of residential unit above commercial uses, for a fixed number of years.

- **Fire Retrofitting Rebate**
  A rebate targeted at helping downtown buildings meet the Ontario Fire Code (O.Reg. 213/07) performance requirements for existing buildings would help meet an identified need in the downtown. Retrofitting requirements often require the purchase of materials, equipment or
systems that in the opinion of the Chief Fire Official, provide protection and improvement of a building (e.g. fire alarms and detection systems, sprinkler systems, fire walls, interior finishes, fire department access, fire escapes and emergency lighting). A one-time rebate could be provided to provide financial assistance with these costs.

- **Streamline Approvals**
  The Façade Improvement Program should be improved by making the approvals process more efficient. A staff working group, comprised of staff from the planning and building department, should be created to review, evaluate and approve applications as a way of simplifying the approvals process. This would assist in reducing the processing time for applications and making the overall process more streamlined. Additionally, reducing the processing time for applications may encourage more participation in the program if applicants are able to obtain funding for a project sooner.

**Complementary Initiatives**

The update to the Downtown CIP would benefit from additional work to assist with the success of the programs, including implementation support and undertaking complementary initiatives that can assist with the revitalization of downtown. Recommendations are listed below:

- **Informational Brochures & Application Forms**
  One-pagers should be developed for each of the incentive programs to provide the most important information quickly (e.g. eligibility, program requirements, timelines). These would be complemented by the creation of easy to use application forms, which should be provided as a fillable AODA compliant documents on the City’s website.

- **Provide Overnight Parking**
  An identified barrier to the revitalization of downtown is the lack of available overnight parking for residents. The City may wish to consider modifying the existing Parking By-law to develop an overnight parking permit program for residents to park in municipal parking lots for free or at a reasonable cost.

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6.0 **Conclusion**

This report has provided an opportunity to review all of the information gathered to date and to craft a series of recommendations on what the future Belleville CIPs will look like. The recommendations presented in this report are intended for review by City staff, the Planning Advisory Committee, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the public. Any recommendations agreed-upon between the consulting team and City staff will be included in the preparation of the Draft Affordable Rental Housing CIP and the updated Downtown CIP. The draft CIP documents are tentatively scheduled to be presented to the public in late February or March, 2020.
Appendix A

Engagement Summary
Belleville Affordable Housing & Downtown Community Improvement Plan

The first Public Information Centre (PIC) for the new City of Belleville Affordable Rental Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and update to the Downtown CIP took place between 4:30 and 6:30 pm on Wednesday December 11, 2019. The PIC took place at the same time as the City’s Zoning By-law consolidation PIC. In total 19 individuals signed in, although there were more in attendance. Of those who filled out a sign in form, 15 identified the CIP as the reason for their attendance.

Prior to the PIC, the project team also met with a number of stakeholder groups to discuss the existing Downtown CIP and the proposed Affordable Housing CIP. A summary of these discussions is provided below.

Stakeholder Meetings

The project team held 5 meetings with key stakeholders. Three of the meetings were related to the Affordable Housing CIP and two of the meetings were related to the Downtown CIP. A summary of what we heard and what was discussed is provided below for each of these separate meetings.

Belleville Downtown Improvement Area (BDIA)

A representative from the BDIA attended this meeting. Further calls are scheduled with other members of the BDIA for the New Year. This meeting focused on what the BDIA believe should be considered as part of an updated Downtown CIP.

The BDIA commented on the fact that the BDIA boundaries are smaller than those in the CIP. As such, only those areas within the BDIA boundary were of interest. The BDIA did state however that they may revise their boundaries in future to encompass other areas covered by the Downtown CIP.
While there was some criticism over how long applications take to process, the BDIA were supportive of the existing Downtown CIP and commented on the success of the façade program. It was generally agreed that the other two incentive programs have not been successful and they will either need to be altered or removed from the CIP. It was suggested that the involvement of a Committee to approve façade improvements may be redundant, as there are not any professionals (architects, engineers, designers) on the Committee panel. The Committee is helpful in making decisions but does not have all the tools necessary to determine the appropriate façade improvements for non-traditional types of development.

The main suggestions from the BDIA for the Downtown CIP were to improve the design guidelines, the overall design of the program, its administration and implementation. It was stated that the existing façade program should continue to operate and that the boundary of the façade program be reviewed to consider including some other historic areas of the City.

**Facade Committee**

The Chair of the Façade Committee met with the City project team to provide input on the Façade program from the Downtown CIP. Attention was drawn to the popularity of the Façade program and its importance in maintaining the vibrancy of Downtown Belleville.

It was suggested that the existing boundary of the façade program, which is not the same as the boundary of the Downtown CIP area, be reviewed. It was stated that there is an opportunity to expand the area to include parts of North Front Street and across the Moira River to some of the buildings along Coleman Street. There is only a limited amount of money available however and not all the buildings within the existing Façade Program boundary have taken advantage of the program yet.

It was also proposed that the CIP should include a review of design guidelines for more modern style buildings. Buildings within the façade program boundary that do not have traditional design characteristics can still benefit from the program and as a result there should also be design guidelines which address ways for these properties to improve their façade, as a way of improving the overall look and feel of Belleville’s downtown.

** Builders/Landlord Associations**

In total, five people attended this meeting for the Affordable Housing CIP. It was generally agreed by all that they would need to know the cost per month requirement for affordable housing in order to determine what they would be able to do to provide affordable rentals. It is likely that affordable rental units would need to be smaller to try to keep costs low enough to create these units.

A number of suggestions were proposed. It was suggested that a coordinator role be established or for a not-for-profit group to act as a coordinator to provide funding opportunities. A coordinator can manage multiple units from a number of different partners. It was also suggested that fast tracking be
implemented for affordable housing. If development meets a certain criteria, it should be eligible for fast tracking thorough the permitting process. Further suggestions included parking reductions, funding packages and reducing/removing development charges.

**Belleville Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)**

Three members of the PAC attended this meeting. Each member provided input on some of the key goals and priorities they believe the new Affordable Housing CIP should address.

The key points raised included providing more affordable housing options near transit routes, and near services and every day commercial requirements, such as grocery stores, pharmacies and other related services. It was also suggested that affordable housing should be provided near downtown but not in the downtown core.

Suggestions were also raised to consider making the process easier and more streamlined for existing homeowners to create legal second units that are at or below the average market rate.

**Housing Agencies**

In total 12 representatives from numerous housing agencies attended this meeting. It was stated that there is a strong need for more affordable housing options to be provided near schools, along transit routes and close to necessary amenities and services. It was also stated that affordable rental options should be provided in new subdivision developments. Comments were also made regarding how to define affordable housing. Housing needs to be provided that is not just affordable by definition but at a rate specific to Belleville that is attainable for those who require it.

It was suggested that the new Affordable Rental Housing CIP should reduce building fees and costs, waiving development fees and reducing parking requirements for affordable buildings. There were also concerns raised regarding how difficult it is to navigate the CMHC, and that the City should consider making the process more transparent and understandable.

**Affordable Housing & Downtown CIP PIC**

The Affordable Housing and Downtown CIP open house occurred at the same time as the City’s Zoning By-law open house. The event was a drop-in style open house, where participants were able to participate in activity stations to provide input and to communicate with members of the project team. There was no formal presentation. A summary of each of the activity stations and what we heard is provided below:

**Affordable Housing Activity Station 1: Priorities**

Activity Station 1 for the Affordable Housing CIP was focused on identifying the priorities for Affordable Rental Housing. Participants were asked to consider a number of key locations and asked to vote on which ones affordable rentals should be provided near.
There were a number of responses recorded on the activity sheets. These are summarized below:

- **Affordable Rental Costs**
  - 13 responses were provided for what people think the monthly rent for an affordable one-bedroom unit should cost. These ranged from approximately $400 per month to $1,500 per month. Most of the responses recorded were between $750 and $1,000 per month, with the average approximately $800 per month.

- **Types of Affordable Housing**
  - The most popular option for affordable housing types were apartment buildings, which had 10 votes. The second most popular were secondary units and converted dwellings, with 6 votes each. Rooming houses had 4 votes and detached dwellings had 3.
  - Additional notes suggested the provision of bachelor apartments for single individuals and the consideration of tiny homes.

- **Proximity to Key Locations**
  - The most popular location for more affordable rental housing to be provided was close to transit corridors, with a total of 8 votes. The second most popular was schools and colleges with 7 votes. New residential areas had 6 votes and existing residential areas had 5 votes. Proximity to downtown had 4 votes, and close to commercial main streets had 3 votes. There were two votes for ‘Other’ but no comments were left.

**Affordable Housing Activity Station 2: Where is Affordable Housing Needed?**

Activity Station 2 for the Affordable Housing CIP required participants to identify some key locations where affordable rentals should be prioritized. Participants were asked to place a sticky dot on a map where they think affordable rentals should be located and encouraged to leave comments on the map.
There were a number of responses recorded on the activity sheet. The following were suggested as locations where affordable housing should be provided:

- Close to the downtown, services and food banks;
- Close to hospitals and Doctors’ offices;
- Access to jobs at the mall;
- Close to Loyalist College for students;
- Mixed affordable housing in new subdivisions (north of Highway 401);
- Close to any transit line or route;
- The second floor of the Memorial Arena specifically;
- In low income areas with converted dwellings (shown on the map as on the west side of the Moira River; and
- In core housing areas (shown on the map as along Bridge Street West and Dundas Street East).

**Downtown Activity Station 1: Boundary**

Activity Station 1 for the Downtown CIP provided an opportunity to discuss whether the existing Downtown CIP boundary required updating. Participants were asked whether the existing boundary was appropriate or whether it should be expanded or reduced. If they believed the latter, they were encouraged to draw on a map the areas where the boundary should change.

On the activity sheet, only one person left feedback, which stated that the existing boundary for the downtown CIP was appropriate and did not need changing. No other responses were recorded.

**Downtown Activity Station 2: Existing Programs**

Activity Station 2 for the Downtown CIP asked participants what their thoughts were on the existing CIP incentive programs. They were asked to vote on each program to say if the program should continue with no changes, continue with changes, or be cancelled.

On the activity sheets, each of the existing programs were recommended to continue but were all said to require improvements. Only one vote was placed for each of the programs. There were also some comments left regarding the programs. One comment suggested the program should provide greater support for the rebuilding of buildings damaged by fire, while another comment suggested that there should be a new plan created and not to only make adjustments.