

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA**

**REPORT NO. CS-2020-0013**

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF  
COUNCIL  
JUNE 10, 2020**

**SUBJECT: GEORGINA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY TEAM INITIATIVES**

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**1. RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That Council receive Report No. CS-2020-0013 prepared by the Economic Development and Tourism Division, Development Services Department and the Corporate Services Department dated June 10, 2020 respecting Georgina's Economic Recovery Team initiatives;**
- 2. That Council direct Georgina's Economic Recovery Team to expand the Community Improvement Plan and Development Application Rebate Programs and introduce programs specific to supporting the business community and their need to address the implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic. And further, that a briefing note be provided to Council to confirm the launch of the expanded Community Improvement Plan and Development Application Rebate Programs;**
- 3. That the current 2020 budget established for the Community Improvement Plan and Development Application Rebate be utilized to fund these additional programs;**
- 4. That the Town Solicitor review the details of the additional financial programs prior to launch; and**
- 5. That Council delegate the approval authority for all applications submitted to the Community Improvement Plan and the Development Application Rebate Programs to Georgina's Economic Recovery Team until such time as the Economic Development Committee begins to meet.**

**2. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to request that Council authorize the introduction of additional financial grants under the umbrella of the Community Improvement Plan and Development Application Rebate Programs. And further, that the Economic Recovery Team be authorized to evaluate and approve any applications to these financial programs until such time as the Economic Development Committee (EDC) is able to meet.

**3. BACKGROUND:**

On March 19, 2020, the Town of Georgina's Mayor, Margaret Quirk issued a declaration of emergency as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Recognizing the impact this pandemic would have on the local business community and our residents, an internal task force was appointed to consider options to address short term assistance and support longer term recovery efforts. This internal task force is now being branded as **Georgina's Economic Recovery Team (Team)** and includes the following Town Staff, with the Chief Administrative Officer and Mayor as advisors to the Team:

Rob Wheeler, Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer  
Ryan Cronsberry, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Geoff Harrison, Manager of Taxation, Revenue and Customer Service  
Karyn Stone, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism

Based on the desire to create programs that can be accommodated within the existing 2020 budget, staff are recommending that a number of additional financial programs be introduced under the umbrella of the existing Community Improvement Plan and Development Application Rebate Programs. These additional financial programs are summarized in Section 4.1 below and recognize that businesses will be required to make additional investments and revise their business operations in order to address the COVID-19 Pandemic and remain competitive.

**4. ANALYSIS:**

In order to support businesses as they begin to adjust their business operations, staff are recommending that two of the Town's existing funding programs be modified to introduce additional programs specific to assisting businesses that are required to modify business operations to address the COVID-19 Pandemic. A summary of the existing funding Programs is provided below.

Existing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Program (Business Improvement Areas)

As Council is aware the Community Improvement Plan is a program that was approved in accordance with Section 28 of the Ontario Planning Act and applies to only those commercially assessed properties that are identified as being within the Keswick, Sutton or Jackson's Point Business Improvement Areas.

- Façade Improvement Grant
- Accessibility Improvement Grant
- Heritage Façade Improvement Grant
- Landscaping Improvement Grant

Existing Development Application Rebate (DAR) Program (Town Wide)

The Development Application Rebate Program was approved in 2018 in accordance with Section 69(2) in order to help Georgina remain competitive and promote employment growth and development of the office and industrial sectors.

- Planning Application Rebates (up to a maximum of \$10,000 per application, maximum of \$20,000 per property where multiple Planning Act applications are required)
- Eligibility Criteria (min. 1500 sq. ft. new office, industrial floor area, maintain/create 5 full time jobs)

In speaking with the Town's Solicitor, he has advised that providing an additional rebate program specific to building permit fees would be permitted under Section 107 of the Ontario Municipal Act.

In light of the current economic climate and the need to adjust business operations together with the existing eligibility criteria, staff are of the opinion that it is unlikely that either of these current programs will be fully utilized during the balance of 2020. The 2020 budget has allocated \$34,200 to the CIP Program and \$100,000 to the Development Application Rebate Program. Staff have received only one application to the CIP Program in 2020 and this application is currently awaiting final review by the Economic Development Committee (EDC).

In order to provide additional assistance to the business community and to assist with efforts that must be made to address operations during this Pandemic and in the future, staff are recommending that additional opportunities to support the local business community be included in these two funding programs as noted below in Section 4.1.

These additional funding opportunities recognize that businesses are required additional software and digital infrastructure to introduce online and curbside shopping. Business are also required to retrofit floor layouts, install barriers etc to address social distancing requirements. These retrofits and technology purchases represent a significant investment for business that have been closed or operating at a limited capacity.

4.1 Revised Grant Program Details

Community Improvement Plan(Business Improvement Areas):

- Applications will now be received to fund interior renovations to address COVID 19 (maximum 50% cost share to a max. of \$3,000 per business)
- Applications will now be received for the purchase/implementation of new technology or software programs to enable e-commerce options (maximum 50% cost share to a max of \$1,500)

Development Application Rebate Program (Town Wide):

- Rebates will now be available for Building Permit Fees (\$3,000 per business, all sectors will be eligible for this specific program)

The Economic Recovery Team is confident that these modifications will allow us to support business owners that are renovating/upgrading existing commercial spaces and retrofits necessary to address COVID-19 and/or upgrading existing commercial spaces.

Staff are working to create the additional application forms related to the programs described above and will be advising Council once they are ready for launch. Staff have had discussions with the Town's solicitor with respect to the introduction of these new financial programs under the umbrella of the CIP and DAR and will be providing the final applications to the solicitor for review prior to launch.

In order to ensure that any applications are processed in a timely manner and due to the inability to conduct meetings with the EDC, staff are requesting that Council authorize the Economic Recovery Team to evaluate any applications received to these programs until such time as regular EDC meetings resume.

**5. RELATIONSHIP TO CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Corporate Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: "Grow Our Economy"

Goal 2: "Engage and Build our Community and Partnerships"

**6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

The 2020 Council approved budget includes \$34,200 for the administration of the CIP Program and \$100,000 for the DAR Program. These existing budget amounts will be utilized for the expansion of the CIP and DAR Programs.

**7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE:**

There are no requirements to provide notice or receive public input prior to consideration and approval of this report.

**8. CONCLUSION:**

Staff are requesting that Council authorize staff to revise the existing Community Improvement and Development Application Rebate Programs to include additional opportunities to support the business community as they adapt their business operations to address the COVID 19 Pandemic. And further, that these programs be implemented immediately and terminate on December 31, 2020.

The Town's Solicitor has been consulted with respect to these additional program and will have the opportunity to review the final details contained within the application forms.

Staff will review and evaluate these additional funding opportunities at the end of 2020 and report to Council on the need to continue these specific programs.

Georgina's Economic Recovery Team is continuing to investigate opportunities to partner with York Region on programs that may be announced in the future and is developing additional marketing campaigns to support shopping local in Georgina. A report will be presented to Council on June 24, 2020 to address the opportunities to support not-for-profits and charitable organizations.

Prepared by:

Recommended by:

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Rob Wheeler, CPA, CA  
Director of Corporate Services and  
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Recommended by

Approved by:

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Harold Lenters, M.Sc. MCIP, RPP  
Director of Development Services

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Dave Reddon  
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