

Growth Community Improvement Plan: Downtown Target Area Guidelines

Overview

The City of North Bay recognizes the importance of the downtown core. The vitality of a Downtown is often used as a means for evaluating the relative economic health of a community. It is essential to maintain a strong Downtown Core in order to portray a positive image of the community and its investors.

As the City moves to maintain a diversified and resilient local economy, it must target its investments into employment, housing and the downtown core. Community Improvement Plans provide the Municipality tools under the Planning Act and Municipal Act to create opportunity in return for private sector investment and development in particular areas of the City. The boundaries of the Downtown Target Area are identified in Schedule A.

Goals and Objectives

The primary objective within the **Downtown Target Area** is to achieve the revitalization of the Downtown core. In order to accomplish this, the goals and priority of projects are:

- Create new, permanent jobs or full-time equivalent positions;
- Support infill development;
- Improve the physical condition of buildings while providing for new usable space;
- Increase the number of residential units;
- Increase the number of professional workers;
- Maintain or increase property values;
- Develop spaces or properties that are currently vacant or underutilized;
- Attract shoppers;
- Enhance the attractiveness and further develop the vision of the Downtown, as outlined in the City of North Bay's Official Plan;
- Support the development of the Downtown as a demand generator and tourism destination;
- Encourage development that complements the built form and commercial mix in the downtown, as outlined in the City of North Bay's Official Plan; and
- Support significant private sector investment.

Applicable Incentive Programs

The Incentive Programs offered within the Downtown Target Area are:

1. Tax Increment Rebate
2. Municipal Fee Rebate
3. Development Charges Rebate
4. Professional Study Grant
5. Façade Improvement Grant
6. Building Improvement Grant
7. Public Art Grant
8. Sidewalk Patio Grant
9. Parking and Landscaping Grant
10. Parking Requirement Exemption
11. Parking and Transit Fee Rebate

Financial Incentive Programs Descriptions

1. Tax Increment Rebate

Purpose: To provide financial incentives to stimulate new private sector investment by new and existing businesses and the intensification of residential units in the form of development, redevelopment, rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of buildings.

Description: Can provide an annual tax increment based grant of up to 100% in year one (1), 75% in year two (2), 50% in year three (3) and 25% in year four (4) following the completion and occupancy of a building that has been constructed or renovated.

Rebate Percentage	Year
100%	1
75%	2
50%	3
25%	4
0%	5

Eligible Costs: The incremental amount of the municipal portion of taxes paid by the applicant as a result of the development, redevelopment of the site/project.

2. Municipal Fee Rebate

Purpose: To provide a rebate for the required municipal fees needed for a project that stimulates new private sector investment by new and existing businesses, intensification of residential units in the form of development, redevelopment, rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of buildings.

Description: Can provide a rebate of 100% of the municipal fees to a maximum of \$250,000 required for the development or redevelopment of a project. The eligible rebate includes:

- Demolition Permits;
- Building Permits;
- Planning Act Applications¹;
- Encroachment Agreements; and
- Sign Permits.

Eligible Costs: Up to 100% of the municipal fees identified above are eligible to be rebated back to successful applicants up to a maximum of \$250,000

3. Development Charges Rebate

Purpose: To provide a rebate for the required Development Charges for development in the Downtown Target Area.

Description: Can provide a rebate of up to 100% of the required Development Charges up to a maximum of \$250,000.

Eligible Costs: Applicants can receive a 100% rebate on the required development charges up to a maximum of \$250,000.

¹ Includes; Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law amendments, Draft Plans of Subdivision/Condominium, Consent, Minor Variance, Site Plan Control Agreements.

4. Professional Study Grant

Purpose: To provide a financial incentive to offset the cost of hiring a Professional Engineer, Architect and/or a Qualified Designer for the design of a proposed housing project, downtown project or industrial development.

Description: This program can provide a grant equal to 75% of the cost to a maximum of \$5,000 to hire a Professional Engineer, Architect and/or a Qualified Designer to develop plans and designs for buildings within the Downtown Target Area.

Eligible Costs: Up to 75% of the costs to hire a third party engineer, architect and/or a licensed small building designer for up to a maximum of \$5,000.

5. Façade Improvement Grant

Purpose: To support applicants in obtaining the funds necessary for upgrading building façades within the Downtown Target Area. In order to maintain the character of the downtown, certain design criteria will need to be fulfilled in order to receive funds for façade upgrades.

Section 2.2.1.1.28 of Official Plan reads;

“Attractive private sector facades and signage that enhance the physical appearance and traditional/historic character of the Central Business District will be encouraged. Use of traditional features such as awnings, front lit sign boards and other similar treatments are encouraged”.

Description: Can offer successful applicants up to 50% funding to a maximum amount of \$15,000 when upgrading façades that meet the general intent of this program. An evaluation table will be used to evaluate Façade Improvement Grant applications; this evaluation table is included in Schedule B.

Applicants are required to include professional design drawings for proposed façade upgrade projects. The costs associated with the development of these drawings by a professional third party are not eligible under the Façade Improvement Grant program but may be eligible for funding under the Professional Study Grant Program.

Eligible Costs: Examples of eligible façade improvements include but are not limited to;

- Masonry cleaning;
- Restoration;
- Installation of storefront awnings;
- Redesign of storefronts;
- Installation of appropriate signage;
- Replacement or repair of cornices, parapets and;
- Other architectural features.

Eligible costs include the cost of construction materials and labour.

6. Building Improvement Grant

Purpose: To support capital projects that will allow for the establishment of new businesses, the significant enhancement of existing businesses or the creation of new residential units within the Downtown Target Area.

Description: Can offer successful applicants up to 50% funding to a maximum amount of \$30,000. This grant is only eligible when a building project includes a façade improvement component as outlined in Façade Improvement Grant or when façade improvements have been completed within the five (5) years prior to the application.

Façade improvements completed five (5) years prior to Building Improvement Grant application must fulfill the general intent of the Façade Improvement Program. Consideration will be given to multi-tenant buildings and buildings that currently meet the general intent of the façade improvement program.

Eligible Costs: Eligible costs include third-party contractor fees and construction materials. Eligible projects might include, but are not necessarily limited to;

- Structural repairs;
- Fire safety projects;
- Construction of new residential units and other major renovations; or
- Construction that results in the establishment of new useable space.

7. Public Art Grant

Purpose: To help to promote uniqueness, sense of place, community spirit and vibrancy in Downtown North Bay through the provision of art forms on both public and private properties.

Description: Provides a grant of 50% of matching funds to a maximum of \$2,500 for eligible art pieces and displays on public and private property that are clearly visible to the public. The maximum grant per property is \$2,500 with a maximum of one application per property per year.

All art pieces and displays must be pre-approved by the City through the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC).

Eligible Costs: The following types of costs are considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- Materials;
- Installation; and
- Lighting and landscaping that highlights the public art.

Types of work eligible for a grant under the Professional Art Grant:

- Murals;
- Sculptures;
- Paintings;
- Local heritage based art pieces and displays;
- Interactive art pieces and displays; and
- Any other art piece approved by the Public Art Advisory Committee.

8. Sidewalk Patio Grant

Purpose: To provide businesses in the Downtown Target Area with the opportunity to utilize publicly-owned sidewalks and on-street parking spaces in order to permit sidewalk patios.

Description: Can provide successful applicants with up to a 100% grant up to a maximum of \$1,000 to support professional fees associated with the design of the sidewalk patio and up to a 100% grant up to a maximum of \$1,000 to support eligible construction costs associated with the sidewalk patio.

Eligible Costs:

- Up to 100% to a maximum of \$1,000 to support professional fees associated with the design of the sidewalk patio; and
- Up to 100% to a maximum \$1,000 to support eligible construction costs associated with the sidewalk patio.

9. Parking and Landscaping Grant

Purpose: To help revitalize existing parking lots and parking spaces in the Downtown Target Area in order to make them safer, more sustainable and visually appealing.

Description: Can provide successful applicants a grant of 50% of matching funds with a maximum of up to \$5,000 for projects that make parking lots safer, more sustainable and visually appealing.

Applicants are required to include professional design drawings for proposed projects. The costs associated with the development of these drawings by a professional third party are not eligible under the Parking and Landscaping Grant Program but may be eligible for funding under the Professional Study Grant Program.

Eligible Costs: Following types of costs are considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- Materials;
- Installation & labour; and
- Lighting & landscaping that improves the safety, visual appeal and sustainability of the parking area.

Projects that incorporate Low-Impact Development (LID) will be given priority. These projects could include but are not limited to:

- Permeable Pavements;
- Rainwater Harvesting;
- Rain Gardens; and
- Absorbent Landscaping.

10. Parking Requirement Exemption Program

Purpose: To incentivize new businesses and residential units to locate within the downtown area by providing a reduction of parking requirements.

Description: Can provide a reduction in the parking requirements from the Zoning By-law for new businesses and residential units when located within the Downtown Target Area.

Eligible Costs: There are no eligible costs associated with this program.

11. Parking and Transit Fee Rebate

Purpose: To provide a grant for parking permits and transit passes for employees of new and/or expanding businesses and residents in the downtown. The purpose is to further incentivize new employment opportunities and increase residential units within the Downtown Target Area.

Description: Can provide a grant for new and/or expanding eligible businesses in the downtown for up to a 50% grant on parking permit fees or monthly transit passes for a maximum of three (3) years. Net new residential units are eligible for a one (1) year grant of 50% on parking permits and monthly transit pass fees².

Eligible Costs: Parking pass permit and monthly transit pass fees.

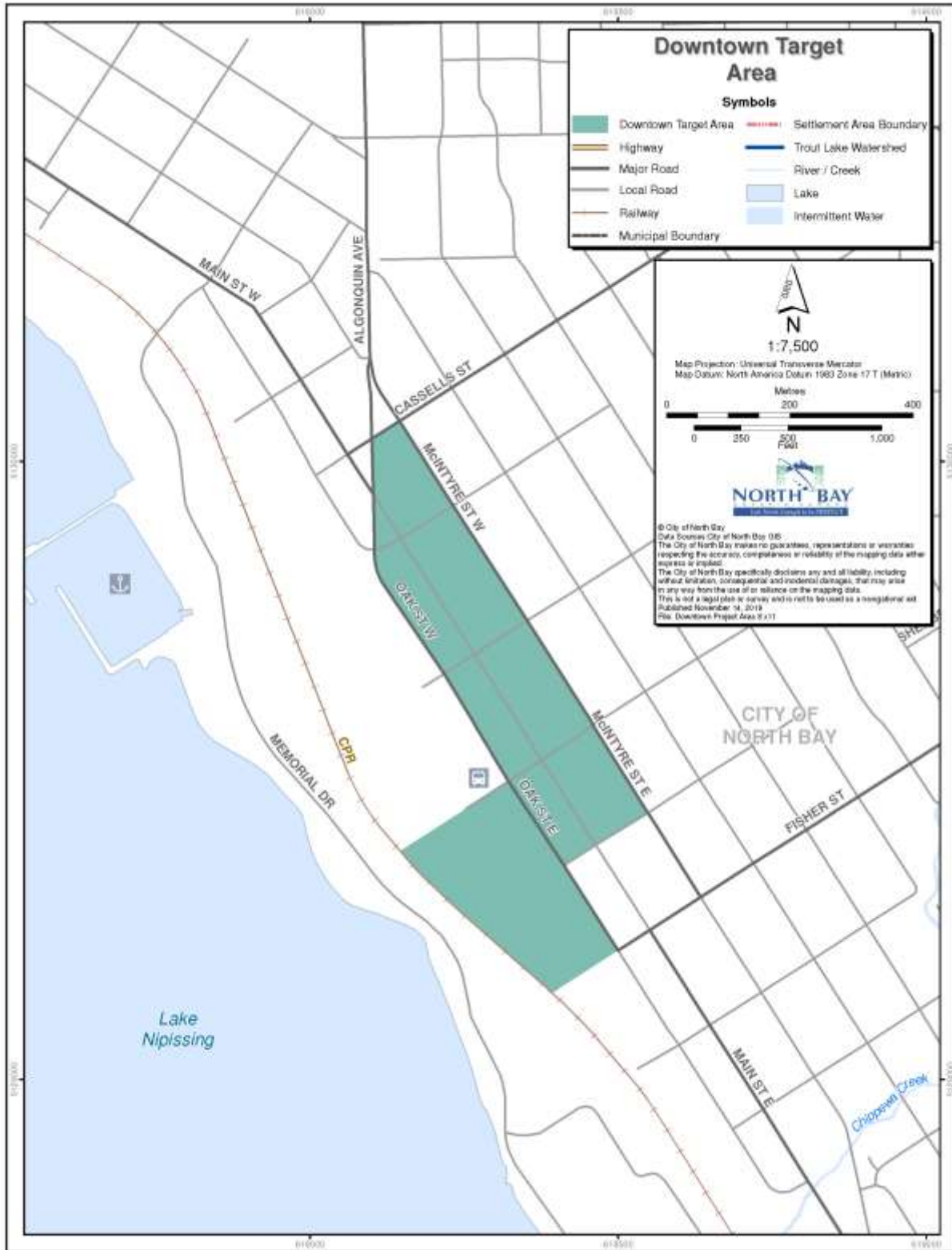
² Only two parking fee grants can be given per individual residential unit. Transit passes are limited to the number of individuals on the applicable lease.

Contact Information

For additional information or to obtain an application form, please contact:

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Schedule A - Downtown Target Area



Schedule B – Façade Improvement Evaluation Chart

Evaluation Criteria	Points Awarded	Comments
Proposed work maintains existing historic and natural façade materials such as brick, stone or wood or includes such materials.	/5	
Proposed work includes materials that are of durable quality. Vinyl siding, metal siding, and cultured stone/brick are strongly avoided.	/5	
Proposed work implements paint and material colours that are of a historic aesthetic.	/5	
Proposed work considers the height of cornices, signage bands, and other elements of the immediately adjacent buildings.	/5	
Proposed work maintains or implements roof cornice.	/5	
Proposed work maintains or implements lower cornice.	/5	
Proposed work maintains or implements a low window sill line at first floor level.	/5	
Proposed work includes a minimum of 50% glazing at ground level, or the existing glazing percentage, whichever is more.	/5	
Proposed work includes display windows that are fully transparent, not mirrored or tinted.	/5	
Proposed work implements or maintains signage band.	/5	
Proposed work implements residential entrances that are easy to differentiate from commercial entrances in mixed use buildings.	/5	
Proposed work includes lighting fixtures that illuminate the façade or signage band and are of an historic aesthetic, such as goosenecks.	/5	
Total Application Score	/60 **	

Ineligible categories will be subtracted from the overall score.

Points Legend

16%-40% = \$5,000
 40.1%-73% = \$10,000
 73.1%-100% = \$15,000

Scoring

- 1- Strongly Disagree
- 2- Disagree
- 3- Neutral
- 4- Agree
- 5- Strongly Agree

Appendix A – General Program Requirements

General Program Requirements

All of the incentive programs contained in this CIP are subject to the following general requirements as well as the individual requirements specified under each incentive program. The general and program specific requirements contained in this CIP are not necessarily exhaustive, and the City reserves the right to include other requirements and conditions as deemed necessary on a property specific basis:

- a) In the Industrial Target Area, the proposed redevelopment, rehabilitation of an existing industrial building in a M1, M2, M3, M4, MBP, MR, MAP-A or MAP-G zone through Zoning By-law 2015-30, as amended, must include a minimum of a 25% increase in useable floor space or have a substantial increase in employment.
- b) An application for any financial incentive program contained in this CIP:
 - i) Can be made only for development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and/or adaptive reuse of a building or property within the identified target areas of this CIP;
 - ii) Must be submitted to the City prior to the commencement of any works to which the incentive program will apply and prior to the application for a building permit; and
 - iii) Must include plans, drawings, studies, reports, cost and/or other studies, details and information as may be required by the City to satisfy the City with respect to project eligibility, design, performance and conformity with the CIP.
- c) Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by City staff and the Chair of Community Services (hereinafter “Review Team”), who will make the decision to approve, deny or defer the application.
- d) Eligibility will be based on the allocated funds to the CIP, and the applications will be dealt with on a first come first serve basis. Applicants may receive partial funding, if the remaining funds cannot meet the request of the applicant.
- e) Applicants applying under this CIP cannot apply for a tax increment grant program under any other applicable CIP or similar incentives. Properties which are located in multiple target areas can only apply for incentives in one target area for the lifetime of this plan;
- f) As a condition of approval, the applicant may be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with the City. This Agreement will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the incentive to be provided. This Agreement is also subject to approval by Council or Council’s designate;

- g) The City reserves the right to audit the cost of any and all works that have been approved under any of the financial incentive programs, at the expense of the applicant;
- h) The City is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including without limitation, costs incurred in anticipation of a grant;
- i) If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the City, the approved grant may be delayed, reduced or canceled, and the applicant may be required to repay part or all of the approved grant;
- j) The applicant will have one (1) year from the time of approval of the application to submit the required information to receive their grant payment. The applicant may apply for an extension in writing; the Review Team has the authority on behalf of Council to grant extensions. Failure to meet the one (1) year requirement, and where no extensions have been given, the application will be deemed to have been denied and no grants will be given.
- k) The City may discontinue any of the programs contained in the CIP at any time, but applicants with approved grants will still receive said grant, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements in the allotted time;
- l) Proposed land uses must be in conformity with the Official Plan, Zoning By-law and other planning requirements and approvals;
- m) All proposed works approved under the incentive programs shall conform to provincial laws and City guidelines, by-laws, policies, procedures, and standards;
- n) All works completed must comply with the description of the works as provided in the application form and contained in the grant agreement, if required, with any amendments as approved by the City;
- o) All construction and improvements made to buildings and/or land shall be made pursuant to a Building Permit, and/or other required permits, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals;
- p) Where required by the City, outstanding work orders, and/or orders or requests to comply, and/or other charges from the City must be satisfactorily addressed prior to grant approval or payment;
- q) Property taxes must be in good standing at the time of program application, approval and throughout the entire length of the grant commitment;
- r) City staff, officials, and/or agents may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the incentive programs offered by the City;

- s) The total of all grants and tax assistance provided in respect of the particular lands and buildings for which an applicant is making the application under the programs contained in this CIP and any other applicable CIPs shall not exceed the eligible costs of the improvements to those particular lands and buildings under all applicable CIPs;
- t) An approved application permits City Staff, Officials and/or agents of the City the right to announce approved financial grants once the work has commenced or as agreed upon by the City and the applicant; and
- u) Proponent agrees to provide annual reporting documentation for the entirety of their tax increment period (four (4) years).