

**Committee:** Committee of the Whole – Community Development

**Date:** July 4, 2022

**Department:** Community Development

**Topic:** Community Improvement Project Areas

**Background:** At the Community Development Committee meeting on April 4th, Committee members requested that a report be prepared to outline the process to include Johnstown as a Community Improvement Project Area.

#### Planning Act Requirements and Official Plan Policies

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* provides that where there is an Official Plan in effect that contains provisions relating to community improvement in the municipality, the council may, by bylaw, designate the whole or any part of an area covered by the Official Plan as a Community Improvement Project Area (2). When this bylaw is passed, the Council may prepare a plan for the project area, which may be adopted and come into effect as a Community Improvement Plan (4). The adoption of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) requires consultation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and at least one public meeting. The plan is subject to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (5).

The Township's Official Plan designates the entire Township as a Community Improvement Area and provides that Council may, by bylaw, designate lands within this area as a Community Improvement Project Area. Section 7.5, included with this report, provides policy objectives (OP Section 7.5.4), matters to consider in the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan (OP Section 7.5.5), and direction on the implementation of the community improvement principles (OP Section 7.5.6).

Subject to Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, in pursuing the objectives of the Township's Official Plan's community improvement policies, Council may:

- Sell, lease or dispose of lands and buildings acquired or held by the Township;
- Give loans and grants to owners, tenants and their assignees for rehabilitation purposes; and
- Provide tax assistance by freezing or cancelling the municipal portion of the property tax on eligible properties for remediation purposes.

## Current Community Improvement Project Areas and Plans

The Township designated the Village of Cardinal as a Community Improvement Project Area by bylaw 2012-03 and approved the CIP in January, 2012. The preparation of the CIP included a background report, prepared by MMM Group Ltd. Consulting Team; a public open house and workshop; and 2 meetings with the Community Development Committee to discuss preliminary direction and a review of the plan. The statutory Public Meeting was held in January, 2012. A Streetscape Plan was prepared later that year, with direction from the Plan and the Township's 2012 Economic Development Strategy.

In 2013, the Village of Spencerville and the area west of Spencerville was designated a Community Improvement Project Area by bylaw 2013-71 and a subsequent CIP for this area was prepared. The Spencerville CIP was prepared by MMM Group through a review of background materials; a SWOT analysis; and a public open house and workshop; followed by the statutory Public Meeting in October 2013, before the plan was approved by Council in December, 2013.

The Cardinal and Spencerville CIPs include specific goals and objectives that aim to create walkable, well-connected communities; promote tourism through waterfront improvements, festivals and events; offer a range of housing opportunities; take pride in landscaping and public spaces; encourage new development and redevelopment of underutilized space; and create attractive Village streetscapes.

The CIP includes financial incentive programs aimed at improving the downtown core areas, including;

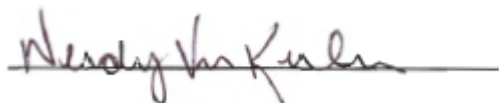
- Façade and Property Improvement Program;
- Application and Building Permit Fees Rebate Program;
- Heritage Property Improvement Program;
- Tax Increase-Based Equivalent Rebate Program;
- Downtown Housing Improvement Program; and
- Project Feasibility Program (Cardinal Only)

## Next Steps

The Committee has requested that this report outline the steps required to create a CIP area for the Village of Johnstown. It is recommended that members review section 7.5 of the Township's Official Plan to determine whether their goals for the Village of Johnstown align with the Official Plan policy objectives for community improvement. Section 7.5.5(1) provides that Council should have consideration for the following items in the selection of a Community Improvement Project Area:

- That there is evidence of a need to improve municipal services such as roads, sidewalks, cycle lanes, active transportation routes, street lighting, vehicle and bicycle parking, sanitary and storm sewers, water supply, parks and recreation, community facilities, the waterfront areas or streetscaping. Improvements may apply to some or all of the above services.
- That the phasing of improvements corresponds to the timing of improvements by the Township and/or senior governments and is within the financial capability of the Township.
- That a significant number of buildings in an area show signs of deterioration and need of repair.
- That there is evidence that a site can be classified as a brownfield and that the adoption of a Community Improvement Plan would assist in the remediation, rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of a property or area.
- That improvement to the visual appearance or aesthetics be required.
- That improvements will have a significant impact on strengthening the economic base of the community.

If the Committee would like to designate the Village of Johnstown as a Community Improvement Project Area, they may recommend that Council direct Staff to engage with a consulting firm to lead this process and the preparation of the CIP, which would be consistent with the approach taken for Cardinal and Spencerville. It may be timely to conduct a review of the Township's current CIPs to determine if amendments are appropriate.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nereyha Kuleva", written over a horizontal line.

Community Development Coordinator