

Georgina Economic Development CIP

Background Report

September 2025



Executive Summary

The Town of Georgina is preparing a new Economic Development Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to strengthen its position as a vibrant, investment-ready municipality while preserving its unique small-town character. This Background Report provides the foundation for that work, examining legislative authority, existing programs, regional policy alignment, and comparative best practices.

CIPs are a tool enabled under the *Planning Act* which allow municipalities to offer incentives, grants and other programs in an effort to stimulate revitalization and economic growth within the municipality. The Town of Georgina currently offers four CIP programs which are focused on façade improvement, heritage improvements/conservation, landscaping improvements and accessibility improvements. These CIP programs target the Business Improvement Areas of the Uptown Keswick BIA, Sutton BIA and Jackson Point BIA. While these initiatives have delivered meaningful results, their limited geographic scope and modest funding have generally constrained the potential broad economic impact of the programs.

A legislative analysis was conducted which includes provincial and municipal policy documents and strategic plans. These policies and plans emphasize the importance of economic diversification, placemaking and sustainable growth within the Township. Georgina's Corporate Strategic Plan and Economic Development and Tourism Strategy further highlight the importance of fostering vibrant downtowns, supporting tourism, and enabling gentle density to ensure the small town character of the Town is protected.

Moving forward, a Townwide CIP framework offers Georgina the opportunity to rationalize existing programs, introduce new incentive streams, and leverage regional partnerships. By doing so, the Town can stimulate investment, strengthen its economic base, and reinforce its identity as a community that is truly "open for business."

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1. Introduction

NPG Planning Solutions Inc. (NPG) and Tim Welch Consulting Inc. (TWC) are partnering with the Town of Georgina (the Town) to prepare an Economic Development Community Improvement Plan.

1.1 What is a Community Improvement Plan?

Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) are formal planning tools authorized under the *Planning Act*. A CIP allows municipalities to revitalize areas of a town or community by offering programs, grants and incentives. CIPs guide public sector investment and stimulate private sector investment through these programs and incentives. Under section 28(1) of the Planning Act, Municipal Councils may define an area as a “community improvement project area” because of factors such as it’s age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of building, or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.

The Town of Georgina presently offers four (4) Community Improvement Programs available to the Business Improvement Areas (BIA) of Uptown Keswick, Sutton and Jackson’s Point. The available programs are related to heritage preservation, façade improvements, landscaping and accessibility improvements. These programs are fully outlined in Section 3 of this Background Report.

1.2 Purpose of This Background Report

This Background Report provides the foundational knowledge for understanding the current community needs with regards to economic development within the community to inform future recommendations for the preparation of new goals and objectives to guide economic development and investment in the Town of Georgina.

This Background Report examines the existing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) programs in the Town and provides an overview of the uptake of these programs to date. It highlights participation trends via detailed analysis of past CIP program updates to provide an overall assessment of CIP usage. An environmental scan of comparable CIPs within York Region is included to better understand the economic goals, objectives and values of the neighbouring municipalities. In doing so, the Report establishes a comprehensive picture of the Town and Region’s current economic development landscape offering critical insights into the development of the Georgina Economic Development CIP.

2. Legislative and Policy Context

This section outlines the authority for establishing a Community Improvement Plan.

2.1 Legislative Authority for establishing CIPs

The legislative authority for the provision of a Community Improvement Plan and the programs outlined in this document are derived from the *Planning Act*, the *Municipal Act*, and the *Development Charges Act*. As previously noted, Section 28 (1) of the *Planning Act* permit municipalities to establish CIPs for the purpose of environmental, social or economic development reasons.

The process for developing and establishing a CIP is further outlined in Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. The authority for the provision of financial incentives is provided by Sections 28(6) and (7) of the *Planning Act*, Section 106 of the *Municipal Act*, and Section 5(1) of the *Development Charges Act*.

2.2 Policy Review

This section provides an overview of the relevant policies related to economic development.

2.2.1 Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario's policy-led planning system, the Provincial Planning Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land across the province.

Chapter 1 of the PPS provides a Vision. Included as part of the Vision, the PPS provides that:

A prosperous and successful Ontario will also support a strong and competitive economy that is investment-ready and recognized for its influence, innovation and diversity. Ontario's economy will continue to mature into a centre of industry and commerce of global significance. Central to this success will be the people who live and work in this province.

Employment policies are included in Section 2.8 of the PPS. Policy 2.8.1 states that planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by:

- a) *Providing an appropriate mix and range of employment, institutional, and broader mixed uses to meet long-term needs;*
- b) *Providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;*

- c) Identifying strategic sites for investment, monitoring the availability and suitability of employment sites, including market-ready sites, and seeking to address potential barriers to investment;*
- d) Encouraging intensification of employment uses and compatible, compact, mixed-use development to support the achievement of complete communities; and*
- e) Addressing land use compatibility adjacent to employment areas by providing an appropriate transition to sensitive land uses.*

The PPS includes further policies addressing the protection and preservation of employment areas. In addition, Section 2.5 of the PPS states that healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported by promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities, and providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas.

2.2.2 Official Plan of York Region

The York Regional Official Plan (YROP) 2022 outlines various policies regarding supporting and growing the economy of the Region. The YROP recognizes that new economic growth is seen as a driver in complete communities and assists in facilitating creativity, supporting innovation and the creation of a vibrant York Region. Furthermore, Policy 2.3.50 encourages local municipalities to foster an economic environment that supports businesses, grows employment and volunteer opportunities, and attract and retain talent by developing policies in their official plans, strategies, which may include implementing York Region's Economic Development Action Plan.

The YROP also includes policies encouraging the support and promotion of the long-term prosperity and viability of the agri-food sector. Policy 5.1.20 encourages local municipalities to develop policies in their official plans, strategies and programs to support the agri-food sector, which may include advocating for agri-tourism, on-farm diversified uses and value added operations.

With regard to Community Improvement Plans, the YROP encourages local municipalities to utilize CIPs for the following:

- To promote redevelopment and improvements to built form and accessibility in Employment Areas;
- To encourage office and affordable housing within strategic growth areas to help improve economic activity and vitality;
- To promote brownfield site redevelopment (where appropriate); and
- To conserve cultural heritage resources.

2.2.3 Official Plan of the Town of Georgina

The Official Plan for the Town of Georgina (Town OP) provides guiding principles, objectives, and policies intended to manage and direct the land use and future growth of

the Town. The planning period for the Town OP is to the year 2031, which is consistent with the YROP, but has been reviewed and updated since its adoption in 2002.

The Town OP provides policies and direction related to Community Improvement within Section 8.6 of the Town OP. Regarding the development of a CIP the Town OP provides as follows:

8.6.2 A Community Improvement Plan may be developed, in accordance with the Planning Act, for particular areas in the Town that require rehabilitation, redevelopment, maintenance, and other forms of improvement. The following criteria shall be considered in identifying potential areas to be selected for the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan

The criteria provided within Section 8.6.2 allows a CIP to be developed in consideration of the provision of affordable housing, streetscape improvements, maintenance and/or rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of housing and other buildings within the Town, neglected waterfront locations and more. The subsequent policies establish that public engagement is required during the development of the Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) and the CIP itself (8.6.3 & 8.6.4) to appropriately ensure that the needs of the community are met. No restrictions are provided regarding the location of the CIPA. The Town OP also provides direction regarding the phasing of improvements to avoid unnecessary hardship on residents within the CIPA.

Finally, Policy 8.6.7 outlines how the implementation of community improvements may be achieved and establishes that grants and loans may be provided by the Town in conformity with the CIP, participation in provincial and federal programs which provide assistance is an asset, and that the CIP should ensure continued enforcement of the Town zoning and property standards, and the continued support of the existing Business Improvement Area.

2.2.4 Town of Georgina Zoning By-law

The Town of Georgina Zoning By-law 500 identifies permitted land uses and sets out requirements concerning lot sizes and dimensions, building heights and other provisions to guide development within Georgina. It contains general provisions that apply to all lands within the Town, as well as specific provisions that apply to individual zones. The Zoning By-law can be used as a tool to assist in implementing the policies set forth in the CIP.

When creating a CIPA, specific zoning designations may be used as a criteria to establish boundaries or as a criterion to be eligible for specific improvement grants.

2.3 Background Study Review

In preparation of the Community Improvement Plan, a comprehensive review of municipal studies and reports has been undertaken. This includes review of the following documents:

- York Region Economic Development Action Plan
- Georgina's Game Plan (2023-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan)
- Town of Georgina Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

2.3.1 York Region Economic Development Action Plan

The York Region Economic Development Action Plan (YREDAP) guides the work of York Region's Economic Strategy team. A new action plan is created every four years, aligned with the term of York Regional Council, and presented for review and approval. Direction for the YREDAP is influenced by the YROP and other Council-approved strategic documents. The YREDAP reflects on the impacts of COVID within the Region and notes that the Regional government was able to leverage \$500,000 to support small businesses through the Small Business Enterprise Centres and local CIPs. The actions in the 2024 – 2027 York Region Economic Development Action Plan are grouped under four pillars: Business, Innovation, Talent and Marketing & Awareness.

Pillar 1: Business Support

Business support is the primary mandate of the York Region Economic Development branch. York Region provides business support services including: business advisory services, economic research, attraction marketing and more. Regional staff are also responsible for the delivery of provincially mandated small business and entrepreneurship advisory services and programs in the Region's northern six municipalities via the York Small Business Enterprise Centre.

The major business support goal of the YREDAP is to strengthen York Region's business community through targeted business retention, expansion, and attraction initiatives. Actions to achieve this include delivering Provincially mandated small business services and support to York Region's Northern Six municipalities through the York Small Business Enterprise Centre (YSBEC) and evolving and strengthening the Regional Foreign Direct Investment Partnership Program in collaboration with local municipalities.

Pillar 2: Innovation

The YREDAP supports the goal of fostering a culture of innovation that contributes to the prosperity and well being of its residents and has seen significant success of innovation across various sectors. The primary goal of the innovation pillar is to foster an environment that supports entrepreneurship and innovation to drive economic advancement by being a catalyst and funder of innovation. Actions to achieve this include the administration of the York Region Innovation Investment Fund to attract and support transformational investments and drive innovation in the community and to foster industry collaboration and engagement with stakeholders to support the innovation network.

Pillar 3: Talent

Competition for top talent has been a topic of discussion within all government levels and the business community for many years. The Workforce Planning Board of York Region,

in its 2023 Workforce Trends in York Region labour market report, discovered six out of 10 companies found it very challenging to recruit candidates across all levels of roles. To assist the business community in acquiring talent the YREDAP seeks to facilitate the growth of a skilled workforce by consolidating resources that support talent attraction in key sectors, collaborate with local municipalities and tourism agencies to support placemaking initiatives across the Region, and considering housing needs through the Affordable Housing Implementation Plan.

Pillar 4: Marketing & Awareness

The YREDAP also seeks to promote the Region as a top location for business, innovation, and talent in the GTA and Canada. Investments will be made into the 'York Link' digital marketing platform for high-impact economies-of-scale business investment, growth promotion, and talent attraction to achieve this goal.

The YREDAP recognizes that the pillars and goals noted above will only be achievable through partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, including the Town of Georgina. Collaboration between stakeholders is an essential tool to assist the Region in leveraging expertise and resources to realize the fulfillment of the YREDAP.

2.3.2 2023-2027 Town of Georgina Corporate Strategic Plan

The 2023-2027 Town of Georgina Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP) is a living document that serves to support and improve the quality of life of the Georgina community members, businesses and visitors. The CSP is an overarching document that shapes all other planning documents such as the Official Plan and ultimately CIPs. The CSP is a document that can adapt and evolve to changing circumstances, such as legislative changes or unforeseen events. Flexibility is built into the CSP to ensure that it remains responsive to the needs of both the community and the administration.

The CSP features the following mission statement:

To promote a high quality of life for our community through the delivery of exceptional services, inclusive engagement and a commitment to support a thriving economy and sustainable environment.

To achieve this mission, the CSP has provided the following goals:

- Delivering Service Excellence
- Ensuring Balanced Growth
- Diversifying Our Local Economy
- Creating a Vibrant, Healthy and Safe Community for All; and
- Advancing Environmental Sustainability

More detailed actions are provided under each goal. For example goals related to diversifying the local economy include supporting Georgina's tourism sector and supporting investment attraction, job creation, business retention and expansion, including within the agricultural sector. The CSP also provides actions related to investing

in community amenities and spaces and supporting the creation of a healthy and inclusive community.

To support implementation of the CSP, staff have developed an implementation plan that articulates high-level timelines, resource requirements and corporate performance measures for each strategic initiative that will be updated on an annual basis. These annual reports will highlight achievements and evaluate progress of the actions.

2.3.3 Town of Georgina Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

The Town of Georgina is anticipated to experience significant growth in the next 25 years, with the population set to increase by over 20,000 to 70,500. Due to this the Town commissioned the undertaking of the Georgina Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2024 (GEDTS) to build a plan to develop a strong and sustainable economy within the Town. The ultimate goal of the GEDTS is that the Town will have a reputation of a community that is “open for business” while retaining its unique lifestyle attributed to its small-town feel and with a diverse agricultural sector.

Significant engagement of the community was conducted during the development of the GEDTS to develop various goals which would support the overall economy of the Town and bolster the Towns tourism industry. A major goal of the GEDTS is to facilitate the creation of lively downtowns and public gathering spaces. To support this, the Town will continue to work with local BIAs to promote opportunities available through its CIP grant programs. The GEDTS also states that the Town will conduct a review of the current CIP funding model to ensure it is adequately funded and updated to support the various Community Improvement Projects within the Town and the place making initiatives. To further support the creation of downtowns the Town is going to continue to source grants to fund any necessary infrastructure improvements.

3. Existing CIPs

3.1 Overview of Existing CIPs

The Town of Georgina has several existing Community Improvement Plans which generally focus on commercial and mixed-use areas of the downtown areas of the urban communities in the Town. These programs have gone through several iterations since their inception of the Town's first CIP in 2014. These grants target the Business Improvement Areas of the Uptown Keswick BIA, Sutton BIA and Jackson Point BIA. Table 1 provides a high-level summary of the existing programs.

Table 1 – Current Town of Georgina Community Improvement Plans

CIP Name	General Description	Incentive Level
Façade Building Grant	Grants to promote the sensitive redesign of existing building façades to enhance the image of the area.	A grant of the less of up to a maximum of \$7,500 or 50 percent of the cost of improvement.
Heritage Building Grant	Grants to provide building owners with financial incentive to improve heritage building façades in a way that conserves significant historical features.	A grant of the less of up to a maximum of \$7,500 or 50 percent of the cost of improvement.
Landscape Improvement Grant	Grants to create enhanced landscaping features such as pedestrian pathways, sustainable features, planters and other aesthetic improvements.	A grant of the less of up to a maximum of \$7,500 or 50 percent of the cost of improvement.
Accessibility Improvement Grant	Grants to improve accessibility in existing buildings in Uptown Keswick, Sutton, and Jackson's Point.	A grant of the less of up to a maximum of \$7,500 or 50 percent of the cost of improvement.

In addition to these programs and as part of supporting economic development activities in the town, the Business Concierge Program offers application fee rebates for the retention/creation of 5+ full-time jobs and creation of a minimum of 1,500 sq. ft. of institutional, office or industrial floor area. This program fee rebate is tiered and based on the size of the proposed development.

Table 2 – Current Business Development Application Fee Grant

Development Tier	Requirements	Incentive Level
Tier One	- Has the potential to create or retain 5-10 full-time jobs and/or; - Results in the creation of a minimum of 1,500 - 5,000 sq. ft. of new floor area.	50 per cent of the application fee up to a maximum of \$10,000 or 50 per cent up to a maximum of \$20,000 for multiple applications.
Tier Two	- Has the potential to create or retain 11-25 full-time jobs and/or; - Results in the creation of a minimum of 5,001 - 49,000 sq. ft. of new floor area.	50 per cent of the application fee up to a maximum of \$15,000 and 50 per cent up to a maximum of \$30,000 for multiple applications. Eligibility:
Tier Three	- Has the potential to create or retain 25+ full-time jobs and/or; - Results in the creation of a minimum of 50,000 sq. ft. of new floor area.	50 per cent of the application fee up to a maximum of \$15,000 and 75 per cent up to a maximum of \$50,000 for multiple applications. Eligibility:

These rebates assist with application fees associated with the following applications: minor variances, zoning amendments, official plan amendments, site plan applications, and/or industrial plan of subdivision/condominium.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Town launched a series of short-term programs aligned with its CIPs. These included a technology grant, and patio grants to support local businesses to continue operations safely and with minimal disruption. These programs were ended following the lifting of various COVID measures at the end of 2022.

The Town also supports organizations, events and businesses through their Economic, Culture and Community Betterment Program. This funding stream supports events, programs and initiatives that serve to promote the Town to markets outside Georgina, generate economic opportunities for the local business community and provide for the betterment of the community.

To date, in 2025, this program has approved over \$28,000 in requests to support 14 programs, and events. This has helped support over \$260,000 in total program value being spent in the community. In 2024, past recipients attracted over 7,800 visitors to

Georgina for various events and programs. The Town is seeking to update this program stream and emphasize on activities and programs that have a direct economic impact on the community.

Finally, as part of the Town of Georgina successful Housing Accelerator Fund application, a new townwide CIP is being developed to support Additional Residential Unit development across the municipality. The goal of this grant is to support homeowners in adding gentle density across the municipality. This program has yet to launch, although the proposed townwide scope has helped support the desire to create a framework for townwide support for economic development programs.

3.2 Overview of uptake of existing CIPs

3.2.1 Past CIP Program Uptake

The existing uptake for the CIP programs varies annually due to broader economic conditions and the willingness of businesses to engage in the programs. Although approximately 100 of the Town's commercial properties are within the BIAs, the existing geographic CIP boundaries also constrain the number of potential applicants.

The current total budget for the Town's CIPs are \$40,000 per year which is accessed on a first come first serve basis. This amount has increased incrementally over the lifecycle of the existing grants.

Table 3 – CIP Project Values and Approved Amounts

	Total Project Value	Approved Amounts	CIP Types Approved
2018	\$23,716.00	\$ 9,941.00	3 Façade
2019	\$8,300.00	\$ 3,433.62	2 Façade
2020	\$34,200.00	\$19,612.00	1 Façade, 1 Accessibility, 1 Landscaping, 7 COVID Program
2021	* \$2,464.43	* \$ 6,232.00	1 Façade, 1 COVID Program
2022	\$5,496.61	\$ 5,250.00	1 Façade, 1 COVID Program
2023	\$ 27,564.21	\$12,208.49	2 Façade, 1 Accessibility
2024	\$ 10,260.00	\$ 5,260.00	2 Façade, 1 Landscaping
Total	\$112,001.25	\$ 61,937.11	
Note in 2021 one project requires updated figures.			

For the existing CIP programs, due to their program structure they fund up to a maximum of 50% of the total project costs and in many cases the full 50% is not fully granted.

The Town of Georgina's development fee rebate program has an operating budget of \$100,000 giving the Town flexibility to support a range of development projects in their business park and beyond. Based on the tier of the potential development size, different incentive valuables can be deployed to support the attraction and expansion of businesses in Georgina.

Table 4 – Development Fee Requests and Rebates

Year	Requested	Development Rebates	Number of Applications
2018	\$ 27,822	\$ 27,822	3
2019	\$20,000	\$20,000	2
2020	\$2,477	\$1,238	3
2021	\$50,000	\$50,000	1
2022	\$25,913	\$20,076	3
Total	\$126,212	\$119,136	12

Only development data until 2022 was provided for this assessment. Over the five years that data was reviewed, 12 projects were supported for either site plan applications, tier 2 development frameworks and some COVID relief measures. Note, COVID related supports have now been discontinued.

3.2.2 Assessment of CIP Usage

The Town of Georgina offers robust but modest incentive programs. With a total annual budget of \$140,000 (\$40,000 for CIP and \$100,000 for development fee rebates) in no given year has these budgets been fully utilized. By expanding the geographic scope of existing CIP and fee waiver programs beyond the current BIAs and industrial park, the Town can open the door to new economic development opportunities. Due to the annual budget never being fully exhausted, it indicates potential for additional utilization of these incentive programs. By expanding the geographic scope of the CIPs townwide, it creates additional opportunities for applicants to uptake and utilize the incentives.

As an example, both Georgina and York Region identified supporting agri-related and on farm economic diversification as priorities in their respective economic development strategies. Future programs within a townwide framework could enable rural areas of the municipality and the smaller hamlets which currently reside outside the boundaries of the CIPs to access CIP funding may help expedite and encourage on farm diversification of while not requiring any additional budgetary investment from the Town – as existing funding will be fully utilized.

The new Townwide framework would also allow the rationalization of existing Town programs, as well as enable the development of future programs that have a range of scope and objectives.

4. Environmental Scan of Comparable CIPs

4.1 York Region Incentives

The Town of Georgina is a municipality within York Region. Although not all may be totally applicable to this framework, understanding the incentives provided by the upper tier of government can help shape future program development and where incentives may be able to stack, creating additional opportunities, locally.

4.1.1 York Region Development Charge Deferrals

York Region offers financial incentives through Development Charge (DC) deferral programs for a variety of buildings, such as new office buildings (two types), rental buildings, and retail buildings. The availability of these regional incentives are contingent on whether lower-tier municipal levels of governments adopt their own incentive policies that are similar or better.

There is a DC deferral available for office buildings of four or more storeys, one for buildings that are less than 75,000 square feet, and another for “large” office buildings that are over 75,000 square feet. The latter is limited to properties located on areas of particular investment interest, such as Regional Centres and Corridors, Major Transit Station Areas, and Specific Local Centres.

As approved by York Region Council on June 26, 2025, office buildings that are a minimum of four storeys above grade, may be eligible to defer the entire regional portion of their development fee for 48 months following building permit issuance by the local municipality. This policy was established to increase opportunities to live and work within the Region and to alleviate road congestion.

4.1.2 York Region Affordable Rental Housing Incentive Community Improvement Plan

The Region of York provides an incentive program to support the goal of increasing the construction of purpose-built rental housing across the York region. This plan covers all of the “urban”, and “towns and villages” areas as outlined in the York Region Official Plan. A partnership model with the lower tier municipalities to match the upper tier incentives is also proposed through this framework.

This incentive provides deferrals of development application fees, a tax increment equivalent grant for the regional portion of the property tax. Although not economic development related, the types of incentives deployed could be applicable to a Townwide framework in Georgina as part of future program development.

4.1.3 Select Lower Tier York Region Economic Development CIPs

Two scans were undertaken of economic development CIPs, first, Table 5 presents CIPs from across the comparable York Region municipalities.

Table 5 – Environmental Scan of York Region Economic Development CIPs

Municipality and CIP	CIP Boundaries	Goals, Objectives and value
Town of Aurora - Aurora Promenade Area CIP	Aurora Promenade Area: Old Town and areas immediately north and south along Yonge Street (2-tier priority area system)	Enable Promenade to become a commercial, social and tourism hub, attracting long-term investment yield for landlords; by promoting investment in private building stock, transit-orientated built form and enhanced pedestrian attraction. Per property incentives target commercial uses and range from a maximum grant of \$15,000 for façade and signage improvements, to a maximum of \$40,000 for building restoration/renovation, and up to \$100,000 for development charges.
Town of East Gwillimbury – Mount Albert Downtown Revitalization and Community Improvement Plan	Downtown Mount Albert/Centre Street area: Main Street, Bank Street, and Centre Street (from Main Street to Mill Street Park)	This initiative seeks to strengthen the community's economic, physical, and social well-being by improving downtown infrastructure, enhancing safety, and creating accessible, enjoyable public spaces. It emphasizes building Complete Communities through transparent engagement with residents, businesses, and stakeholders, while aligning with AODA standards. Together, these efforts will support sustainable growth, active civic life, and safer, more inclusive corridors. The 2014 CIP report recommends financial incentives per property with up to \$7,500 for façade improvements, up to \$2,000 for improving accessibility, and up to \$2,000 for landscape improvements. However, <u>the Town does not currently offer any incentives or grants related to this CIP.</u>
King Township – King Township CIP	Across five precincts: Various areas around the Township in villages, hamlets and rural areas	This Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is built around two streams—Village Vibrancy and Rural Resiliency—supporting the revitalization of King City, Nobleton, Schomberg, and the Township's rural areas, including hamlets, farmland, and the Highway 11 Corridor. It introduces financial incentives for property improvements, redevelopment, and on-farm diversified uses, while emphasizing sustainability, high-

Municipality and CIP	CIP Boundaries	Goals, Objectives and value
		quality design, and economic resilience. The CIP aligns with the Township's new Official Plan, responds to pandemic-related challenges, and sets the stage for future updates, particularly tied to the Highway 11 Corridor land use study. Incentives are available for a diversity of priorities, some include those ranging up to \$12,500 (summed amount) for signage and façade improvements, up to \$5,000 for improving building accessibility, and up to \$5,000 in support for planning application and building permit fees. Their incentives targeted to hamlets and rural properties provide up to \$10,000 in grants.
Town of Newmarket – Newmarket Historic Downtown CIP	Community Improvement Policy Area: Generally, along Yonge Street from the northern Town boundary to Sawmill Valley Drive, and Davis Drive, from east of Yonge Street to Alexander Road, including the Historic Downtown Centre along Main Street, as identified in the Town of Newmarket Official Plan	The plan to revitalize the Historic Downtown focuses on creating a supportive implementation framework within the Town's Official Plan, paired with incentives for building upkeep, façade improvements, and rental upgrades. It proposes amendments to zoning and planning policies to enable growth, diversify uses, and reduce barriers such as parking requirements, while offering fee rebates to encourage redevelopment. Key priorities include enhancing streetscapes, public art, and green space connections, attracting strategic businesses, improving parking options, and advocating for expanded GO Transit service to create a vibrant, accessible downtown. Incentives in the form of grants and loans are available for a diversity of priorities. Grants include those offering up to \$17,500 (summed amount) for façade and signage improvements, up to \$15,000 for improving building interiors in commercial, industrial and mixed use properties, and a full or

Municipality and CIP	CIP Boundaries	Goals, Objectives and value
		partial rebate for planning application and building permit fees.
Town of Richmond Hill – Richmond Hill Office Development and Village Revitalization CIP	The Centres and Corridors along Yonge Street (from Highway 7 in the south to Bloomington Road in the north)	Support and contribute to needed office space within Richmond Hill; support intensification within the City's Centres and Corridors and older business parks; and realize the revitalization of the Villages. Incentives are available for a diversity of priorities, some include those offering up to \$17,500 (summed amounts) for signage and façade improvements, up to \$100,000 for building renovation to office use, and up to \$5,000 for heritage property conservation.
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville – Downtown Stouffville Community Improvement Plan	Downtown Stouffville: along Main Street, from east of Orchard Park Boulevard to west of Park Drive, and on Edward Street, from Main Street to just south of Millard Street.	This initiative aims to support the redevelopment of Downtown Stouffville by assisting businesses, guiding public and private property enhancements, and focusing attention on local priorities. It targets areas needing repair or transition, coordinates community change, and stimulates private investment through municipal incentive programs. Incentives include a grant of up to \$15,000 for signage and façade improvements and building use conversion, reduction in property tax increase rate caused by redevelopment/rehabilitation, and a program that promotes the sale/lease of municipal owned buildings or land for redevelopment.

*Incentive lists are summarized and are not exhaustive of those available per municipality.

The CIPs within York Region, see Table 5, show different approaches to establishing plan area boundaries. Notably, most of them are focused in areas with existing commercial leverage, such as town centres, historic downtowns, and main corridors, with one extending the CIP to rural use areas and another to business parks.

King Township has incorporated opportunities for its hamlets, agricultural and rural areas through a Rural Residency CIP Stream, where farmers are incentivised to diversify their on-site uses to include opportunities for agri-tourism, on-farm dining, sale of local produce

and/or value add activities. The Village Vibrancy Stream, which promotes beautification, property improvements and economic development for village property owners and businesses by supporting aesthetic improvements to the village and utilizing under-developed land.

In Richmond Hill, the Office Development and Village Revitalization CIP support intensification within the designated city centres and corridors, and older business parks. The CIP sets up the Building Renovation Grant program which promotes the adaptive re-use of existing structures to office use through a grant of \$10,000 to \$100,000 for private sector investors.

Table 6 below, provides an overview of economic development CIPs from six municipalities where plan area boundaries were municipal wide. These municipalities range in size and have differing capacity levels to support differing CIP structures.

Table 6 – Environmental Scan of Townwide CIPs

Municipality CIP	CIP Boundaries	Purpose, Scope and Incentives
Town of Blue Mountain Townwide Revitalization Community Improvement Plan	Townwide	The following financial incentive programs are designed to encourage private sector investment, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, redevelopment, and broader community improvement works throughout the Town: • Study and design grant (up to \$20,000 per property) • Building façade and signage program (maximum of \$10,000-\$20,000 in grant and \$30,000-\$40,000 in loan) • Building improvement and renovation program (maximum of \$10,000-\$15,000 in grant and \$40,000-\$60,000 in loan) • Tax increment equivalent program (maximum of \$25,000 in grant and \$50,000 in loan) • Brownfield tax assistance program • Municipal fees grant equivalent program (up to \$50,000) • Property enhancement and improvement (maximum of \$15,000 in grant and \$45,000 in loan) • Energy efficiency improvement program (maximum of \$5,000 in grant and \$15,000-\$20,000 in loan)

Municipality CIP	CIP Boundaries	Purpose, Scope and Incentives
		• Vacant building conversion or expansion program (up to \$15,000 in grant and \$30,000 in loan) • Destination infrastructure grant (up to \$15,000 in loan)
Haldimand County CIP	Downtown Revitalization (DRCIP) – designated downtown areas within townships Rural Business and Tourism (RBTCIP) – County-wide, no designated area	Haldimand’s CIP program has two streams with an annual Operating Budget of \$150,000. Downtown Revitalization (DRCIP) - provides grants to eligible property owners within the six township downtown areas who want to invest in the renovation, development, or redevelopment of their business spaces. Grants include: • Façade, landscape and signage improvement (up to \$25,000); • Property tax increase rebate (up to 50%); • Planning application/ building permit/ development charge fee refund (100% of development charges, planning and building permit fees); • Building restoration, renovation and improvement (up to \$25,000); • Heritage Housing Grant (up to \$15,000); Rural Business and Tourism (RBTCIP) - incentivises business/property owners operating in designated hamlets or heritage buildings, or engaging in value-added agriculture or commercial roofed accommodations. Incentives include grants for: • Façade landscape and signage improvement (up to \$10,000 per property); • Property tax increase rebate (up to 50%); • Planning application/ building permit/ development charge fee refund (100% of development charges, planning and building permit fees); • Building restoration, renovation and improvement (up to \$25,000); • Heritage Commercial Use (up to \$10,000).

Municipality CIP	CIP Boundaries	Purpose, Scope and Incentives
Town of Halton Hills Community Improvement Plan	Townwide and within specific Priority Zones (i.e. Downtowns, Hamlets, GO station lands, employment lands, agricultural lands)	CIP provides financial incentives to support local businesses, and stimulate private sector investment and revitalization related to priorities in the community. Townwide incentives: • Grants for accessibility (\$2,000-\$5,000) and for energy efficiency (up to \$7,500) enhancement in commercial properties; • Grant for interest accrued (up to \$10,000) on Development Charge deferral for non residential development; • Environmental Site Assessment grant (up to \$20,000 per grant and \$35,000 per project); • Property tax assistance (50% of increment for municipal portion) and planning/building fee grant (up to \$4000 per property) for brownfield development; • Property tax assistance (100% of increment for municipal portion for max. 10 years) and no interest on Development Charge (20 years) for affordable rental housing
King Township – King Township CIP	Across five precincts: Various areas around the Township in villages, hamlets and rural areas	This CIP uses a 2-stream system (Village Vibrancy Stream and Rural Resiliency Stream). It includes visions for the revitalization of the Village Core areas of King City as well as the Township’s Countryside, including the hamlets, agricultural and rural uses, and the Highway 11 Corridor. • Village incentive programs: ○ Signage Improvement Grant (up to \$2,500); ○ Façade Improvement Grant (up to \$10,000); ○ Property Improvement Grant (up to \$10,000); ○ Building Accessibility Grant (up to \$5,000); ○ Motor Vehicle & Bicycle Parking Grant ○ Building Improvement & Use (up to \$5,000); ○ Conversion Grant (up to \$10,000);

Municipality CIP	CIP Boundaries	Purpose, Scope and Incentives
		○ Planning Application & Building Permit Fee Grant (up to \$5,000); ○ Tax increment equivalent grant (up to 100% of tax increase, not combinable with other grants); • Hamlets and rural incentive programs: ○ Up to \$10,000 in grants per property for projects related to agritourism, on-farm dining, sale of local produce, value add activities, façade and signage improvements, broadband infrastructure, planning and building fees, and professional services.
City of Niagara Falls Brownfields Community Improvement Plan	City-wide, within urban area	To promote the remediation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse and overall improvement of brownfield properties. Financial Incentives: • Environmental study grant: Up to 50% of the cost of an eligible environmental study (i.e. Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, Remedial Work Plans and/or Risk Assessment/Risk Management Plans) to provide better information on type of contamination and potential remediation costs for brownfield properties. • Tax assistance and rehabilitation grant: tax freeze of up to 5 years during and after the remediation and redevelopment of a property and annual grant (80% of increase in municipal property taxes) for up to 10 years after the freeze ends
Town of Orangeville	Municipal-wide with two priority zones (heritage area and employment area)	CIP aims to facilitate and encourage broader economic growth, sustainable development, and enhancement of underutilized areas within the Town. CIP Budget for 2024-2025 is \$150,941.46 (including carried over reserve fund and \$40k in 2025 Council contribution). Townwide CIP incentives: - Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program for cleaning up contaminated land and affordable housing (80% of the annual municipal tax increment);

Municipality CIP	CIP Boundaries	Purpose, Scope and Incentives
		- Planning fees and building permit grants for industrial uses (up to \$5,000 and \$10,000 per property, respectively) - Accessibility improvement grant for accessible parking signage (up to \$1,000 per property) - Environmental site assessment grant (up to \$20,000 per grant and up to \$35,000 per project)

The CIPs that were reviewed include plans within larger municipalities such as Niagara Falls and Halton Hills, as well as Haldimand County and Orangeville, which are similar in size to Georgina, and smaller towns such as the Township of King and Town of Blue Mountain. See Table 7 below shows the comparative size of the municipalities.

Table 7 – Comparing Municipal Populations

Municipality	Population (2021)
City of Niagara Falls	94,415
Town of Halton Hills	62,951
Haldimand County	49,216
Town of Georgina	47,642
Town of Orangeville	30,167
Township of King	27,333
Town of The Blue Mountains	7,025

These CIPs offer a perspective into how small to mid-sized municipalities established their municipal-wide CIP policies and incentives. The following sections expand on this comparison and provide some best practices and background information.

4.2 Establishing CIP boundaries

A scan of the CIPs in Table 6 shows a diversity of approaches to establishing boundaries for a municipal-wide CIP. Notably, two common approaches were creating separate streams and priority areas within the CIP. From those reviewed, only Blue Mountain kept the CIP area applying townwide.

Similarly to King's, the Haldimand County CIP splits into two streams. The Downtown Revitalization CIP applies to designated downtown areas within the County's six townships, and the Rural Business and Tourism CIP apply to the rest of the surrounding areas, there is no designated area. When comparing related grants amongst the two streams, the levels of incentives are consistent. The main difference between the two is that that downtown CIP offers an additional refund program for planning application and building permit fees. Though the incentives are similar, this two-streamed approach allows the County to provide requirements geared toward the two types of land structures.

For the Town of Orangeville CIP, Townwide applicants can apply to grants related to Environmental Site Assessment, accessibility, planning fees and building permits. However, certain programs, such as for façade improvements, development charge deferral, and major building improvement and conversion, are limited to properties within the established priority areas. One priority area consists of an employment zone, and another covers the historical heritage centre.

The City of Niagara Falls is currently updating its CIP and boundaries. Its current Brownfield CIP provides two types of incentives city-wide in the urban area. The environmental study grants help remove barriers for projects to complete early-stage studies and reviews to ensure that sites are viable. While the tax assistance and rehabilitation grant is often larger and support project implementation with 5-year incremental grant on property taxes for the difference in assessment for the site development. The Niagara Falls CIP also aligns with the Niagara Region incentives creating the opportunity for stacking of incentives.

The Town of Georgina consists of the Keswick, Sutton and Jackson's Point urban areas and the rural community of Pefferlaw, rural hamlets and the surrounding agricultural areas. As previously mentioned, the current CIP provides grants that target the Business Improvement Areas of the Uptown Keswick BIA, Sutton BIA and Jackson Point BIA. By adopting a townwide framework than targeting specific program it can create flexibility and adaptability for the Town of Georgina, depending on the Town's economic priorities.

4.3 CIP Goals and Objectives

There are many similarities amongst the goals and objectives of local CIPs, however, the boundaries for specific incentives and programs are dependent on the municipal geographic context.

More localized CIPs look to attract sustainable investments, perform upkeep and refreshments of their façades and signage, enhance the pedestrian experience, and targeting under-utilized areas for adaptive reuse and/or redevelopment. In contrast, larger urban area wide CIP tend to focus more on redevelopment as well as investment attractions to a municipality.

There are also references to increasing density, improving linkages between nodes, having an active and transparent stakeholder engagement process, developing an implementation framework for the CIP, and ensuring CIP consistency with existing municipal strategy and policies.

For Georgina, having a framework that is Townwide creates flexibility moving forward while aligning with the current and future goals of the town to grow it's economy and achieve its goal to be a community that is "open for business" while retaining its small-town feel.

4.4 CIP Incentive Levels

This section will look at the incentive levels of Georgina's existing CIPs in comparison to the scanned CIPs. The environmental scan found CIPs façade improvement grants ranged from maximums of \$10,000 to \$25,000, placing Georgina (max. \$7,500) well below the average range. If paired with the heritage building façade grant valued at the same amount, this puts the Town within the average range.

Of the scanned CIPs, only Haldimand County had a heritage focused incentive that applied municipal wide. The heritage incentives branch into commercial and housing components, with incentive levels reaching up to \$10,000 and \$15,000 respectively.

None of the scanned CIPs had municipal-wide grants specifically for landscape improvement and sustainable features besides Haldimand County, that grouped theirs with the façade grant. Although, it was not uncommon to see grants for environmental site assessments and energy efficiency.

Regarding grants to improve accessibility, Georgina, which offers up to \$7,500 in grants per project, outperformed all the studied CIPs with the average grant ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

In summary, Georgina offers an average financial incentive for façade and landscape improvements and a generous incentive to address accessibility. Its current fee rebate program has seen strong uptake by those involved in industrial development.

Based on local CIPs, there are opportunities to support more types of economic investment.

4.5 Georgina Economic Development CIP Cost Benefit Analysis

A limited cost benefit analysis was conducted on the potential shift to a townwide framework for economic development programs.

Table 8 – Costs and Benefits of ARU Incentive Elements

Element	Cost	Benefit
Townwide vs Targeted CIPs	A municipal wide framework could result in additional program applications that could results in	Given that many of the other York region CIPs are targeted by having robust townwide incentives could

	additional staff time required to assess and determine eligibility.	create a competitive advantage for the Town of Georgina.
Budget Considerations	The larger geographic area covered by potential future CIPs programs could result in additional demand creating budget pressures.	To date, CIPs have been under budget as a result it is likely the future programs can absorb incremental increases in demand at a municipal wide scale.
Stacking of Incentives	Due to the townwide nature of the framework the potential that multiple CIPs may interact or overlap in terms of eligibility criteria. This could result in multiple reviews of CIPs by staff and a larger “per project” cost to the municipality going forward.	The stacking of CIPs or other incentives could help support the financial viability of various projects. With a townwide framework there is also the potential for stacking with some York Region incentives that may apply in Georgina.
Program Consideration	The municipal wide framework could see existing programs potentially utilized in ways not initially intended. Ensuring program funding levels and criteria align to this broader framework will ensure that potential applicants’ expectations are properly managed.	By expanding programs to a municipal wide framework creates equity of access to property owners who now may access incentives that could result in innovative business or economic development opportunities in Georgina.
Awareness Building	Following the completion of any change to the CIP framework and eventual program updates/development. An awareness campaign to promote the difference and/or new opportunities should be undertaken that will likely carry a cost in terms of staff time and resources.	By raising awareness both locally and in the surrounding region it will help spur usage of any new programs under the framework.

5. Conclusion

This background report has laid the foundation for a comprehensive and inclusive CIP that reflects both the Town's unique character and its aspirations for economic growth. Through a detailed review of existing CIP programs, legislative frameworks, regional strategies, and comparative municipal scans, it is evident that Georgina has the opportunity to evolve its CIP programs into a more robust, Townwide framework.

A comprehensive review of regional and municipal strategies has informed the development of this background report. The strategies and plans emphasize the importance of business support and placemaking as key priorities for fostering sustainable growth within Georgina and York Region on a whole. It is important that the CIP builds on these foundations to position Georgina as a vibrant, inclusive, and investment-ready municipality.

While current CIP programs have delivered meaningful support to BIAs and select development projects, their geographic limitations and modest funding levels have constrained broader economic impact. Expanding the CIP to encompass the entire municipality would not only increase accessibility and equity but also align with regional priorities such as agri-tourism, on-farm diversification, and small business innovation.

The comparative scan of other CIPs demonstrates that Townwide CIPs can be both feasible and transformative, especially when paired with targeted streams and flexible incentive structures. Georgina's strong alignment with York Region's Economic Development Action Plan and its own strategic goals such as fostering vibrant downtowns, supporting tourism, and enabling gentle density further reinforce the rationale for a broader CIP framework.

Understanding the policy directions in conjunction with the comparative analysis contained within, it is essential that the Georgina Economic Development CIP stimulate investment and innovation to also strengthen Georgina's identity as a community that is open for business.