



TOWN OF COCHRANE FINAL COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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WSP

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	What is a CIP?	1
1.2	Purpose of this Document	2
1.3	CIP Project Area.....	3
2	PLANNING CONTEXT & POLICY REVIEW	6
2.1	Planning Act	6
2.2	Municipal Act.....	7
2.3	Ontario Heritage Act.....	9
2.4	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.....	9
2.5	Provincial Policy Statement (2014).....	9
2.6	Growth Plan for Northern Ontario (2011)	10
2.7	Town of Cochrane Official Plan (2014).....	11
2.8	Town of Cochrane Zoning By-law (2014)	15
2.9	Other Local Planning Considerations	15
2.9.1	The Doable Neighbourhood Project, Cochrane, Ontario (2015)	15
2.9.2	Strategic Plan for the Town of Cochrane (2014)	18
2.9.3	Rethinking Cochrane’s Socio-economic Future (2010)	19
2.9.4	Cochrane Resident and Labour Market Attraction Strategy (2012)	20
3	IDENTIFICATION OF CIP OPPORTUNITIES ...	22
3.1	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis.....	22
3.2	Key CIP Opportunities.....	34
4	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	41
4.1	Visioning Workshop.....	41
4.2	Community and Business Surveys.....	41

5	CIP VISION AND GOALS	43
5.1	Vision Statement	43
5.2	Goals	43
6	MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY	44
6.1	Public Policies	44
6.1.1	Urban Design Guidelines	44
6.1.2	Streetscape Design Plan.....	44
6.1.3	Parking Strategy.....	44
6.2	Public Lands and Buildings	45
6.3	Infrastructure	46
6.4	Gateway Signage	48
6.5	Smartphone Application	49
7	FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS.....	50
7.1	Accessibility Grant.....	52
7.2	Affordable Housing Study Grant.....	53
7.3	Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant.....	54
7.4	Downtown Housing Grant.....	56
7.5	Environmental Site Assessment Grant.....	57
7.6	Façade Improvement Grant.....	58
7.7	Landscaping and Parking Area Improvement Grant	60
7.8	Planning and Building Fee Grant.....	61
7.9	Retail Market Strategy Study Grant.....	62
7.10	Signage Improvement Grant	63
7.11	Tax Increment Equivalent Grant.....	64
7.12	Concept Renderings.....	66

8	IMPLEMENTATION	70
8.1	Interpretation	70
8.2	Administration	70
8.2.1	Designation of Administrator and Approval Authority	71
8.2.2	Financial Incentive Program Budget	71
8.3	General Eligibility Requirements	71
8.4	Design Guidelines	73
8.4.1	Streetscape Guidelines	73
8.4.2	Built Form Guidelines	74
8.4.3	Building Façade Improvement Guidelines	75
8.4.4	Building Signage Guidelines	76
8.4.5	Gateway / Wayfinding / Directional Signage Guidelines	77
8.4.6	Landscaping and Parking Area Guidelines	77
8.5	Application Process	78
8.6	Marketing Strategy	80
8.6.1	Town Website and Social Media	81
8.6.2	Launch Party	81
8.6.3	Printed Materials	81
8.6.4	Pop-Ups	81
8.6.5	Potential Participant Meetings	81
8.6.6	Shop Local Initiative and Contests	82
8.6.7	Annual Reporting	82
8.6.8	Showcase Success	82
8.7	Monitoring and Evaluation Program	82
8.8	Amendments to the CIP	85
9	CONCLUSION	86

TABLES

Table 3-1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to Community Improvement in Cochrane	23
Table 7-1: Overview of CIP Financial Incentive Programs	50
Table 7-2: Implementation Areas for Proposed Financial Incentive Programs.....	52

FIGURES

Figure 1-1: Town of Cochrane Settlement Area Boundary - CIP Project Area	5
Figure 2-1: Town of Cochrane Official Plan Schedule A - Urban Land Use Designations (Cochrane Settlement Area)	14
Figure 2-2: Town of Cochrane Zoning By-law Schedule A (Cochrane Settlement Area)	16
Figure 2-3: Cochrane Street Beautification Recommendations, Doable Neighbourhood Project	17
Figure 3-1: SWOT Images – CIP Project Area Tour.....	32
Figure 3-2: Existing gateway sign on Western Avenue	35
Figure 3-3: Recommended Gateway Precinct and Potential Gateway Locations.....	37
Figure 3-4: Recommended Downtown Precinct	38
Figure 3-5: Recommended Brownfields Redevelopment Precinct	39
Figure 4-1: CIP Visioning Workshop - March 8, 2018	41
Figure 6-1: Potential Municipal Parking Lot Locations.....	47
Figure 7-1: Existing intersection of Sixth Avenue / Railway Street (top); after potential Town-initiated gateway improvements (bottom)	67
Figure 7-2: Existing intersection of Sixth Avenue / Third Street (top); after potential Town-initiated gateway / streetscaping improvements and improvements funded in part by CIP grants (bottom)	68
Figure 7-3: Existing vacant building at corner of Fourth Avenue / Third Street (top); after potential redevelopment and improvements funded in part by CIP grants (bottom)	69
Figure 8-1: Financial Incentive Program Application Process Summary	80

APPENDICES

- A** Visioning Workshop Summary
- B** Community and Business Survey Results

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS A CIP?

The Town of Cochrane is preparing a Community Improvement Plan (CIP). A CIP is a planning and economic development tool for municipalities to promote community revitalization and often serves as a catalyst for achieving economic, community planning and urban development goals. Municipalities use CIPs to enable a wide range of programs and policies that encourage private investment, and to support strategic municipal initiatives aimed at the revitalization of targeted areas. CIPs can provide several benefits for a community, including:

- Stimulating private sector investment in targeted areas through grants and loans provided by the Town;
- Promoting revitalization and place-making to attract tourism, business investment, and economic development opportunities;
- Developing affordable housing;
- Promoting brownfield cleanup and redevelopment;
- Enhancing streetscapes, landscaping, building façades, and signage;
- Improving energy efficiency; and
- Encouraging the effective use of community infrastructure.

Under Section 106 of the Municipal Act, municipalities are prohibited from directly or indirectly assisting industrial or commercial enterprises. However, municipalities are exempt from these restrictions if they are exercising their authority under Section 28 of the Planning Act. Section 28 of the Planning Act enables municipalities to:

- Designate by by-law a specific property, area, or entire community covered by an Official Plan as a community improvement project area;
- Acquire, hold, clear, grade, or otherwise prepare land for community improvement;
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate, or improve buildings on municipal land;
- Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of municipal land;
- Provide grants or loans to owners, tenants and their assignees within the community improvement area to pay the whole or any part of identified eligible costs; and
- Provide property tax assistance for environmental remediation purposes.

A municipality's Official Plan must contain policies to enable the preparation of a CIP, and the municipality also requires a by-law designating a CIP project area.

Under Section 28 of the Planning Act, once an area has been designated a community improvement area, a variety of financial assistance programs may be implemented. These programs may include grants or loans to property owners and tenants to help cover the costs of improvements to eligible properties. Municipalities may also incorporate a "municipal leadership

strategy” into a Community Improvement Plan to identify other actions, programs, capital projects, and policies that may assist in revitalizing target areas. A municipal leadership strategy may address issues related to policy and regulatory gaps or conflicts (e.g. changes required to the Zoning By-law), streetscaping and public realm improvements or guidelines, or the implementation of other projects related to community revitalization.

In general, CIPs are not intended to support greenfield development, but rather to improve conditions in existing urban areas. The most common use of a CIP is to enable grants to assist private property owners in improving their properties, including undertaking improvements to façades, signage, and landscaping, and to assist with the costs of improving historic properties. CIPs may also be used to promote the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites, as well as the revitalization of commercial, industrial, institutional, and even rural areas. Under a CIP, a municipality may issue grants and loans to help support redevelopment and infill development projects by providing incentives to increase the assessed value of a property (tax increment equivalent grants), offering rebates on planning and application fees, or providing direct grants or loans to help finance redevelopment and intensification projects.

A key component of a CIP is the eligibility criteria that establish the conditions and goals by which an application for a financial incentive will be evaluated. For example, to be eligible for a façade improvement grant, a CIP may require that the proposed improvements be consistent with specific urban design guidelines or criteria. Through the thoughtful identification of eligibility criteria for financial incentive programs that are tailored to the municipality, the CIP can advance a wide range of planning, urban design, and economic development objectives.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this CIP document is to describe the framework for the preparation of the Town’s CIP, establish the Plan’s vision and goals, identify the recommended financial incentive programs to meet the Plan’s goals, and set out an implementation strategy which includes administration and marketing of the CIP, and monitoring results.

This CIP document is organized as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the legislative, policy, and regulatory framework for the preparation of the CIP;
- Section 3 reviews strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the Town which have been considered in the development of the CIP;
- Section 4 summarizes the community engagement completed during the development of the CIP;
- Section 5 presents the vision for the Town and the goals of the CIP, developed as a result of a Visioning workshop held at the outset of the project with members of the CIP Working Group, Economic Development Board, and Planning Board;
- Section 6 describes municipal initiatives that are recommended to complement and support the Plan;
- Section 7 sets out financial incentive programs for private property owners and developers to achieve CIP goals;

- Section 8 provides details on the implementation of the CIP, including administration, eligibility and application requirements, a municipal marketing strategy, and monitoring / evaluation program, and the processes required for any amendments to the CIP;
- Appendix A includes a summary of the CIP Working Group Visioning Workshop results; and
- Appendix B includes a summary of the Community and Business Survey results.

Sections 6 through 8 of this document are the operative sections of the CIP for the purposes of any by-law implementing this Plan. Sections 1 through 5 are non-operative and are provided as background information for the reader.

1.3 CIP PROJECT AREA

The Town of Cochrane is located approximately 120 km northeast of Timmins, within the Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area. The Planning Area occupies a total land area of approximately 536 km² and consists of an expansive rural area, and the two hamlets of Clute and Genier. The Town is an urban service centre for a wide area in Northeastern Ontario, and a junction and distribution point for road, rail and air transport with connections to James Bay, Quebec, and southern and western Ontario. The Town also provides business services for residents of the community and surrounding area, as well as the travelling public (Town of Cochrane Official Plan, 2014).

The Town of Cochrane is situated at the junction of provincial Highway 11 North / South and Highway 11 West (TransCanada Highway), which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and continues westward to the Towns of Kapuskasing and Hearst. The major centre of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec is located within a two-and-a-half-hour drive to the west of Cochrane; the area in between includes the wilderness area of Abitibi-Temiskaming, one of the largest forestry resource regions of Quebec.

The Ontario Northland Railway (ONR) is the southernmost stop for the Polar Bear Express train service between Cochrane and Moosonee. Industrial uses are concentrated along the ONR, and both north and south of the railway on the east end of the Town. Mixed use commercial areas are located south of the railway, and the downtown Central Business Area, Central Transition Area, and residential uses are located to the north.

According to the 2016 Census (Statistics Canada), the population of the Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area was 5,321, representing a slight decrease from the 2011 Census population of 5,340. The 2016 population of the Cochrane population centre, as defined by Statistics Canada, was 3,648. The Official Plan for the Town of Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area anticipates modest growth and a population of 7,400 by the planning horizon year 2032, primarily associated with anticipated economic development opportunities in the region related to gold exploration and mining. Urban growth in the Planning Area is expected to be focused in the Cochrane settlement area (Town of Cochrane Official Plan, 2014).

Section 8.1 of the Town's Official Plan (2014) identifies the Cochrane settlement area and the Hamlets of Clute and Genier as Community Improvement Areas, which may be further designated by by-law, in whole or in part, as one or more defined Community Improvement Project Areas for which a detailed Community Improvement Plan will be prepared. At this time,



the Town of Cochrane is seeking to implement a Community Improvement Plan for the Cochrane settlement area only, as illustrated in **Figure 1-1**. The five-year Strategic Plan for the Town of Cochrane (2014) recommends that the Highway 11 corridor, the planned Lake Commando improvements, and the downtown core be considered as areas for revitalization through the CIP process.

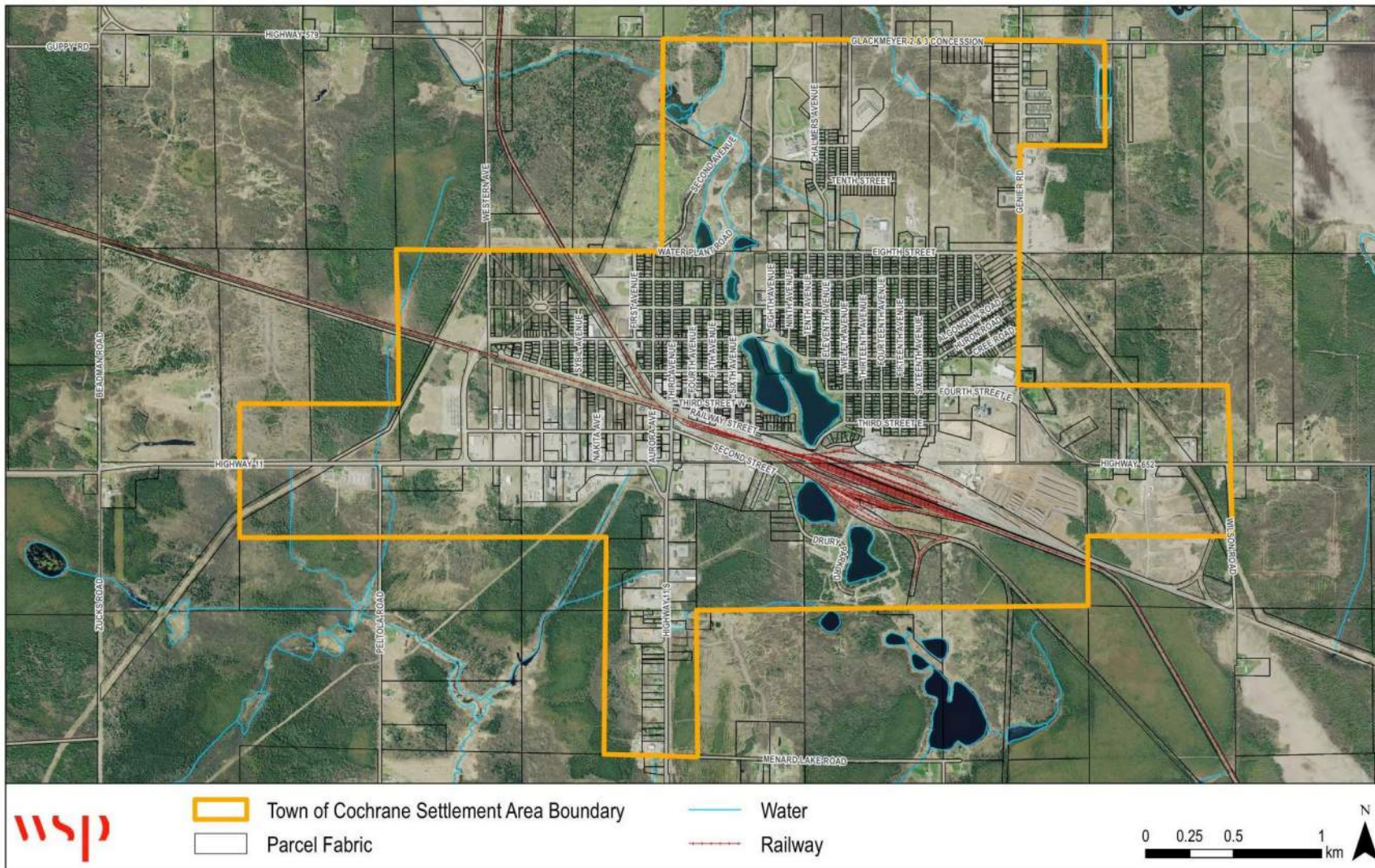


Figure 1-1: Town of Cochrane Settlement Area Boundary - CIP Project Area

2 PLANNING CONTEXT & POLICY REVIEW

2.1 PLANNING ACT

The Planning Act outlines the tools, methods and procedures that municipalities can use to plan for and regulate the use of land and buildings in Ontario. The Act also outlines the powers that municipalities can exercise through a Community Improvement Plan.

Section 28(1) of the Planning Act defines community improvement as:

“...the planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary.”

Section 28 of the Planning Act allows municipalities whose Official Plans contain provisions regarding community improvement to prepare and adopt Community Improvement Plans for designated community improvement project areas (Section 28(2)).

A community improvement project area is the area to which the Community Improvement Plan applies, and is passed as a by-law by Council (Section 28(3)).

An area can be designated as a community improvement area for various reasons. The criteria for designation include:

“...age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reasons.”
(Section 28(1))

The breadth of the definition allows municipalities the flexibility to address specific local community improvement issues, such as downtown revitalization, as well as issues that are more generally present in a municipality at large, such as the presence of brownfields.

Where a by-law designating a community improvement project area has been passed, Council may adopt a plan in accordance with certain subsections of Section 17 of the Planning Act. Section 17 outlines the statutory process for adopting the document, including the provision of at least one public meeting, which must be held no earlier than 20 days after publishing the notice of the public meeting and making the Community Improvement Plan publicly available for review.

Under Section 17(15) of the Planning Act, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the upper-tier municipality, if applicable, must be consulted during the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan. When a Community Improvement Plan comes into effect, however, approval by the Minister of Municipal Affairs is no longer required for the municipality to acquire land, provided the Plan provides for the acquisition and improvement of land (Section 28(3)). The Community Improvement Plan may be used by the municipality to:

“construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area in conformity with the Community Improvement Plan, and sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any such buildings and land appurtenant thereto.” (Section 28(6a)) and/or:

“sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any land acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area any person or governmental authority for use in conformity with the community improvement plan.” (Section 28(6b))

This permits the municipality to make direct interventions to improve properties, or to build new buildings and facilities, as needed.

Under Section 28(7), the municipality may issue grants and loans to property owners and tenants to help pay for eligible costs. Eligible costs are broadly defined to include “costs related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities” (Section 28(7.1)). Under no circumstance can the amount of a grant or loan made in respect of particular lands and buildings exceed the eligible cost of the community improvement plan with respect to those lands and buildings (Section 28(7.3)).

The Planning Act also contains provisions that allow the municipality to enter into agreements concerning any grants or loans it may issue, and permit the municipality to register the agreement against the title of the land (Section 28(11)).

Once Council is satisfied that a Community Improvement Plan has been carried out, Council may pass a by-law to dissolve the community improvement project area. Following the dissolution of the project area, any previously effected Community Improvement Plans are rendered non-applicable (Section 28(13)).

In addition to Section 28, Section 69 of the Planning Act allows municipalities to reduce or waive the amount of a fee in respect of a planning application where it feels payment is unreasonable. Many Community Improvement Plans offer application fee refunds as a financial incentive.

2.2 MUNICIPAL ACT

Section 106 of the Municipal Act prohibits municipalities from directly or indirectly assisting any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses (Section 106(1)). Prohibited actions include:

- a) giving or lending any property of the municipality, including money;

- b) guaranteeing borrowing;
- c) leasing or selling any property of the municipality at below fair market value; or
- d) giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee. (Section 106(2))

Section 106(3) of the Municipal Act provides an exception to the above, indicating that a municipality may exercise powers under Section 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the Planning Act or Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act.

By including an exception to the Section 106(1), the Municipal Act grants a municipality powers and tools for community improvement. These include tools related to the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield properties. Brownfield properties are considered to be properties that are (or are perceived to be) contaminated as a result of a prior land use (for example, a property where a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment has been conducted and which did not meet the standards specified under Section 168.4(1) of the Environmental Protection Act). Under Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act, municipalities may provide property tax assistance to eligible properties to offset all or part of the remediation costs. The Municipal Act also grants municipalities the authority to cancel or defer the municipal portion of property taxes on eligible properties.

It is noted that this section of the Municipal Act does not specifically address the provision of financial assistance to residential properties. Typically, Community Improvement Plans are intended to focus on commercial properties, but there are examples of Community Improvement Plans that provide limited funding opportunities for particular types of residential properties (e.g. to help maintain historic residential properties or create new residential units).

Municipalities may also apply to the province to match the municipal tax rebate with the education portion of the property tax through its Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP). Under the program, the province can cancel all or part of the education property taxes of a property for up to three years. However, applicants to this program must obtain approval from the Minister of Finance, and there must be a Community Improvement Plan in place for the property before they may apply. It should be noted that other municipalities' experience with the BFTIP indicates that the application process can be complex and the turnaround time for a decision from the province can be considerable. However, the program should be considered for inclusion in the Community Improvement Plan. The Town may choose to pursue a BFTIP on behalf of a landowner in a "trial run" and, if the process is too onerous, cease to use the program.

Section 107 of the Municipal Act outlines municipalities' powers to make grants, including the power to provide a grant in the form of a loan or by guaranteeing a loan, subject to criteria outlined in Section 106. Additional powers include:

- selling or leasing land for nominal consideration, or granting land;
- providing land owned and occupied by the municipality for use by anyone, upon terms established by council; and
- selling, leasing, or disposing of any municipal property at a nominal price, or by way of a grant, to provide for the use of the property on terms established by council.

Additionally, the Municipal Act permits municipalities to provide tax relief to owners of eligible heritage properties (Section 365.2). Municipalities may pass a by-law to establish a local program that provides tax reductions or refunds to owners of eligible heritage properties. To be eligible, properties must be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, or part of a Heritage Conservation District designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, or subject to a separate heritage conservation agreement between the owner and the municipality. This type of program may be identified as a component of a municipal leadership strategy through a Community Improvement Plan. However, these grant programs are typically implemented and administered separately by municipalities from the Community Improvement Plan.

2.3 ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT

The Ontario Heritage Act is relevant to the preparation of a CIP, as it may support heritage conservation through financial incentives or municipal leadership programs. Under Section 39(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act, municipalities may pass by-laws to implement separate grant or loan programs to help owners of heritage properties designated under Part IV of the Act to pay for alterations to the property, in accordance with the terms established by the by-laws. There are currently no buildings in the Town of Cochrane designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Town does not currently administer any grant or loan programs for the preservation and maintenance of heritage properties or buildings.

2.4 ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) establishes the framework for the development of province-wide, mandatory accessibility standards in all areas of daily life. It guides building design through amendments to the Ontario Building Code, and also guides the design of public spaces that are considered to be “new construction” or are undergoing major changes to existing features. Revitalization and redevelopment efforts supported by the CIP will need to consider AODA standards.

2.5 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (2014)

The 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) outlines the province’s policies regarding community planning in Ontario. Though the PPS does not explicitly reference Community Improvement Plans, it supports the revitalization of Ontario’s urban areas through specific policies.

Policy 1.1.3.1 promotes the regeneration of settlement areas. Policy 1.1.3.3 states that planning authorities are to identify locations and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment, including brownfield redevelopment. The PPS defines brownfield sites as:

“Undeveloped or previously developed properties that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant.”

Healthy, livable and safe communities should be promoted through various means including the improvement of accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons, by identifying, preventing, and removing land use barriers which restrict their full participation (Policy 1.1.1(f)). Policy 1.7 promotes long-term economic prosperity, which is to be supported by the revitalization of downtowns and main streets (Policy 1.7.1(c)), and the promotion of brownfield site redevelopment (Policy 1.7.1 (e)), among other means.

The PPS also promotes the provision of affordable housing. Policy 1.4.3 requires that planning authorities provide an appropriate range and mix of housing types and densities to meet current and future demand by “establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households.”

Policy 2.6 of the PPS requires the conservation of cultural heritage resources. Specifically, Policy 2.6.1 states that “Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved”. Additionally, proponents of development and site alteration on lands adjacent to protected heritage resources must demonstrate that the heritage attributes of the protected property will be conserved (Policy 2.6.3).

In summary, the PPS therefore supports the maintenance and revitalization of the Town of Cochrane through measures that could include the use of a Community Improvement Plan to:

- Promote the economic viability of the downtown core and other potential project areas;
- Improve the availability of affordable housing;
- Promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment, with particular attention to brownfield sites; and
- Help conserve and improve cultural heritage resources.

2.6 GROWTH PLAN FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO (2011)

The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario is a 25-year plan that came into effect in 2011. It was prepared under Ontario’s Places to Grow Act (2005), which provides that the Province may identify and designate areas for which strategic growth plans can be developed. The Growth Plan focuses on attracting and sustaining growth in north communities, and is intended to be used a strategic framework that will guide decision-making in Northern Ontario for the next 25 years. The Town of Cochrane Official Plan was prepared with consideration for the policies in the Growth Plan, such as designating areas for local economic opportunities and housing, supporting small businesses, and providing a local framework to assist in the implementation of regional economic plans (Town of Cochrane Official Plan, 2014).

The Growth Plan is structured around six key policy areas which contribute to the region’s long-term sustainability and prosperity: Economy; People; Communities; Aboriginal Peoples; Infrastructure; and Environment. The Growth Plan is focused on the following six key guiding principles:

- Creating a highly productive region, with a diverse, globally competitive economy that offers a range of career opportunities for all residents.
- Developing a highly educated and skilled workforce to support an evolving knowledge-based economy and excellence in the trades.
- Partnering with Aboriginal peoples to increase educational and employment opportunities.
- Delivering a complete network of transportation, energy, communications, social and learning infrastructure to support strong, vibrant communities.
- Demonstrating leadership in sustainable growth and environmental management.
- Establishing innovative partnerships to maximize resources and ensure this Plan achieves its ambitious vision and is fiscally sustainable.

Several of the six key policy areas contain policy direction that directly or indirectly support community improvement initiatives. Under the Economy policy area, the Growth Plan policies support the development of a strong, resilient and more diversified northern economy through policies which are intended to support growth and diversity in the region’s traditional resource-based industries, as well as the development of new and emerging economic sectors that have the greatest potential to result in job growth and opportunities in the North.

Under the Communities policy area, the Growth Plan policies support community planning that balances the priorities of human, economic, and environmental health. Official Plans, community economic plans, and participating in community planning efforts are identified as effective tools to ensure the future economy and long-term sustainability of communities reflects the views of citizens and businesses. Municipalities are encouraged to align their Official Plans with strategies which focus on achieving specific objectives relevant to the development of a Community Improvement Plan, such as optimized use of existing infrastructure and creating a high quality of place.

Under the Infrastructure policy area, the Growth Plan policies promote intensification and brownfield site redevelopment, whenever feasible.

2.7 TOWN OF COCHRANE OFFICIAL PLAN (2014)

The Town of Cochrane’s Official Plan (OP) was adopted in September 2013 and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in April 2014, and sets out a policy framework to guide the Town’s development to the year 2032. It identifies a series of objectives and provides direction regarding growth and development in the Town, including land use policies for the urban Cochrane settlement area designations (i.e. residential, central business area, central transition area, linear mixed use commercial area, industrial area, parks and open space, and mobile home park), the rural area designations (i.e. rural, agricultural, hamlet, shoreline development, aggregate extraction, and airport areas), and related planning considerations including: cultural heritage; natural heritage; development constraints; community facilities; infrastructure, services, and roads; and implementation. Major land use designations within the Town of Cochrane settlement area are illustrated in **Figure 2-1**.

The following OP Objectives (Section 2.7) are particularly relevant to the CIP:

- Objective 1 identifies overall development patterns and priorities, as follows: “To promote logical, orderly, attractive, cost-effective and efficient land use and development patterns in the Planning Area, which minimize land consumption and servicing costs. The Cochrane settlement area will be the focus of growth. To this end, the plan will promote a phased approach to new development, whilst encouraging intensification and redevelopment in appropriate locations. New development will generally occur adjacent to the existing built-up area.”
- Objective 2 encourages economic growth and development in the Planning Area, “[...] including resource development, resource-based tourism and recreational development, commercial, industrial, institutional and residential development.”
- Objective 6 sets out to “preserve and enhance the quality and character of the Planning Area.”
- Objective 8 concerns the protection of “built heritage resources and cultural heritage resources from incompatible development.”
- Objective 10 seeks to “provide physical services and community facilities within the financial capability of the municipality.”
- Objective 11 encourages community improvement.

Section 4.3 of the OP sets out policies for the Central Business Area within the Cochrane settlement area. The Town seeks to foster the continued business function of this area by promoting the expansion of retail, office, and public uses, and by encouraging investment in community improvement. The Central Business Area is identified as the prime business and commercial area for the Town and serves as a Town centre. Policy 3 states that improvements to the Central Business Area will be encouraged through Community Improvement Plans, redevelopment, and renovation, among other means.

Section 4.5 of the OP sets out policies for the Linear Mixed Use Commercial Area within the Cochrane settlement area. Policy 8 encourages the use of Community Improvement Plans, redevelopment and renovation of buildings in the area, among other means.

Section 8 of the OP addresses Community Improvement, which is identified as a priority of Council. This section defines community improvement to include “public and private activities that maintain, rehabilitate and redevelop the existing physical environment to accommodate the social and economic priorities within the community.”

Section 8.1 identifies the Cochrane settlement area and the Hamlets of Clute and Genier as Community Improvement Areas. Further, Council may designate by by-law, in whole or in part, one or more defined Community Improvement Project Areas for which detailed Community Improvement Plans will be prepared. Policy 3 establishes the following issues/needs which may be addressed in a designated Community Improvement Project Area through a Community Improvement Plan:

- a. deficiencies in water or sewerage systems;
- b. substandard road conditions;
- c. poor housing and/or building conditions;
- d. conflicting land uses;
- e. inadequate public parks, recreational or community facilities;

- f. poor drainage conditions, safety and/or health hazards;
- g. deficiencies in street lighting and/or sidewalks;
- h. inadequate off-street parking;
- i. ecological deficiencies in local lakes;
- j. improvement of community energy efficiency; or
- k. creation of affordable housing.

Policy 4 stipulates that financial assistance in a Community Improvement Plan will be provided entirely at the discretion of Council.

Section 8.2 provides policy direction for the implementation of Community Improvement Plans, in accordance with the powers conferred upon Council by the Planning, the Municipal Act, and other applicable statutes:

- a. According to need, Council will designate Community Improvement Project Areas under Section 28 of the Planning Act, followed by the preparation and adoption of Community Improvement Plans for designated areas.
- b. Council may acquire land within a Community Improvement Project Area; clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement.
- c. Council will use public funds acquired through appropriate municipal, provincial and federal programs to assist in implementing the Community Improvement Plan policies.
- d. Council will encourage public participation during the preparation of the Community Improvement Plan.
- e. Council will encourage the maintenance of property in accordance with the Cochrane Property Standards Bylaw.
- f. Council will provide continued support for historical preservation through the application of the Heritage Act.
- g. Council will encourage the rehabilitation of private buildings by advising owners of government subsidies and programs.

Section 6.3.1 of the OP addresses contaminated sites / brownfields, which refers to lands in the Planning Area on which industrial, commercial, institutional and other land use activities took place in the past, and that are now lands or buildings which are vacant, underused, derelict or abandoned sites, some of which may be contaminated. The policies of the OP recognize that benefits of redeveloping these sites include: economic development; re-use of existing buildings; neighbourhood revitalization; more effective use of existing infrastructure, services and facilities; and improvements to water, soil, and air quality.

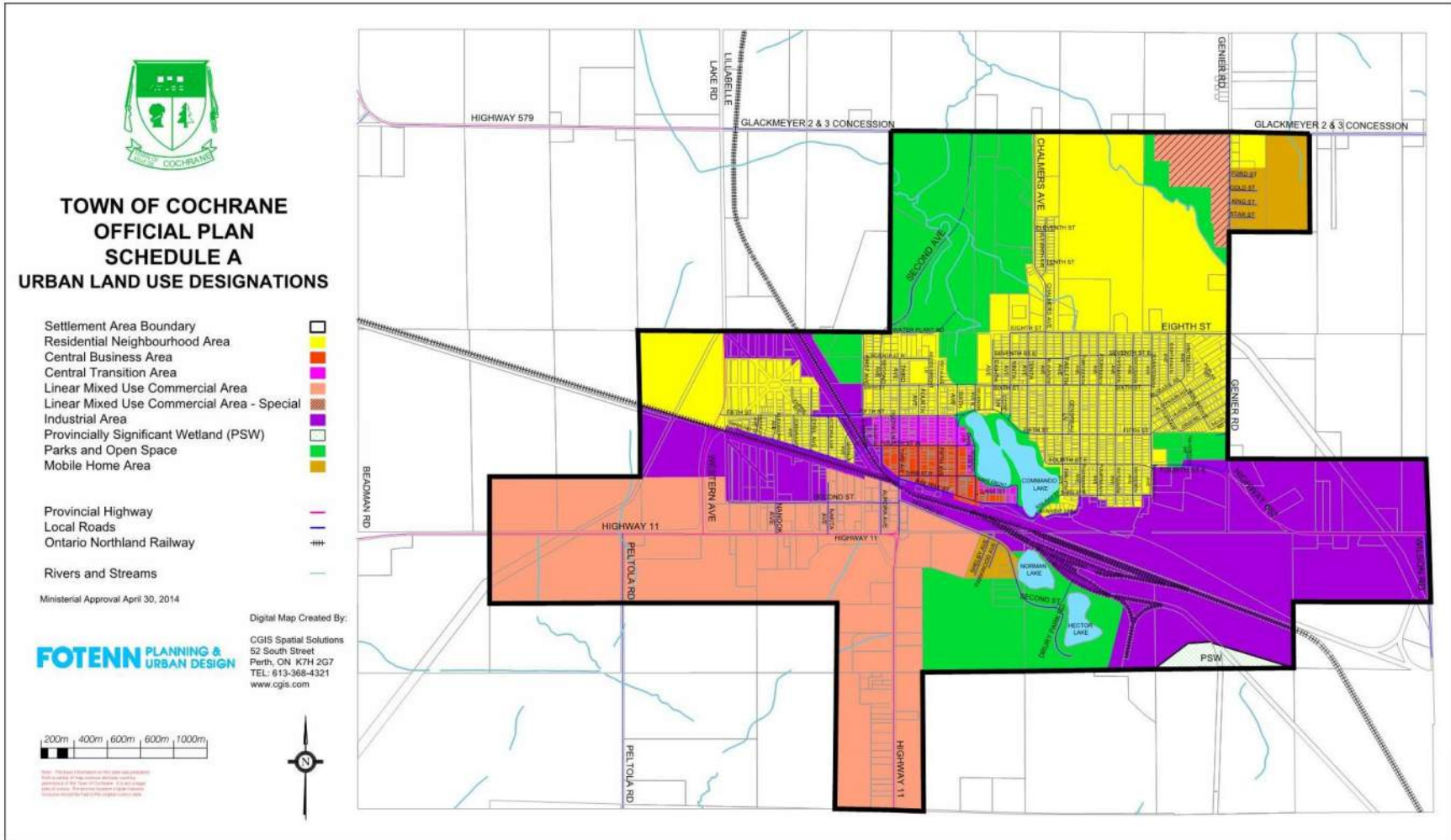


Figure 2-1: Town of Cochrane Official Plan Schedule A - Urban Land Use Designations (Cochrane Settlement Area)

2.8 TOWN OF COCHRANE ZONING BY-LAW (2014)

The Town of Cochrane Zoning By-law (By-law No. 968-2013) was adopted by Council in June 2014. It identifies permitted land uses and sets out requirements concerning lot sizes and dimensions, building heights and locations, and parking, among other provisions to guide development within the Town and the broader Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area. It contains a set of general provisions that apply to all lands within the Town and Planning Area, as well as specific provisions that apply to individual zones. The following zones are located within the Town of Cochrane settlement area:

- Residential First Density (R1);
- Residential Second Density (R2);
- Mobile Home Residential (R3);
- Commercial Core (C1);
- Commercial Transition (C2);
- Linear Mixed Commercial (C3);
- Industrial (M1);
- Park and Open Space (OS); and
- Sensitive Area (SEN).

These zones are illustrated in **Figure 2-2**.

2.9 OTHER LOCAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

2.9.1 THE DOABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT, COCHRANE, ONTARIO (2015)

The Town of Cochrane was selected as one of four communities in Ontario for implementation of the Doable Neighbourhood Project (DNP) in partnership with 8-80 Cities. The project involves the implementation of pilot projects across the community to improve active transportation options (i.e. walking and cycling), animate parks and public spaces, and sociability, with an overall goal of creating a healthier community.

The DNP resulted in a series of prioritized pilot projects that could be implemented in the short, medium, and longer terms. 8-80 Cities supported community partners in Cochrane in navigating the municipal approvals processes and engaging and recruiting local community champions and volunteers to implement pilot projects. Two early successful programs implemented in the Town included the Community Bike Share Program and Commando Lake waterslide.

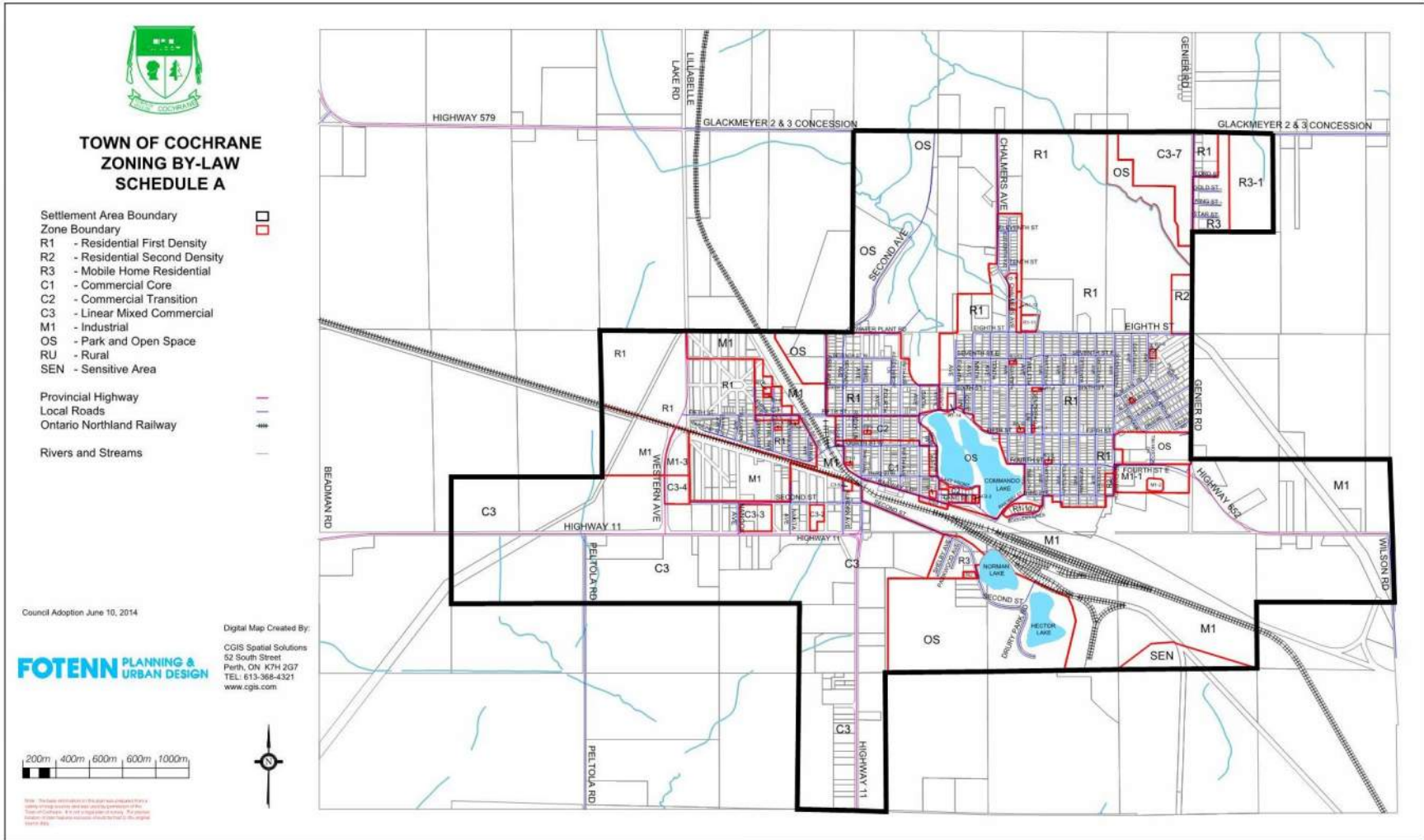


Figure 2-2: Town of Cochrane Zoning By-law Schedule A (Cochrane Settlement Area)

The DNP focused on the Sixth Avenue central business district and Commando Lake, the premier public space in Cochrane. The DNP pilot projects are also intended to complement the ongoing Commando Lake revitalization project and recent construction of the Town’s first bike lanes in 2014.

Participants in the DNP community engagement activities brainstormed numerous ideas for community pilot projects around the following themes: Arts and Culture; Parks and Public Spaces; Streets and Sidewalks; Walking and Cycling; Public Education and Awareness; and Town-wide Amenities and Economy. The following pilot projects were selected for phased implementation:

- Public Bike Share Program;
- Commando Lake Waterslide;
- Cochrane Street Beautification;
- Downtown Plaza;
- Pop-Up Libraries; and
- Public Amenity Adoption Program.

At the time of this Background Report, the Town has successfully implemented the Public Bike Share Program, the Commando Lake Waterslide, a pop-up piano program, and pop-up library boxes through the Book Share Program, which have all received great community response.

The future implementation of the CIP represents a significant opportunity to complement the recommended Cochrane Street Beautification and Downtown Plaza initiatives. The Cochrane Street Beautification initiative includes recommendations for the following pilot projects on Sixth Avenue:

- Installation of a temporary boulevard down the middle of Sixth Avenue;



Figure 2-3: Cochrane Street Beautification Recommendations, Doable Neighbourhood Project

- Planting more trees along sidewalks; and
- Constructing new crosswalks for traffic calming.

Regarding the desire of residents for a new public space in the downtown area, community partners and stakeholders identified a vacant lot at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Third Street as an ideal location for a pedestrian plaza. Specific recommended pilot projects for a future plaza space include installation of moveable chairs and benches, planters, simple lighting, and public art to create a safe and welcoming pedestrian space, and naming the plaza in honour of a local resident to celebrate the Town’s heritage.

The municipal leadership strategy, which forms part of the CIP, considers implementation of these recommendations, in addition to other municipal initiatives that have been identified as part of the CIP process.

2.9.2 STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF COCHRANE (2014)

The Strategic Plan for the Town of Cochrane was completed in October 2014 and identifies a vision and a set of priorities for realizing short-, medium-, and long-term economic and community development opportunities. The Strategic Plan complements the Town’s Official Plan, and includes an analysis of the community’s strengths, weaknesses, and perceived opportunities and threats concerning economic development.

The Strategic Plan sets out an overall vision for the Town of Cochrane:

“Together, Cochrane residents are building a sustainable economy that supports a culturally diverse and vibrant northern way of life.”

The Plan contains the following five key strategic directions, which each contain two to six targeted projects:

1. Strengthen Business Community – pursuing project that build local business capacity, and support an environment that encourages new investment;
2. Grow Agricultural Sector – investing in projects that facilitate the growth of Cochrane’s agricultural sector, including secondary product creation and marketing;
3. Leverage Transportation Assets – investing in projects that build competitive advantage by enhancing existing assets, including Highway 11, rail, and the airport;
4. Promote a “Great Place to Live” – developing projects, partnerships, and marketing materials to facilitate and support population stability and a better quality of life; and
5. Maintain Tourism Infrastructure – maintaining and enhancing Cochrane’s existing tourism assets with the goal of enticing tourists to “stay another day”.

The preparation of a CIP is referenced in the Strategic Plan under the following strategic directions:

- Key Direction 2: Grow Agricultural Sector discusses a community-wide effort to make better use of Lake Commando as a central public space, such as through construction of a multi-use permanent shelter to house the well-established Cochrane Farmer’s market. The Strategic Plan identifies potential use of a CIP to offer small grants to local organizations to encourage activities and events at Lake Commando.

- Key Direction 3: Develop a Transportation Strategy, the Strategic Plan identifies Highway 11 as a major asset for Cochrane, as well as the need to increase amenities and services along the corridor, and enhance the marketing and appearance of the area to encourage both truck and passenger traffic to stop in the community. Specifically, the Plan includes establishing a CIP for the Highway 11 corridor as a strategic project, and recommends that the CIP consider the following specific areas:
 - revitalizing the Highway 11 corridor;
 - the planned Lake Commando improvements; and
 - the downtown core.

The Strategic Plan suggests that the municipality consider developing a Streetscape Design Plan for the Highway 11 corridor, or any other area considered for the CIP. The Streetscape Design Plan would set out guidelines for beautification, signage, street furniture, pedestrian crossings, among other elements. CIP grant applicants would be required to conform to the Plan as a condition of grant approval.

In addition, an example of CIP results from a nearby northern community was provided in the Strategic Plan. The Town of Hearst CIP, which was established in 2009, has resulted in over \$300,000 in municipal grants to Highway 11 businesses, \$1.4 million in investment from 21 local businesses / companies, and community improvements including façade improvement, bilingual signage, and paving projects to improve parking.

2.9.3 RETHINKING COCHRANE’S SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUTURE (2010)

In 2010, the Town of Cochrane established a Cochrane Community Adjustment Committee. In partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), the Cochrane & Area Community Development Corporation, and the Town of Cochrane, the Committee examined what adjustments are needed in Cochrane towards improved socio-economic viability and a plan for implementation of these adjustments. The Committee prepared a strategic document outlining potential social and economic development and diversification opportunities, towards the goal of achieving a prosperous and stable economic base.

The report, “Rethinking Cochrane’s Socio-economic Future”, identifies business retention and improvement as a priority, to enable existing businesses to maximize their ability to compete both locally and abroad.

Several of the adjustments proposed in the report are directly applicable to a Community Improvement Plan.

Adjustment E-2 is to establish an agency under the Town of Cochrane which will focus on funding required for Town initiatives. The report speaks to the need for the Town to address the needs of private investors in the community, who may propose a project that could positively contribute to the local economy. There is a short-term goal of providing a service that assists private investors with funding applications, and structuring fees so that cost to the private investor is minimized in order to foster economic development in the community.

Adjustment E-5 is to reorganize and establish a viable and sustainable economic development presence in the Town of Cochrane, in part by setting an annual budget to be invested into economic development.

Adjustment E-9 is to establish a downtown revitalization initiative designed to rapidly upgrade the Cochrane downtown core, and change the culture of management to be well positioned to thrive in the coming decades. The report identifies the need for the Town to consider providing incentives to downtown businesses. The following elements are proposed as part of this adjustment:

- Establish a downtown core with the physical and cultural improvements needed to attract customers from the highway and future development;
- Train downtown businesses to create a thriving downtown businesses core through marketing and raising the level of service;
- Review the Town's procurement policy;
- Educate and promote awareness for community members to shop locally;
- Establish a strategy to redirect traffic from Highway 11 to the downtown core;
- Link the downtown core to Lake Commando to draw summer traffic; and
- Apply to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Economic Development Program and/or the Business Retention and Improvement Program for funding.

2.9.4 COCHRANE RESIDENT AND LABOUR MARKET ATTRACTION STRATEGY (2012)

The Cochrane Resident and Labour Market Attraction Strategy (Yfactor Inc., 2012) was prepared to identify recommendations for residential and labour recruitment and retention. The report identifies that the Town of Cochrane is well-positioned to attract new investment for business expansion and diversification, and to foster the growth of existing business for long-term stability.

Cochrane is categorized as a resource-dependent community that is smaller and less diversified economically than small and medium-sized northern cities of Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, and Timmins. While these cities are also heavily dependent on resource industries, they are also important regional centres for health, education, and other services. The report identifies a high proportion of physicians per capita in Cochrane as a competitive advantage over other northern communities of its size, as quality and availability of health care

are significant factors in decision-making for families choosing to relocate. Challenges identified include a declining population trend, which has the potential to result in a decreasing labour force and market potential.

The report emphasizes that economic diversification and repositioning are key to continued economic growth in Cochrane, and that a clearly defined brand and attraction strategy based on the community's key assets and differentiators will help to position the community as a viable option for new residents.

The report recommends development and implementation of a marketing strategy that targets the Indigenous community, Northern Ontario ex-pats, skilled immigrants, and transient workers. Messaging to the four different groups should target specific elements, such as: promotion of housing programs and employment and training programs for Indigenous people; promotion of cost of living and a family-friendly environment for ex-pats; promotion of cost of living, safety, education, and settlement support for skilled immigrants; and promotion of cost of relocating vs. commuting and affordable housing for transient workers. Branding, an improved Town website, advertising, events and conferences, partnerships and public relations, and social media are provided as key marketing strategies through which to attract new residents and businesses.

The implementation of the CIP program also includes a recommended marketing strategy that can be integrated into the overall marketing strategy for the Town.

The Town is planning to undertake an update to the Cochrane Resident and Labour Market Attraction Strategy in 2018.

3 IDENTIFICATION OF CIP OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS ANALYSIS

This section provides an analysis of the Town of Cochrane’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in order to understand what types of CIP policies and programs will be most important for improving and revitalizing the CIP Project Area. The SWOT Analysis considers a wide range of different subjects that are relevant to the CIP. Key considerations in each subject are outlined in **Table 3-1** and illustrated in **Figure 3-1**. These factors were identified based on existing background documentation, and have been refined based on further discussion and input from the CIP Working Group, Council, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders.

Table 3-1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to Community Improvement in Cochrane

Note: References to numbered images in **Figure 3-1** are in brackets (#)

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Building Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sixth Avenue downtown, between Railway Street and Fourth Street, is well-framed by commercial storefronts with no setback from the sidewalk (1) Consistent 1 to 2-storey building heights along Sixth Avenue contribute to pedestrian-oriented built form and appealing sightlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many buildings lack architectural features Many buildings are in a state of deterioration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous buildings with heritage character along Sixth Avenue (Post office; Archbishop Anderson Memorial Church) (2) Zoning permits 10 m building heights in Commercial Core and Commercial Transition Zones Potential for modest increases in downtown building heights and residential densities that are consistent with existing streetscapes (2-3 storeys is desirable) Potential for an architectural landmark building at SW corner of Sixth Avenue and Third Street (existing Canadian Tire outlet) (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible deterioration of building stock with insufficient maintenance No heritage designations or preservation programs
Building Façades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large windows along storefronts on Sixth Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of building façades along Sixth Avenue are not well-maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for façade and signage improvements through repair or use of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible deterioration of façades that are not adequately maintained

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some good examples of modern and inviting signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent mix of building materials (brick, siding) contributes to a lack of cohesion in the appearance of Sixth Avenue (4) Lack of architectural details and historic character, and minimal coordination among façade styles and materials Numerous storefronts along Sixth Avenue lack window displays and open signs, or have windows obscured/covered resulting in uninviting atmosphere Some residential and commercial lots in proximity to and within downtown core along gateway approaches are not well-maintained Some signage is not pedestrian-oriented Inconsistent signage types include posters, large backlit signage 	<p>historically appropriate materials, designs, and colour schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to recognize northern character through representative building materials, designs, and colour schemes 	

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large amount of diagonal on-street parking available on Sixth Avenue and adjacent streets within downtown core; provides buffer for pedestrian realm • Mix of on-street and off-street parking • Availability of accessible parking spaces and mountable curbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagonal parking along Sixth Avenue obscures building façades and pedestrian realm (1) • Lack of residential parking for downtown residents • Location of parking lot / loading area adjacent to Post Office fronts along Sixth Avenue • Limited potential for rear parking • Some vehicles parking along Fourth Street are infringing on sidewalk space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to improve landscaping and appearance of parking lots fronting along Sixth Avenue (e.g. signage, lighting, parking stall striping, etc.) (5) • Potential for municipal parking lot for downtown residents and visitors on nearby vacant municipal lands (along Railway Street at corner of Seventh Avenue South, and across from Lake Commando) • Significant opportunities to incorporate visible and attractive bicycle parking at businesses and public buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential users of off-street lots may be deterred if signage and pedestrian connections to Sixth Avenue and Fourth Avenue are not clear or conditions are poor • Potential clients may be discouraged if parking in front of businesses is primarily used by staff / downtown residents
Streetscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decorative light standards along Sixth Avenue with pedestrian-oriented lighting pointing downwards (6) • Wide sidewalks and use of pavers • Bump-outs along Sixth Avenue (at Railway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of storefronts along Sixth Avenue and throughout downtown core lack accessible entrances and barrier-free design features and include physical barriers (e.g. steps at main entrance) (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide right-of-way on Sixth Avenue has potential for boulevard down the centre of road with landscaping or seating • Opportunities for increased street trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population will have greater accessibility needs, resulting in increased need to retrofit existing buildings and create streetscapes that meet accessible design standards

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<p>Street, Third Street, and Fourth Street) include bench seating at two different heights/planters (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some accessible entrances include ramps and automatic door buttons • Dedicated cycling lanes along Sixth Avenue and Third Street provide direct and safe access to and through downtown core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of outdoor seating / street furniture along main streets in downtown core • Garbage dumpster in use by adjacent businesses fronting along Sixth Avenue (between Empire Theatre and Archbishop Anderson Memorial Church) detracts from downtown aesthetics • Lack of street trees and landscaping 	<p>and planters, where sidewalk width permits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bump-outs along Sixth Avenue provide space and opportunity for increased seating and landscaping • Diagonal on-street parking in front of Sixth Avenue businesses can be repurposed by installing temporary/moveable street furniture / patio spaces to animate street life • Opportunities for retrofits to improve accessibility • Opportunities to improve marked crosswalks and overhead pedestrian crossing lights • Significant opportunities to incorporate visible and attractive bicycle parking at businesses and public buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited sidewalk space for standard accessible ramps • Ministry of Transportation jurisdiction over Highway 11 corridor may impede streetscaping improvements
Parks and Waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate adjacency of downtown to a premier public space and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of signage from downtown core to Lake Commando 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for a pedestrian connection / view point to Lake Commando at western 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived lack of public parking at new Lake Commando pavilion

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<p>waterfront at Lake Commando</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Lake Commando from downtown core at western end of Third Street • Newly constructed, modern public space/event spaces (pavilion, full-service kitchen, stage, canteen, future deck) at Lake Commando is an attractive addition to the public space (9) • Lake Commando is well-animated and offers both passive and active recreation • Tim Horton Events Centre provides excellent recreation opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public seating at Lake Commando • Lack of public gathering spaces / parks within downtown core apart from Lake Commando 	<p>end of Fourth Street (10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for recreation-oriented businesses to support activities at Lake Commando • Use of new event space at Lake Commando to support local economic development (e.g. local dining, weekly seasonal Farmer's Market) • Opportunities to improve connection between downtown and Tim Horton Events Centre for pedestrians and cyclists 	
Gateways / Wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location of Town along Highway 11 brings traffic into Town and provides opportunity to draw in pass-by traffic • Town-branded main gateway (Board of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main gateway (Board of Trade office / Polar bear statue) is showing deterioration which may impact visitor first impressions • Lack of clear and Town-branded signage at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for wayfinding signage targeted at vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and snowmobilers at key locations along Western Avenue, at roundabout, along 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear and inviting signage that is consistent with other Town branding may result in missed opportunities to capture pass-by traffic along Highway 11, or to

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<p>Trade office / Polar bear statue) is prominently located at key entry route to Town from Highway 11 West and South; Town has invested in new signage and a new polar bear to replace existing (11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grid pattern of downtown streets allows for ease of navigation for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers 	<p>intersections of Highway 11 West and South, Third Street West and Third Avenue roundabout, and Western Avenue at Railway Street to indicate location of downtown, Lake Commando, Polar Bear Habitat, and Tim Horton Event Centre</p>	<p>Highway 11, and along Third Street (12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for signage directing visitors to Lake Commando from downtown • Bump-outs along Sixth Avenue provide space and opportunity for wayfinding/branding signage to signal entry to main downtown shopping street • Opportunities to implement banners/street signage to brand downtown and historic neighbourhoods 	<p>encourage visitors to travel into downtown / Lake Commando area</p>
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good mix of retail, services, and institutional uses (Post Office, bank, drugstore, retail, Town Hall, Public Library, Court House, Police, Service Ontario) available in downtown core between Third Avenue and Sixth Avenue, all in close walking proximity • Some residential uses above storefronts and on side streets within 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited retail uses (e.g. lack of grocery store) • Vacant storefronts both downtown and in other areas of Town (e.g. Trading Post, former mall on Highway 11 West) create areas of inactivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for public gathering space / downtown plaza • Opportunities for affordable housing development in vacant buildings and on upper floors of commercial storefronts throughout downtown core • Vacant mall along Highway 11 West represents redevelopment opportunity (14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued conversion of commercial storefronts to residential units may result in loss of downtown commercial opportunities • Brownfield sites require remediation and rehabilitation prior to site development • Car-oriented commercial uses along Highway 11 for “anchor” tenants such as grocery stores and restaurants

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<p>walking distance of downtown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of public programming / amenities at key locations (pop-up book share boxes; pop-up piano shelters) (13) • Downtown location of popular retail (Giant Tiger) draws residents to downtown • Railway location at south end of downtown core provides great opportunity to draw in travellers on the Polar Bear Express between Cochrane and Moosonee 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for more home-based businesses and industries within downtown core residential uses (15) • Numerous brownfield sites (e.g. Pink Palace) represent significant development opportunities • Diverse commercial and industrial vacancies offer size and location choices for new development 	<p>may draw traffic away from downtown</p>
Policy/ Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Core and Commercial Transition zoning designations are largely consistent with small-scale, mixed land uses and pedestrian-focused character • Appropriate zoning designations are also in effect for Linear Mixed Commercial and Industrial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning permits a good mix of landed uses and modest increase in existing building heights to 2-3 storeys in Commercial Core and Commercial Transition Zones • Community improvement policies in the Official Plan broadly enable a wide range of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of general urban design, commercial design, streetscape and/or architectural design guidelines to guide redevelopment and infill proposals (particularly in the core)

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
			<p>potential programs and tools for consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensification, redevelopment, and infill is supported in the Official Plan • Official Plan encourages remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites 	
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location along Highway 11 (TransCanada Highway) offers opportunities to attract businesses and tourists • Town is considered a top community / destination for snowmobiling, resulting in significant tourism opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High proportion of vacant properties along Sixth Avenue and throughout downtown core, and at key sites along Highway 11 (e.g. Trading Post, former mall) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant properties present potential for infill and redevelopment • Potential for an increase in service-based businesses in downtown core (e.g. restaurants) • Presence of public institutions, infrastructure, and Detour Mine bus depot draws users to the Town and may support business development • Opportunity to convert/rehabilitate key vacant/underutilized sites for additional housing and commercial options (16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow population growth could result in low demand for goods, services, and housing, which could result in increased vacancies, a small tax base, and challenges for property maintenance and upkeep

CIP ELEMENT	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Program Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are committed to economic revitalization and CIP implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be challenging for small municipal departments to keep up with applications due to limited resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents and stakeholders in the Town are supportive of economic revitalization and CIP implementation • Local partnerships with Board of Trade and a future Business Improvement Association for downtown businesses could increase staff capacity and/or available funding and resources to implement the CIP • Vacant municipally-owned lands represent opportunities for municipal leadership initiatives (e.g. gateway features) • Strong entrepreneurial spirit amongst new business owners in downtown core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to staff size, any staff turnover may create significant disruption in CIP implementation due to loss of continuity • Long-standing, existing business owners may not perceive a need to undertake improvements

Figure 3-1: SWOT Images – CIP Project Area Tour



Image 1 – Commercial storefronts along Sixth Avenue with diagonal parking



Image 2 – Heritage character (Post Office)



Image 3 – Potential location for landmark building (SW corner of Sixth Avenue and Third Street)



Image 4 – Lack of cohesive architectural style / building materials (Sixth Avenue)



Image 5 – Opportunities for parking lot improvements (Sixth Avenue)



Image 6 – Decorative light standards along Sixth Avenue



Image 7 – Bump-outs along Sixth Avenue with seating/planters



Image 8 – Physical barriers to accessibility



Image 9 – Lake Commando Pavilion



Image 10 – Potential future pedestrian connection / view of Lake Commando (Fourth Street)

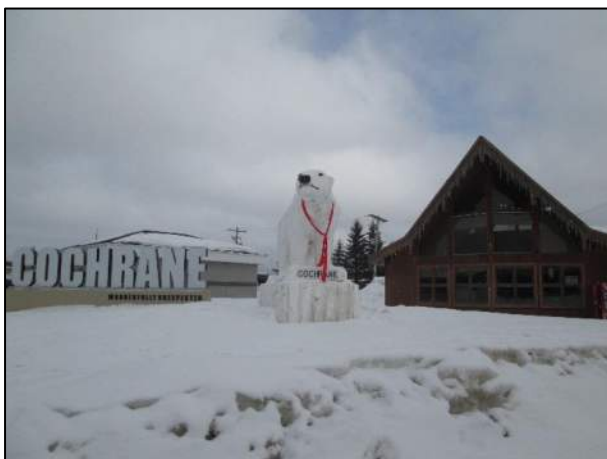


Image 11 – Town-branded gateway (Board of Trade office / Polar Bear)



Image 12 – Potential gateway location at snowmobile crossing (Highway 11)



Image 13 – Pop-up book-share box along Sixth Avenue



Image 14 – Vacant mall redevelopment potential



Image 15 – Existing home-based business



Image 16 – Vacant building with redevelopment potential in downtown

3.2 KEY CIP OPPORTUNITIES

The SWOT analysis highlighted several major opportunities relevant to community improvement in Cochrane:

- Signifying the key entry points into the Town for vehicles, snowmobile trail users, and pedestrians;
- Improving streetscaping, building façades, signage, and accessibility in the downtown core, while promoting heritage preservation;
- Developing a more cohesive, vibrant, and accessible streetscape in the downtown core, particularly along Sixth Avenue;
- Promoting the redevelopment of vacant and brownfield sites.



For example, the Town has already invested in signage at Western Avenue signifying the Town as a top international destination for snowmobile trails. The signage is visible to both vehicles on the road and snowmobiles on the trail (see **Figure 3-2**).

Figure 3-2: Existing gateway sign on Western Avenue

Although the Official Plan designates the entire Town as a CIP area, the strengths and opportunities identified through the SWOT analysis fall into three main thematic areas: gateway features to signify entry into the Town and downtown core; downtown revitalization and improvements; and redevelopment of vacant and brownfield sites. Additionally, it became evident through the Visioning Workshop (see **Section 4** of this report) that these thematic areas are high priorities for the Town. Therefore, it is recommended that specific CIP project areas, or precincts, be identified for:

- Gateway features, as illustrated in **Figure 3-3**;
- Downtown improvements, as illustrated in **Figure 3-4**; and
- Brownfields redevelopment, as illustrated in **Figure 3-5**.

The precincts are discussed in greater detail in **Section 7** of this Plan.

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Figure 3-3: Recommended Gateway Precinct and Potential Gateway Locations

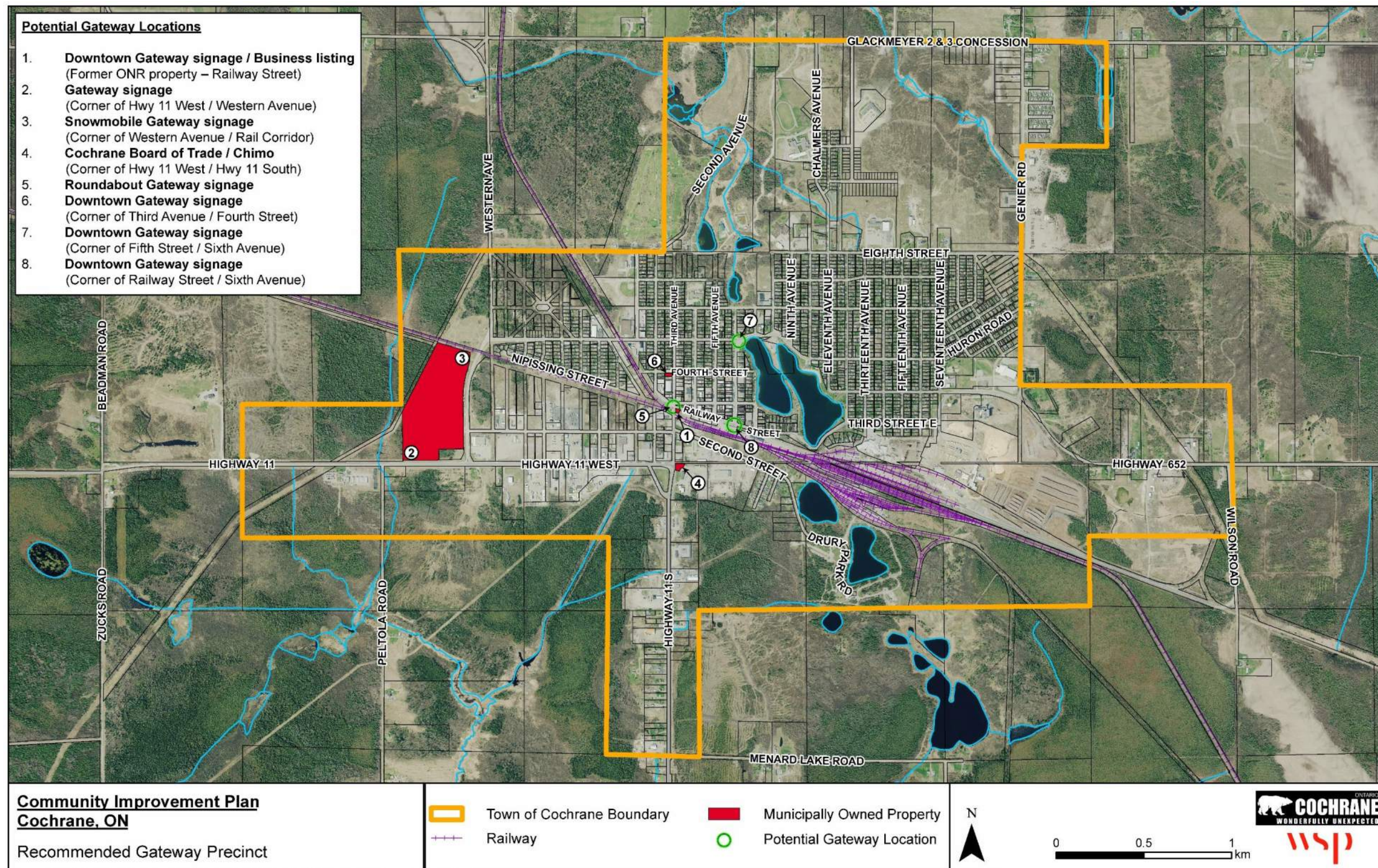


Figure 3-4: Recommended Downtown Precinct

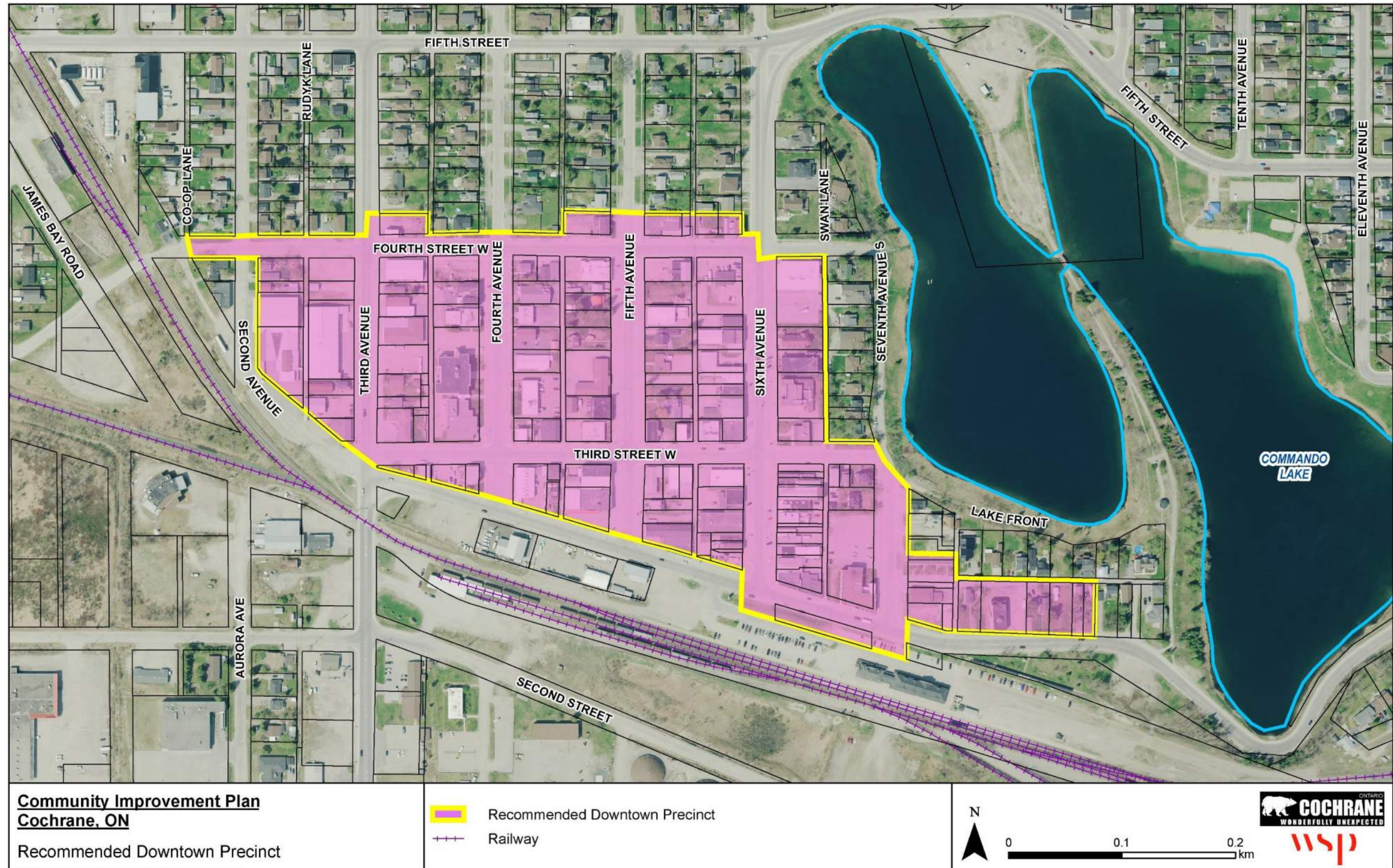
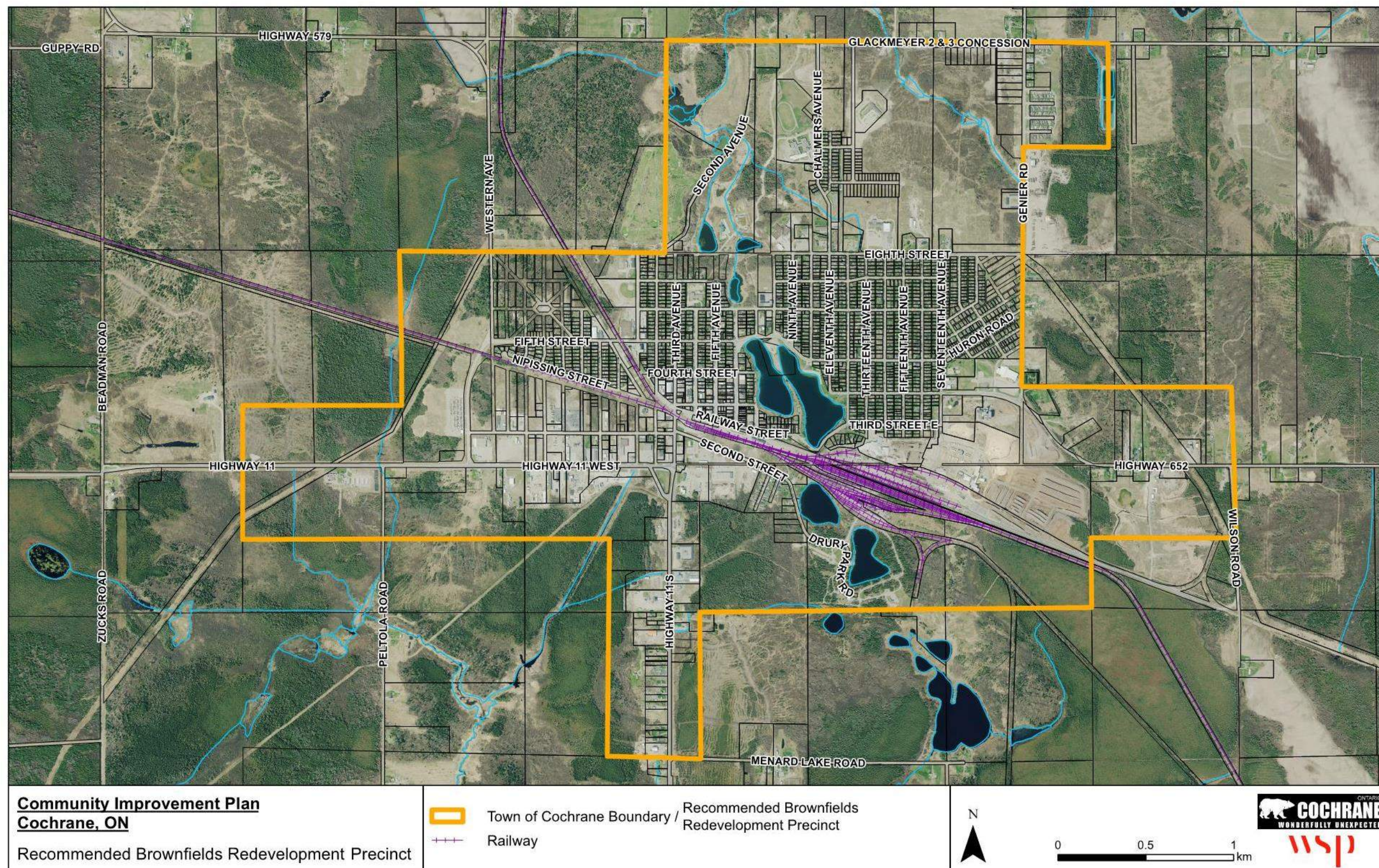


Figure 3-5: Recommended Brownfields Redevelopment Precinct



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4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A CIP Working Group was established at the outset of the Community Improvement Plan project in February 2018 to guide the project and review deliverables as it progresses. The Working Group includes Town staff and members of the Economic Development Board and Planning Board.

4.1 VISIONING WORKSHOP

On March 8, 2018, WSP facilitated a Visioning Workshop with the CIP Working Group, as well as other members of the Economic Development Board, Planning Board, and Mayor of the Town of Cochrane. The Visioning Workshop was intended to provide the foundation for the CIP.

The Visioning Workshop participants discussed the potential boundaries of the CIP area and CIP Precincts within the Town of Cochrane. Through visioning and mapping exercises, participants also contributed to the development of a Vision Statement and a series of goals for the CIP, which are set out in **Section 5** of this report. A detailed summary of the Visioning Workshop results is provided in **Appendix A**.

Figure 4-1: CIP Visioning Workshop - March 8, 2018



4.2 COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS SURVEYS

Two surveys were made available online via the Town's website between March 13 and March 26, 2018. The Community Survey sought public comments regarding redevelopment priorities, including specific locations where respondents believe improvements were needed. The Business Survey was aimed specifically at local business owners. The survey sought input on why business owners choose to locate their business in Cochrane, what challenges they face, and what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats exist that impact or have potential to impact their businesses.

A total of 165 responses to the Community Survey were received. The downtown core, and particularly Sixth Avenue, was frequently identified as a focus for redevelopment, including the need for improvements to streetscaping, lighting, and building façades. Vacant lots were also prioritized for redevelopment. Lake Commando and the surrounding area and amenities were frequently identified for continued improvements, with recognition that the Town has already invested significantly into the area. Effective delivery of municipal services, encouraging affordable housing, and enhancing streetscapes in the Town were identified as the most important CIP program areas; however, all CIP program areas were identified as having high importance. Lake Commando and the surrounding area, the railway, and 'Chimo' polar bear statue and Polar Bear Habitat were most frequently identified as important to preserve and representative of Cochrane's heritage and northern character.

A total of 19 responses to the Business Survey were received. Common reasons for locating businesses in Cochrane included long-time residency in the Town or family businesses and histories, as well as locational attributes such as availability and cost of real estate, lifestyle and natural amenities, and a sense of community. Commonly cited challenges for business owners included finding or attracting qualified staff, having a limited clientele or market for their product, the cost of rent, utilities and other services, and regional competition, particularly in Timmins.

A detailed summary of the results of the Community and Business surveys is included in **Appendix B**.

5 CIP VISION AND GOALS

5.1 VISION STATEMENT

A Vision Statement is a formal, aspirational statement that identifies what is important to a community, now and in the future. It provides a foundation for establishing the specific goals of the CIP.

At the Visioning workshop on March 8, 2018, members of the CIP Working Group, the broader Economic Development Board, and the Planning Board identified the components of a vision for future community improvement in the Town of Cochrane. Responses to the Community Survey also identified key ideas for Cochrane's future. These components were combined into a Vision Statement for the community.

Cochrane will strive to be an inviting, diverse, and forward-thinking northern community that will support social and economic development.

5.2 GOALS

In order to implement the Vision Statement, a series of goals are identified below based on key themes discussed at the Visioning Workshop and in Community and Business Survey responses.

1. Create an inviting, diverse, and progressive social and economic hub by facilitating investments in community improvements.
2. Signify the main entry points into Cochrane and the downtown through recognizable gateway features to draw residents and visitors into the Town.
3. Focus on revitalizing Cochrane's downtown to create positive and lasting first impressions, particularly through building façade, streetscaping, and accessibility improvements, and entrepreneurial activity.
4. Build pride in Cochrane's downtown, particularly Sixth Avenue, and promote it as a vibrant destination to attract residents, visitors, business owners, and customers.
5. Work to attract more service-based and retail businesses to the downtown core.
6. Work together to ignite, attract, and support entrepreneurial spirit among existing and prospective downtown businesses through community improvements and co-working or incubator spaces.
7. Leverage community improvements to retain existing and attract new businesses in the Town.
8. Pursue the implementation of community improvements through a combination of municipal leadership and private investment.
9. Redevelop brownfield sites throughout the Town.

6 MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

The Town of Cochrane can play a significant leadership role in promoting the success of the CIP through complementary improvements to public policies, lands, and infrastructure. It is recognized that the Town has recently made investments that support the goals of this Plan, including the implementation of: significant improvements at Lake Commando; projects recommended as part of the “Doable Neighbourhood Project”; and planned renewal of gateway features and “Chimo”, the Town’s well-known polar bear, at the Board of Trade building which signifies the key entry into the Town at the intersection of Highway 11 West and Highway 11 South. This section identifies other potential Town-initiated projects that can help to meet the goals of this Plan.

6.1 PUBLIC POLICIES

The Town has opportunities to implement strategic policy initiatives that will support its CIP goals and Precinct objectives. The Town may wish to consider development of the following policy documents.

6.1.1 URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Detailed design guidelines will help guide development, redevelopment, infill, and other building improvements in a manner that is compatible with the community’s character and future vision. The guidelines should complement and build upon the design guidelines set out in **Section 8.4** of this Plan.

6.1.2 STREETScape DESIGN PLAN

A streetscape strategy would set out improvements to public streets, sidewalks, pathways, and trails that fall under the Town’s responsibility. The Town’s Strategic Plan identifies the development of a Streetscape Design Plan to help implement the CIP. The Plan would set out guidelines for beautification, signage, street furniture, pedestrian crossings, among other elements. CIP grant applicants would be required to conform to the Plan as a condition of grant approval. This Design Plan should complement and build upon the existing streetscape design guidelines set out in **Section 8.4** of this Plan, and should identify and prioritize specific improvements in conjunction with planned public infrastructure works, anticipated costs, and a proposed implementation strategy.

6.1.3 PARKING STRATEGY

A parking strategy can help identify the required amount, preferred locations, and most effective management framework for public and commercial parking in the Town. It can help match parking provisions to land use and identify opportunities for redevelopment.

Through visioning activities with the CIP Working Group, the availability of downtown parking was identified as a concern, especially with consideration for a potential increase in downtown residential units (e.g. in upper-storeys of commercial buildings). The Town has identified several vacant municipal properties, as well as private properties for potential future purchase, in proximity to downtown, which have potential to be used as municipal parking lots. A future municipal parking lot could be used to supplement available on-street parking for downtown residents, visitors, and local business staff. Potential locations for a municipal parking lot on municipally-owned properties are illustrated in **Figure 6-1**.

A parking strategy could examine these vacant municipal and private properties and determine the feasibility of their use as parking lots. The strategy should also examine potential parking regulations and enforcement for existing on-street parking, to ensure that available on-street parking is not monopolized and remains available for use by potential customers seeking to visit local businesses.

6.2 PUBLIC LANDS AND BUILDINGS

The location of Downtown Cochrane and its relationship to Lake Commando represents a premier public amenity and an opportunity to develop a cohesive and vibrant Downtown District teeming with local services, shopping, recreation, and tourism opportunities. This is further facilitated by the Town's strategic location along Highway 11, which represents a significant opportunity to draw in the travelling public into the Town centre.

In this area, it is recommended that the Town:

- Further enhance Lake Commando waterfront facilities, including washrooms, change rooms, picnic areas, and other facilities for use by visitors and non-motorized boaters;
- Conduct more seasonal programming on Lake Commando and at the newly constructed Pavilion, such as the existing waterslide program, future animated beach days, public skating, fishing derbies, and weekly farmer's markets;
- Install wayfinding signage at entry points into the Town and within the downtown to improve visibility of and access to pedestrian and cycling connections to and along waterfront areas, which the Town has made significant investments in (e.g. Lake Commando boardwalk);
- Consider creating an access to the Lake Commando pathway at the eastern end of Fourth Street where the road terminates in a view of the Lake Commando bridge;
- Continue the implementation of active transportation infrastructure, such as bicycle parking and bicycle lanes, throughout downtown and connecting to other major recreational facilities, such as the Tim Horton Events Centre;
- Encourage recreation-based businesses and outfitters to locate in vacant downtown commercial buildings to further enhance recreational and tourism opportunities associated with Lake Commando; and
- Repurpose a number of Sixth Avenue parking spaces to install temporary, seasonal bicycle racks, parkettes, café seating or patios, for use by downtown residents and visitors, especially in association with local business owners.

These actions could be implemented with the support of a Lake Commando Waterfront Master Plan or a Town-wide Recreation Master Plan.

The Town may also consider public-private partnership (P3) projects to promote redevelopment at strategic, highly visible locations, both within the downtown and Lake Commando area, or in other prominent locations within the Town, such as the vacant mall along Highway 11. It may also demonstrate municipal leadership through the acquisition of land for such purposes.

Other initiatives on vacant municipal lands may include the development of a downtown Plaza, as recommended in the “Doable Neighbourhood Project” report and discussed in **Section 2.9.1**, and a community garden to encourage urban agriculture, local food production, and environmentally sustainable practices with health, social, and economic benefits.

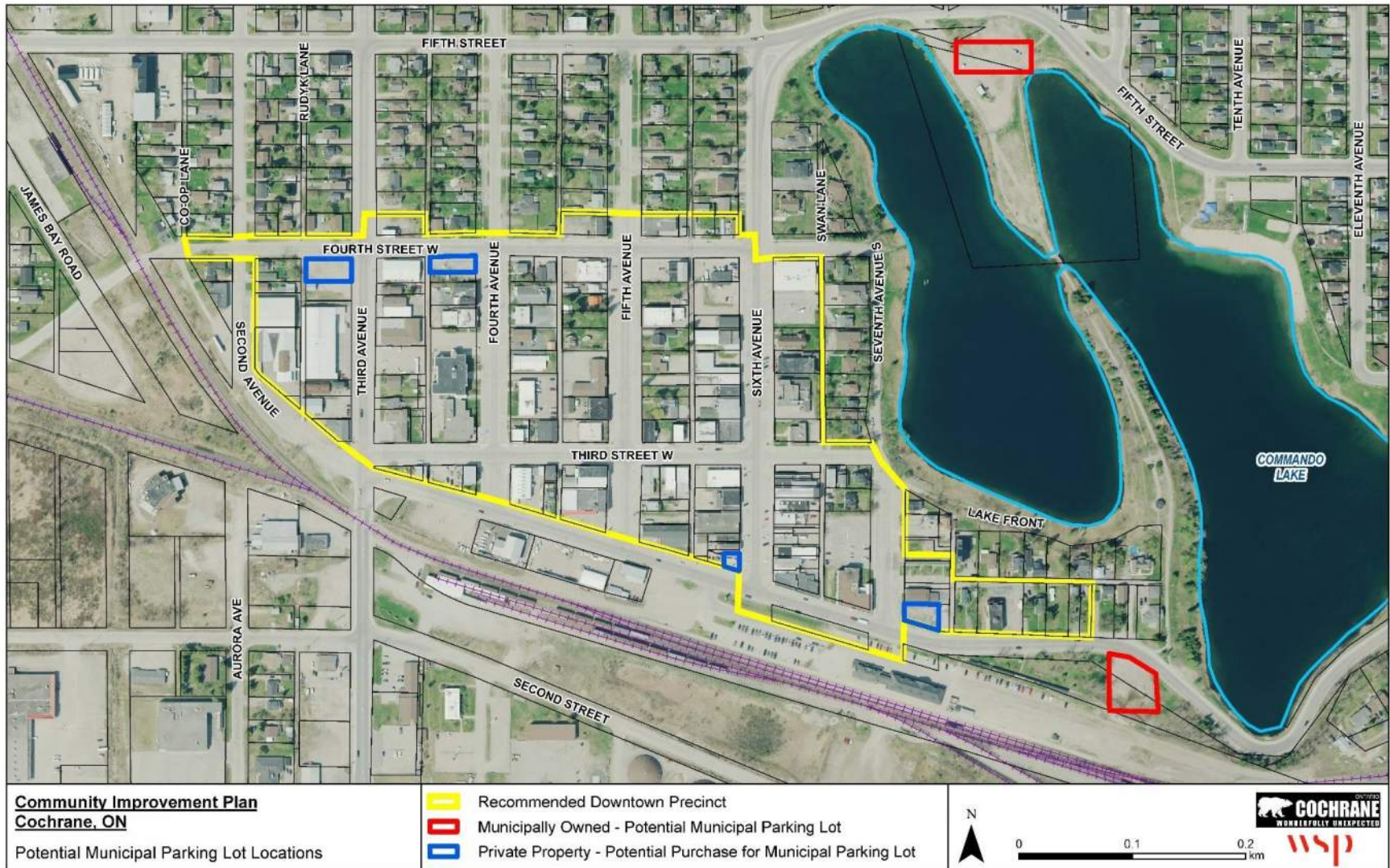
6.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

Based on the results of community engagement, numerous streets throughout the Town, and specifically downtown streets, were identified as in need of road repairs, repaving, and streetscaping improvements. When local streets are being considered and prioritized for road works, the Town should consider implementing streetscape improvements in conjunction with other construction, including a potential landscaped/treed median along Sixth Avenue, planting of street trees, rehabilitation of sidewalks, installation of street furniture, and other decorative elements such as planters, banners, and hanging flower baskets.



Example of past banners and integrated seating/planters along Sixth Avenue, Cochrane (Image source: Google Streetview, 2018)

Figure 6-1: Potential Municipal Parking Lot Locations



Document Path: L:\MMM Planning\Projects\Current Projects\Cochrane\CIP5_Mapping\MXD\CIP Project Areas\CIP_DowntownPrecinctPlusParking_11x17.mxd

6.4 GATEWAY SIGNAGE

Along Highway 11, the Town may explore further opportunities to increase and implement Tourist-Oriented Directional Signing (TODS) with the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and Canadian TODS Limited, a private, third-party company that operates, manages, maintains, and finances this program on behalf of the Ministries. Signage along Highway 11 would be intended to provide wayfinding for visitors and to encourage through-traffic to stop in Cochrane.



Example of Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (Image Source: City of Hamilton)



Example of municipal wayfinding signage (Image Source: www.seymourmainstreet.org)

The Town should also consider investing in additional gateway signage signifying key entryways into Cochrane (e.g. at the base of the roundabout), as well as wayfinding/directional signage to Downtown Cochrane and Lake Commando, targeting motorists, snowmobilers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Signage improvements may also include street signage branded by historic districts or neighbourhoods, banners along Sixth Avenue and along key routes into downtown, business listings, and wayfinding signage within downtown to key services, businesses, and recreational facilities including Lake Commando, the Tim Horton Events Centre, and the Polar Bear Habitat.

Key locations for potential gateway signage were identified by members of the CIP Working Group as part of the Visioning Workshop and are illustrated in **Figure 3-3**.

The Town could consider undertaking a Wayfinding Signage Strategy to assist in developing an overall theme, with specifications for the types of signs, size, colour, and other design elements. The Strategy could be used to create a cohesive and recognizable look and feel for signage in the Town, in keeping with the Town's existing branding. Examples of potential Town banners are included in **Section 7.12**.

6.5 SMARTPHONE APPLICATION

The Town may consider developing a smartphone application for use by residents and visitors, to better promote Township amenities and commercial offerings. Potential functionality of the application could include the following:

- Maps of the Town, featuring points of interest and attractions;
- A local events calendar;
- Promotions and features offered by local businesses;
- Information on snowmobiling and other recreational activities and amenities; and
- Food and accommodations information.

The development of a smartphone application may be an appropriate project for a future municipal summer student or intern from a University or College program specializing in communications technology and programming.

7 FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

This section of the CIP establishes a comprehensive set of financial incentive programs that are intended to achieve the goals of this CIP by encouraging private sector development and investment in Cochrane. The incentive programs presented are intended to respond to the local needs and opportunities to be addressed through the Plan. They have been developed based on engagement with community members, Town staff and Council, and the CIP Working Group, as well as a review of best practices which have been successful in other municipalities.

The financial incentive programs have been created to encourage private sector redevelopment in Cochrane, particularly with respect to the Town’s downtown commercial areas and brownfield sites. Applicants may use individual incentive programs, or combine multiple complementary programs for a single site or development, unless otherwise stipulated under the individual programs. The purpose, description, and eligibility requirements for each financial incentive program are outlined in this section. Eligible projects may also be augmented with other federal and provincial funding programs.

All programs are subject to funding allocated by Town Council on an annual basis.

A summary of the available financial incentive programs is provided in **Table 7-1**.

Table 7-1: Overview of CIP Financial Incentive Programs

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM	PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS	FULL DETAILS
Accessibility Grant	A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$2,500.	Section 7.1
Affordable Housing Study Grant	A grant for a total of 50% of eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.	Section 7.2
Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant	Cancellation, deferment, or freezing of municipal and provincial portions of property taxes for properties undergoing environmental remediation.	Section 7.3
Downtown Housing Grant	A grant equal to half (50%) of the construction cost of each unit, to a maximum of \$5,000 per unit, and to a maximum of two (2) units for eligible address.	Section 7.4
Environmental Site Assessment Grant	A grant equivalent up to half (50%) of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of \$3,000 per study, and a maximum of two (2) studies per property / project.	Section 7.5
Façade Improvement Grant	A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.	Section 7.6
Landscaping and Parking Area Grant	A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.	Section 7.7

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM	PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS	FULL DETAILS
Planning and Building Fee Grant	A grant equal to 100% of the Town’s fees, to a maximum of \$1,500, to cover the cost of minor variance applications, zoning by-law amendment applications, site plan applications, building permit fees, or demolition permit fees.	Section 7.8
Retail Market Strategy Study Grant	A grant equivalent up to half (50%) of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of \$3,000 per study, and a maximum of one (1) study per property / project.	Section 7.9
Signage Improvement Grant	A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$2,500.	Section 7.10
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	100% rebate of the municipal portion of a property tax increment resulting from redevelopment or building improvements, paid in increments over a maximum of 2 years.	Section 7.11

It is recommended that the incentive programs apply to the specific recommended Precinct Areas identified in **Section 3.2** of this document and described in this section, as indicated in **Table 7-2**. Specific improvements within the recommended Gateway Precinct would be completed through the municipal leadership strategy.

The objective of the **Gateway Precinct**, illustrated in **Figure 3-3**, is to create a welcoming first impression and distinct visual identity for the Town by:

- Signifying key entry points through signage and gateway features to encourage the travelling public on Highway 11 and using snowmobile trails to enter the Town;
- Improving wayfinding signage to direct visitors to downtown and Lake Commando; and
- Improving aesthetics to showcase the Town’s character and visual identity.

The objective of the **Downtown Precinct**, illustrated in **Figure 3-4**, is to create a welcoming, economically and socially vibrant Town centre that attracts both residents and visitors by:

- Enhancing the pedestrian-oriented streetscape;
- Improving the aesthetics and heritage character of building façades;
- Improving wayfinding, building signage and building accessibility;
- Facilitating the rehabilitation and ongoing use of existing storefronts;
- Increasing the supply and improving the condition of commercial and mixed-use building stock; and
- Supporting the development of environmentally sustainable building and landscaping features.

The objective of the **Brownfields Redevelopment Precinct**, illustrated in **Figure 3-5**, is to promote the redevelopment of former commercial / industrial properties which are contaminated and/or underutilized by:

- Supporting environmental remediation activities;
- Supporting the adaptive reuse of abandoned institutional or industrial properties.

Table 7-2: Implementation Areas for Proposed Financial Incentive Programs

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM	DOWNTOWN PRECINCT	BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT PRECINCT
Accessibility Grant	✓	
Affordable Housing Study Grant	✓	
Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant	✓	✓
Downtown Housing Grant	✓	
Environmental Site Assessment Grant	✓	✓
Façade Improvement Grant	✓	
Landscaping and Parking Area Grant	✓	
Planning and Building Fee Grant	✓	✓
Retail Market Strategy Study Grant	✓	
Signage Improvement Grant	✓	
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	✓	

7.1 ACCESSIBILITY GRANT

Purpose

To improve the accessibility of existing buildings in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and to promote improved access to commercial and institutional properties, in order to achieve universal accessibility for all ages and mobility devices. Such improvements should be consistent with the character of the building or property.



Existing examples of accessible entrances in Cochrane
(Image Sources: WSP, 2018)

Eligible Costs

1. Installation of new automatic doors;

2. Installation of new wheelchair access ramps;
3. Widening of public entryways;
4. Leveling or repairs to pathways/accesses and stairs; and/or
5. Any other improvements designed to improve accessibility, subject to approval by the Town’s Administrator and/or Review Panel.

Program Details

1. A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$2,500.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Only the commercial or institutional area of a property shall be eligible for this grant.
4. Accessibility improvements shall be in accordance with, or exceed, the requirements of the Ontario Building Code, as applicable to the property.



Customized portable ramps are a simple method / interim measure to improve accessibility
 (Image source: CBC News, Sudbury, July 5, 2017)

7.2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY GRANT

Purpose

To promote the development of new affordable housing units in Cochrane through the funding of background and supporting studies. This grant applies to studies for new projects or to the rehabilitation, renovation, or redevelopment of existing buildings, vacant lands, or under-utilized sites. Funding for conversions may also be considered on a case-by-case basis, if the units are accessible.



Former hotel redevelopment opportunity, Cochrane
 (Image source: WSP, 2018)

Eligible Costs

1. Studies to support an affordable housing development of four (4) or more units in the Downtown Precinct, including on the upper storey(s) of existing commercial buildings. Examples of studies could include architectural drawings including site plan / landscape drawings, business plans, hydrogeological and terrain analyses, and environmental reports.

Program Details

1. A grant for a total of 50% of eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Eligible projects feature housing that is affordable to those households earning the median income in Cochrane or less per year, as defined by Statistics Canada.

7.3 BROWNFIELD PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE GRANT

Purpose

To encourage the remediation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of brownfield sites in the Town. This grant temporarily eliminates part or all of the property tax increase on a property that is undergoing or has undergone remediation and development, to assist with payment of the cost of environmental remediation.

Eligible Costs

1. Environmental remediation costs, including any action taken to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property, to permit a Record of Site Condition (RSC) to be filed in the Environmental Registry under Section 168.4 of the Environmental Protection Act;
2. Placing clean fill and undertaking related grading; and
3. Environmental insurance premiums.

Program Details

1. Municipal Tax Assistance:
 - a. The Town may, by by-law, defer or cancel all or part of the municipal taxes on a brownfield site during the Rehabilitation Period and Development Period, as defined in Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act.

Under the Municipal Act, “Rehabilitation Period” means with respect to an eligible property, the period of time starting on the date on which the by-law providing tax assistance for the property is passed and ending on the earliest of,

- (a) the date that is 18 months after the date that the tax assistance begins to be provided,
- (b) the date that a Record of Site Condition for the property is filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the Environmental Protection Act, and
- (c) the date that the tax assistance provided for the property equals the sum of,
 - (i) the cost of any action taken to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property to permit a Record of Site Condition to be filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the Environmental Protection Act, and
 - (ii) the cost of complying with any Certificate of Property Use issued under Section 168.6 of the Environmental Protection Act.

Under the Municipal Act, “Development Period” means, with respect to an eligible property, the period of time starting on the date the rehabilitation period ends and ending on the earlier of,

- (a) the date specified in the by-law, or
 - (b) the date that the tax assistance provided for the property equals the sum of,
 - (i) the cost of any action taken to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property to permit a Record of Site Condition to be filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the Environmental Protection Act, and
 - (ii) the cost of complying with any Certificate of Property Use issued under Section 168.6 of the Environmental Protection Act.
- b. The total value deferred or cancelled will not exceed the total eligible costs, which are defined in the eligibility requirements. The level and duration of the tax assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- c. Before passing the by-law approving the tax deferral or cancellation, the Town must notify the Ministry of Finance. Within 30 days of passing the by-law, the Town must also notify the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Finance.

2. Provincial Tax Assistance:

- a. The Town may apply to the provincial Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program, on behalf of the owner, to cancel or freeze all or part of the education component of property taxes.
- b. The application must be approved by the Minister of Finance, and may be subject to a different timeline than the approved Municipal Tax Assistance.
- c. The Town must be offering Municipal Tax Assistance in order for the owner to be eligible for Provincial Tax Assistance.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs, as long as the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible cost of rehabilitating the land and buildings.
4. The Town may require the applicant to prepare a business plan or feasibility study as a condition of approving tax assistance.
5. Application for Provincial Tax Assistance shall be at the sole discretion of the Town. Initially, the Town may wish to seek Provincial Tax Assistance on behalf of the owner as a pilot project only, and discontinue such applications in the future. Should the Town choose not to apply for Provincial Tax Assistance, such a decision shall not require an amendment to this Plan.
6. The applicant must demonstrate that the subject property is a brownfield site, which is determined through an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). The Town has the discretion to determine whether the subject property would be considered as a brownfield site.
7. If the property is sold, in whole or in part, before the original grant period lapses, the original owner is not entitled to receive the remaining grant payments under the original agreement. The new owner is not entitled to receive any of the remaining grant. The grant is non-transferrable under Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act.

7.4 DOWNTOWN HOUSING GRANT

Purpose

To encourage the provision of new residential units in Downtown Cochrane, and to improve the condition of existing residential units on upper storeys.

Eligible Costs

1. Development of new residential units in the upper storey(s) of a mixed-use building in the Downtown Precinct; and/or
2. Significant improvement in the condition / quality of one or more residential units in the Downtown Precinct, which improves the occupants' living conditions and quality of life, increases the value of the unit(s), makes currently uninhabitable units habitable, or increases the appeal of the unit(s) to a broader range of income groups. Eligible works may



Existing upper storey residential units, Cochrane
(Image source: WSP, 2018)

include those that improve the health and safety of the residential unit(s), and are required to bring the building or unit(s) into compliance with the Ontario Building Code, such as: electrical system and wiring improvements; structural improvements; or other health and safety-related improvements.

Program Details

1. Eligible applicants may receive grants for the rehabilitation of residential units or the conversion of non-residential space to residential units.
2. A grant will be equal to half (50%) of the construction cost of each unit, to a maximum of \$5,000 per unit, and to a maximum of two (2) units for eligible address. In no case shall the total grant exceed 50% of the total construction cost.

Eligibility Requirements

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Existing or proposed ground floor/at-grade residential space within the designated Community Improvement Project Area shall not be eligible for the grants through this program. For clarity, upper storey and rear residential units in mixed-use buildings are eligible for this program.
4. At the discretion of Council in consultation with the Administrator and/or Review Panel, priority may be given to the conversion of upper storey space to new residential unit(s) and for the rehabilitation of affordable housing and rental units over other housing projects.

7.5 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT GRANT

Purpose

To promote the completion of environmental studies by property owners to better understand the type of contamination and potential remediation costs for brownfield sites.

Eligible Costs

1. Confirming and describing contamination at the site (partial or complete Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA));
2. Surveying designated substances and hazardous materials at the site (Designated Substance and Hazardous Materials Survey); and
3. Developing a plan to remove, treat, or otherwise manage contamination found on the site (Remedial Work Plan / Risk Assessment).

Program Details

1. A grant equivalent up to half (50%) of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of:
 - a. \$3,000 per study; and
 - b. Two (2) studies per property / project.
2. The grant shall be payable upon completion of all studies for which it is being provided.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Phase I ESAs are not considered eligible studies under this grant.
4. Applicants must complete and submit, for the Town's review, a Phase I ESA that demonstrates that site contamination is likely.
5. Applications shall include:
 - a. A detailed study work plan;
 - b. A cost estimate for the study; and
 - c. A description of the planned redevelopment, including any planning applications that have been submitted/approved, if applicable.
6. All environmental studies shall be completed by a qualified person, as defined by Ontario Regulation 153/04.

7.6 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Purpose

To encourage aesthetic improvements to buildings and properties, and to support continued maintenance of the Town's building stock. This grant is intended to promote building and associated streetscape improvements that reflect the Town's northern character and contribute to a vibrant, modern environment in the Downtown Precinct. This may be achieved through the maintenance and restoration of original building materials and architectural details, where applicable, or through the use of attractive, modern design.

Eligible Costs

1. The following eligible improvements apply only to front, rear, or exterior building façades that front onto a public street:
 - a. façade restoration of brickwork, wood, masonry, and metal cladding;

- b. repair or replacement of entablature, eaves, parapets, and other architectural details;
 - c. repair or replacement of windows and doors;
 - d. repair or replacement of signage in accordance with the Town’s Property Standards By-law and the Ontario Building Code and Regulations;
 - e. repair, replacement, or addition of exterior lighting;
 - f. repair, replacement, or addition of awnings, marquees, and canopies;
 - g. replacement of façade elements that were originally in place during initial construction of the building;
 - h. redesigned shop fronts; and/or
 - i. such other improvements/repairs, as may be considered and approved by Council in consultation with the Town’s Administrator and/or Review Panel;
2. Painting or installation of mural or other wall art of exterior side walls; and
 3. Professional fees associated with the above improvements.



Example of before (left) and after (right) a façade improvement grant, Kenora, ON
(Image Source: City of Kenora, 2017)

Program Details

1. A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.
2. The maximum amount of a grant for professional architectural services or heritage professionals shall not exceed 50% of the grant that is calculated for eligible construction costs.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Improvements shall generally comply with the Design Guidelines set out in **Section 8.4**.
4. Only commercial, office, institutional, and mixed-use buildings are eligible for this grant.

7.7 LANDSCAPING AND PARKING AREA IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Purpose

To encourage an appealing pedestrian environment in the Downtown Precinct by supporting improvements to the aesthetics of outdoor landscaping on private properties, as well as more efficient use of private parking areas, improving their aesthetics, and providing better pedestrian connections and seating. This grant also promotes parking area improvements that are consistent with low impact development (LID) principles. LID incorporates design techniques that mimic natural environmental functions, including infiltrating, filtering, storing, and holding back water runoff close to its source. Examples of LID design include, but are not limited to, bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, and permeable pavements.



Example of a bioswale feature
(Image source: Aaron Volkening, Flickr)

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) is in the process of developing a Low Impact Development (LID) Stormwater Management Guidance Manual to help guide stormwater management design and water quality control.

Eligible Costs

1. Professional landscaping, including installation of water-efficient ground cover using native plant species or tree planting;
2. Resodding, in conjunction with a larger landscaping improvement project (i.e. associated with other eligible projects in this grant);
3. Repair, replacement, or improvement of front- or side-yard driveways and parking areas, provided that a more low impact surface is installed (e.g. lightly coloured pavers rather than black asphalt, or a permeable paving surface);
4. Installation or improvement of decorative retaining walls or fences;
5. Installation or improvement of pedestrian walkways;
6. Installation of stormwater management systems that are considered to be, in the opinion of the Town of Cochrane in consultation with applicable agencies, innovative and beyond the minimum requirements for stormwater management. Such systems may include the use of bioswales, rainwater harvesting and reuse systems, rain gardens, etc.;
7. Installation of active or sustainable transportation infrastructure, such as bicycle parking or electric vehicle charging stations;
8. Installation of street furniture, such as benches or permanent planters; and

9. Installation or improvement of a seasonal outdoor sidewalk café or patio, provided that it is located adjacent to the sidewalk.

Program Details

1. A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.
2. The maximum amount of a grant for professional landscape architectural services shall not exceed 50% of the grant that is calculated for eligible construction costs.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Improvements shall comply with the Town's Property Standards By-law.
4. Improvements shall generally comply with the Design Guidelines set out in **Section 8.4**.

7.8 PLANNING AND BUILDING FEE GRANT

Purpose

To encourage infill development and redevelopment that is context-sensitive, attractive, and desirable. This grant reduces the administrative costs associated with the planning and building applications required to undertake improvements to private property. This grant is not intended for greenfield development or development through Consent to Sever applications.

Eligible Costs

1. Development of a vacant property for commercial, office, or a mix of uses;
2. Redevelopment of a property for commercial, office, or a mix of uses;
3. Major additions to a commercial or mixed use property, involving an increase of at least 25% of the existing gross floor area;
4. Infrastructure works including the improvement or reconstruction of existing on-site public infrastructure (water services, sanitary, and storm sewers);
5. Conversion of upper-storey space in a mixed-use or commercial building to residential units;
6. Professional services by an engineer, architect, or professional planner; and
7. Any combination of the above.
8. In general, any projects which are eligible for other incentives outlined in this Plan will also be eligible for the Planning and Building Fee Grant, if the applicant is required to obtain planning approvals and/or a building permit.

Program Details

1. Planning Fee Grant: A grant to a maximum of \$1,500 may be provided to cover the cost of minor variance applications, zoning by-law amendment applications, or site plan applications. The grant may equal 100% of the Town's fees, provided it does not exceed \$1,500.
2. Building Fee Grant: A grant to a maximum of \$1,500 may be provided to cover the cost of building permit fees or demolition permit fees. The grant may equal 100% of the Town's fees, provided it does not exceed \$1,500.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.

7.9 RETAIL MARKET STRATEGY STUDY GRANT

Purpose

To encourage the development of new retail businesses in Cochrane's Downtown Precinct. The program provides financial assistance for projects that involve undertaking market studies to support and inform retail opportunities through the expansion of existing businesses or the establishment of new retail businesses.

Eligible Costs

1. Market studies to support the retail planning process for a new retail business or an expansion to an existing retail business in the Downtown Precinct.

Program Details

1. A grant equivalent up to half (50%) of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of:
 - a. \$3,000 per study; and
 - b. One study per property / project.
2. The grant shall be payable upon completion of all studies for which it is being provided.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.

2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.

7.10 SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Purpose

To promote new attractive and pedestrian-oriented signage that contributes to the visual identity and northern character of the Town.

Eligible Costs

1. Replacement, repair, improvement, or installation of signage and associated lighting on building façades of commercial, office, institutional, mixed-use (including home-based businesses), and industrial properties in the Downtown Precinct.
2. Eligible signs include:
 - a. Primary signs attached to buildings, particularly those that form part of a building façade’s sign board area, or that are located above a building entrance or porch;
 - b. Hanging signs, which may be used either as primary signs or as secondary signs, to complement the main building signage; and
 - c. Stand-alone signs, associated with landscaping, located in front yards and stand-alone signs in rear yards.



Example of attractive signage on Sixth Avenue, Cochrane (Image source: WSP, 2018)

Program Details

1. A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$2,500.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. Improvements shall comply with the Town’s Property Standards By-law and the Ontario Building Code and Regulations.
4. Improvements shall generally comply with the Design Guidelines set out in **Section 8.4**.

7.11 TAX INCREMENT EQUIVALENT GRANT

Purpose

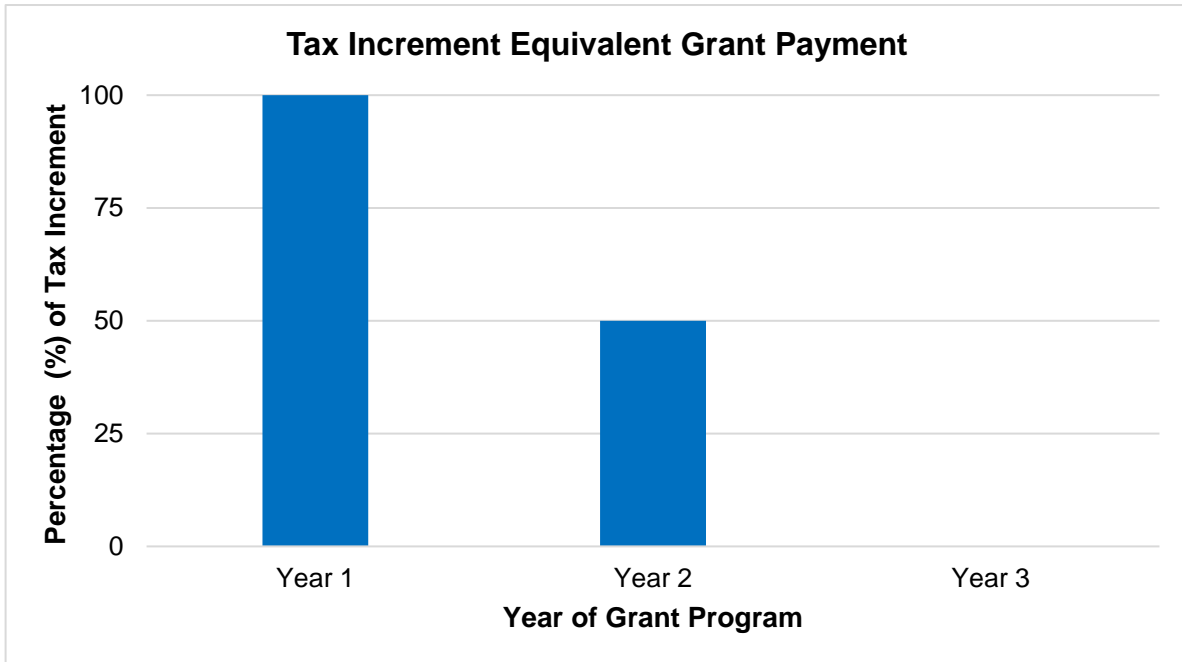
To encourage infill development and redevelopment in the Downtown Precinct that is desirable and attractive. To ensure that the proposed development or redevelopment is in the Town's best interests, the design of the project will need to be consistent, in the opinion of the Administrator and/or Review Panel, with the Plan's goals as described in **Section 5.2** of this Plan, as well as with the objectives of the Downtown Precinct as described in **Section 7** of this Plan. This grant is not intended for greenfield development.

Eligible Costs

1. Within the Downtown Precinct, the following costs shall be considered eligible:
 - a. Redevelopment of a property for commercial, retail, office, or a mix of uses;
 - b. Adaptive reuse of a property to suit a new commercial, retail, office, or mix of uses;
 - c. Major additions to a commercial or mixed-use property, involving an increase of at least 25% of the existing gross floor area, or of at least \$500 of the assessed value of the property;
 - d. Conversion of upper-storey space in a mixed-use or commercial building to residential units, or major renovations or improvements to upper storey residential space;
 - e. Streetscaping or landscaping improvements required as part of a proposed development;
 - f. Professional services by an engineer, architect, or professional planner associated with the redevelopment or adaptive reuse; or
 - g. Any combination of the above.

Program Details

1. The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is offered to eligible property owners only where the property assessment increases as a result of development, redevelopment, or major improvement, and there is a subsequent increase in municipal property taxes. For the purposes of calculating this grant, municipal property taxes include the municipal portion of the taxes only, and do not include education or any other special charges.
2. Grants shall be equal to a declining percentage of the municipal tax increase resulting from the improvements, and shall be paid to the owner each year for a maximum of 2 years. In year one (1), the amount of the grant shall equal up to 100% of the tax increment and shall decrease by 50% per year until it reaches 0%.



3. Notwithstanding the above, the amount of the grant(s), the time period over which the grant(s) are paid, and the rate of decrease of the value of the grant(s), shall be at the sole discretion of the Town and outlined in the financial incentive program agreement. The total amount of all Tax Increment Equivalent Grants shall not exceed 50% of the total eligible costs of the improvements.
4. Grants shall be provided upon successful completion of the work, as approved by Council, and payment in full of the property taxes including the taxes for the incremental assessment increase. The amount of the grant in the first year cannot be calculated until the incremental assessment has been determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and provided to the municipality, which may take up to two years. Grants for subsequent years shall be paid annually to property owners within three (3) months of payment of the full property tax.
5. The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant shall not be paid and shall not accumulate for any year when taxes remain unpaid by the due date. Any failure to pay taxes in any year shall disqualify the owner for further grant payments.

Example Scenario

A hypothetical property pays \$2,500 in annual municipal property taxes this year. If the property is redeveloped and a reassessment results in municipal property taxes of \$5,000 annually, the tax 'increment' is \$2,500 (i.e. \$2,500 + \$2,500 = \$5,000). In the first year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$2,500, representing 100% of the tax increment. In the second year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$1,250, representing a decrease of 50% from the previous year. The next year, the grant would expire. This example assumes that all eligibility criteria are met.

Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Requirements outlined in **Section 8.3** shall apply.
2. Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out in **Section 8.5**.
3. At its sole discretion, the Town may require the applicant to submit a business plan, prepared to the satisfaction of the Town, in relation to an application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant.
4. To be eligible for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, the property shall be improved such that the amount of work undertaken results in an increase of at least \$500 in the assessed value of the property, or the improvement involves more than 25% of the existing gross floor area.
5. In order to determine the suitability of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, prior to submitting an application for the program, eligible applicants may be required to estimate the total potential value of the tax increment, based on current assessment values and anticipated investment.
6. If the total value of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is significantly less than the applicant's estimated value, at the sole discretion of the Town, the applicant may be given the opportunity to withdraw their application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant program, and submit an application for one or more of the other incentive programs in this Plan as may be applicable to the project.
7. Should an eligible applicant be approved for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, and if the subject property is sold, in whole or in part, before the original grant period lapses, the original owner may not be entitled to receive the remaining grant payments, in accordance with the terms of the program agreement. The payments are also non-transferrable to the new owner, unless specifically stipulated as part of the Financial Incentive Program Agreement executed between the original owner and the Town.
8. The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant cannot be combined with any other grant or rebate in this Plan, with the exception of the Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant.
9. The property owner is responsible for the entire cost of the development or redevelopment project.

7.12 CONCEPT RENDERINGS

The following concept renderings illustrate potential improvements through the implementation of some of the financial incentives described in this Section and/or municipal initiatives described in **Section 6**.

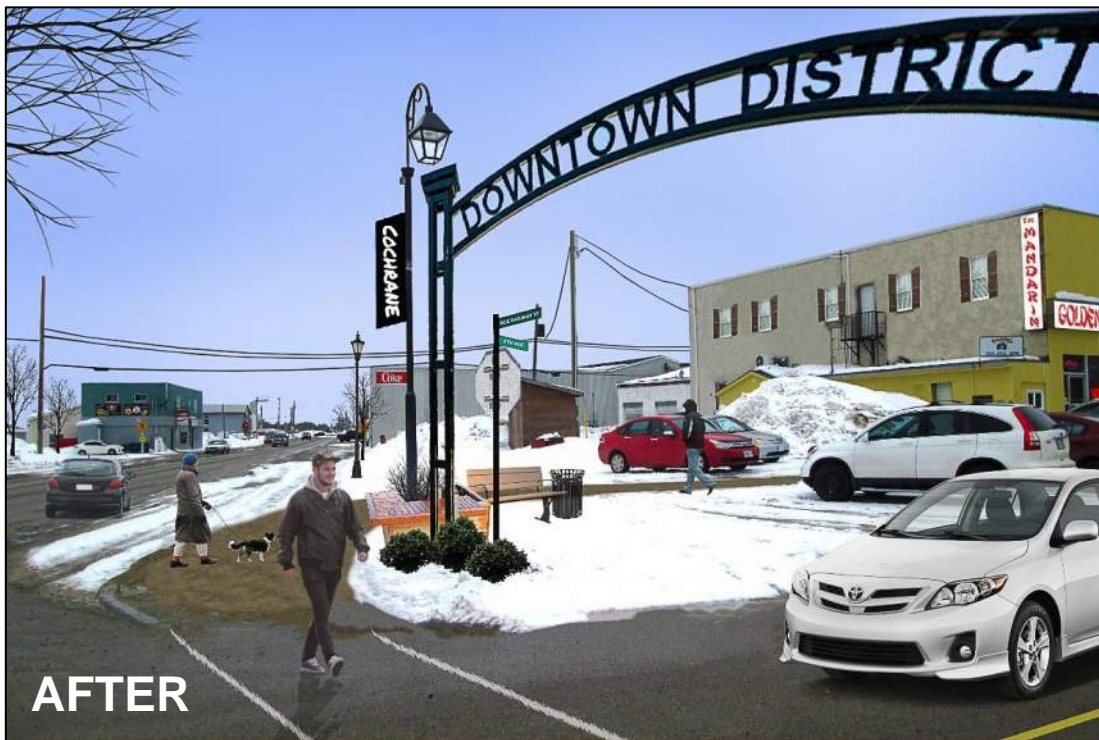


Figure 7-1: Existing intersection of Sixth Avenue / Railway Street (top); after potential Town-initiated gateway improvements (bottom)



Figure 7-2: Existing intersection of Sixth Avenue / Third Street (top); after potential Town-initiated gateway / streetscaping improvements and improvements funded in part by CIP grants (bottom) (e.g. Downtown Housing Grant, Façade Improvement Grant, Signage Grant, and/or Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant)



Figure 7-3: Existing vacant building at corner of Fourth Avenue / Third Street (top); after potential redevelopment and improvements funded in part by CIP grants (bottom) (e.g. Affordable Housing Study Grant; Accessibility Grant; Landscaping and Parking Area Grant; and/or Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant)

8 IMPLEMENTATION

The successful implementation of the Town of Cochrane CIP requires municipal leadership and a clear and comprehensive framework to guide the administration of the Plan, and ensure that the recommended financial incentive programs achieve the intended outcomes and goals of this Plan.

This section sets out the interpretation, general administration structure, general eligibility requirements, application process, and other considerations related to the management of the CIP and its implementation in the Town of Cochrane. It also includes a recommended municipal marketing strategy, and a monitoring and evaluation program.

8.1 INTERPRETATION

This CIP must be read and interpreted in its entirety, and in conjunction with the Planning Act, Municipal Act, and all applicable municipal planning documents for the Town of Cochrane.

The CIP shall be interpreted at the sole discretion of the Town of Cochrane Council, in consultation with, or based on, advice from Township staff.

8.2 ADMINISTRATION

This Plan will be administered by the Town of Cochrane, as part of the implementation of the Community Improvement policies (Section 8) of the Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area Official Plan.

The Community Improvement Project Area(s) to which this Plan applies shall be as designated by by-law from time to time.

This Plan is intended to be implemented over a 10-year period. Council may review the Plan after five (5) years to assess the degree of uptake and the overall success of the programs, and may elect to continue implementing the Plan beyond 10 years. Amendments or adjustments to this CIP may be made as described in **Section 8.8** of this document.

Grant applications shall be processed, subject to the availability of funding, as approved by Council. Council may determine that the objectives of a particular financial incentive program have been met, and decide to terminate or temporarily suspend funding, without the need for an amendment to the CIP.

Once Council is satisfied that this Plan has been carried out, it may enact a by-law dissolving the Community Improvement Project Area(s) and rendering the Plan inoperative.

8.2.1 DESIGNATION OF ADMINISTRATOR AND APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Upon approval of this CIP, Council shall appoint a member of the existing Town staff as the CIP Administrator, to manage day-to-day implementation and approval of applications. The responsibilities of the Administrator would generally include meeting with potential applicants for financial incentives programs; coordinating applications with a Review Panel and/or Council; undertaking marketing activities; and monitoring and evaluation.

8.2.2 FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM BUDGET

At its sole discretion, Council may establish a budget for financial incentive programs as part of its annual budget process. This budget may be subject to the availability of funding and other budget priorities, and is therefore not specified in this Plan. Any unused portion of the financial incentive program budget may be carried over to the following year.

Further, at its sole discretion and considering any recommendations made by the Administrator through the Monitoring and Evaluation Program, Council may choose to allocate portions of the financial incentive program budget to specific programs, or choose not to allocate funding to certain programs.

The Town may discontinue any of the financial incentive programs recommended in this CIP at any time, without amending this Plan. However, applicants with approved tax assistance and/or grant payments shall still receive said payment, provided that they continue to meet the general and program-specific requirements and the terms of any executed Financial Incentive Program Agreement entered into with the Town.

8.3 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

1. The subject property must be located in the CIP Project Area as designated by municipal by-law at the time of the application;
2. All proposed projects must, in the opinion of the Administrator, Review Panel and/or Council, generally contribute to achieving, and not conflict with, the vision and goals of this Plan as set out in **Section 5**, and with the objectives of the applicable precinct as set out in **Section 7** of this Plan. Where applicable, they should be consistent with the design guidelines set out in **Section 8.4** of this Plan;
3. Proposed projects must represent a permanent improvement to the property or building, and not a lifecycle replacement of existing materials or structures. For clarity, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, trailers, sheds, hanging planters, and similar non-permanent elements shall not be considered eligible;

4. Due to administrative costs, applications for grants less than \$500 shall not be considered;
5. An application for any financial incentive program contained in this Plan must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any works to which the financial incentive program applies and prior to an application for a building permit;
6. If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application;
7. An application for any financial incentive program contained in this Plan must include plans, estimates, contracts, reports, and other details, as required by the Town, to satisfy the Town with respect to project costs and conformity to this Plan, as well as all municipal by-laws, policies, procedures, standards and guidelines, including Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Site Plan requirements and approvals;
8. As a condition of application approval, the applicant may be required to enter into an agreement with the Town. The agreement shall specify the terms, duration, and default provisions of the incentive to be provided;
9. Where other sources of government and/or non-profit organization funding (federal, provincial, etc.) that can be applied against the eligible costs are anticipated or have been secured, these must be declared as part of the application. Accordingly, the grant may be reduced on a pro-rated basis;
10. The Town 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;
11. The Town is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including costs incurred in anticipation of a tax assistance and/or grant payment;
12. If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the Town, the Town may delay, reduce or cancel the approved tax assistance and/or grant payment and require repayment of the approved tax assistance and/or grant;
13. Town staff, officials, and/or agents may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the financial incentive programs offered by the Town;
14. Eligible applicants may apply for one or more of the incentive programs contained in this Plan, noting that the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant may only be combined with the Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant. No two programs may be used to pay for the same eligible cost. In addition, the total of all tax assistance and grants provided in respect of the subject property may not exceed the eligible cost of the improvements to that property;
15. The subject property must not be in arrears of any municipal taxes, area rates, or other charges;
16. All expenses that are eligible for the incentive programs contained herein must be paid in full and the amount of the incentive shall be reimbursed as a grant to the applicant. Grants shall only be paid out when the work has been completed and paid invoices are submitted to the Town;
17. Outstanding work orders from the Town's Fire Department or Building Division must be addressed prior to grant approval; and

- 18.** Applications for financial incentive programs must meet the eligibility criteria set out for each individual incentive program, as set out in **Section 7**, as well as the general policies and requirements for submitting applications as outlined in **Section 8.5** of this Plan.

8.4 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Aesthetic improvements to buildings, properties, and the pedestrian environment will play a significant role in achieving the goals of this Plan. This section presents a series of recommended design guidelines which are intended to provide guidance to applicants and Town staff, and establish a general standard for community improvements made using this Plan and the associated financial incentive programs.

The interpretation and application of these design guidelines shall be at the discretion of Council or the CIP Administrator and/or Review Panel. All new developments and improvements to existing properties and buildings shall comply with these design guidelines, wherever possible. It is recognized that not all guidelines set out in this section will be applicable to every CIP initiative or financial incentive program.

Should the Town develop a comprehensive set of Urban Design Guidelines in the future, as described in **Section 6.1.1**, those Guidelines shall be applicable to CIP initiatives and financial incentive programs and may replace the guidelines presented in this section.

8.4.1 STREETScape GUIDELINES

- 1.** Sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and ground floor building entrances should be universally accessible (i.e. barrier-free).
- 2.** Hanging baskets and seasonal planters with native and salt-tolerant plants that provide year-round visual interest (e.g. coniferous species) are encouraged.
- 3.** Public and wayfinding signage should be complementary to the overall theme of the streetscape and architectural character.
- 4.** Streetscape elements, such as street furniture and waste containers, should be clustered.
- 5.** Existing street trees should be retained and new street trees should be planted, where possible.
- 6.** All sidewalks should be designed to a minimum width, as determined by the Town.
- 7.** Paving materials and textures should be differentiated throughout main streets, core commercial areas, and crosswalks (e.g. pavers, coloured asphalt).
- 8.** Existing light fixtures should be upgraded and decorative lighting should be installed to improve the night-time experience.
- 9.** Temporary or permanent installations of public art are encouraged.



Example of tiled pavers and hanging baskets for commercial streets
(Image source: Shields Gardens)



Example of street trees and street furniture
(Image source: SEH Inc.)

8.4.2 BUILT FORM GUIDELINES

1. Building heights should be compatible with surrounding buildings and neighbourhood contexts, and provide appropriate transitions, in accordance with the Town's Official Plan policies for land use compatibility and Zoning By-law provisions.
2. New buildings or additions should be similar in height to adjacent buildings, in order to create a consistent roofline.
3. New buildings or additions should be located to create a consistent façade line fronting along the street / sidewalk.
4. Buildings should be in scale with the existing built form, and should maintain appropriate public access and quality of scenic views.
5. Primary building entrances should front onto the public street.
6. In the downtown, building façades should be continuous and uninterrupted, where possible.
7. Building entrances should be universally accessible (i.e. barrier-free), in accordance with Ontario Building Code standards. Where steps at entrances cannot be avoided, the installation of an accessibility ramp, stop gap measure, or alternate entrance, is encouraged, even where it is not required by the Ontario Building Code.



Examples of uninterrupted building façades
(Image sources: Downtown Grandhaven, 2011 (left); Carleton Place (right))

8.4.3 BUILDING FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES

1. Existing façades should be repaired and revitalized.
2. Original masonry and architectural details should be preserved, where possible.
3. Storefront signage should be in proportion to the building.
4. Incorporating and balancing natural shading (i.e. trees) with artificial shading (i.e. awnings) is encouraged.
5. Façade openings should be designed to maximize natural lighting (e.g. glazing dimension, colour, and architectural sunshade details to accommodate summer/winter sun).
6. A cohesive “northern” colour palette is encouraged, including brown (timber and brickwork representing the land), white (clean modern colour representing snow), blue (representing water), green (representing the natural environment and vegetation), and grey (representing rock).
7. The use of building materials, including wood, glass, metal siding, and stonework, that are complementary to adjacent properties is encouraged.
8. Repeating elements along a façade, including architectural features or windows, are encouraged. Large expanses of blank exterior walls should be avoided.
9. Storefronts window displays should be modern and uncluttered, and should be designed to showcase the business’ products. Seasonal and rotating storefront displays are encouraged.
10. Business hours and open / closed signs should be clearly visible.



Example of modern storefront window
(Image source: Zen Merchandiser)



Example of repeating architectural features along a façade
(Image source: Township of Uxbridge)

8.4.4 BUILDING SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

1. Front-lit, embossed, or engraved signage is encouraged. Lettering on signs should be embossed or engraved and painted, with decorative lighting pointed towards the signs.
2. Back-lit and neon signs are discouraged.
3. Primary storefront signage should be located above the primary entrance, where possible, and should be minimized in storefront windows.
4. Secondary hanging signage is encouraged to complement primary storefront signage, such as at the side of corner buildings.
5. Consider light, grade changes, and surrounding features when designing for visibility.



Example of secondary hanging storefront signage
(Image source: Ripon, Wisconsin)



Example of decorative lighting features above signage
(Image source: Hammerworks)

8.4.5 GATEWAY / WAYFINDING / DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

1. Signage for wayfinding, mapping, sightlines, points of interest, and business listings should include large, bold, clear, and modern displays and fonts.
2. Signage should be scaled to the targeted user, such as passing motorists, snowmobilers, cyclists, or pedestrians.
3. Designing and locating signage should account for snow coverage, snow clearance, and surrounding vegetation.
4. Light, grade changes, and surrounding features should be considered when designing for visibility.
5. Town-initiated signage should be of a cohesive theme and colour scheme, in keeping with the Town's branding.



Example of directional signage
(Image source: Onsign Industries)

8.4.6 LANDSCAPING AND PARKING AREA GUIDELINES

1. Parking areas should be located at the rear of buildings, where possible.
2. Parking areas should be buffered from the sidewalk and street. A planting strip including decorative landscaping, trees, or fencing is encouraged. Large parking areas should be broken up with decorative landscaping.
3. Parking areas should provide safe and clear (i.e. barrier-free) pedestrian access to building entrances, including signage and designated walkways, where appropriate.
4. The use of permeable paving surfaces is encouraged.
5. The use of native and salt-tolerant plants in landscaping and planting strips is encouraged, to minimize watering and maintenance requirements.
6. Landscaping shall be designed to maintain clear pedestrian access to building entrances.



Example of parking lot with decorative landscaping
(Image source: Flickr, NNECAPA)



Example of planting strip between a parking lot and sidewalk
(Image source: Osoyoos Times, Sept. 17, 2014)

8.5 APPLICATION PROCESS

The recommended process for submitting a financial incentive program application and the Town's process for accepting and evaluating applications is described below and illustrated in **Figure 8-1**:

Step 1: Pre-application Consultation, Application Submission and Acceptance

Prior to submitting an application for one or more of the financial incentive programs in this CIP, applicants are required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with the CIP Administrator and/or Review Panel to confirm application and eligibility requirements. At this meeting, the applicant should present the following supporting materials:

- Photographs of the existing building or property condition;
- Details of the project to be completed;
- Drawings or plans showing the details of the project;
- Estimate of the associated costs to complete the project;
- A work plan for the improvements and timeline for completion; and
- Any additional materials required to review the application, as determined by the Town.

The Administrator and/or Review Panel will complete a preliminary screening of the supporting materials and provide comments to the applicant on whether the project meets the objectives of the CIP. Staff will confirm the proposed project's eligibility under the available financial incentive programs.

If a project is determined to be eligible for one or more financial incentive programs, the Administrator and/or Review Panel will inform the applicant of how to complete an application. Acceptance of an application does not guarantee program approval. The application will be rejected if it not considered complete, or if it clearly does not comply with the eligibility criteria.

The applicant will be advised of approval or non-approval within 30 business days of the receipt of a complete application.

The Administrator will enter the accepted or rejected application into the Town's inventory, as described in **Section 8.7**.

Step 2: Review and Evaluation of an Accepted Application

Applications for projects which are determined to meet the goals of the CIP and objectives of the Precinct areas will be recommended for approval by the Administrator. A recommending report will be prepared and submitted to the Review Panel and/or Council for review and approval. Funding for the CIP financial incentive programs and individual grant applications is allocated solely at the discretion of Council and the Administrator and/or Review Panel, if they have been delegated authority.

Step 3: Application Approval and Financial Incentive Program Agreement

Upon approval of an accepted application, a Financial Incentive Program Agreement (“the Agreement”) will be prepared by the Administrator and entered into between the Town and the applicant. The Agreement will outline the nature of the works to be completed, the details of the financial incentive programs, and a timeframe for project completion and grant payment(s). A copy of the Agreement will be provided to the applicant.

Step 4: Completion of Community Improvement Works and Grant Payment(s)

Upon execution of the Agreement, the applicant may begin the approved community improvement works. In the case of grants, payment will occur once the approved works have been completed, as outlined in the Agreement, to the satisfaction of the Administrator and/or Review Panel and Council.

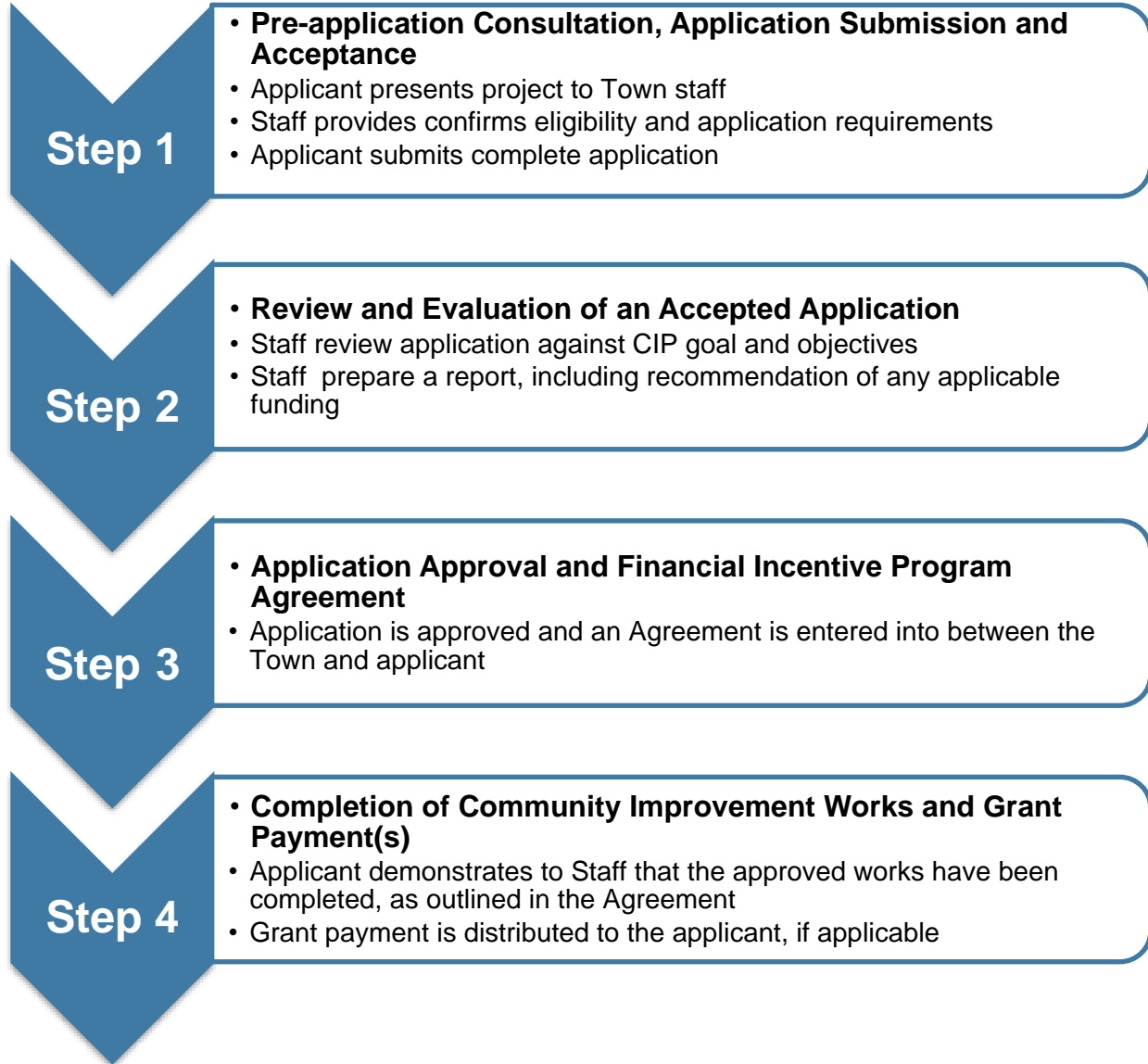
Before the payment is issued, the applicant may be required to provide the Administrator and/or Review Panel with final supporting documentation, such as photographic evidence of the completed works, invoice for all eligible work completed, and proof of payment to contractors, etc., to the satisfaction of the Administrator and/or Review Panel.

The Administrator and/or Review Panel and other Town staff, as applicable, may perform a site visit and inspection of the building or property, as necessary, to ensure the community improvement works have been completed in accordance with the Agreement.

The Administrator and/or Review Panel may take appropriate action as specified in the Agreement if the applicant defaults on the Agreement.

If all program and Agreement requirements are determined to have been met to the satisfaction of the Administrator and/or Review Panel, payment will be issued to the applicant for the approved grant, in accordance with the program and Agreement requirements.

Figure 8-1: Financial Incentive Program Application Process Summary



8.6 MARKETING STRATEGY

The successful implementation of the CIP vision and goals requires effective communication of the initiatives and available funding opportunities to property and business owners, developers, tenants, and the broader community. A Marketing Strategy targeting potential applicants, both local and outside the Town, should be prepared and launched by Town staff immediately following Council adoption of the CIP. This section provides recommendations that the Town may consider in the development and implementation of the CIP Marketing Strategy, which should be in line with and build upon the Town’s existing branding.

8.6.1 TOWN WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Town has established, and should maintain, a dedicated CIP page on its website, which should include CIP information (including a summary of available grants), application forms, and Town staff contact information. The Town may wish to provide a short video, maximum 2 minutes in length, highlighting the key features of the Town, such as its strategic location, natural and cultural environment, key services, etc., followed by an explanation of the CIP, the vision, and the financial incentive programs that are available for private-sector investment. This video can be linked to other partner websites, such as that of the Cochrane Board of Trade, and through the Town's social media feeds such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The Town should use its existing social media platforms to announce the formal launch of the CIP and share success stories as community improvement works are completed.

8.6.2 LAUNCH PARTY

The Town should conduct a physical or virtual launch party leading up to the launch of available funding through the CIP. The launch should incorporate a social media presence, including the promotion of the CIP website and video. Town staff and elected officials should be available in person and through social media to answer questions related to the CIP.

8.6.3 PRINTED MATERIALS

Consistent with existing branding and promotional efforts, the Town should develop newsletters and/or brochures that provide an overview of the CIP and the available financial incentive programs to be circulated, in hard copy and electronically, to all property owners and tenants within the designated Community Improvement Project Area. Newsletters and brochures may also be displayed and provided at the Town's municipal office, on its website, through the Cochrane Board of Trade, through local elected officials, at business locations participating in the CIP, and at any other locations or distributors considered appropriate by Town staff.

8.6.4 POP-UPS

The Town may wish to provide pop-up information booths with Town staff at local events to disseminate information about the CIP to a wide audience, including through local media outlets which may already be covering the events.

8.6.5 POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT MEETINGS

Early in the implementation process, Town staff and elected officials may wish to offer targeted meetings with potential participants and presentations on the financial incentive programs available through the CIP.

Biannually, the Town may wish to lead an information session or consultation program to remind the public of the Plan and identify any modifications that may be needed.

8.6.6 SHOP LOCAL INITIATIVE AND CONTESTS

To encourage economic activity in the Town, a “Shop Local” initiative could be implemented in Downtown Cochrane or on a Town-wide scale. An advertising campaign promoting the initiative could appear in a range of local media, such as newspapers, radio, television, and online.

The initiative could include a “Shop Local Passport” which encourages residents and visitors to shop at local businesses, collect “passport” stamps, and submit a completed passport (e.g. 5 purchases at local businesses in one month) for a prize draw. The passports could be made available at local businesses, and at the Town and Board of Trade offices.

Local business owners could also be encouraged to draw in customers by participating in a storefront window display contest, encouraging the “Shop Local” theme and promoting locally-made goods.

Further initiatives may be developed by the Town’s Economic Development Department.

8.6.7 ANNUAL REPORTING

The Town should communicate the results of the Monitoring and Evaluation Program through newsletters and information sheets. These can serve to remind potential applicants of the program, promote the achievements of this Plan, and highlight case studies and successful projects.

8.6.8 SHOWCASE SUCCESS

The Town should identify, recognize, and celebrate successful projects, and ensure they are reflected in CIP promotional material. For example, the Town may wish to signify buildings / properties that successfully completed community improvement works through the available financial incentive programs with signs on the properties or profiles on the Town website, with permission from the CIP applicants/participants.

8.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM

This CIP has been developed and designed to be flexible as a planning and economic development tool for the Town of Cochrane. It identifies opportunities and provides incentives for private sector investment, as well as for municipal initiatives, to redevelop and beautify land, buildings, and streets in the Town.

To ensure that this Plan achieves the desired results and remains current with respect to local and global market conditions, and to inform decision-making regarding the Town’s implementation budget, the uptake and success of the programs should be monitored, evaluated and, if necessary, revised on a regular basis.

The recommended monitoring and evaluation program for this CIP includes the following three main steps:

Step 1: Establish Baseline Conditions Inventory

Immediately following Council adoption of this Plan, the Administrator should gather baseline conditions for the Community Improvement Project Area, where the information is available. The Administrator should develop an inventory of baseline conditions upon which to monitor the number, types, and success of the financial incentive program applications and municipal leadership programs.

The information in the inventory should include:

- Number, size, and location of vacant lands and vacant buildings by land use category (e.g. residential, commercial, institutional, industrial). A map and photos illustrating the vacant lands and buildings are recommended for internal and external use;
- Vacancy rate of residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses;
- Number of streetscaping elements (e.g. light posts, trees, benches, bicycle racks, etc.);
- Length of trails/bicycle paths and number of trail/pathway connections to sidewalks and roads;
- Number of bicycle, commercial, and municipal parking spaces (on-street and off-street); and
- Statistics related to number of visitors, employees, etc., where it is possible to obtain the data.

Step 2: Application Data Collection

The Administrator should maintain a record all pre-application consultations related to potential submissions, even if the consultations do not result in a submitted application. In doing so, the Administrator shall have consideration for the confidentiality of any inquiries.

As applications are received, they should be listed by the financial incentive program type in the inventory. In addition, comparable information regarding municipal leadership programs that are related to this Plan should be recorded as a separate category.

Carefully selected performance indicators will provide important information regarding the success of this Plan and its individual programs. For each financial incentive application received, the Town should record and monitor, on an on-going basis, the:

- Date of the pre-application consultation meeting;
- The subject property's tax assessment prior to the project's approval;
- Total construction value of the project;
- Requested grant value, by program and in total;
- Details and purpose of the project, including the square footage of commercial space affected, number of trees to be planted, length of façade improved, etc., as may be appropriate;
- Names of contractor(s) and supplier(s), which may be useful information to provide to future applicants;
- Appearance of the property prior to project initiation ("before" photos);
- Proposed concept plans for the property; and

- Any relevant subjective information about the application (notably, whether the CIP is responsible for encouraging the project).

In addition, it is important to appropriately record and monitor sites where more than one application has been submitted according to the financial incentive programs (e.g. where an applicant applies for an Accessibility Grant and a Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant).

For unsuccessful applications, the Town should monitor, on an on-going basis, the:

- Number of unsuccessful applications; and
- Reason(s) for the application's denial.

For each approved financial incentive program application, the Town should monitor, on an on-going basis, the:

- Approved value of grant(s), in total and by program;
- Amount of private investment leveraged by the grant(s);
- Timing of completion of the project and payment of the grant(s);
- Property tax assessment after the completion of the project, if relevant; and
- Appearance of the completed project ("after" photos).

As an outcome of a decision on a financial incentive program application, the Town may survey the applicant to obtain feedback on the financial incentives process. Regarding each municipal leadership program, the Town will monitor the progress of each project on an annual basis. This may require annual communication with each department or individual responsible for advancing the program.

This information should be recorded and monitored, as it will provide valuable information in the Monitoring and Evaluation Report that will be presented to Council on an annual basis.

Step 3: Prepare Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report

The Town should prepare an annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report that demonstrates the performance of the CIP to Council. The Monitoring and Evaluation Report will provide a summary of the baseline conditions inventory, and updates to this inventory based on the successful applications and constructed improvements in any given year. The Report shall include the details of the information collected in Step 2.

In addition, the Report that shall also include, if necessary, recommendations regarding:

- Measures for avoiding any unintended outcomes of the CIP programs in the future;
- Funding of the incentive programs for Council's consideration in budget deliberations or the funding or timing of any Town-initiated projects recommended in this document, or others that are recommended or developed after the adoption of this Plan;
- Potential for revisions to the CIP Project Area, which may be passed by by-law;
- Consideration of amendments or adjustments to the Plan, as described in **Section 8.8** of this document; and
- Administration of the Plan.

Furthermore, the annual Report should include a review, summary, and analysis of potential funding opportunities from the federal and provincial governments or other sources. The Monitoring and Evaluation Report should be made available on the Town's website for public review.

8.8 AMENDMENTS TO THE CIP

As redevelopment and revitalization is achieved in the Town of Cochrane over time and specific CIP goals or objectives may evolve, the Town may deem it necessary to amend or adjust this Plan. It may also be necessary to address issues with specific financial incentive programs, which may become evident as the programs are implemented.

Required adjustments to this Plan shall generally be identified through recommendations from the annual monitoring and evaluation report, discussed in **Section 8.7**. This CIP permits adjustments; however, certain adjustments may require an amendment to this CIP, in accordance with Section 28(5) of the Planning Act. Planning Act requirements for a Statutory Public Meeting and related notice must also be met.

The following adjustments to the CIP **require an amendment** under Section 28(5):

- Change to the Community Improvement Project Area (as illustrated in **Figure 1-1**);
 - This adjustment requires a by-law passed by Council.
- Extension of the Plan beyond the intended 10-year planning horizon;
- Addition of a new financial incentive program, or complete removal of a financial incentive program;
- Changes to the CIP vision and/or goals;
- Changes to the types of eligible projects or addition of a new eligible project;
- Changes to eligibility criteria; and
- Changes to the value or calculation of grants.

Minor administrative adjustments may be permitted without an amendment. The following adjustments **do not require an amendment** under Section 28(5) of the Planning Act:

- Dissolution of the Community Improvement Project Area (as illustrated in **Figure 1-1**) (i.e. the Plan becomes inoperative);
 - Requires a by-law passed by Council, once Council is satisfied this Plan has been carried out.
- Changes to the amount of annual funding provided for incentive programs (total or program-specific);
- Changes to the funding or prioritization of the Town-initiated programs;
- Discontinuation of funding for one or more incentive programs; and
- Delegation of administration / approval of the financial incentive programs to a committee or an individual, or a return of the responsibilities to Council;
 - Delegation generally requires a by-law, subject to Section 23.1 of the Municipal Act.

9 CONCLUSION

The Town of Cochrane Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a strategic planning and economic development tool that will be implemented to achieve the following vision and associated goals:

Cochrane will strive to be an inviting, diverse, and forward-thinking northern community that will support social and economic development.

The CIP was developed in collaboration with a CIP Working Group, with broad input from residents and the business community. This Plan sets out a framework aimed at fostering community revitalization and economic prosperity in Cochrane.

The municipal leadership strategies and financial incentives programs set out in the CIP have been identified to implement the vision and goals of improving gateways to the Town, revitalizing the Cochrane's downtown, and promoting the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites. Financial incentive programs apply to specific areas and eligible projects. Implementation and monitoring of the CIP and its results will be undertaken by the Town of Cochrane, in partnership with private sector investment, community members, Council, and the CIP Administrator and/or Review Panel.

The Plan will remain in effect for 10 years. After five (5) years, it may be reviewed by Council to evaluate its effectiveness and degree of uptake and success. This Plan is designed to be adaptable, with flexibility built into the policies and programs to account for changes in the Town's financial resources and priorities. Accordingly, the Plan may be adjusted or amended, as necessary, to improve its programs and better respond to revitalization needs within the Town.

The successful promotion and implementation of the Plan will require the continued dedication of Town staff and Council, including a dynamic marketing strategy, annual review and reporting, identification of lessons learned, and adaptation to changing priorities and economic conditions.

Most importantly, this Plan represents a commitment to the community for the provision of continued public and private investment opportunities, to ensure Cochrane remains a premier northern community and a place its residents and businesses are proud to call home.

APPENDIX

A

VISIONING WORKSHOP
SUMMARY

Appendix A: Visioning Workshop Results – March 8, 2018

Exercise 1: Cochrane CIP Project Area Delineation – Mapping Exercise

Visioning workshop participants first confirmed that the CIP should apply to the entire settlement area of Cochrane (i.e. the CIP area). Participants then discussed specific precinct areas where specific CIP financial incentive programs would apply.

Gateway Precinct

Participants identified specific locations where gateway signage could be implemented to signify key entry points into the Town and downtown area, for vehicles, snowmobiles, and pedestrians. The following locations were identified:

- Downtown Gateway signage / Business listing (Former ONR property – Railway Street)
- Town Gateway signage (Corner of Hwy 11 West / Western Avenue)
- Snowmobile Gateway signage (Corner of Western Avenue / Rail Corridor)
- Cochrane Board of Trade / Chimo (Corner of Hwy 11 West / Hwy 11 South)
- Roundabout Gateway signage
- Downtown Gateway signage (Corner of Fourth Street / Third Avenue)
- Downtown Gateway signage (Corner of Fifth Street / Sixth Avenue)
- Downtown Gateway signage (Corner of Railway Street / Sixth Avenue)

Participants noted that the former Ontario Northland Railway (ONR) property used to have signage with a business listing which would be desirable to reinstall. Gateway signage to signify entry in the downtown core was suggested to be located at the corner of Third Street and Fourth Avenue, and at the north and south ends of Sixth Avenue. The need for signage for snowmobilers entering the Town at the corner of Railway Street and Western Avenue where a snowmobile trail crosses Railway Street was also identified, as Cochrane is considered a premier snowmobiling destination. Regarding signage at the recently constructed roundabout at the junction of Railway Street, Third Street, and Third Avenue, participants suggested that gateway signage could be implemented at the base of the roundabout, similar to signage installed in Kanata, Ontario as illustrated below. Lastly, it was noted that plans were already underway for gateway improvements at the Cochrane Board of Trade site, including new signage and a new polar bear statue ('Chimo').



Workshop participants also discussed opportunities for signage and streetscaping improvements along Highway 11; however, it was recognized that any such improvements would be subject to Ministry of Transportation (MTO) approvals and would have to be coordinated with the MTO.

Downtown Precinct

Visioning workshop participants discussed the importance of prioritizing community improvements in the downtown core as a major focus of the CIP. A Downtown Precinct was identified to encompass the Central Business District land use designation in the Official Plan, as well as commercial properties on the north side of Fourth Street. Within this precinct, the following community improvements were suggested:

- Streetscaping improvements, including landscaping, lighting, and street furniture to entice residents and visitors to linger;
- Wayfinding and signage;
- Branding features, such as banners along Sixth Avenue, and historic neighbourhood name signage and street signage of a different character than other street signage throughout the Town;
- Building façade improvements;
- Accessibility improvements to provide barrier-free entrances to businesses and retrofits within buildings to bring properties up to the standards and barrier-free requirements in the Building Code; and
- Increased availability of parking for residential uses.

Brownfields Redevelopment Precinct

Visioning workshop participants agreed that financial incentive programs related to the redevelopment of brownfields or underutilized, vacant sites should be applicable throughout the Town of Cochrane, as opposed to identifying specific properties. Identifying the entire settlement area as the Brownfields Redevelopment Precinct is intended to facilitate broad opportunity for the redevelopment of these sites throughout the entire Town.

Potential Municipal Leadership Strategy

Visioning workshop participants identified the following potential initiatives for implementation as part of a municipal leadership strategy in the CIP:

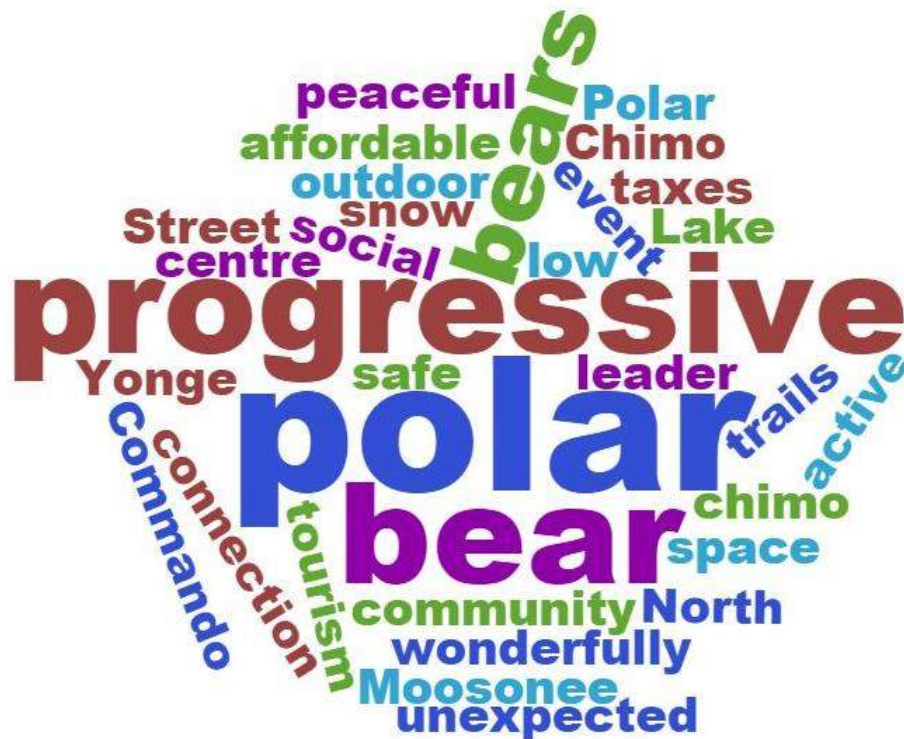
- Downtown branding;
- Storefront contests;
- Construction of false façades in front of dilapidated storefronts;
- Establishment of a Downtown BIA;
- Provision of incubator and co-working spaces for entrepreneurs; and
- Provision of residential parking for downtown residents on vacant municipal properties.

Exercise 2: Visioning Statement Brainstorming – Cochrane Today

Describe in 1 or 2 words what comes to mind when you hear the word “Cochrane”.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| #1 Trails | Polar Bears |
| Active | Polar Bears |
| Affordable | Peaceful |
| Chimo | Progressive |
| Cochrane crunch | Progressive |
| Commando Lake | Progressive |
| Connection Moosonee | Safe Community |
| Event Centre | Snow |
| Fishing community | Snow |
| Low taxes | Snowmobiling |
| Ontario Northland Train | Social leader |
| Polar Bear | Space |
| Polar Bear | Tourism outdoors |
| Polar Bear | Wonderfully Unexpected |
| Polar Bear | Yonge St. North |
| Polar Bear | |

The answers were formatted into a “word cloud”. The words which were identified by workshop participants most frequently are shown more prominently in the image below.



Exercise 3: Vision Statement Brainstorming – Cochrane in the Future

Describe in 1 or 2 words what you would like Cochrane to be in the future.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 4 Wheelers Routes | Innovative |
| Attractive | Intermodal |
| Beautiful | Investment |
| Beautiful | Inviting |
| Chic | Job creation |
| Community | Leaders |
| Downtown | Modern |
| Enjoyable | Northern paradise |
| Entrepreneurial | Organized signage |
| Exhilarating | Polar bear research |
| Foot traffic | Polar bears |
| Forward-thinking | Prosperous |
| Forward-thinking | Social hub |
| Futuristic | Sociability |
| Highway sidewalk | Tourist-friendly |
| Hub | Vacation destination |
| Improved | World class trails |

The answers were formatted into a “word cloud”. The words which were identified by workshop participants most frequently are shown more prominently in the image below.



Exercise 4: Vision Statement Discussion

The draft vision statements and concepts below were developed by the workshop participants:

- An inviting, modern hub, striving toward/promoting discovery and momentum through progressive social evolution.
- To discover Cochrane as an inviting modern hub, striving to create a progressive, current social and economic environment.
- Focusing on exponential growth, Cochrane will create a vibrant, thriving community, by driving social and economic development to enhance our inviting, northern community through a forward-thinking approach.

Exercise 5: Goals Discussion

The following draft goals were discussed by workshop participants:

Downtown Cochrane:

- Improve and evolve/rethink downtown to attract people, residents, tourists
- Promote downtown as a destination
- Encourage service-based businesses in downtown
- Inviting, socially connected
- Build pride
- Promote incubators for business, retail, service
- Let downtown evolve naturally
- Focus on façade improvements and first impressions
- Reignite entrepreneurial spirit by directing people and customers to downtown businesses through community improvements (façades, streetscaping, combination of municipal leadership & private investment)
- Invigorate and support new entrepreneurs
- Identify local champions for cultural change

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APPENDIX

B

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

Appendix B: Community and Business Survey Results

Town of Cochrane CIP – Community Survey Results

Q1: Describe in 1 or 2 words what you think of when you hear the word “Cochrane.”

Theme	Frequency of Response
Home / Hometown	42
Polar bear(s)	19
North / Northern Ontario / Northern gem/paradise/original / True North	12
Small town / community	12
Friendly	9
Bad roads / pot holes	7
Beautiful / Beautiful community	6
Lake Commando / lake	5
Nature / Outdoors / Outdoor activities	5
Town	3
Ontario Northland	3
Chimo	2
Cold	2
Community	2
Expensive	2
Family home / quiet home	2
Potential	2
Snowmobiling / Winter sports	2
Pride	2
Scenic	2
Best in Northeastern Ontario	1
Big-hearted	1
Boring	1
Selective	1
Great / nice community	1
Community involvement	1
Community spirit	1
Community that takes care of its town	1
Deprived	1
Isolated	1
Family-oriented	1
Far away	1
Adaptable	1
Growth	1
Clean	1
High taxes	1
Peaceful	1
Full of surprises	1
Tired	1

Theme	Frequency of Response
Ghost town / middle of nowhere	1
Lifestyle	1
Innovative	1
Pool	1
Adverse to change	1
Rural	1
Snow	1
Unorganized	1
Vibrant	1
Welcome	1
Wonderfully unexpected	1

Q2: Describe in 1 or 2 words what you would like Cochrane to be in the future.

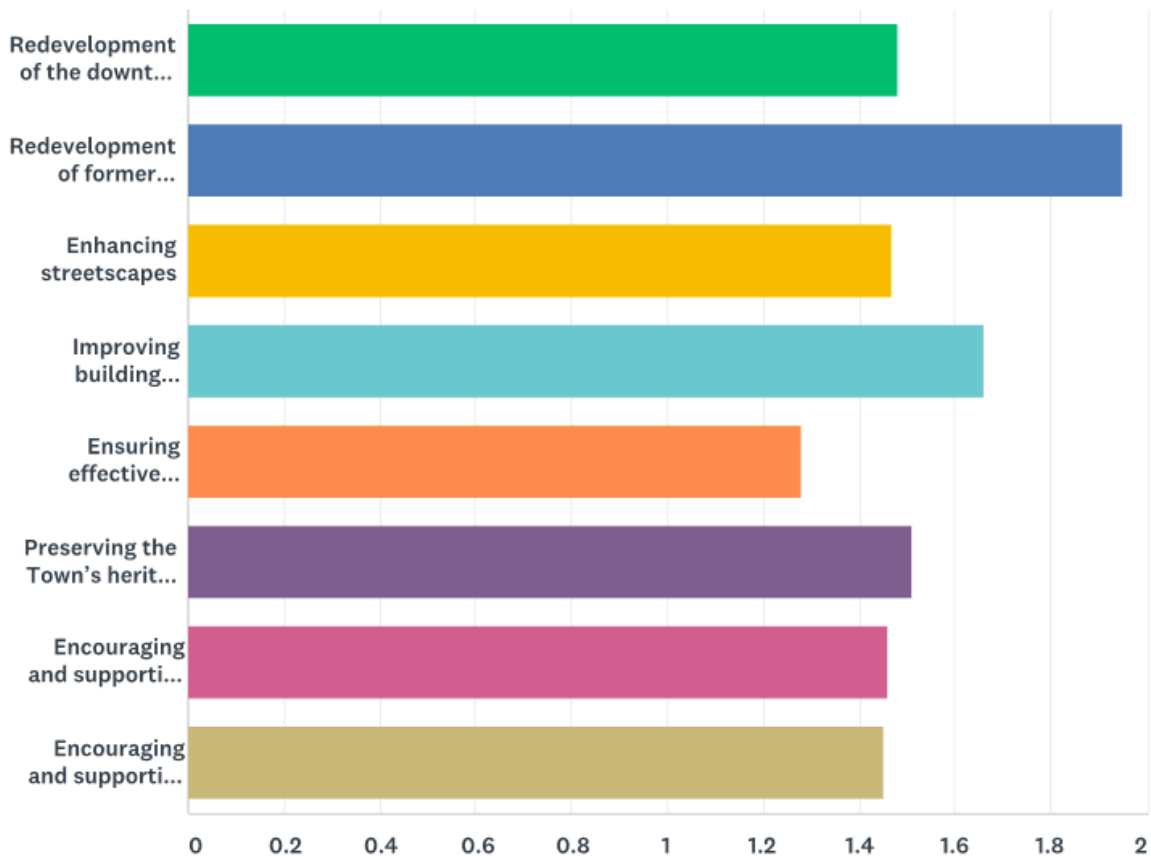
Theme	Frequency of Response
More / better shopping / services / retail-oriented / shopping destination	10
Economic and job growth/diversity / prosperous / self-sufficient / successful	10
Affordable / affordable housing	7
Booming / boomtown / growing / bigger	7
Home	6
Good/new/safe roads / no potholes	6
Safe	6
Eventful / exciting / fun	5
More recreation / adventurous / outdoor playground/paradise/outdoorsy / snowmobiling	5
Family community / family-oriented / family-friendly	4
Great place to live	4
Attractive / beautiful	4
Innovative / progressive / project smart	4
Thriving / not insignificant	3
Vibrant town / community	3
Good place to visit / tourism / tourist destination	3
Hub / central	3
Financially accountable / responsible / independent	3
Friendly / open	3
More senior-friendly / retirement community	3
Small community	3
Team / united / working together	3
Modern / updated / up to date	3
Lower taxes	2
Awesome	2
Culturally diverse	2
Relaxing / quiet / serene	2
Small business opportunities	2
Accessible	2

Theme	Frequency of Response
Good jobs	2
Happier / less negative / optimistic	2
Nicer / vibrant downtown	2
Opportunity	2
Picturesque / pretty	2
Welcoming	2
Three equal cultures in all services and programs	1
Active	1
Alive	1
City	1
Clean / cleaner	1
Community that takes care of its own	1
Back to basics community	1
Convenient	1
Day / night / sun	1
Debt-free	1
Developed	1
Efficient	1
Focal point	1
Forward looking	1
Further south	1
Improved / popular	1
Less population	1
Multi-sportsplex	1
Polar bears	1
Reliable	1
Snow	1
Sustainable	1
Technologically advanced	1
The same	1
Young adult-friendly	1
Worried	1

Q3: How would you rank the importance of these topics?

CIP Program	Ranking		
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Least Important
Redevelopment of the downtown area	56%	40%	4%
Redevelopment of former industrial or contaminated sites (“brownfields”)	31%	43%	26%
Enhancing streetscapes	63%	29%	9%
Improving building façades	47%	40%	13%
Ensuring effective delivery of municipal services	73%	25%	1%
Preserving the Town’s heritage and northern character	59%	31%	10%

CIP Program	Ranking		
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Least Important
Encouraging and supporting private-sector investment in the Town	60%	35%	5%
Encouraging and supporting affordable housing in the Town	66%	23%	11%



Q4: Which sites or locations in downtown would be desirable for redevelopment?

Location	Frequency of Response
Sixth Avenue / Main Street (e.g. entire street; vacant storefronts; building façades; between Railway Street and Third Street)	40
Pink Palace on Railway Street	12
Vacant lots / former businesses (e.g. next to funeral home; next to former Mandarin restaurant; old train museum; flower lot; St. Joseph School; old KFC building; corners of Sixth Avenue / Seventh Avenue and Railway Street; Trading Post; former Chinese restaurant; Olindo's)	11
Downtown core / buildings	11
Lakefront / beach / Lake Commando	7

Location	Frequency of Response
Railway Street	5
All roads	4
None / N/A / Not sure	4
Fourth Avenue (e.g. near Scotiabank / old library; Town Hall; library)	2
Entire Town	2
Commercial / storefronts	2
Corner of Railway Street / Sixth Avenue	2
Johnston TV	2
Streetscaping (e.g. trees)	2
Streets without sidewalks	1
Railway Street	1
Community housing	1
Bakery	1
Bowling alley	1
By arena	1
Connected stores	1
Curling club, golf course, ski club, invest in gymnasium with sports nights	1
Focus on sites that attract people to move to or visit Cochrane	1
Hillcrest Park	1
Property maintenance	1
Power plant	1
Refacing buildings	1
Theatre	1
Place for youth (e.g. arcade/pool hall/internet café)	1

Q5: Which sites or locations should be the focus of brownfield redevelopment?

Location	Frequency of Response
N/A / No response / Not sure / More explanation required / Don't know / Not important	26
Pink Palace	15
Power plant	4
All brownfields	3
Trading Post	2
Seventh Avenue and Railway Street (e.g. across from train station)	2
Areas around entrances to Town	2
Hillcrest Park	2
St. Joseph's School	2
Community Garden	1
Railway Street	1
Second Street	1
Third Avenue	1
Fourth Avenue and Fourth Street (e.g. beside Thibs)	1
Old laundromat	1

Location	Frequency of Response
Empty lots downtown	1
Around ONR sheds	1
Behind golf course	1
Chip piles at True North	1
Concession 2 & 3	1
Curling club / fall fairgrounds	1
Downtown	1
Western Avenue	1
Highway 11	1
Lakes, parks, schools	1
Former mall	1
Properties adjoining Brewer's retail	1
Railway Street Home Hardware stock yard	1
Dump	1
Land by ESCHS	1
The mills	1
Old bar on Railway Street	1
Old KFC building	1

Q6: What elements of Cochrane's heritage and northern character are important to preserve?

Theme	Frequency of Response
Lake Commando and area / bridge	20
Railway history / train museum / ONR / Train station	18
Polar bear statue / Chimo	8
Polar bears / habitat / heritage village	8
Buildings prior to 1940 / remaining heritage buildings (e.g. Town Hall, Court House)	6
Carnival / Winter Carnival	6
Skidoo and ski trails / recreation	5
"Old west" or "north" feel / northern life / True North	4
Polar Bear Express	4
Indigenous culture / history / camp	4
Forestry / lumber / logging history	4
N/A / None / Nil	4
Sense of community / small town feel	4
Three cultures and languages / culture	3
Sixth Avenue (main street, buildings)	3
All aspects of history and ancestors	3
Downtown core	2
Band stand area	2
Town Hall	2
Snowmobiling	2
Safety / safe streets	2
Hunting, trapping, fishing, camping	2
Inn	1

Theme	Frequency of Response
Major community centre	1
Affordability	1
Parks	1
Cochrane Crunch	1
Derby	1
Cenataph	1
Cinema / Theatre	1
Cochrane museum	1
Art gallery	1
Court House	1
Provincial Park	1
Nature / outdoors	1
French	1
Local businesses	1
Street lights, sidewalks	1
Community archives at Public Library	1
Early settlement / fires / pioneers / siren / adopt old time atmosphere with awnings on storefronts	1
Memorial Park	1
Agriculture history	1

Q7: Which streets or locations would benefit from improved streetscaping (e.g. improvements to lighting, sidewalks, landscaping) or building façades?

Location	Frequency of Response
6 th Avenue	35
All roads and sidewalks or missing sidewalks in entire Town	23
5 th Street	17
Year-round pathway around lake / around lake / parks	11
Railway Street	7
3 rd Avenue	6
Downtown core (streets and building façades)	6
4 th Avenue	5
Polar Bear Habitat Road	4
4 th Street	4
5 th Avenue	3
Highway 11 West; need for sidewalks	2
12 th Avenue	2
Genier Road	2
11 th Avenue	2
Street lighting	2
Future hub trail that ventures out of town	1
12 th Street	1
1 st Avenue	1
2 nd Avenue	1
7 th Avenue	1
3 rd Street	1

Location	Frequency of Response
4-way corner near beach	1
7 th Avenue and Railway (across from train station)	1
Old laundromat	1
Old Giant Tiger building	1
All streets and sidewalks	1
6 th Street	1
7 th Street	1
13 th Avenue	1
Traffic signals at 6 th Avenue & Railway Street; 3 rd Avenue & 4 th Street; 3 rd Avenue & 5 th Street	1
Corner of Highways	1
17 th Avenue, 13 th Avenue, 8 th Avenue roads	1
Crossing light at 5 th Street and 6 th Avenue	1
Restaurant frontage and accessibility	1
Sidewalks on east side of Town	1
Huron Road lighting and sidewalk on south side	1
Train museum area	1
Nipissing Avenue	1
12 th and 5 th	1

Q8: Are you a resident of Cochrane?

Yes: 94%

No: 6%

Q9: For how many years have you been a resident of Cochrane?

Average: 27

Median: 24.5

High: 63

Low: 0

Q10: Do you have any other questions, comments, or concerns about the CIP or the process?

Question / Comment	Frequency of Response
N/A / None	29
Road improvements / repairs needed	8
Support for CIP	3
Inquiry about project / improvements timeline and results released to public	3
Maintain what we currently have before adding more / Improve what's there	2
Better shopping opportunities / Improved retail sector needed	2
Road repairs needed on 5 th Street	1
Remove trucks from downtown; need for detour truck route	1

Question / Comment	Frequency of Response
Easier process for new businesses and affordable housing needed	1
High municipal taxes; residents should have to pay less to utilize community facilities and attractions (e.g. Events Centre and Polar Bear Habitat)	1
CIP for rural areas to promote outdoor recreation outfits	1
Rebates for planning fees for ZBL amendments and business licencing	1
Adopt a Garden program suggestion	1
Sixth Avenue – trees and new pavement is a good start; need lighting and more trees; hanging baskets in summer; billboard with events; plaque about historical events	1
Hope that Town will make meaningful improvements that will be well thought out and long-terms wins	1
Would love to move to Cochrane but Town needs more industry	1
Need for community meeting to review survey results and important topics	1
No support for increased taxes	1
Need for transparent process	1
Town should focus on maintaining essential services and keeping debt down rather than spending on non-essentials	1
Road construction needs to be more efficient and maintain access to businesses	1
Three cultures are special and should be built upon equally	1
Inquiry regarding cost to Town for CIP program/grants	1
Keep beach beautiful	1
Need for bachelor-sized geared-to-income housing	1
Inquiry if CIP is about physical infrastructure or if social programming such as physical fitness for seniors will be considered	1
Survey should be available in French	1
Need for affordable housing, sense of welcoming community	1
Accessibility	1
Need for investment in high speed internet	1
Focus on what's important and respect taxpayers' money	1

Town of Cochrane CIP – Business Survey Results

Q1: What are the top 5 reasons why you choose to locate your business in Cochrane?

Factor	Frequency of Response
Long-time resident / family-owned business / family/business history in Cochrane	7
Location (e.g. people, lifestyle, small community, family-oriented, amenities, natural resources)	3
Location (e.g. availability/cost of real estate, stability)	2
Customer base	1
Potential growth	1
French / English mix	1
Progressive community with opportunities	1
Opportunities	1
Proximity to mine site	1
Government business (i.e. did not choose to locate in Cochrane specifically)	1
To be closed on weekends / pricing / stock	1
No response	1

Q2: What are the top 5 challenges for you as a business owner / operator in Cochrane?

Factor	Frequency of Response
Shortage of labour / staff or volunteer recruitment / Reliable and qualified employees	4
Limited clientele / market or small population	4
Cost of rent / utilities / internet / fuel / insurance	4
Competition (e.g. Timmins, internet) / customer loyalty	4
Lack of business fairs / seminars	2
High municipal taxes	2
Getting products / supplies and cost / repercussions on cost for sale of products	2
Advertising / marketing	1
Community involvement	1
Weather-related issues	1
Too political	1
Pricing of products	1
Customer knowledge of personal life	1
Increasing federal / provincial costs	1
Lack of business services / competitive quotes (e.g. from transportation companies)	1
Lack of business involvement in events / draws to economic possibilities (e.g. Carnival, Summer Fest)	1
Exclusivity	1
Business too advanced for customer base	1
Transportation / lack of public transportation	1
Limited office space	1

Factor	Frequency of Response
Lack of support for Indigenous-owned and operated business	1
Distance from professional/medical services	1
Downtown	1
No response	1

Q3: How many years have you had your business in Cochrane?

Average: 12 years

Median: 7 years

High: 48 years

Low: 0 years

Q4: What are the existing strengths in Cochrane, or in the specific area where your business is located, that contribute to your business' success?

Factor	Frequency of Response
Local customer base and repeat business	3
Location (e.g. proximity to airport, railway, vehicle access)	2
Location (e.g. peaceful, safe community and sense of place)	2
Loyal customers at other location	1
N/A – home-based business	1
Networking / relationships with other business owners	1
Location (e.g. access to natural resources, outdoor lifestyle and amenities)	1
Affordable housing / business location	1
Personal service	1
Large property size	1
Lower costs than nearby urban areas (i.e. Timmins)	1
Attracts new residents	1
Proximity to mine / other major projects	1
Out of town traffic	1
Relationship with community members	1

Q5: What are some weaknesses in Cochrane, or in the specific area where your business is located, that affect your business?

Factor	Frequency of Response
Poor road conditions	2
Shortage of labour / help	1
Resistance to progress	1
Poor internet	1
Lack of 24-hour businesses	1
Lack of medium-sized business or industry	1
Poor property maintenance	1
Downtown aesthetics	1
Cost of new development	1
Politics	1

Factor	Frequency of Response
Overpriced materials	1
Financial resources of population	1
Limited advertising space uptown (i.e. in residential area outside of core commercial area)	1
Lack of connectivity to south of railway	1
Location of Town functions only around Lake Commando	1
Lack of promotion for highway businesses	1
Small retail space	1
Town selling same product	1

Q6: What opportunities do you see in Cochrane, or in the specific area where your business is located, that could encourage economic development?

Factor	Frequency of Response
Incentives / funding for building improvements	2
Food supplier	1
Small, innovative business incubators	1
Reopen Provincial Park	1
Snowmobile tourism	1
Attracting skilled/unskilled workforce	1
Post-secondary education programs/partnerships	1
Stagger timing of Street Sale and Summer Fest to encourage attendance at both	1
Start over	1
Create a procurement list for local bidding	1
Get businesses to work together	1
Welcome new business owners / expansion of existing businesses	1
Acquire Crown land for site expansion	1

Q7: What are the challenges in Cochrane, or in the specific area where your business is located, that could potentially impact your business?

Factor	Frequency of Response
Cost of taxes, utilities	2
Expanding local economy	1
Infrastructure challenges (e.g. roads, sidewalks)	1
Parking issues	1
Lack of advertising space in downtown	1
Lack of exposure / services south of the highway	1
Town promotion	1

