

Municipality of Wawa

Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan Final Background and Directions Report

November 2023



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan

Wawa ^{Canada}



Image Sources: WSP

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Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that we are on land that has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. We would like to recognize that we are in the Robinson-Superior Treaty territory and on land which is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe. Specifically, we acknowledge the neighbouring community of Michipicoten First Nation, for whom we have great respect. We also recognize the contributions of all Indigenous peoples, including the Métis, in shaping and strengthening the community and Province of Ontario.



Introduction



1 Introduction

1.1 What is a CIP?

The Municipality of Wawa is undertaking the preparation of a new Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The existing Downtown Wawa CIP was adopted by Council in June 2008, but was never implemented due to a lack of funding. This project represents a renewed opportunity for the Municipality to develop a CIP that will encourage investment and community improvements in Downtown Wawa.

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 policies and financial incentive programs that encourage private investment, and to support strategic municipal initiatives, aimed at the revitalization of targeted areas. A CIP identifies the local needs, priorities, and circumstances for designated CIP project areas (from large areas to specific streets and properties), which are usually in transition and in need of maintenance, rehabilitation, development, and redevelopment. CIPs can provide several benefits for a community, such as:

- Stimulating private sector investment in targeted areas through grants and loans provided by the Municipality;
- Promoting revitalization and place-making to attract tourism, business investment, and economic development opportunities;
- Developing affordable housing;
- Promoting the cleanup and redevelopment of “brownfield sites”, which are former industrial or commercial properties that are typically vacant or underutilized, and have some form of environmental contamination that must be remediated prior to redevelopment taking place;
- Enhancing streetscapes, landscaping, building façades, signage, and accessibility;
- Improving energy efficiency; and
- Encouraging the effective use of community infrastructure.



In general, CIPs are not intended to support “greenfield” development in previously undeveloped areas, but rather to improve conditions in existing urban areas.

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, to promote community improvement initiatives. 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 Community Improvement Project Area.

Under Section 28 of the Planning Act, once an area has been designated a Community Improvement Project 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. 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 are tailored to the municipality and establish the conditions by which an application for a financial incentive will be evaluated. By applying these eligibility criteria to applications for financial incentive programs, the CIP can advance a wide range of planning, urban design, and economic development objectives.

Municipalities may also incorporate a “municipal leadership strategy” into a CIP 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.

The success of a CIP will require a strong marketing strategy, a monitoring program, and periodic reviews of the financial incentive programs to determine their continued relevancy and any required adjustments to better meet current and anticipated economic conditions and trends.

1.2 Downtown CIP Urban Design Guidelines

The Downtown Wawa CIP will be complemented by the development of CIP-specific Urban Design Guidelines (UDGs). Urban design shapes how places look and feel, and how people connect to and experience the places where they live, work and play. It strives to support health, quality of life, well-being, functionality, and efficiency. Good urban design serves everyone, by respecting the details that make a place unique and full of character, while helping to ease movement and increase accessibility by creating comfortable, welcoming, safe spaces.

The CIP-specific UDGs will be used to:

- Provide guidance for CIP applicants in designing aspects of their building and property improvement projects in a manner that meets the vision and goals of the CIP for the future of Downtown Wawa;



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan

- Illustrate examples of the implementation of key urban design elements in the Downtown context;
- Assist Municipal staff in evaluating CIP applications and potential community improvement projects, as well as planning and undertaking municipal leadership activities.

Some design challenges in Northern communities such as Wawa include: climate-related considerations while still attracting pedestrian activity to Downtown; aging building stock, building design and the selection of building materials to reflect local heritage; the prevalence of vehicle use over more active transportation (e.g. cycling); and the need to integrate parking without detracting from a pedestrian-friendly Downtown character, among other considerations. UDGs can respond to such challenges, and provide CIP applicants with direction on how to achieve the CIP vision and goals, by implementing specific design elements.

Key urban design elements which are typically addressed in UDGs and may form part of the Downtown Wawa CIP UDGs include, but are not limited to, improving and expanding on existing:

- Building facades and signage;
- Built form (e.g. architectural styles, conserving heritage value);
- Landscaping and plantings;
- Lighting;
- Parking;
- Paving;
- Public art;
- Public open spaces; and
- Street furniture.



Urban design elements may include building façades, furnishings, patios and bump-outs, and planting



The UDGs will not form operative policy. If there is a conflict between the UDGs and the Municipality's Official Plan policies and/or Zoning By-law provisions, or other applicable municipal policies, those policies and provisions would prevail.

1.3 Report Purpose and Structure

The purpose of this Background and Directions Report is to outline a framework for the new Downtown Wawa CIP, and document the input and recommendations received from Municipal staff, Council, property and business owners and operators, the public, and other interested parties received through written comments and engagement events. The preparation of the CIP will be based on the information contained in this Report, although it may be expanded beyond the preliminary recommendations identified herein.

This Background and Directions Report is organized as follows:

- **Section 2: Planning Context and Policy Review** outlines the legislative, policy, and regulatory framework for the preparation of the CIP;
- **Section 3: Community Engagement** presents a summary of the community engagement completed to date;
- **Section 4: Downtown CIP Vision and Goals** presents a proposed vision and supporting goals for the Downtown CIP. These were developed through a Visioning Workshop held on October 24, 2023 with members of municipal staff, Council, local property / business owners, the Algoma District Services Administration Board, and the Goose Nest Committee, and further informed by community and business survey responses;
- **Section 5: CIP Opportunities** summarizes key CIP opportunities, including potential Financial Incentive Program options and urban design priorities informed by a Downtown walking tour and analysis completed by the project team, an analysis of community engagement input received to date, and a review of current CIP best practices and CIPs from other Northern Ontario municipalities;
- **Section 6: Next Steps** provides a summary of next steps in the Downtown Wawa CIP project process.
- **Appendix A** includes a summary of the Visioning Workshop results; and
- **Appendix B** includes a summary of the Community and Business Survey results.

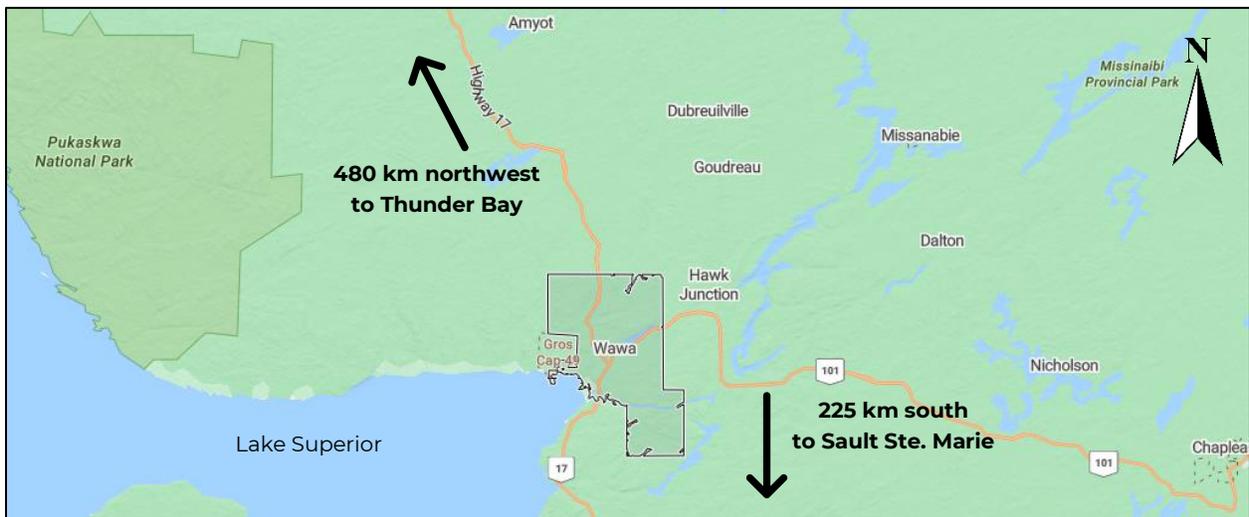


1.4 Community Profile

The Municipality of Wawa, formerly known as the Township of Michipicoten, is strategically located in Northeastern Ontario and serves as the hub of North Algoma Region at the convergence of the TransCanada Highway (Highway 17) and Highway 101, as illustrated in **Figure 1-1**. Wawa is located approximately 480 km southeast of Thunder Bay, and 225 km north of Sault Ste. Marie.

The Municipality is comprised of the main urban centre of Wawa, as well as the smaller coastal settlement areas of Michipicoten and Michipicoten River, which are located along the shores of Lake Superior.

Figure 1-1: Municipality of Wawa Location Map (Google, 2023)



Geographically, the Municipality occupies a total land area of 411.89 km² (Statistics Canada, 2021). The Downtown has historically functioned as a mixed-use area comprised of residential, commercial, and tourism-oriented land uses.

Population and Housing

According to the 2021 Census (Statistics Canada), the population of the Municipality of Wawa was 2,705, which represents a decrease of 6.9% from the 2016 of 2,905. The Municipality has been experiencing population decreases over recent years, owing in part to a loss of local



industrial activity. Other factors affecting population decreases include an aging population, lack of housing stock, and migration of residents to more southern municipalities.

The median household income in Wawa in 2021 was \$80,000, according to Statistics Canada). The majority of housing in Wawa consists of single-detached homes, accounting for 81% of the housing stock. The remaining housing options include semi-detached houses (2%), rowhouses (or townhouses) (3%), apartment buildings with fewer than five (5) storeys (11%), and movable dwellings (2%). Seventy-eight percent (78%) of homes in Wawa are owner-occupied. When compared to other regions in Northern Ontario, the real estate market in Wawa is characterized by its affordability, with the average housing value in 2021 being \$170,400, however, the Wawa Housing Action Plan, 2023 has identified the need for more affordable housing opportunities to serve the current population.

Employment

According to the 2021 Census, the total labour force in the Municipality was 1,425 persons, with the majority of the occupations being: sales and service (27%); trades, transport, and equipment operators and related occupations (24%); and education, law and social, community and government services (14%). A few main industries have been introduced in recent years contributing to these trends, such as the establishment of three (3) gold mines just outside of the municipal boundaries. The largest gold mine operator is Wesdome Gold Mines Ltd., which is a Canadian focused gold producer with two high grade underground assets, one of which is the Eagle River Mine in Ontario, just west of Wawa. The Mine was introduced in the 1990s and has been the largest contributor to jobs in the area for years. While the Mines currently employ many residents of Wawa and have benefited the local economy, challenges have included the transient nature of contract workers who require short-term accommodations. While this has benefited the hospitality industries, it has also caused a shortage in accommodations for current residents and potential tourist use.

While not unique to Wawa, its economic sector is challenged by the shortage of skilled and service-based labour. Job openings in trades like plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, and similar professions are scarce in small northern communities, which further presents significant difficulties for both redevelopment and new construction projects. The limited number of contracting companies operating in Wawa report that there is an excess of job opportunities in Wawa, which affects their capacity to fulfill the demand for these services (Wawa Housing Action Plan, 2023).



Recreation

The Municipality is renowned for its abundance of outdoor activities which significantly contribute to tourism in the area, including fishing, boating, paddling, hunting, snowmobiling, ATVing, mountain biking, and hiking. The Municipality’s proximity to Lake Superior, as well as local attractions including Wawa Lake and five (5) natural waterfalls in the area, draw tourists in the summer months. Recreational facilities in the Municipality include Michipicoten Memorial Community Centre, which includes an arena, a curling rink, a gym and fitness centre, and banquet hall and lounge, a gym studio, and multiple meeting rooms. As a regional hub for recreational activities, Wawa is well-positioned to support many tourism-related businesses and economic development opportunities.

Downtown Wawa

Downtown Wawa is currently comprised of a mix of retail, service, office, and other commercial uses, as well as some residential uses and institutional uses. Broadway Avenue is the main artery through the Downtown where commercial activity is focused. Downtown Wawa’s scenic location directly adjacent to Wawa Lake provides unique opportunities to spur local business activity and significant economic investment in the area. Key Downtown attractions include the Lion’s Beachfront Heritage Walk, and the Wawa Goose Nest Market, which offers seasonal opportunities for local entrepreneurs and artisans to sell their products to residents and tourists.

The entry to the Downtown from the south is marked by a highly visible and strategically located gateway sign. Other municipal signs and elements are found throughout the Downtown to reflect the area’s history, though some are in need of revitalization.



Downtown Wawa also embraces its history through the existing building composition which adds character and historic value to the Municipality’s core for residents to remember its roots. However, over recent years, a significant number of vacant buildings and sites have resulted in fewer active businesses and a loss of economic activity in the Downtown, and a lack of aesthetic and urban design cohesion.



The Downtown is also full of public art and culture installations that contribute to a sense of local identity. “Heritage doors” are found throughout the Downtown and are metal doors painted by a local artist (Heather Sinnott), scanned and printed on metal as permanent installations. There are also multiple pieces of former mining equipment found throughout the Downtown, including at the north end of Broadway Avenue and within the Goose Nest market area. These pieces celebrate the significance of mining to the history and economy of Wawa. There are also existing and planned murals on building façades along Broadway Avenue which add vibrancy and reflect the local culture.

1.5 Downtown Community Improvement Project Area

The existing Municipality of Wawa Downtown Community Improvement Plan (2008) identifies a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) encompassing approximately 11 hectares and spanning 2.5 km, as shown in **Figure 1-2**. In 2008, this geographic area conformed to the General Commercial land use designation boundary in the Municipality’s Official Plan in effect at that time.

The proposed CIPA for the new Downtown CIP is illustrated in **Figure 1-3**, and was confirmed through a Visioning Workshop held on October 24, 2023 (further discussed in **Section 3.2** of this Report). It maintains the boundaries of the existing 2008 CIPA, and encompasses Broadway Avenue and properties on the east side of McKinley Avenue, from Algoma Street in the north to Main Street in the south. The proposed CIPA is the area in which properties may be eligible for Financial Incentive Programs in the new Downtown CIP. The majority of the proposed Downtown CIPA is designated as Commercial Central Area in the Municipality’s current Official Plan (2010).

Visioning Workshop participants discussed the potential for expansion of the CIPA further south to encompass properties along Mission Road, as well as reductions to the CIPA to remove properties with existing residential uses along the east side of McKinley Avenue. Ultimately, it was decided to maintain the existing boundaries of the 2008 CIPA, with focus remaining on the Downtown.

Expansions of the CIPA to the south or to other areas in the Municipality could be considered as part of future amendments to the CIP or as part of the development of separate CIPs, and informed by the success and results of the Downtown CIP. Existing residential properties along McKinley Avenue are proposed to remain within the Downtown CIPA, as they are designated Commercial Central Area in the Municipality’s Official Plan (2010) and are zoned C1 General

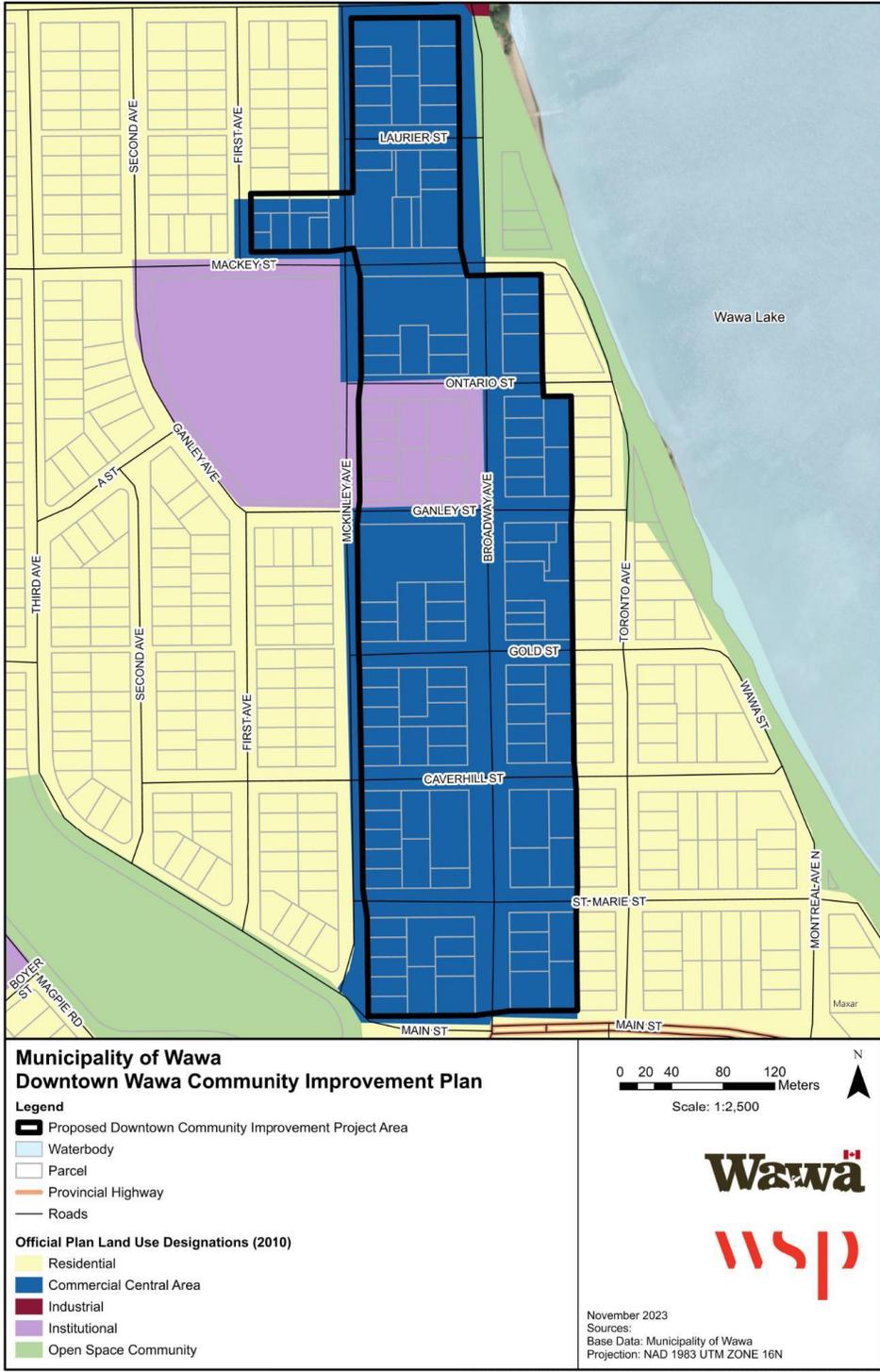


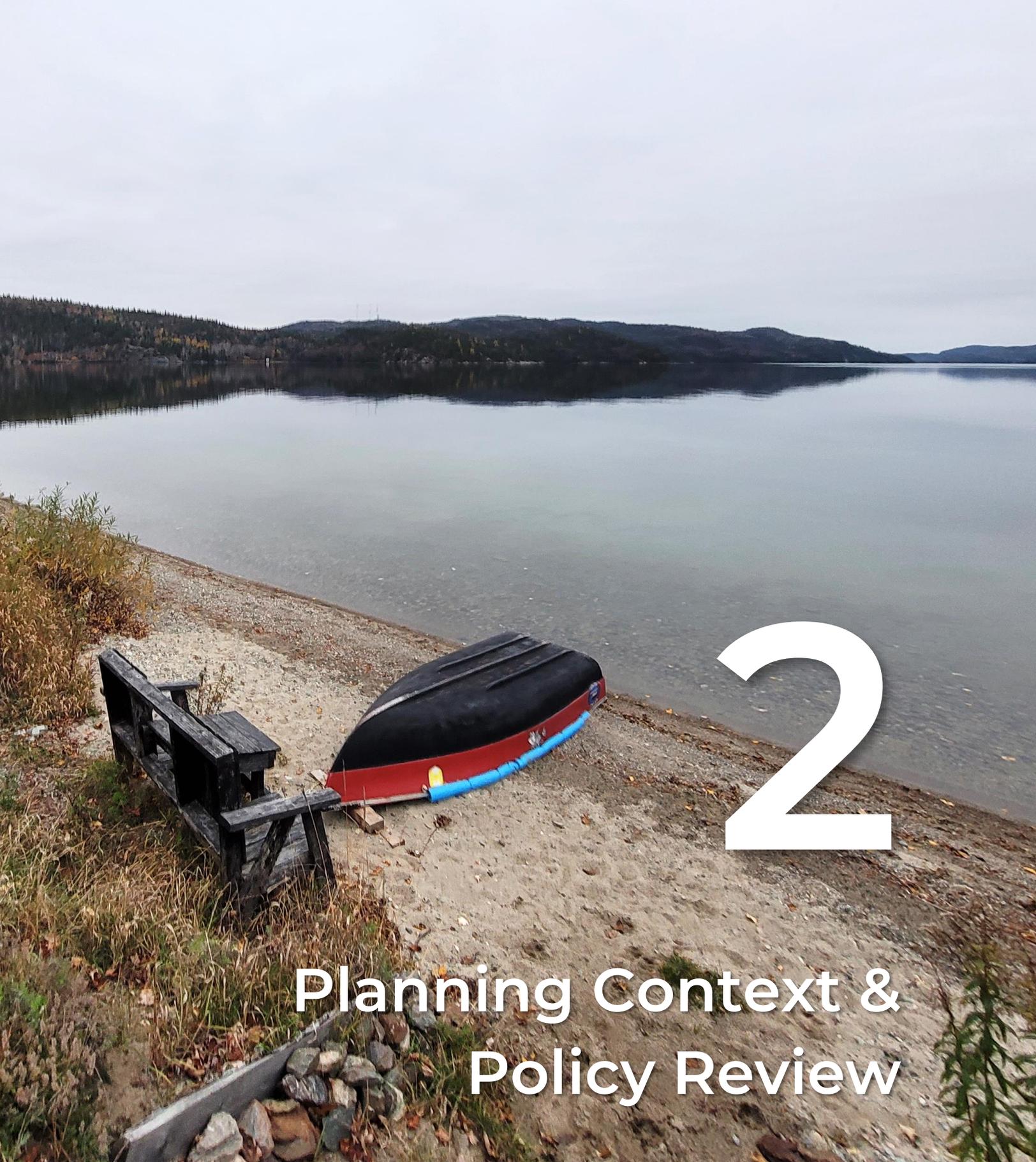
Commercial in the Municipality’s Zoning By-law (2015), which would enable these properties to potentially redevelop as commercial uses in the future. Although they are proposed to be included within the Downtown CIPA, any proposed community improvement projects on these existing residential properties for commercial purposes only would need to meet the general and program-specific eligibility requirements within the CIP.

Figure 1-2: 2008 Municipality of Wawa Community Improvement Project Area



Figure 1-3: Proposed Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Project Area (Consistent with 2008 CIP)





2

Planning Context & Policy Review



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 (1.1) of the Planning Act now addresses affordable housing through stating:

“ Without limiting the generality of the definition of “community improvement” in subsection (1), for greater certainty, it includes the provision of affordable housing.”

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)). The area can be designated based on criteria, including:

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



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The broad nature of the definition provides municipalities with 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 Housing 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 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 enables the municipality to directly intervene in making improvements to property, 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” is 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

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 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). Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act enables municipalities to 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 Municipality 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 a municipality's 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 no existing buildings in Downtown Wawa that are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

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 Downtown CIP will need to consider AODA standards.

2.5 Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS) outlines the Province’s policies regarding land use 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:



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“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.”

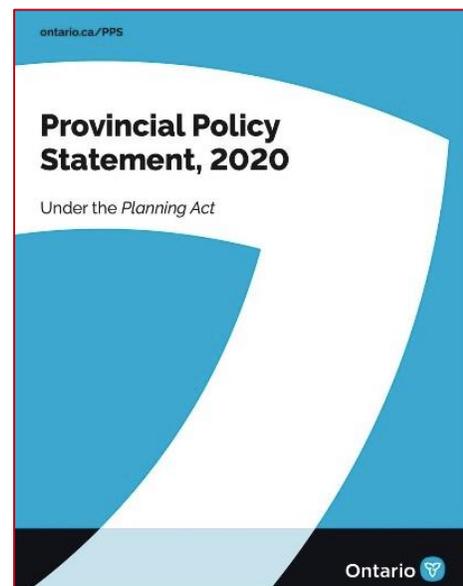
Healthy, livable and safe communities should be promoted through various means including the improvement of accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons, by identifying, preventing, and removing land use barriers which restrict their full participation (Policy 1.1.1(f)).

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(d)), and the promotion of brownfield site redevelopment (Policy 1.7.1 (f)), 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.”

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

- Promote the economic viability of the Downtown;
- Improve the availability of affordable housing; and
- Promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment, including brownfield sites, where they exist.





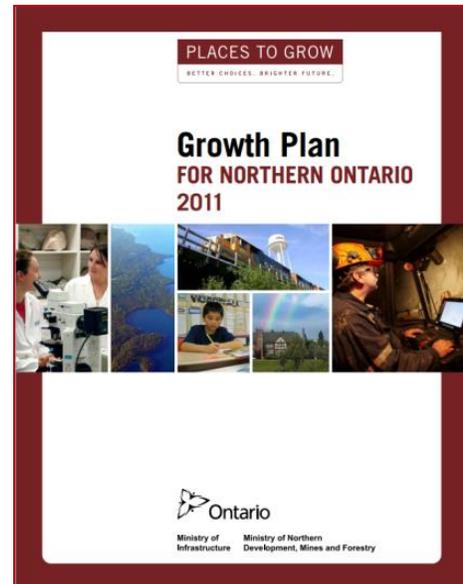
2.6 Growth Plan for Northern Ontario (2011)

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 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 (6) 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 Municipality of Wawa Official Plan (2010)

The Official Plan for the Municipality of Wawa (OP) was adopted on November 2, 2010 and subsequently approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on April 18, 2011. The OP sets out a planning policy framework to direct development and land uses throughout the Municipality. It establishes goals, objectives, land use designations, and related policies regarding the natural environment, growth and settlement areas, rural lands, and economic development in the Municipality, while providing direction for planning decisions. Policies are provided for the following land use designations: Wawa Residential; Village Residential; Employment; Downtown; Rural Crown Land; Environmental Protection; Open Space; Rural Highway Commercial; Highway Commercial; and Institutional.

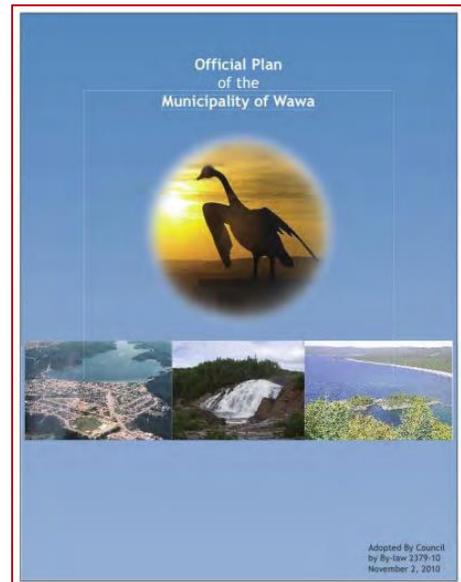
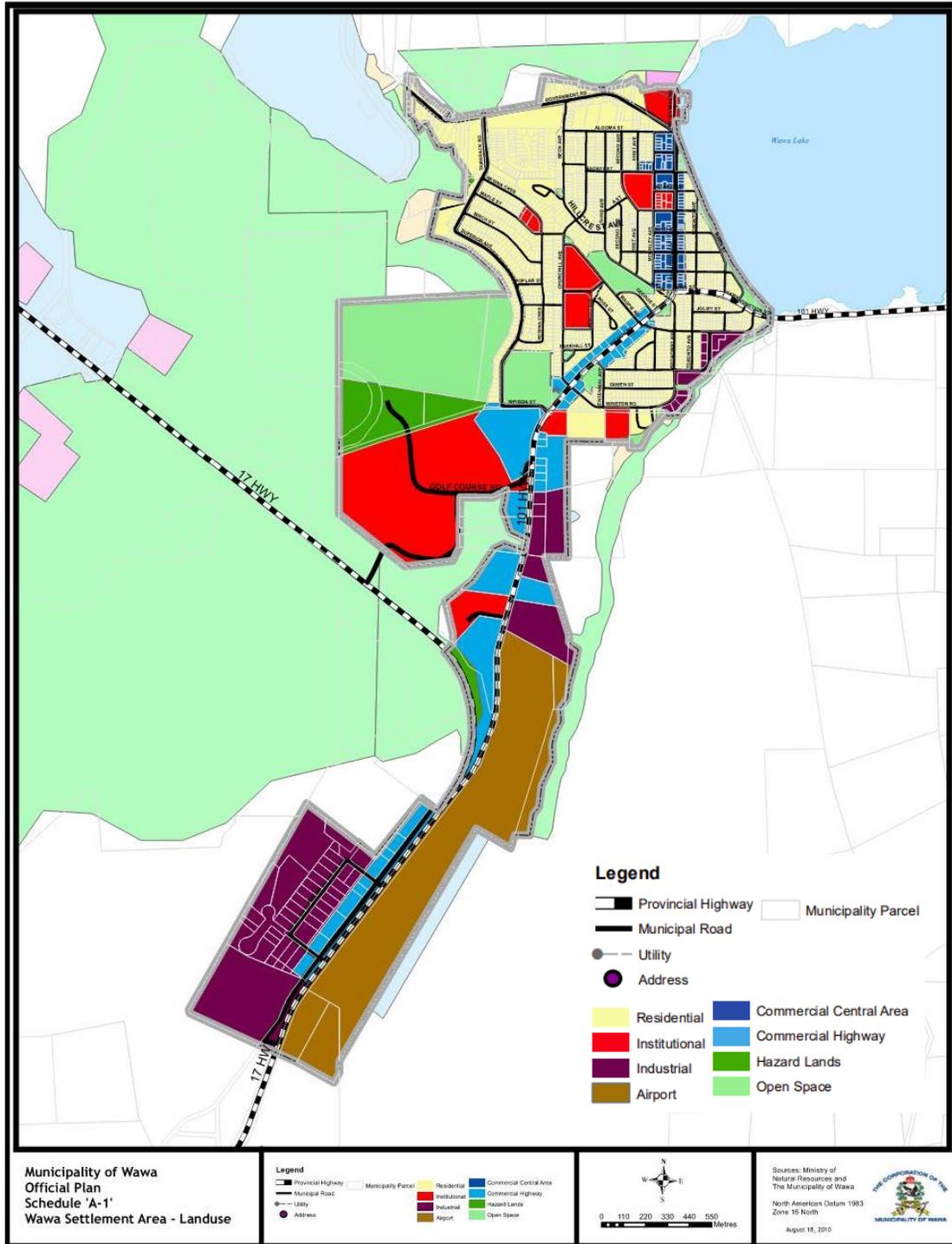


Figure 2-1 identifies the land use designations in the Wawa Settlement Area, which includes the Downtown.



Figure 2-1: Municipality of Wawa Official Plan Schedule A-1 – Wawa Settlement Area - Land Use





The OP policies and goals are based on sustainability, ensuring the community can meet today's needs without comprising the needs of future generations (Section A2). The following environmental, economic, and social sustainability elements are particularly relevant to the CIP:

- **Section A2.1 Environmental Sustainability:** recognizes the importance of preserving Wawa's natural heritage system, greens spaces, water resources and terrestrial landscape that play an integral role in the character of Wawa. The Municipality will support innovative and sustainable development that protects the natural environment and encourages innovative energy supply alternatives.
- **Section A2.2 Economic Sustainability:** states that in ensuring Wawa has a sustainable economic future, the Municipality encourages diverse employment opportunities that are based in resources, recreation, tourism and technology, and recognizes the importance of opportunities for higher education and skills training.
- **Section A2.3 Social Sustainability:** emphasizes the importance social sustainability in the development of a healthy community, specifically addressing basic community needs for housing, education, health care, employment, safety, food, security, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. To address these needs, the Municipality encourages the provision of human services and programs, partnerships and coordination to ensure the community preserves a high quality of life.

Section A3 sets out the goals of the OP, including the following which are specifically relevant to the implementation of the CIP:

- Section A3.2.5 – “to reinforce the function of **Downtown Wawa as the primary cultural, service and retail focal points** by promoting mixed-use development”;
- Section A3.2.6 – “to encourage a **strong connection between the Downtown and the waterfront areas through mixed-use developments and improvements to public space**”;
- Section A3.2.7 – “to encourage **further intensification** and use of the lands within the downtown core and to make every effort to **improve the economic health of the core by encouraging redevelopment and the broadest mix of uses**”;
- Section A3.4.1 – “to **encourage economic growth** and provide opportunities for economic development in a manner which will sustain and improve the quality of life in the Municipality”;
- Section A3.4.3 – “to **support and maintain existing transportation infrastructure** in the interest of fostering economic growth and investment”;



- Section A3.4.4 – “to encourage the development of **tourist commercial uses in the Downtown** as well as in appropriate shoreline and rural areas”; and
- Section A3.4.7 – “to recognize, protect and where appropriate, **utilize cultural heritage features and resources** in conjunction with economic development and tourism initiatives”.

Section B4 of the OP sets out policies for the Downtown, which apply to the Central Commercial Area designation on Schedule A-1. Section B4.2 states the vision of the Downtown designation is to “form part of a proud and historic northern community that will continue to provide quality service to its local population and will creatively evolve to become a leading waterfront destination for tourism and recreation on Northern Ontario.” Section B4.5.2 contains policies to guide new development or redevelopment in the Downtown. The policies encourage land assembly to create larger, more viable development parcels, and direct that development is to occur on full sewer and water services. Hospitality and tourist-oriented uses that enhance pedestrian linkage between the downtown and open area spaces are encouraged. Further, all development proposals requiring Planning Act approval may be required to restore or enhance their building facades in order to maintain the architectural character and identity of the Downtown.

Section B4.5.3 recognizes and encourages residential uses in the Downtown area, provided such uses are located in the second storey of buildings, or are developed on land or in buildings which are vacant or underutilized.

Section B4.6 sets out policies for Public Space in the Downtown, which includes streets, sidewalks, parking lots, parks, and administrative or public buildings. Specific projects aimed at revitalizing public lands and buildings may include:

- a) “Provision of streetscape landscaping such as trees, shrubs and flowers;
- b) Provision of street furniture, lighting, flower plants, art and monuments in strategic, pedestrian oriented locations;
- c) Improvements to the gateway to the Downtown located at the intersection of Broadway Avenue, Mission Road and Main Street;
- e) Provision of wayfinding signage;
- f) Provision of parking areas for campers, recreational vehicles and trailers; and/or
- g) Renovations and/or façade improvements to existing public buildings.”



Section E1.7 of the OP sets out policies for Community Improvement which encourage: “planning, replanning, design and redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy proficiency, or any of them, of a CIP area, and 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 for specific areas of the Municipality. It may also include the provision of affordable housing.”

The OP policies enable Council to undertake Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) as municipal finances and other sources of funding permit, and specify that Council may include tax assistance programs and register agreements relating to grants and loans issued to fulfill CIP objectives.

The OP provides that all lands located within the Settlement Areas on Schedules A-1 (see **Figure 2-1**) and A-2 are defined as Community Improvement Areas, for which CIPs can be prepared.

Section E1.7.2 outlines community improvement projects, including but not limited to:

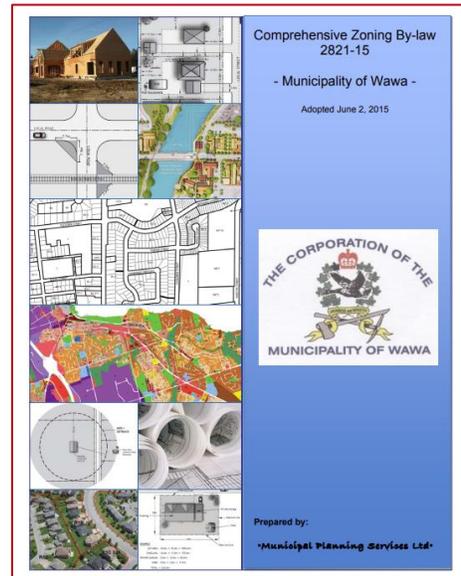
- a) “The development of seniors housing or forms of affordable housing;
- b) The development of parks, recreational trails and public uses at or near the waterfront;
- c) Improvements to sidewalks and road surfaces to enable safe and comfortable travel by pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles;
- d) Projects designed to foster accessibility and active transportation in the community;
- e) Tree planting and street beautification programs and improvements to private buildings and properties; or,
- f) The construction and improvement of buildings and structure that promote energy efficiency.”



2.8 Municipality of Wawa Zoning By-law 2821-15 (June 2, 2015)

The Municipality of Wawa Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2821-15 (Adopted June 2, 2015) implements the policies of the Official Plan, and identifies permitted land uses and sets out lot and building requirements such as lot sizes and dimensions, building heights and locations, and parking, among other provisions, to guide development within the Municipality. It contains general provisions that apply to all lands within the Municipality, as well as specific provisions that apply to individual Zones.

The properties within the proposed Downtown CIPA are primarily zoned C1 General Commercial. The C1 Zone permits a wide range of commercial uses, including but not limited to business offices, convenience stores, financial institutions, hotels, medical offices, personal service shops, places of amusement, places of worship, restaurants, and retail stores. Standalone residential uses are not permitted in the C1 Zone. However, Section 4.4 of the Zoning By-law contains provisions which permit a secondary dwelling unit in a building in a C1 Zone to allow for apartment dwelling units which are accessory to a commercial use.



2.9 Municipality of Wawa Downtown Community Improvement Plan (2008)

The existing 2008 Municipality of Wawa Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) establishes a path for improvements and upgrade to public and private lands and buildings in the Downtown. It includes a series of recommendations for incentives (i.e., tax relief and grant programs) to encourage private sector investments in the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) to help create a more unique identity and sense of place. The grants available under the existing CIP are summarized in **Table 2-1**.

The CIP states that grants and incentives will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and will generally be limited to one registered owner per calendar year, however, Council will make



efforts to evenly distribute improvement funds across the entire CIP area. The CIP also provides that Council may give preferential consideration to applications that are within the areas where concurrent municipal public realm improvements are being undertaken.

Table 2-1: CIP Incentives (2008 Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan)

Grant	Purpose	Amount
Building Façade Improvement Program (Primary Grant)	To assist building owners to improve a building façade in accordance with the Downtown Revitalization Plan and this report	A one-time grant of 50% to a maximum of \$5,000.
Building Façade Improvement Program (Secondary Grant)	For improvements to exterior sides and the rear of buildings, particularly where the building sits on a corner lot.	A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$3,500.
Sign Replacement Program	To replace an existing sign.	A grant of 50% up to \$1,500.
Building Restoration or Addition Program	To provide a tax increment equivalent grant for a specified period of time to provide a landowner with relief from the increase in assessment and property tax caused by redevelopment initiatives.	A six-year rebate program wherein the first 3 years the restored property is eligible for a 100% reduction in new municipal tax generated by the redevelopment.
Design Fee Grant	For the preparation of plans necessary for the Building Façade Improvement Program or the Building Restoration Program.	A one-time grant of 50% to a maximum of \$500.
Building Permit and Planning Application Fee Rebate	To assist a property owner that undertakes improvements in accordance with the vision and objectives of the CIP.	Varies – based on application type.
Tippage Fee Grant	To provide reimbursements for fees associated with the disposal of non-hazardous waste related to the improvement programs.	Varies – based on tippage fees.



Grant	Purpose	Amount
Accessibility Grant	To remove barriers to accessibility in the Downtown.	Varies – grant of up to \$1,000 based on the number of barriers removed or the total cost of the undertaking to remove a single barrier.

2.9.1 2008 CIP Results and Need for Modernization

Due to funding decisions, the 2008 Downtown CIP was never implemented by Council and no Financial Incentive Programs have been awarded. As a result, the existing CIP has not been fully utilized as a tool to promote economic development and Downtown revitalization.

As further discussed in Section 2.10.1 of this Report, Council has expressed a renewed commitment in implementing a Downtown CIP. Considering how much time has passed since the 2008 adoption of the existing Downtown CIP, as well as key legislative changes which have expanded the applicability of a CIP (e.g., to support affordable housing), the Municipality considers it prudent to modernize the CIP to review the community improvement opportunities and Financial Incentive Programs which should be included.

2.10 Other Local Planning Considerations

2.10.1 Municipality of Wawa Strategic Plan: A Plan of Action 2023-2027 (August 2023)

As a new Council was elected in Fall 2022, Council deemed it appropriate to undertake a Strategic Plan refresh exercise and developed the current 2023-2027 Strategic Plan through extensive consultations with Council, staff, and the community through an online survey. The Municipality of Wawa Strategic Plan (2023-2027) was developed in August 2023 and adopted by Council on September 5, 2023, and will guide major decisions with respect to the allocation of municipal resources and assets, and budget and project priorities, from 2023 to 2027. The Strategic Plan was informed by the Municipality’s 2021 Transformation Review, the intent of which was to ensure that the services and programs





provided by the Municipality are relevant, appropriate, high quality, and delivered in an efficient and sustainable manner, which laid the groundwork for the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan identifies key priorities and action items organized by common themes that arose from Strategic Planning workshops. The themes for key priorities and specific action items that are relevant to the Downtown CIP, or would occur within the proposed Community Improvement Project Area, include the following:

1. Infrastructure Improvements

Key actions relevant to the CIP include:

- Conceptual Design and financing strategies to upgrade the Town Hall (located Downtown) in 2024-25.

2. Tourism and Economic Development

Key actions relevant to the CIP include:

- Develop and implement a Housing Strategy to increase housing stock in 2023-24;
- Encourage private owners to comply with Property Standards By-law on an on-going basis;
- Update the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) in 2023;
- Develop and implement a branding and marketing strategy in 2024; and
- Implement recommendations in the Five-year Wawa Tourism Plan and develop an Implementation Plan in 2024.

2.10.2 Wawa's 5-Year Tourism Strategy & Action Plan (April 3, 2023)

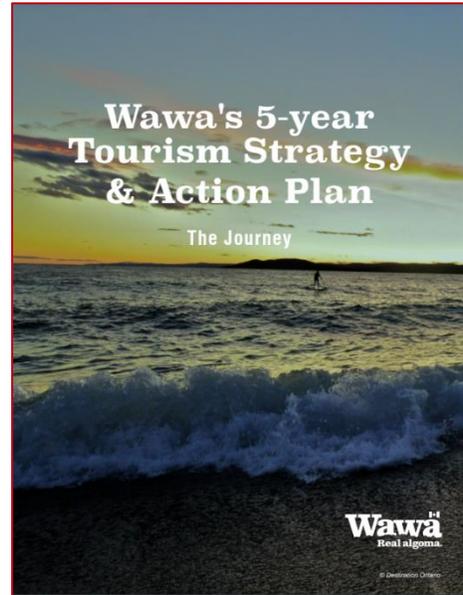
The Municipality of Wawa's 5-year Tourism Strategy and Action Plan was prepared in 2023 as a guide to grow the tourism sector in Wawa, and recognizes tourism as an important economic driver and contributor to businesses and the overall community.

The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan identifies the different types of tourism in Wawa, what assets already exist, and where there are gaps and opportunities for growth. The Primary Tourism Assets in Wawa were identified as accommodations, attractions, food and beverage providers, festivals and events, retailers, and service providers. Through engagement with residents, tourism partners, and businesses, an overarching vision and community improvements were established. A review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and



challenges identified four areas to build resilience and diversify the Municipality’s economy through tourism, including:

- Engage stakeholders to strengthen support for tourism;
- Position Wawa as a place for visitors and locals to explore and enjoy;
- Increase community capacity to focus on and pursue tourism development; and
- Enhance tourism assets, products, and services that support visitation across the year.



The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan also identifies objectives and actions for tourism development. Key actions with particular relevance to the Downtown CIP include:

- Improving identified wayfinding information and infrastructure barriers;
- improving the attractiveness of the Downtown core and enhance accessibility to key tourism assets;
- Supporting opportunities for partnerships with Michipicoten First Nation and other Indigenous tourism organizations; and
- Supporting new commercial development and business activations in the Downtown.

The Downtown CIP represents an opportunity to build on the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan by supporting and encouraging the development of a sustainable tourism / visitor economy through Financial Incentive Programs that support local businesses which offer year-round tourism experiences, accommodations, and amenities that both draw tourists to Downtown Wawa and keep them in the area or provide a vibrant “homebase” for their visit to the region.

2.10.3 Wawa Housing Action Plan (2023)

The Wawa Housing Action Plan (HAP) was completed in 2023 to assess the local housing market conditions, identify housing challenges and gaps, and highlight actions to address these issues. The HAP focuses on identifying the current housing situation in the Municipality, understanding the future demand for housing, and developing an approach to building affordable housing.

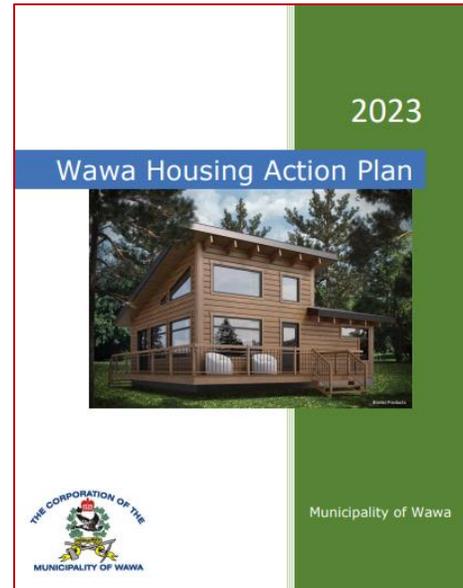


Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan



The HAP directly identifies the Downtown CIP as a key strategy through which to achieve of the goal of diversifying housing options, and encouraging the redevelopment of commercial buildings into housing in the area. Recommendations for potential CIP Financial Incentive Programs which are highlighted in the HAP include:

- **Rental Housing Planning and Building Fee Waiver Program:** Grant equal to up to 100% of the fees paid on specified planning and development applications for an affordable rental or purpose-built rental housing project;
- **Planning and Building Fee Grant:** A rebate of planning application fees and building permit fees;
- **Residential/Office Conversion Grant – Upper Floor (s):** A grant equal to 50% of the cost of renovating and converting second floor or higher units to residential or office uses up to a maximum of a specified amount; and
- **Residential Conversion and Intensification Grant:** A grant of a pre-determined amount per new residential dwelling unit created, to a maximum of a specified amount. This grant is intended to encourage property owners to create new residential dwelling units within the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area through new development or through renovation or addition to an existing building. The grant would provide property owners up to a certain amount per new residential dwelling unit created, to a maximum of a specified amount. The grant may be used for rental or ownership units.



2.10.4 Age-Friendly Wawa: Updated 2021-2025 Action Plan (2021)

The Wawa Age-Friendly Plan, first completed in 2016, is intended to ensure that the Municipality is meeting the needs of seniors for appropriate housing, building accessibility, and increasing opportunities for social participation. The Action Plan was updated in 2021 to evaluate and identify needs and priorities that could guide the implementation of the Action Plan through the year 2025.

To date, key actions completed have included renovating the Royal Canadian Legion Hall with accessibility features, completing the Housing Needs and Demand Study (February 2017), and the construction of a 10-unit seniors housing complex in partnership with the Algoma District



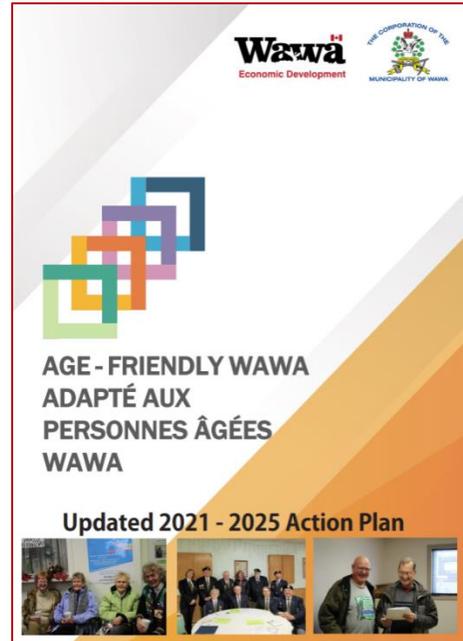
Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan



Services Administration Board. The Municipality also received funding to update the Wawa Lake Waterfront to include accessible features including a boardwalk, accessible washroom, and ramp.

The updated Plan identifies priority goals and actions for ways in which to create a more age-friendly community. Key goals and actions which are relevant to or can be supported through the Downtown CIP include:

- Re-visit seniors' housing needs once the new seniors' building is complete and occupied;
- Ensure sufficient barrier-free parking spots, through an awareness campaign aimed at local businesses;
- Improve accessibility in public and private buildings;
- Determine and outline popular walking routes for seniors and/or typical walking distances from home to Downtown; and
- Investigate seasonal options for accessible outdoor public seating (e.g., benches with backs and arms).



New seniors' housing complex, Wawa, Ontario (Source: www.wawa.cc)



redesign goose nest
Wawa Lake

Lakerview
has character, historical
Empty

condo
Lais
Empty

Signage?

Parking

Possible
Extension
down Mission
Road?

Vision aspires
Wawa vision supports
Culturally & Soc
diverse

3

Community Engagement



3 Community Engagement

Community engagement is a critical component of the success of the Downtown CIP, from its development through to its implementation. The Municipality of Wawa is committed to engaging with local business owners and operators, residents, members of Michipicoten First Nation, local interest groups, and agencies to ensure that the Downtown CIP reflects community needs and priorities and can support and facilitate community improvement projects with tangible impacts on the quality of life and vitality in Downtown Wawa.

The Downtown CIP project process includes several opportunities for community engagement to inform the development of Financial Incentive Programs which will be available to private landowners, as well as recommendations for municipal leadership activities on public lands. To date, a Downtown walking tour and Visioning Workshop were held with members of Council, Municipal staff, local business owners, and community members, and community and business surveys were conducted to gain specific insights into CIP priorities and opportunities from residents and business owners / operators. These activities and their results are summarized in the following sections.

3.1 Walking Tour

On October 24, 2023, members of the WSP project team participated in a Downtown walking tour along with members of Council, Municipal staff, members of the local Goose Nest Committee, and residents. Municipal staff led the walking tour, starting at the Wawa Municipal Office building and exploring the entirety of the Downtown area, with special focus on Broadway Avenue and within the 2008 Community Improvement Project Area.

Walking tour participants provided local knowledge of Downtown Wawa, ranging from the historical significance of current buildings and structures, previous uses of land and buildings, current land ownership status, as well as insights on the needs and priorities for community improvements in the area to help revitalize Downtown. This knowledge sharing from community members is essential to understanding existing conditions and opportunities in Downtown Wawa, and was used to inform an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC) which is documented in **Section 5.1** of this Report. **Figure 3-1** illustrates key highlights of the walking tour, and priority areas for consideration in the development of the Downtown CIP.



Figure 3-1: Walking Tour Highlights (October 24, 2023)



View of Downtown along Broadway Ave.



Goose Nest Market



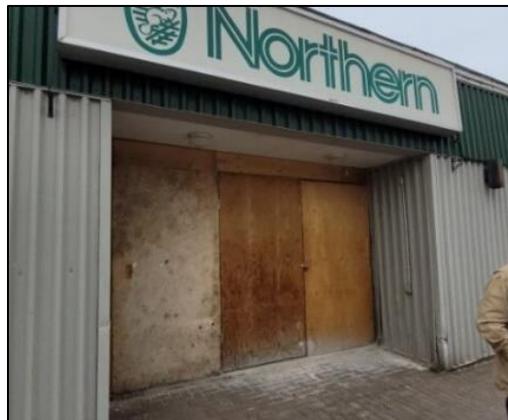
Municipal signage for Lion's Beach



Vacant lot off Broadway Ave.



Public art on Broadway Ave.



Vacant storefront on Broadway Ave.



3.2 Visioning Workshop

On October 24, 2023, WSP project team members facilitated a Visioning Workshop with a focused group of participants including representation from members of Municipal staff, members of the local Goose Nest Committee, local business owners, residents, and the Algoma District Services Administration Board. The purpose of the Visioning Workshop was to assist in establishing a vision and goals for the Downtown CIP, and to gain input on key economic development and urban design opportunities that should be addressed through the CIP.

The Visioning Workshop included a presentation to introduce the CIP project purpose, process, and examples of Financial Incentive Programs and CIP results in other Ontario communities, as well as an overview of urban design guidelines and elements as they relate to a CIP. The Visioning Workshop also included facilitated visioning activities with participants to set the foundation for the project, including:

- A mapping exercise to review and confirm the proposed boundaries of the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area;
- Development of a draft Vision Statement and goals for the Downtown CIP, presented in Section 4 of this Report; and
- Identifying and ranking urban design priorities in the Downtown to inform the CIP-specific Urban Design Guidelines.



Figure 3-2: Collaboration among Visioning Workshop participants

Figure 3-2 illustrates the collaborative efforts of the workshop participants. A detailed summary of the Visioning Workshop activities and results is provided in **Appendix A**.

3.3 Michipicoten First Nation Engagement

Municipal staff and members of the WSP Project Team held a virtual meeting with Alex, Marques, the Community and Land Use Planner for Michipicoten First Nation (MFN) on October 30, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the CIP project and understand how best to engage MFN community members in obtaining input on how the Downtown CIP can



With respect to CIP priorities and opportunities, respondents emphasized the need to improve the overall aesthetics of the Downtown through building facades and signage. In particular, respondents would like to see vacant lots and buildings revitalized, as well as the redevelopment of former industrial or contaminated sites. Respondents also felt that key elements of the heritage and character of Downtown Wawa that should be preserved include the Lion’s Beach waterfront area, the Goose Nest Market, and historic buildings and features such as mining equipment installations. Respondents emphasized a desire for community involvement and transparency in the CIP process to ensure the community truly benefits from this project and real change occurs.

Youth Survey

The Community Survey was also completed by 16 students at Michipicoten High School, as part of their Grade 10 Civics and Careers class. The analysis of the youth survey results has been separated from the overall Community Survey results, to provide a youth perspective to the CIP.



The majority of respondents live in Wawa, with nearly half regularly spending time Downtown. They generally described

Downtown Wawa today as boring, plain, and old, while Downtown Wawa in the future was envisioned as being more colourful, bright, modern, and exciting.

Youth respondents also emphasized the importance of redeveloping vacant and underutilized properties and buildings, and also noted the importance of preserving Wawa’s northern character. Specific areas for improvement included the Lion’s Beach waterfront and the dock. Regarding heritage and character features that should be preserved, the Wawa goose statue, mining equipment, and Wawa Lake were prioritized. In general, there was a large emphasis on making Downtown Wawa more exciting through the introduction of recreational facilities and beautification.

Business Survey

An online Business Survey directed at local business owners and operators was also distributed directly by email. The Business Survey was aimed specifically at local business owners and



operators, and sought input on why business owners choose to locate their business in Wawa, what challenges they face, what opportunities exist that impact or have potential to impact their businesses, and the specific types of Financial Incentive Programs they may be interested in applying for through the Downtown CIP.

The Business Survey received a total of four (4) responses. Respondents included business owners who have owned their businesses ranging from one (1) to 10-plus years. Similar to the Community Survey, respondents also characterized Downtown Wawa today as outdated and unattractive, compared to a vision for Downtown Wawa in the future being welcoming, affordable, vibrant, and beautiful.



The majority of respondents choose to locate their businesses in Downtown Wawa based on the potential for high pedestrian and vehicle traffic, with one respondent specifically identifying the opportunity to renovate and transform an aging building into something more vibrant and beautiful as a draw.

Some of the challenges respondents felt were prevalent in owning / operating a property or business in Downtown Wawa included general costs, demolition regulations, as well as collaboration with the Municipality and Council. However, several opportunities for encouraging economic development and tourism were also identified, including providing a wider variety of services and storefronts, beautifying the Downtown by catering more towards pedestrians (e.g. through seating areas), and working with forwarding-thinking Municipal staff and Council members.

Enhancing and improving streetscapes, walkways, building façades and signage, and accessibility, as well as redeveloping vacant lots and buildings were identified as most important to improve Downtown Wawa. The top Financial Incentive Programs that existing business and property owners / operators would be interested in forming part of the CIP include a Building Improvement / Energy Efficiency Grant, Building Façade and Signage Improvement Grant, Accessibility Grant, and a New Housing / Accommodation Grant.

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



4

CIP Vision & Goals



4 CIP Vision and Goals

4.1 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 Downtown Wawa CIP. Visioning Workshop participants and Community and Business Survey respondents identified key words and ideas that represent their vision for the future of Downtown Wawa. These ideas have been integrated into the following proposed Vision Statement for the Downtown CIP.

The Municipality of Wawa is committed to cultivating an inclusive, thriving, and welcoming Downtown that actively embraces and uplifts a culturally diverse community, nurturing both social and economic vitality.

4.2 Goals

In order to implement the Vision Statement, a series of CIP goals are proposed based on relevant goals included in the 2008 Downtown CIP, and key inputs received at the Visioning Workshop and through the Community and Business Surveys.

- 1** To reinforce the role of Downtown Wawa as a primary destination for business, commerce, and tourism in the community and the Algoma District.
- 2** Ensure the heritage, local businesses, and natural features located in the Downtown are promoted through recognizable and inviting gateway features to draw in residents and visitors.
- 3** Assist and collaborate with existing businesses and promote new businesses in order to achieve economic development goals.
- 4** Encourage the development and redevelopment of municipally- and privately-owned vacant and/or underutilized land and buildings, including the provision of additional



Downtown housing units.

- 5** Support the revitalization and beautification of the community, through improvements to the public realm and infrastructure, and private properties.
- 6** Recognize opportunities and work proactively with CIP applicants, and provide assistance to applicants through the building and development process.
- 7** Increase accessibility and safety through investments into existing and future safety-based infrastructure such as crosswalks, public lighting features, and signage.
- 8** Encourage and reward pride and investment in property ownership, including celebrating and marketing successful community improvement initiatives.
- 9** Pursue the implementation of community improvements through a combination of municipal leadership and private investment, and seek an appropriate annual funding allocation from Council to implement the CIP.
- 10** Focus on overall positive and lasting first impressions, particularly through building façades, streetscaping, accessibility improvements, and entrepreneurial activity.



5

CIP Opportunities



5 CIP Opportunities

This Section presents a summary of opportunities to be addressed through the Downtown CIP, informed by the results of engagement activities conducted to date, an analysis of the Downtown area, and a review of current CIP best practices and Financial Incentive Program offerings in other municipal CIPs across Ontario.

5.1 Downtown Walking Tour and SWOC Analysis

The Downtown walking tour and resulting Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) analysis conducted by the WSP project team, described in **Section 3.1**, forms an integral part in developing the draft and final Downtown CIP and related Urban Design Guidelines. The SWOC analysis is presented in **Table 5-1**. Key opportunities identified through the SWOC to be addressed through the CIP Financial Incentive Programs and recommendations for municipal leadership activities include:

- **Building Composition and Land Uses:** Possibility of renovating or expanding existing buildings to accommodate upper-storey residential units, promotion of mixed-use developments, improving existing municipal infrastructure (e.g., Goose Nest Market).
- **Building Façades:** Potential for cost-effective materials to be used in façade repairs, and the replacement of aging or otherwise blank façades with murals to beautify and improve the overall appearance of Downtown building stock.
- **Parking:** Ample room for beautification features (e.g., temporary sidewalk extensions and patios with planters or other softscape features) could replace some parking spaces such as green infrastructure like street trees, garden beds, biofilters, in order to increase vibrancy; removal of excess on-street parking to facilitate other opportunities (e.g. markets, patios), and utilizing vacant lots for parking to replace lost on-street parking.
- **Streetscaping:** Enhancements may include adding street trees (where space permits), planters with appropriate species selection, pedestrian-scale lighting, as well as accessibility and safety features (e.g., crosswalks, improved sightlines).



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan

- **Parks and Waterfront:** Improving the condition of and promoting connections to the waterfront through increased signage and wayfinding, restoring or replacing infrastructure such as walkways and other elements, and redevelopment of vacant lots and brownfield sites into potential community areas such as parks or gathering spaces.
- **Public Art and Murals:** Installation of vinyl murals, which are cost-effective and durable, throughout the Downtown to increase vibrancy.
- **Gateways / Wayfinding:** A need to improve wayfinding and install gateway features to direct visitors into Downtown and promote existing infrastructure, attractions, and historic destinations such as the Goose Nest Market, Lion's Beachfront, Heritage artifacts and doors, and the Waterfront Boardwalk.
- **Land Use:** Potential to rezone some Downtown areas, such as brownfield sites, to increase opportunities for the provision of greenspace and other community amenities.
- **Economic:** Seeking external CIP funding sources to bolster municipal budgets, and encourage the allocation of funds for CIP improvements.



Wawa Lake Waterfront

Table 5-1: Downtown Wawa Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis

CIP Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Building Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds characters and historic value to the Downtown core • Residents reminisce on previous uses, owners, times • Many of the buildings are two storeys with residential units located above commercial stores, and there is an opportunity for more upper-storey housing • Goose Nest Market – small wooden structures used during festivals, and community events that can showcase the local economy and goods (e.g., baked goods, jewelry, clothing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging, weathered buildings • Many vacant buildings • Vacancy often caused by structural damage (e.g. water pipe leak/burst, mold, etc.) • The layout of the Goose Nest Market buildings could be improved to better, the structure locations / orientation are not ideal to contribute to the public realm, especially when it is busy • Visual evidence of active businesses lacking signage and window displays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong desire / market demand for additional residential units above commercial uses along Broadway Ave. to provide affordable housing options • Potential for mixed use buildings, such as the municipal building at the south end of Broadway Ave. • Improve the Goose Nest Market layout for better user function and aesthetics (e.g., horseshoe layout facing the street) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of private investment in the maintenance and improvement of current building stock • Duration of building vacancies is often lengthy and contributes to poor perception of Downtown building stock, as well as public complaints • The ability of the Municipality to intervene in privately-owned vacant buildings and properties is limited • Financial constraints around building improvements, including the Goose Nest Market
Building Façades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent improvements and additions to several Downtown buildings, including noticeable façade renovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many façades are in various stages of disrepair, or inconsistent with the character of the Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of cost-effective material-based façade improvements as exemplified by the Legion Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many landowners are not interested in façade improvements without incentives • Lack of examples of façade improvements



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CIP Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
	<p>completed in recent years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some murals were added to blank walls to improve the overall aesthetics and to contribute to community identity and vibrancy in the Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faded colouring of building materials Inconsistency of materials used in new building additions Storefronts often missing signs or signs are aging and in disrepair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In cases where the building owner does not want to replace the facades, there may be opportunity for art or murals to be installed by the Municipality (with owner agreement) Mural opportunity identified on building north of the Goose Nest Market area as well as 96 Broadway Ave. (currently a municipal building, but recently declared surplus) 	<p>aside from a few local shops and the Legion</p>
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An abundance of on-street parking (angled parking) Ample space for all types of vehicles, including trailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking takes up high proportion of the right-of-way, although it is needed in the winter due to snow removal operations With snow piling, angled parking encroaches into the roadway The angled parking causes some issues when having to turn in left to a spot (no U-turns) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beautification and green infrastructure features can be added in place of access parking spaces to increase vibrancy Removal of some on-street parking spaces to utilize the space for other uses (e.g. temporary summer events, such as stalls) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy snow fall and the long winter season results in a need for parking in close proximity to retail and commercial uses



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CIP Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
		<p>are permitted, but only one sign in town notes this and it is common practice not to observe this)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not ideal for bike or other vehicle lanes 	<p>during market festivals, or patio spaces)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of some on-street parking may be offset by using vacant sites as parking lots, or relocating parking to the rear of buildings where there is access from a side road and rear laneway 	
Streetscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide rights-of-way (noted as necessary for snow piling) • Ample space and capacity for high volumes of traffic • Condition of sidewalks is generally good • Zero-metre (0 m) lot line contributes to a consistent street wall (where buildings are present) • Decorative lighting on street poles is attractive at night, particularly in winter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of beautification and amenities, such as plantings, empty banner holders and aging banners detract from street aesthetically • Lack of places to sit and enjoy the area • Lack of crosswalks in the Downtown • Sidewalk material is interlocking pavers which is attractive but has some issues with heaving (leading to accessibility concerns), and some surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification through increased street trees, garden beds, and boulevard plantings (requires careful species selection for urban tolerance and hardiness zone, plus providing adequate soil volumes soil cells) • Increased lighting and accessibility features • Consideration for new crosswalk(s) at key intersections • Increased safety for pedestrians through opportunities to narrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy snow fall average has deterred the Municipality from changing the existing streetscape • Safety is an issue, particularly at intersections due to the width of the crossing and speed of drivers (no stop signs) • Municipal staff suggested a new strategy for traffic management is needed, such as traffic signals and illuminated crosswalks



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CIP Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
		<p>damage (scratch marks from plows)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decorative lighting on street poles is mounted on street side and conflicts with snowplows (some have been hit) 	<p>the street without impacting snow storage (i.e., painting lines), while considering sight lines for drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to flip lights and banners to sidewalk side of pole to avoid conflicts with vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget constraints may limit implementation of improvements
<p>Parks and Waterfront</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stunning viewshed of Wawa Lake from the northeast end of Downtown, and views of the waterfront at each side road leading to the water from the Downtown Continuous waterfront pathway connects from north end of Downtown to the beach at the southeast end of Downtown (Main Street) Indigenous totems found along the beach Lookout points along Broadway Ave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sidewalk east of Montreal Street to complete the 'loop' along the waterfront and connect back to Downtown Lack of signage / wayfinding to beach and no viewsheds from the southern end of Downtown results in the waterfront being underutilized Beach itself is not well maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the existing infrastructure in place to clean up the waterfront Expand on current infrastructure and waterfront attributes (e.g., restore totems, increase signage) 78 Broadway Ave. (St. Monica Catholic Church) has a wide grassed area which could potentially be used for events, with permission from the owner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic oil rig feature requires maintenance, and it is currently leaning; as a result, some people would like to see it relocated, while others want it to be repaired in place Oil rig currently blocks some of the view of the Lake when driving through the Downtown, and may be better suited to a different location



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CIP Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Public Art and Murals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Doors – original doors were wood, painted by a local artist (Heather Sinnott), and scanned and printed on metal as permanent installations • The book “Wawa’s Heritage Doors: Portals to our Past”, written by local historian Johanna Rowe, narrates the doors and provides a general map of locations (e.g., at the Goose Nest) • Existing murals at Broadway Ave. and Gold St., and Broadway Ave. and Ganley St. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic mining equipment at the Goose Nest – important to the history of the town, but lacks appropriate signage and may conflict with the market use in current location; potential to relocate with a suggestion for the vacant lot at the southeast corner of Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vinyl mural applications are very cost-effective and have been durable in their application; could be utilized as a temporary beautification for building façades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly design process for murals, and potential for unique procurement process • With two (2) additional murals already proposed, there may be limited appetite for further public art installations
Gateways / Wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Gateway welcome sign is clearly on brand and is located in a good location (highly visible) to mark the entrance to the Downtown • There are multiple municipal signs and historic elements found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directional signage is lacking • Business signage is lacking • Planted gateway features (raised planter beds) are on private property; some are maintained by the Municipality through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to provide wayfinding to key destinations (Lion’s Beachfront, Heritage Walk, Waterfront Walk) • Potential for the development of a self-led walking tour based on abundance of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for improvements is a constraint



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CIP Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
	throughout the Downtown (although some in need of revitalization)	agreement with private property owners	historic facts and structures	
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-use buildings existing throughout the Community Improvement Project Area • Abundance of small businesses as well as upper-storey residential units above commercial uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Zone extends beyond current market demand – there has been little desire to convert buildings along McKinley Ave. to commercial uses • Existing zoning within the Community Improvement Project Area does not permit standalone residential buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to rezone some areas to increase beautification opportunities, such as redeveloping brownfield sites (e.g., former gas stations) into parks, greenspaces, and community amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing zoning generally permits commercial uses, meaning rezoning may be required depending on the nature of development proposed • There is a lack of businesses interested in locating within the Downtown core, as most new business has been concentrated further south down Mission Rd., particularly in the form of accommodations / lodging businesses
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of resident support and small business owners committed to revitalizing the Downtown core and ensuring the community returns to a thriving area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a noticeable lack of private investment into the Downtown core in recent years • The former CIP was not implemented due to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External funding sources may be utilized to bolster municipal financial resources • Opportunity to encourage spending / 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing funding is a challenge; limited budget is available



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CIP Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Goose Nest Committee and the market provide a unique aspect of the Downtown; creates a micro-economy, and showcases local business and art through festivals, markets and more The Economic Development team at the Municipality is committed to improving the community 	<p>economic decisions and tight budgetary constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents are often times split in terms of major economic decisions (e.g., the decision to remove or fix the historic oil rig) 	<p>fund allocation to CIP improvements</p>	



5.2 Key Sites for CIP Implementation

Several key sites for CIP implementation opportunities in Downtown Wawa have emerged through the information gained during the Downtown walking tour and through engagement activities undertaken to date. Municipal staff and community members identified specific municipal and privately-owned properties in Downtown Wawa as having potential to be improved or redeveloped to help achieve the vision for the Downtown CIP, such as specific privately-owned vacant properties and buildings along Broadway Avenue, as well as the Wawa Municipal Offices and Library and Lion’s Beach Waterfront. **Figure 5-1** highlights some of these key sites that could form a focus for CIP implementation.

Figure 5-1: Key Sites for CIP Implementation



Wawa Lake waterfront lookout



Former Sam’s Foodline store (55 Broadway Ave.)



Wawa Municipal Offices (Source: Wawa Municipal Website)



Vacant lot backing on to Wawa Lake (26 Broadway Ave.)



Vacant Lot (39 Broadway Ave.)



Vacant Lot (southeast end of Broadway Ave.)

5.3 Key Urban Design Priorities

Throughout the Downtown walking tour and community engagement activities undertaken to date, several key urban design priorities have emerged as crucial drivers for inclusion in the CIP-specific Urban Design Guidelines (UDGs) and overall community enhancement through the Downtown CIP.

During the Visioning Workshop, participants were asked to rank urban design elements in order of importance and the following ranking was determined:

- (1) Building Façades
- (2) Furnishing / Amenity / Planting
- (3) Lighting / Signage
- (4) Sidewalks
- (5) Parking Spaces
- (6) Roads / Lanes

As part of the Community, Youth and Business Surveys, respondents were also asked to rank urban design elements in order of importance, as presented in **Table 5-2**.



Table 5-2: Urban Design Elements Ranking of Importance

Urban Design Element	Community Survey Rank	Youth Survey Rank	Business Survey Rank
Street furnishings / amenity spaces (e.g. benches, waste bins)	3	4	1
Landscaping / plantings	6	3	2
Lighting	2	3	1
Building architecture / façade improvements	1	3	2
Building / business signage	4	1	2
Sidewalks (re-laying or replacing existing brick pavers)	8	3	1
Parking spaces	9	4	2
Accessibility features (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers)	5	2	1
Public art / murals	7	3	3
Other	10	5	4

Among “other” urban design elements, respondents suggested the importance of waste disposal receptables, public gathering areas, and safety features in Downtown Wawa.

Overall, the most important urban design elements to the community are:

- Building architecture / façade improvements;
- Building / business signage;
- Street furnishings / amenity spaces (e.g. benches, waste bins);
- Lighting;
- Sidewalks (re-laying or replacing existing brick pavers); and
- Accessibility features (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers).

By ranking these urban design elements in terms of importance, a clear sense of priorities for the Downtown emerges which will guide the development and implementation of the CIP and UDGs. This ranking, along with the other information gathered through engagement activities, will inform the basis of these documents.

The UDGs will aim to enhance the distinct community image of Downtown Wawa by guiding development or redevelopment in the use of appropriate materials, building form and styles,



consistent furnishings, enhancement through plantings, and overall site planning. Priorities for the UDGs will focus on the highest ranked elements above, and strive to incorporate these harmoniously within the Downtown CIP.

5.4 Scan of CIP Best Practices

This section provides a scan of CIP best practices in Ontario, with particular attention to the types of Financial Incentive Programs that are being included in municipal CIPs to facilitate commitments across Ontario to enhancing overall quality of life for residents and fostering sustainable, vibrant communities. These CIP best practices offer valuable insights into the CIP elements that may be employed in the Downtown CIP to support a stronger, more vibrant and resilient Downtown Wawa.

5.4.1 Housing-focused CIP Programs

The following table presents an overview of Financial Incentive Programs in municipal CIPs across Ontario that are specifically focused on encouraging the development of housing units, with a particular focus on facilitating affordable housing through key incentives.

Table 5-3: Overview of Current Municipal Housing-focused CIP Programs

Municipal CIP	Financial Incentive Program and Purpose	Incentive Amount
City of St. Catharines CIP (2020)	Accessory Dwelling Unit Program: To incentivize the development of Accessory Dwelling Units	Grant of up to 70% of the project costs up to a maximum of \$20,000 for the construction of an interior or exterior accessory dwelling unit.
City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)	Seniors Housing Study Grant: To encourage development of new housing for Kenora’s seniors’ population	Grant of 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 of eligible project costs for studies to support a new seniors’ housing development of four (4) or more units.
Greater Sudbury Affordable Housing CIP (2018)	Residential Incentive Program (per-door grant): Grant to jump-start affordable housing in	Grant of \$10 per square foot of newly created affordable habitable residential space, or \$20,000 per affordable



Municipal CIP	Financial Incentive Program and Purpose	Incentive Amount
	locations that best serve needs of tenants	dwelling unit, whichever is lesser.
City of Owen Sound Affordable Housing CIP (2020)	Development Charges Grant: To incentivize construction and stimulate the supply of Rental Housing Development	Grant equal to or less than the amount of Development Charges owed at the time of building permit issuance.
Town of The Blue Mountains Housing within Reach CIP (2021)	Attainable Housing Feasibility Grant: Intended to assist eligible applicants with the cost of determining an attainable housing project's feasibility prior to construction	Grant value determined based on eligible studies (market analysis, business development related, building condition report).
	Downtown Apartment Rehabilitation or Conversion Program: intended to facilitate the rehabilitation of an existing residential unit, or the conversion of commercial, residential or mixed-use building space into an attainable housing unit(s) in the upper-storey or rear floor space of a building	Grant based on the value of any of the following eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works related to Ontario Building Code or Fire Code compliance • Accessibility improvements • Permanent finishing materials and decorative elements (25%) • Costs of services of an engineer or architect (15%)
City of Bellville CIP (2021)	Affordable Rental Housing Tax Increment Equivalent Rebate: New second units or new apartment buildings which result in the creation of affordable rental unit(s) are eligible to receive a Tax Increment Equivalent Rebate	Rebate for the municipal portion of tax increases which occur as a result of the development of affordable rental unit(s), for 10 years.
	Accessibility Top-Up Rebate: New legal second units or affordable rental units that are	Rebate up to \$2,500 per unit.



Municipal CIP	Financial Incentive Program and Purpose	Incentive Amount
	designed to be accessible for persons with disabilities are eligible for a rebate.	
Sault Ste. Marie Rental Housing CIP (2014)	<p>Rental Housing Tax Increment Equivalent Grant: A grant to property owners who undertake the development or redevelopment of properties that result in a reassessment.</p> <p><u>Assisted Living Incentive:</u> Projects which provide facilities that contribute to an improved assisted living environment such as additional space for nurses, physiotherapists, social service agencies or personal support workers will be eligible for up to one additional tax grant year</p> <p><u>Additional Barrier Free Units:</u> Projects which exceed the minimum number of barrier free units required under the Ontario Building Code (The OBC require that 10% of all new residential units in multi-unit buildings shall be designed to be barrier free).</p>	<p>Amount for this program shall not exceed 75% of the increase in the municipal portion of the taxes, decreasing to 50% in year two and 25% in year three (25% in year four with assisted living incentive)</p>
Thunder Bay Downtown and Strategic Core Areas CIP (2023)	<p>Residential / Office Conversion Grant: To promote the renovating and converting of second floor or higher units to residential of office use</p>	<p>Equal to 50% of renovation costs to a maximum of \$10,000</p>



5.4.2 Current CIPs in Northern Ontario

A review of the following current CIPs from other Northern Ontario municipalities was conducted to help inform the selection and development of potential Financial Incentive Programs for the Downtown Wawa CIP:

- City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (Amended January 2021);
- City of Dryden CIP (December 2019);
- Township of Ignace CIP (August 2018); and
- City of Kenora Harbortown Centre CIP (March 2017).

The name, purpose or objective, and grant amount of each Financial Incentive Program included in the above CIPs are summarized in **Table 5-4**.

Table 5-4: Scan of CIPs in Northern Ontario Municipalities

CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
Accessibility	N/A	Program Name: Accessibility Grant	Program Name: Accessibility Grant	Program Name: Accessibility Grant
		Purpose: To improve the accessibility of existing buildings	Purpose: To improve the accessibility of existing buildings	Purpose: To encourage the provision of accessibility to existing buildings
		Amount: 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$15,000	Amount: 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$2,500	Amount: 50% to a maximum of \$2,500
Brownfield Sites	N/A	Program Name: Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant	Program Name: Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant	N/A
		Purpose: To encourage the remediation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of brownfield sites in the City	Purpose: To encourage the remediation and rehabilitation of brownfield sites by temporarily eliminating part or all of the property tax increase on a property that is undergoing or has	



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
		<p>Amount: The City 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. (total value deferred or cancelled will not exceed the total eligible costs);</p> <p>The City may apply to the provincial Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program, on behalf of the</p>	<p>undergone remediation and development to assist with payment of the cost of environmental remediation</p> <p>Amount: The municipal portion of the property tax assistance is limited to the Rehabilitation Period and/or the Development Period of the project in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Act, 2001</p>	



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
		owner, to cancel or freeze all or part of the education component of property taxes		
Commercial / Residential Intensification	Program Name: Commercial Conversion and Residential/Office Conversion Grant	Program Name: Commercial and Rental Housing Conversion and Expansion Grant	Program Name: Commercial Space Conversion Grant	Program Name: Residential Conversion and Intensification Grant
	Purpose: To encourage the redevelopment of existing main floor space to a commercial use, or to encourage the redevelopment/creation of new second storey or higher, residential/office units	Purpose: To support new and growing businesses in Dryden and facilitate the provision of affordable housing units in the City	Purpose: To encourage the development of new and expanded businesses in Ignace by supporting the conversion of existing residential properties to commercial space where appropriately zoned	Purpose: To promote residential intensification
	Amount: 50% of the cost of renovating and converting main floor residential to a commercial use or second floor or higher	Amount: \$5,000 per project and/or property for professional services shall not exceed 15% of the grant that is	Amount: 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 of eligible project costs for projects that increase commercial building stock within the CIP area	Amount: \$4,000 per new residential dwelling unit created, to a maximum of \$12,000



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourn Centre CIP (2017)
	units to residential/office use up to a maximum of \$10,000 dollars	calculated for eligible construction costs		
Signage Improvements	N/A	Program Name: Signage Improvement Grant	Program Name: Signage Improvement Grant	Program Name: Improved Signage Grant
		Purpose: To promote new attractive and pedestrian-oriented signage that contributes to the visual identity and northern character of the City	Purpose: To promote attractive signage that contributes to a positive image of the Township	Purpose: To improve the condition of existing signs that do not comply with the sign design guidelines
		Amount: To promote new attractive and pedestrian-oriented signage that contributes to the visual identity and northern character of the City	Amount: 50% of the costs related professional design and construction, to a maximum of \$2,500	Amount: 50% to a maximum of \$2,000 to replace an existing sign
Façade Improvements	Program Name: Commercial Façade Improvement Grant	Program Name: Façade Improvement Grant	Program Name: Façade Improvement Grant	Program Name: Building Façade Improvement Grant



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
	<p>Purpose: To provide a grant to owners or tenants who rehabilitate and improve façades of buildings within the project area</p>	<p>Purpose: To encourage aesthetic improvements to buildings and properties, and to support continued maintenance of the City's building stock</p>	<p>Purpose: To encourage aesthetic improvements and upgrades to existing building</p>	<p>Purpose: To improve overall conditions of existing façades</p>
	<p>Amount: 50% with a maximum of \$10,000</p>	<p>Amount: 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$15,000 (grant for professional landscape architectural services shall not exceed 50% of the grant that is calculated for eligible construction costs)</p>	<p>Amount: 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000</p>	<p>Amount: 50% to a maximum of \$15,000 towards the cost of façade improvements</p>
Landscaping and Parking	<p>Program Name: Façade, Signage, and Landscape Improvement Grant</p>	<p>Program Name: Landscaping and Parking Area Improvement Grant</p>	<p>Program Name: Landscaping and Parking Area Improvement Grant</p>	<p>Program Name: Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant</p>
	<p>Purpose: to assist with the financing of improvements to an</p>	<p>Purpose: To assist eligible applicants with improvements to private</p>	<p>Purpose: To encourage a more attractive and appealing built</p>	<p>Purpose: To improve the conditions of private property landscaping</p>



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
	existing building's façade or signage, or to assist with other eligible improvements to private property (i.e., landscaping)	properties which will optimize the amount and quality of off-street parking, make more efficient use of private parking areas, improve their aesthetics	environment by improving the aesthetic appearance of parking areas and landscaped areas	
	Amount: 50% with a maximum of \$3,000	Amount: 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$15,000 (grant for professional landscape architectural services shall not exceed 50% of the grant that is calculated for eligible construction costs)	Amount: 50% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000	Amount: 50% to a maximum of \$15,000 of the cost to improve outdoor landscaping on private property
Planning and Building Fees	Program Name: Planning Application and Building Fee Grant Program	Program Name: Planning, Building, Demolition, and Landfill Fee Grant	Program Name: Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant	Program Name: Planning and Design Grant
	Purpose: stimulate investment by property owners or tenants of	Purpose: To encourage infill development and redevelopment that is	Purpose: To support attractive and desirable infill development and	Purpose: To assist in the planning and design



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
	commercial or mixed use buildings in the Project Areas through the provision of a grant to those who wish to invest	context-sensitive, attractive, and desirable.	redevelopment by reducing the administrative costs associated with making improvements to private property	aspect of building façade improvements
	Amount: 100% of the fee for a planning application and rebating the 100% of the fee for a building permit, up to a maximum of \$10,000 dollars	Amount: Planning Fee - Up to a total of 100% of the City’s fees, as determined at the discretion of Council and in consultation with the City’s Administrator and/or the Land Sale and Development Committee, to cover the cost of minor variance applications, zoning by-law amendment applications, or site plan applications	Amount: Maximum of 100% may be provided to cover the cost of official plan amendment applications, zoning by-law amendment applications or minor variance applications, building permit fees, and demolition permits associated with redevelopment	Amount: 50% to a maximum of \$1,000 towards the cost of the preparation of architectural plans for façade improvement
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	Program Name: Tax Grant Rebate Program	Program Name: Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	Program Name: Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	Program Name: Residential Conversion and Intensification Grant



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourn Centre CIP (2017)
	<p>Purpose: Grants to property owners who rehabilitate their properties to an extent that results in a property value increase as determined by MPAC</p>	<p>Purpose: To stimulate infill development and redevelopment projects, which would include those properties and/or buildings that have undergone rehabilitation or significant building improvements</p>	<p>Purpose: To encourage desirable and attractive development and redevelopment in the Township</p>	<p>Purpose: To provide a Property tax break to properties affected by redevelopment</p>
	<p>Amount: 100% of the increased municipal taxes attributed strictly to the valuation change in each year of the program. It is recommended that any development that results in new residential uses be eligible for a rebate for a term of up to 10 years. All other uses would be eligible to receive a</p>	<p>Amount: 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 duration, as determined on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of Council</p>	<p>Amount: equal to a declining percentage of the municipal tax increase resulting from the improvements, and will be paid to the owner each year for a maximum of 4 years. In year one, the amount of the grant will equal up to 100% of the tax increment and will decrease by 25% per year until it reaches 0%</p>	<p>Amount: based on varying percentages over 5 years</p>



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CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
	rebate for a term of up to 5 years			
Environmental Site Assessment	N/A	Program Name: Environmental Site Assessment Grant	Program Name: Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Grant	N/A
		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	Purpose: To encourage the completion of environmental studies which are intended to support the remediation of brownfield sites	
		Amount: 50% of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of: \$3,000 per study; and two (2) studies per property / project	Amount: 50% of the cost of undertaking an eligible study, to a maximum of: \$3,000 per study; and two (2) studies per property / project	
Other	N/A	Program Name: Affordable Housing and Seniors Housing Grant	Program Name: Municipal Land Disposition Program	Program Name: Seniors Housing Study Grant



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan



CIP Program Theme	City of Thunder Bay Strategic Core Areas CIP (2021)	City of Dryden CIP (2019)	Township of Ignace CIP (2018)	City of Kenora Harbourtown Centre CIP (2017)
		<p>Purpose: To promote and implement new affordable housing and/or seniors housing units</p>	<p>Purpose: To promote the establishment of new development on surplus lands owned by the Township of Ignace and contribute to the Township’s long-term revenue base</p>	<p>Purpose: To support new seniors housing</p>
		<p>Amount: 50% of eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 (Council may consider approving a grant amount which exceeds 50% of the eligible project costs and/or the \$5,000 maximum, in consultation with the City’s Administrator and/or the Land Sale and Development Committee)</p>	<p>Amount: Council will consider the sale of municipal lands at up to 90% below market value where a proponent is prepared to apply for a building permit within two years of purchase</p>	<p>Amount: 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 for project costs</p>



5.5 Financial Incentive Program Options for the Downtown Wawa CIP

This section presents a suite of potential Financial Incentive Programs and their purpose which could be considered for inclusion in the new Downtown CIP, based on a review of the existing 2008 Downtown CIP, CIP best practices and available Financial Incentive Programs in other Ontario municipalities, as well as input received from Municipal staff, the business community, and local residents with respect to the priorities and needs for improvement in Downtown Wawa.

It is important to note that not all of these potential Financial Incentive Programs may ultimately form part of the Downtown CIP. The grant value of any selected Financial Incentive Programs that do form part of the Draft CIP will be determined in consultation with Municipal staff.

Potential Housing-focused Financial Incentive Programs

The following Financial Incentive Programs have a specific housing focus and are proposed as a potential means to encourage the development of vacant sites, and redevelopment or rehabilitation of existing buildings to provide for additional affordable rental and ownership housing in the Downtown.

It is recommended that any housing-focused Financial Incentive Program include both non-profit housing providers and the private sector as eligible CIP applicants.

- **Affordable Housing Feasibility and Development Grant** – A grant intended to assist eligible applicants with the cost of undertaking professional studies to determine an affordable housing project’s feasibility prior to construction, and to support required planning and technical studies and plans, such as market analyses, building condition reports, site plans, servicing studies, and other related studies.
- **Rental Housing Planning and Building Fee Waiver Program** – A grant equal to up to 100% of the fees paid on required planning and development applications to support the development of an affordable rental or purpose-built rental housing project.
- **Residential Conversion and Intensification Grant** – A grant of a pre-determined amount per new residential dwelling unit created (rental or ownership units), intended to



encourage property owners to create new residential dwelling units through new development or through renovation or addition to an existing building. The grant would provide property owners up to a certain amount per new residential dwelling unit created, to a maximum specified amount.

- **Residential / Office Rehabilitation and Conversion Grant – Upper Storey(s)** – A grant to offset the cost of renovating and converting upper storey units above a commercial use to residential or office uses.

Other Potential Financial Incentive Programs

The following Financial Incentive Programs are focused on achieving the vision and goals of the Downtown CIP.

- **Accessibility Improvements Grant** – A grant to assist with the cost of undertaking accessibility improvements to existing sites and/or buildings, such as site grading, the installation of ramps, and automatic door openers.
- **Brownfields Redevelopment Grant** – A grant to encourage the remediation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of brownfield sites (e.g. former gas stations) in the Downtown, by temporarily eliminating part or all of the municipal and/or school portions of property tax on eligible properties to assist with eligible costs of environmental remediation and rehabilitation.
- **Building Façade Improvement Grant** – A grant to encourage aesthetic improvements to buildings and properties, and to support continued maintenance of Downtown building stock.
- **Energy Efficiency Grant** – A grant to encourage property owners to improve energy efficiency of existing commercial / industrial buildings, and to facilitate the installation of small-scale renewable energy systems. Eligible costs could include completing energy audits, interior or exterior renovations resulting in enhanced energy efficiency (e.g. insulation, replacements of windows), small-scale solar energy systems (e.g. roof panels), purchase and installation of EnergySTAR certified heating / cooling / ventilation products and features, purchase and installation of energy efficient lighting and low-flow utilities, among others.



- **Landscaping, Property, and Parking Area Improvement Grant** – A grant to assist eligible applicants with improvements to private properties which will optimize the amount, quality, and aesthetics of private landscaped areas, patio space, off-street private parking areas, pedestrian linkages to buildings and the street, and bicycle parking.
- **Planning and Building Fee Grant:** A rebate of planning application fees (e.g. Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Minor Variance, Consent, Site Plan Control) and building permit fees to assist with the administrative costs of development or redevelopment of a site or existing building.
- **Public Art Grant** – A grant to support the implementation of public art throughout the Downtown, including on building walls (e.g., vinyl mural installations). This grant program could also target young and/or Indigenous artists, by increasing the grant value for a property owner if the project will be completed by a young or Indigenous artist in the community.
- **Signage Improvement Grant** – A grant to promote new attractive and pedestrian-oriented signage that contributes to the visual identity and northern character of Downtown Wawa.
- **Tourism Business Accelerator Grant** – A grant to provide financial assistance to property owners for projects that involve business planning, undertaking market studies, and/or the expansion of existing or establishment of new tourism-related retail and experience-based commercial businesses (e.g., an outfitter).
- **Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG)** – A grant to help offset the costs for property owners undertaking retail, office, commercial, or mixed-use projects where the property assessment increases as a result of development, redevelopment, or major improvement, and there is a subsequent increase in municipal property taxes. The duration of any TIEG is not prescribed by the Province, and is at the discretion of the Municipality.



5.6 Municipal Leadership Opportunities

Discussions with Municipal staff and the results of the Visioning Workshop and Community and Business surveys helped to identify opportunities for municipal leadership activities in the form of public improvements to complement the private investment of property owners undertaking improvement projects aided by CIP Financial Incentive Programs. The following municipal leadership activities may be included as recommendations for future improvements to be undertaken to contribute to achieving the vision and goals of the CIP:



- **Enhanced / Additional Gateway and Wayfinding Signage –**

The Municipality of Wawa has made considerable investments in gateway features and signage, particularly at the southern entrance to Downtown. However, community engagement responses indicate there are further opportunities for additional gateway and wayfinding signage to draw visitors to Downtown from further afield. There is a lack of wayfinding signage that denotes the specific natural, cultural, and commercial amenities located in the Downtown. Examples might include a Downtown business and amenities directory sign near the existing gateway feature at Broadway Avenue, Mission Road and Main Street, and directional signage to Downtown along Mission Road where many tourist accommodations are located.



- **Public Art Installations –**

Multiple building façades and exterior walls on Downtown buildings have been identified as in a state of deterioration and in need of repairs due to weathering and age. The Municipality has undertaken vinyl mural applications as a cost-effective and durable solution to improve exterior building aesthetics and add vibrancy through public art to the streetscape. For example, 59 Broadway Ave. includes a vinyl mural





installation, and is only showing minor signs of wear after 3 years. Additional vinyl mural applications may provide interim solutions for building façade and wall improvements, prior to more permanent façade improvements taking place. The Municipality could consider public art contests to develop mural designs, and undertake their application at key properties with owner consent.

- **Broadway Avenue Streetscaping –**

To complement community improvement projects on private properties along Broadway Avenue, the Municipality may consider investing in beautification efforts, such as increased plantings, new Downtown banners, hanging baskets, and the relocation of decorative lighting to the pedestrian side of the right-of-way, to avoid conflicts and damage by large vehicles such as snowploughs.



- **Crosswalks –** The need for crosswalk installation and improvements at key intersections was identified by workshop and walking tour participants to increase pedestrian safety and accessibility in navigating the Downtown, especially considering sightlines and wide rights-of-way. Crosswalks also represent a gateway opportunity, as they can be constructed through specific paving materials or decorative painting to signify the entry into Downtown and a more pedestrian-oriented environment.



- **Repurposing of On-Street Parking Areas –** The Municipality could experiment with the seasonal removal of select areas of on-street parking, to facilitate the temporary development of patio spaces for businesses, parkettes or seating areas for Downtown users. If more permanent on-street parking removal is desirable following the implementation of such temporary uses, the Municipality could consider the development of a parking lot on an available vacant lot to offset the loss of on-street parking.



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- **Wawa Municipal Offices / Public Library** – Both Municipal staff and community members recognized the potential for renovations and upgrades to the Municipal offices and Public Library to improve accessibility and aesthetics.
- **The Goose Nest Market** – The Goose Nest Market is one of the most unique aspects of Downtown Wawa, comprised of multiple compact wooden structures that can be rented by community members and entrepreneurs during local events and festivals. The Goose Nest Market is a valuable existing economic attraction where local vendors can showcase their goods, however, community members have suggested a need to consider reorganizing the layout of the structures to enhance the market experience for visitors. For example, suggestions have included reorienting the structures to form an internal courtyard, which may require the relocation of some of the historic mining monuments located on the site.



- **Wawa Lake Waterfront** – Downtown Wawa is situated with direct proximity and vistas to Wawa Lake, including an expansive waterfront beach and heritage walk, which represents a tremendous amenity to attract both residents and visitors to the Downtown. While the Municipality has made significant recent investments in the boardwalk, community members have suggested further improvements including the potential relocation or repair of the historic oil rig to enhance the lookout area, increased and refreshed signage and wayfinding to direct users to the boardwalk, as well as improved maintenance of the beach.





Figure 5-2: Key Community Improvement Plan Opportunities



Existing Waterfront Signage



The Goose Nest Market



Garden beds on Broadway Avenue



Examples of angled parking spaces and wide rights-of-way in the Downtown



Example of existing street furniture



Wawa Lake waterfront and boardwalk





6 Next Steps

This Background and Directions Report will serve as the foundation for developing the Draft Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and Urban Design Guidelines (UDGs), which are anticipated to be made available for public review in late 2023 or early 2024. A Public Open House will be held by the Municipality in early 2024 to introduce the details of the Draft Downtown CIP and UDGs to the community, and to obtain valuable feedback on the proposed CIP vision, goals, Financial Incentive Programs and eligible project types, recommendations for municipal leadership activities, and urban design directions.

Following the Public Open House, a Final Draft Downtown CIP and UDGs will be prepared and presented before Council at a Statutory Public Meeting under the Planning Act, anticipated to be held in February 2024. At this meeting, community members may provide comments on the CIP and UDGs to Council, or can submit their comments in writing. This Public Meeting represents a key opportunity for community members to express their support of the CIP and UDGs and their importance in contributing to Downtown revitalization. Following the Public Meeting, the Downtown CIP and UDGs will be finalized and presented to Council for consideration of adoption. If adopted, and following a 20-day appeal period under the Planning Act, the Downtown CIP and UDGs will then be ready for implementation to provide opportunities to spur economic investment and vitality in Downtown Wawa.

Appendix

A Visioning Workshop Summary



Appendix A: Visioning Workshop Results – October 24, 2023

Exercise 1: Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Project Area Delineation – Mapping Exercise



The purpose of this exercise was to review and confirm the boundaries of the existing 2008 Downtown Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA). The existing 2008 CIPA is focused on and bound by Broadway Avenue to the east, the east side of McKinley Avenue to the west, Algoma Street to the north, and Main Street to the south. This area represents the commercial heart of the Downtown core, as well as lands along McKinley Avenue that are designated and zoned for potential commercial redevelopment in the Municipality’s Official Plan and Zoning By-law, respectively, but are currently occupied by residential uses. Participants were asked to markup maps with notations about the CIPA boundaries and specific sites which represent key opportunity areas for improvement.



During the workshop, participants discussed the potential for expanding the CIPA further south to encompass portions of Mission Road, as well as potential to include the Industrial Park. WSP project team members explained that CIPs generally benefit from being limited to a focused area where a cohesive vision can be achieved, and where community improvements can be concentrated to create the biggest impacts. While some municipalities elect to designate their entire community as a CIPA, other municipal CIPs have more focused Precinct or Program Areas where only specific Financial Incentive Programs apply. It was generally agreed that Wawa’s first CIP should focus on Downtown revitalization, which has been documented as a commitment of Council and supported by the community and various



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan

other municipal plans and studies. Should the Downtown CIP be successful in its implementation and uptake, the Municipality may consider expanding the CIPA at a future date or developing other standalone CIPs to encompass other areas within the Municipality in need of revitalization and improvement.



Ultimately, it was decided to maintain the existing boundaries of the 2008 CIPA, with a focus on Broadway Avenue. Existing residential properties along McKinley Avenue are proposed to remain within the Downtown CIPA, to recognize their existing Official Plan designation and zoning, and to enable these properties to potentially redevelop as commercial uses in the future. Although they are proposed to be included within the Downtown CIPA, any proposed community improvement projects on these existing residential properties would need to meet the eligibility requirements within the CIP.

Exercise 2: A Vision for Downtown Wawa

Workshop participants were asked to use the online Mentimeter tool to answer questions regarding the existing conditions in Downtown Wawa, as well as how they envision Downtown Wawa in the future. The words and statements generated through this exercise were used in developing a vision statement for the Downtown CIP.

A. Downtown Wawa Today

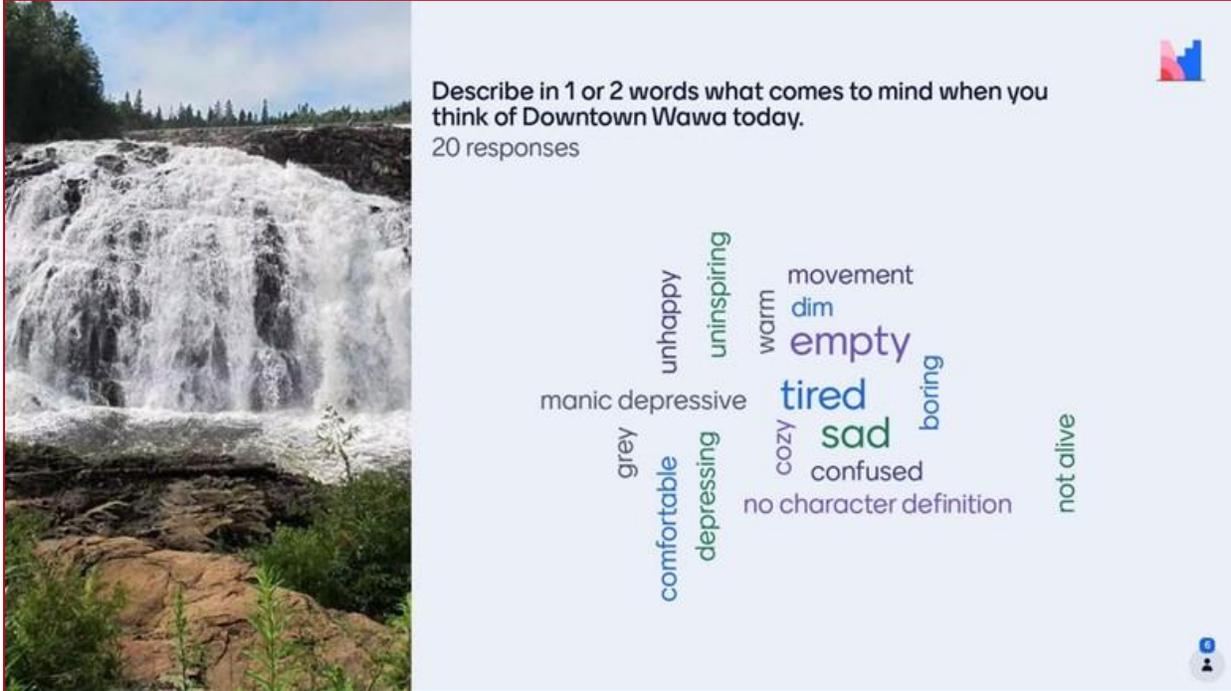
Describe in 1 or 2 words what comes to mind when you think of Downtown Wawa today.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Boring | Movement |
| Comfortable | Not Alive |
| Confused | No Character Definition |
| Cozy | Sad (2) |
| Depressing | Tired (2) |
| Dim | Unhappy |
| Empty (2) | Uninspiring |
| Grey | Warm |
| Manic Depressive | |



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan

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



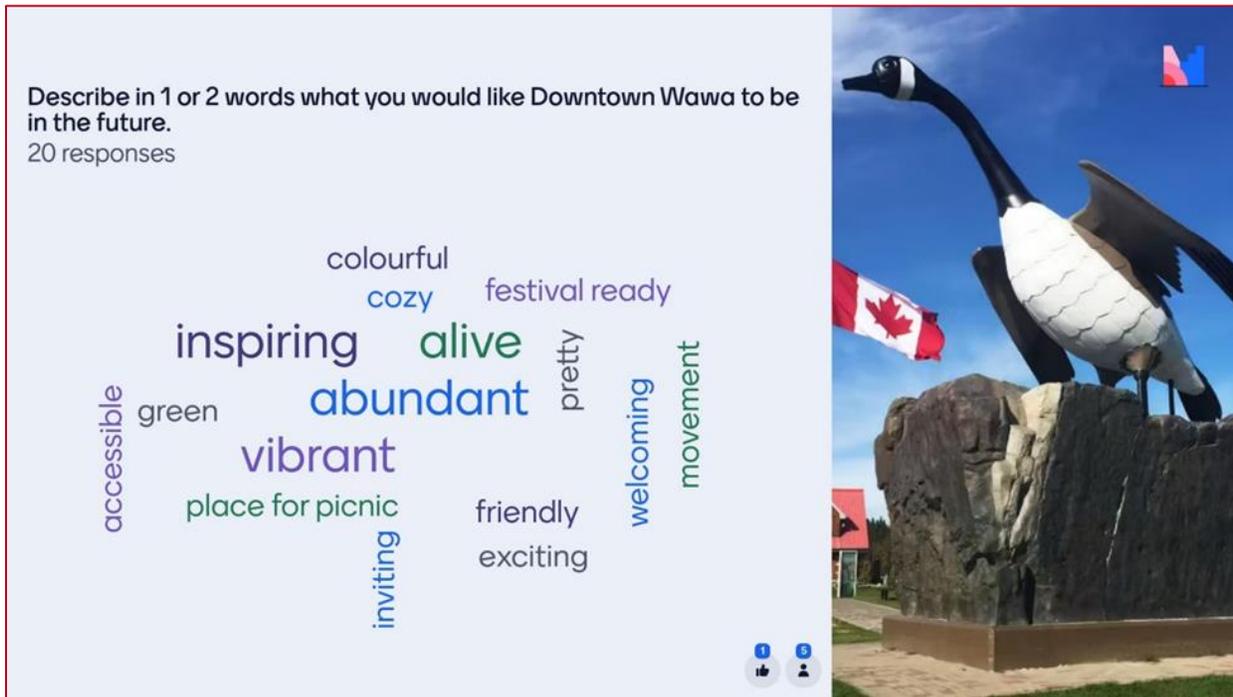
B. The Future Downtown Wawa

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

- Abundant (x2)
- Accessible
- Alive (x2)
- Colourful
- Cozy
- Exciting
- Festival Ready
- Friendly

- Green
- Inspiring (x2)
- Inviting
- Movement
- Pretty
- Place for Picnic
- Vibrant (x2)
- Welcoming

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



C. Draft a Vision Statement

The workshop participants were split into two groups and asked to draft an aspirational vision statement for the Downtown CIP by expanding on the thoughts shared through the word cloud exercises.

The groups came up with the following statements:

“Wawa aspires to be a healthy, vibrant and inviting environment that strives to attract and support a culturally diverse community both socially and economically.”

“Wawa will be a friendly family-based community with diverse local businesses and activities for young folks such as skate parks, water parks and swimming pools as well as small boutique-style shops.”

“Wawa is a culturally diverse family-friendly, green, outdoor-based community that supports and encourages new business.”



From these draft vision statements, it is evident that community members envision a revitalized Downtown that promotes new and existing businesses and is characterized by vibrancy and diversity. Discussion of these statements also focused on the theme of respecting and celebrating Wawa's historic roots, while embracing a new sense of community and striving to ensure that real change occurs.

Exercise 3: Goal Setting

Expanding on the vision statement, participants were then asked to develop a series of complementary goals which potential community improvement projects could be evaluated against, to determine whether they were meeting the intent of the Downtown CIP.

In small groups, participants developed the following goals, or areas to be addressed:

- Beautification / greenery / overall revitalization in the Downtown area;
- Improved signage and wayfinding features;
- Striving for an overall housing increase but also an acknowledgement and perhaps some policy considerations for historic housing and buildings, such as rebates or grants for the maintenance and revitalization of heritage features (facades, overall structures);
- Need for gateway features, specifically to lead visitors who may be staying in accommodation on Mission Road to the Downtown, and to advertise the wide range of local businesses, natural features, and history available to explore in the Downtown area;
- Improvements to existing and additional pedestrian crossings to ensure the safety of residents and visitors who may not be used to the wide streets causing confusion and potential safety issues;
- Increased connectivity to Wawa Lake and the natural features surrounding the Downtown, to better capitalize on their proximity and contributions to the Downtown experience.

Exercise 4: Urban Design Priorities

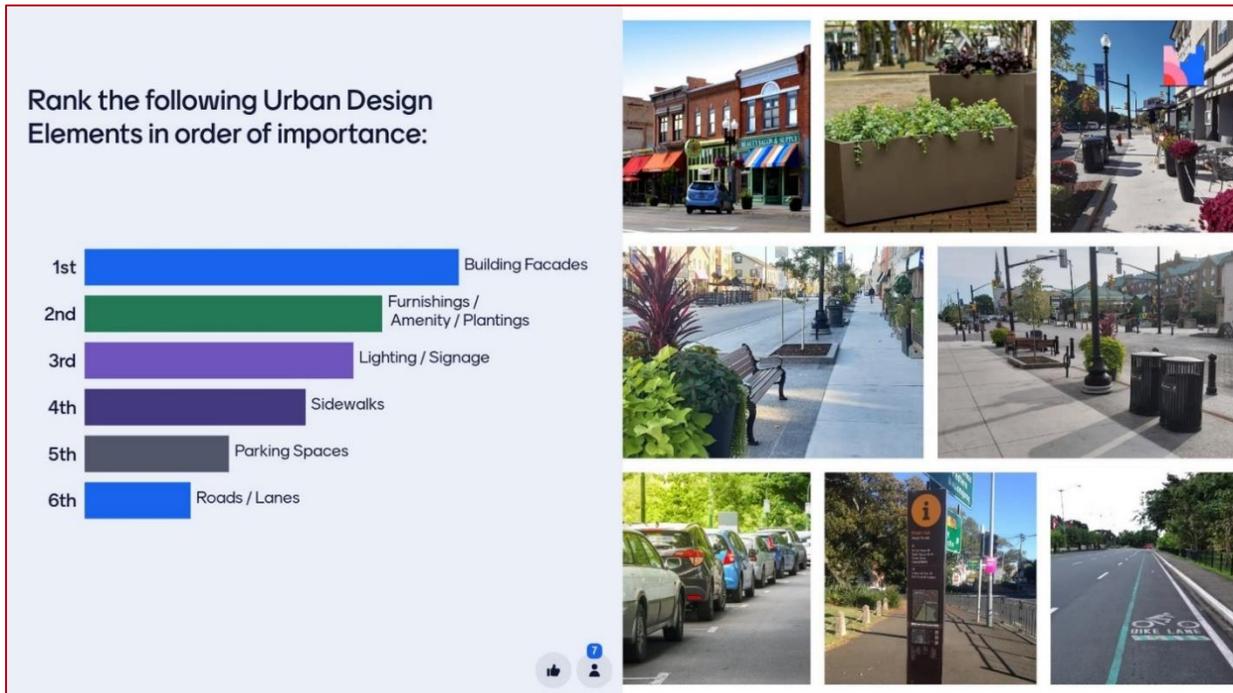
Workshop participants were asked to consider the specific urban design priorities for the Downtown, that would contribute to the user experience and overall look and feel of the Downtown area. Participants were shown precedent images exemplifying urban design features and asked to use the online Mentimeter tool to rank urban design elements in order of their importance and priority for improvements, as documented below:



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- (1) Building Façades
- (2) Furnishing / Amenity / Planting
- (3) Lighting / Signage
- (4) Sidewalks
- (5) Parking Spaces
- (6) Roads / Lanes



Workshop participants then discussed specific Downtown locations, including private properties and businesses and municipally-owned lands, which represent particular opportunities or candidate sites for CIP implementation:

- Places that contribute to the goals of the CIP:
 - Goose Nest Market Area, including heritage features
 - The Legion, which has a newly renovated façade
 - The Pharmacy which is one of the newer stores in the area
 - The bakery at Gold Street and Broadway Avenue
- Places that have good potential but may benefit from specific improvements:



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan

- The waterfront and lookout points to Wawa Lake
- Vacant lots at St. Marie Street and Broadway Avenue, which could be considered for redevelopment as parks, rinks, and other community uses
- The food bank, a municipally-owned property that has multiple other uses
- The layout of the Goose Nest Market
- The Lakeview Hotel and Restaurant, which represents significant Downtown heritage but could benefit from revitalization
- Town Hall and Library, to improve accessibility issues
- The Roxy / bowling alley, which could benefit from façade improvements
- Insurance building
- Places that may detract from the goals of the CIP:
 - Vacant lots
 - Abandoned and damaged vacant buildings
 - Various existing businesses with damaged facades, lack of signage, lack of accessibility features, and shuttered blinds that do not contribute to a vibrant pedestrian experience Downtown

Appendix

B

Community and Business Survey Results

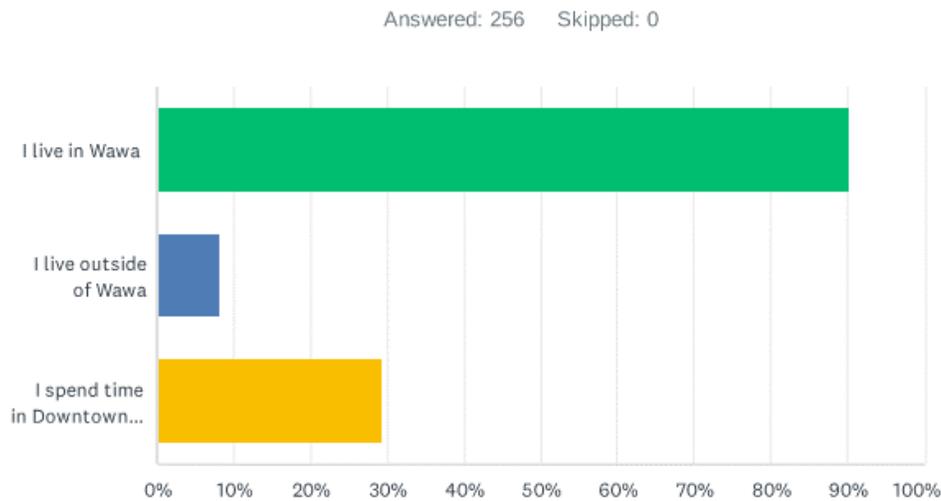
Appendix B-1: Community Survey Results

In total, there were 256 respondents to the Community Survey (250 online respondents, six (6) hard copy), as well as 16 respondents from a Grade 10 Civic and Careers Class at Michipicoten High School. The Community Survey results and Youth Survey Results are presented separately for each question.

Q1: Which best describes you? Please select all that apply.

Community Survey Results

Ninety percent (90.2%) of respondents live in Wawa, 8.2% live outside of Wawa, and 29.3% regularly spend time Downtown.

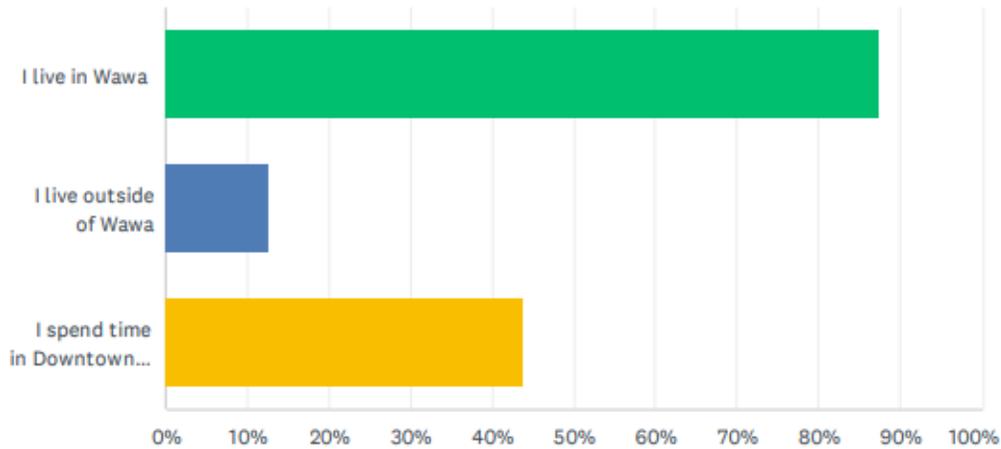


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I live in Wawa	90.23% 231
I live outside of Wawa	8.20% 21
I spend time in Downtown Wawa regularly	29.30% 75
Total Respondents: 256	

Youth Survey Results

Eighty-eight percent (87.5%) of respondents live in Wawa, 12.5% of respondents live outside of Wawa, and 43.75% of respondents spend time in Downtown Wawa regularly.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



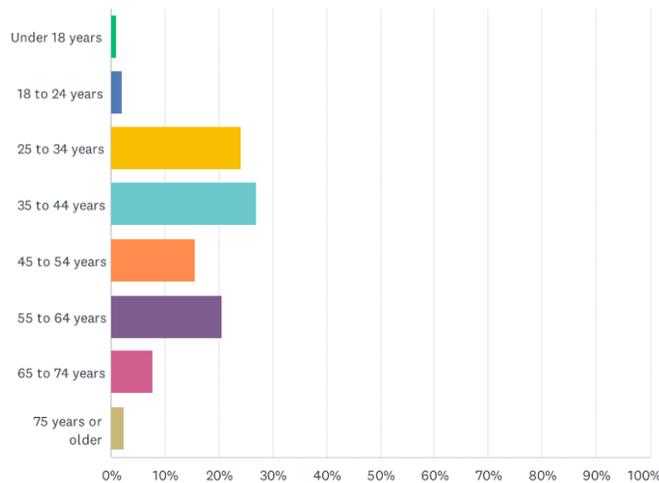
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I live in Wawa	87.50% 14
I live outside of Wawa	12.50% 2
I spend time in Downtown Wawa regularly	43.75% 7
Total Respondents: 16	

Q2: Please select your age range.

Community Survey Results

The majority of respondents were 36-44 (26.2%) years old, closely followed by the 25-34 (23.5%) age group.

Answered: 249 Skipped: 1



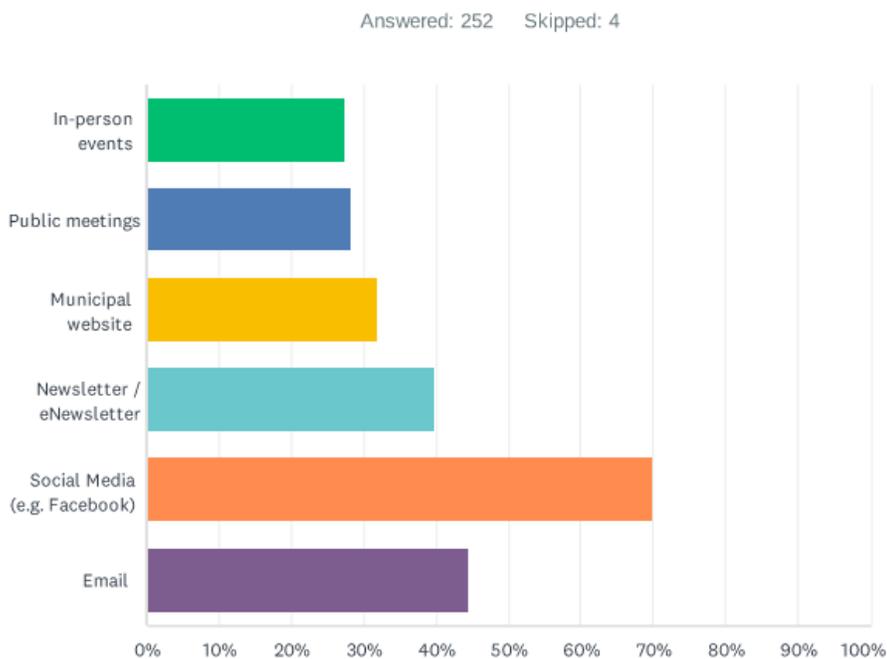
Youth Survey Results

All respondents were under the age of 18 years old (100%).

Q3: What is your preferred method(s) of receiving communication and engaging on the CIP project? Select all that apply.

Community Survey Results

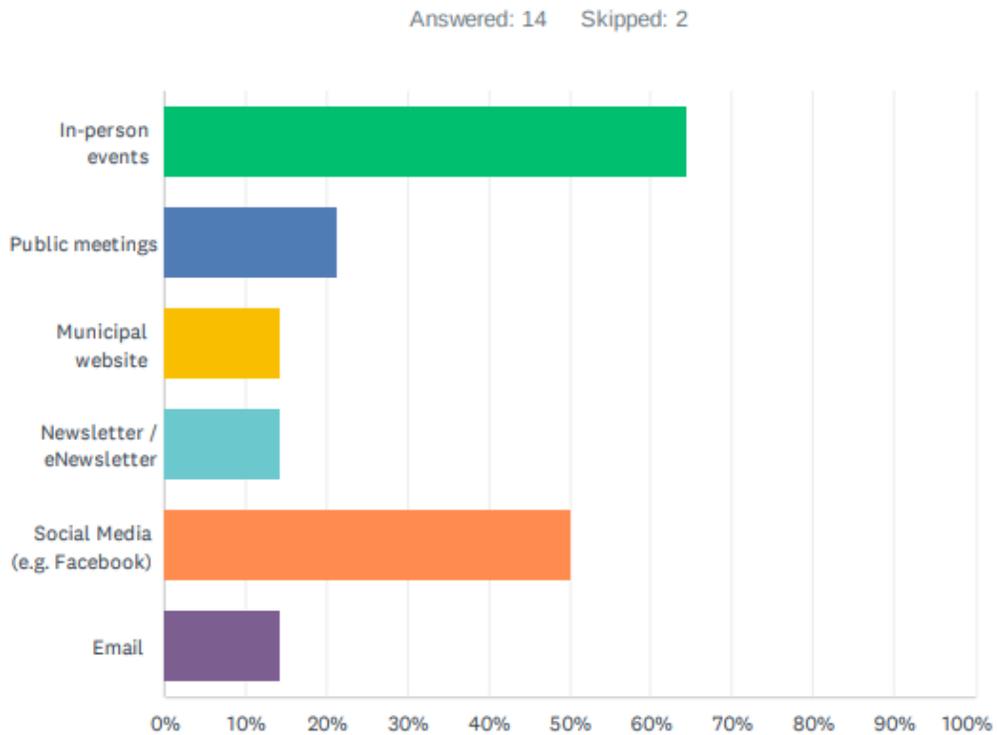
The majority of respondents prefer to receive communication and engage on the CIP project through Social Media (e.g. Facebook) (69.8%).



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
In-person events	27.38%	69
Public meetings	28.17%	71
Municipal website	31.75%	80
Newsletter / eNewsletter	39.68%	100
Social Media (e.g. Facebook)	69.84%	176
Email	44.44%	112
Total Respondents: 252		

Youth Survey Results

The majority of respondents prefer to receive communication and engaging on the CIP project through in-person events (64.2%).



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
In-person events	64.29% 9
Public meetings	21.43% 3
Municipal website	14.29% 2
Newsletter / eNewsletter	14.29% 2
Social Media (e.g. Facebook)	50.00% 7
Email	14.29% 2
Total Respondents: 14	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Snapchat or Instagram	11/22/2023 12:28 PM

Q6: How would you rank the importance of these topics. Please select one answer for each topic (1 – very important, 2 – somewhat important, 3 – least important).

Community Survey Results

Respondents identified the following top three topics as most important for the CIP:

1. Development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties or buildings (86.5% voted very important);
2. Redevelopment of former industrial or contaminated sites (“brownfields”) (75.3% voted very important); and
3. Improving building facades and building signage (70.8% voted very important).

	1	2	3	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
a) Enhancing streetscapes (e.g. benches, lighting, hanging baskets, landscaping, street trees, public art)	46.78% 109	36.48% 85	16.74% 39	233	1.70
b) Improving sidewalk conditions or materials	39.04% 89	38.16% 87	22.81% 52	228	1.84
c) Improving building facades and building signage	70.87% 163	18.26% 42	10.87% 25	230	1.40
d) Redevelopment of former industrial or contaminated sites (“brownfields”)	75.32% 174	15.15% 35	9.52% 22	231	1.34
e) Development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties or buildings	86.58% 200	6.06% 14	7.36% 17	231	1.21
f) Preserving Wawa’s heritage and northern character	44.10% 101	38.86% 89	17.03% 39	229	1.73
g) Encouraging housing supply and options Downtown (e.g. upper storey apartment above ground level commercial uses)	48.26% 111	36.52% 84	15.22% 35	230	1.67
h) Improving accessibility to buildings (e.g., ramps, automatic door openers)	51.30% 118	30.87% 71	17.83% 41	230	1.67
i) Improving energy efficiency of buildings	30.13% 69	50.22% 115	19.65% 45	229	1.90
j) Enhancing landscaping and parking areas	36.80% 85	43.29% 100	19.91% 46	231	1.83
k) Improving connectivity for pedestrians and active transportation users (e.g. cyclists) between Downtown and nearby amenities (e.g. Wawa Lake)	23.48% 54	43.04% 99	33.48% 77	230	2.10
l) Reducing the cost of planning and development applications and building permit approvals	43.04% 99	40.00% 92	16.96% 39	230	1.74

Youth Survey Results

Youth respondents identified the following top three topics as most important for the CIP:

1. Development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties or buildings (50% voted very important);
2. Preserving Wawa’s heritage and northern character (50% voted very important); and
3. Improving building facades and building signage (43.7% voted very important).

	1	2	3	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
a) Enhancing streetscapes (e.g. benches, lighting, hanging baskets, landscaping, street trees, public art)	46.78% 109	36.48% 85	16.74% 39	233	1.70
b) Improving sidewalk conditions or materials	39.04% 89	38.16% 87	22.81% 52	228	1.84
c) Improving building facades and building signage	70.87% 163	18.26% 42	10.87% 25	230	1.40
d) Redevelopment of former industrial or contaminated sites ("brownfields")	75.32% 174	15.15% 35	9.52% 22	231	1.34
e) Development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties or buildings	86.58% 200	6.06% 14	7.36% 17	231	1.21
f) Preserving Wawa's heritage and northern character	44.10% 101	38.86% 89	17.03% 39	229	1.73
g) Encouraging housing supply and options Downtown (e.g. upper storey apartment above ground level commercial uses)	48.26% 111	36.52% 84	15.22% 35	230	1.67
h) Improving accessibility to buildings (e.g., ramps, automatic door openers)	51.30% 118	30.87% 71	17.83% 41	230	1.67
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k) Improving connectivity for pedestrians and active transportation users (e.g. cyclists) between Downtown and nearby amenities (e.g. Wawa Lake)	23.48% 54	43.04% 99	33.48% 77	230	2.10
l) Reducing the cost of planning and development applications and building permit approvals	43.04% 99	40.00% 92	16.96% 39	230	1.74

Q7: Are there specific properties or locations in Downtown Wawa that you believe need improvement, redevelopment, or revitalization?

Community Survey Results

In total, there were 208 answers to this question, although some respondents listed multiple properties and improvement areas. The following properties and locations were identified as priority areas for improvement:

- All vacant buildings (96)
- Underutilized or active buildings with poor existing conditions (93)
- Empty Lots (84)
- Sams Foodline (Vacant) (55)
- Columbia Restaurant (Vacant) (52)
- Old Northern Store (Vacant) (45)
- Embassy Restaurant (Vacant) (22)
- Walkways (16)
- Lion's Beach waterfront area (13)
- Oil Drill Rig (11)
- Goose Nest Market Area (10)

Youth Survey Results

Youth respondents identified the following properties and locations as priority areas for improvement:

- Lion's Beach waterfront area and dock (5)
- All vacant buildings (3)
- Sams Foodline (Vacant) (3)
- Old Northern Store (Vacant) (2)
- Chinese Food Store (2)
- Embassy Restaurant (Vacant)

Q8: What elements of Downtown Wawa's heritage and character are important to preserve?

Community Survey Results

Respondents listed a wide range of heritage and character-defining elements of Downtown Wawa that are important to preserve. In total, there were 186 answers to this question, although some respondents listed multiple elements. Some of the commonly listed elements included:

- Lion's Beach waterfront area (75)
- Mining elements (63)
- Historic buildings and features (58)
- Goose Nest Market (42)
- Natural beautification features (32)
- Walkways (26)
- Small / local businesses (24)

Youth Survey Results

Youth respondents suggested the following heritage and character elements for preservation:

- Lion's Beach waterfront area (7)
- The Goose Statue (3)
- Mining elements (2)

Q9: How would you rank the importance of the following urban design elements in Downtown Wawa? Please select one answer for each element (1 – very important, 2 – somewhat important, 3 – least important).

Community Survey Results

The top three urban design elements which were ranked as most important include:

1. Building architecture / façade improvements (76.0% felt it was very important);
2. Lighting (62.1% felt it was very important); and
3. Building / business signage (52.3% felt it was very important).

Respondents that selected "Other" suggested the importance of waste disposal receptables, public amenities such as greenspace, parks and gathering areas, and safety features.

	1	2	3	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
a) Street furnishings / amenity spaces (e.g. benches, waste bins)	53.64% 118	34.09% 75	12.27% 27	220	1.59
b) Landscaping / plantings	46.36% 102	40.45% 89	13.18% 29	220	1.67
c) Lighting	62.10% 136	29.22% 64	8.68% 19	219	1.47
d) Building architecture / façade improvements	76.02% 168	14.03% 31	9.95% 22	221	1.34
e) Building / business signage	52.27% 115	36.82% 81	10.91% 24	220	1.59
f) Sidewalks (re-laying or replacing existing brick pavers)	34.09% 75	43.18% 95	22.73% 50	220	1.89
g) Parking spaces	30.91% 68	45.00% 99	24.09% 53	220	1.93
h) Accessibility features (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers)	49.32% 108	36.99% 81	13.70% 30	219	1.64
i) Public art / murals	40.64% 89	34.25% 75	25.11% 55	219	1.84
j) Other (please specify below)	54.93% 39	12.68% 9	32.39% 23	71	1.77

Youth Survey Results

Youth respondents ranked the following top three urban design elements as most important:

1. Building / business signage (56.2% felt it was very important);
2. Accessibility features (e.g ramps, automatic door openers) (37.5% felt it was very important); and
3. Landscaping / plantings; Lighting; Building architecture / façade improvements; Sidewalks (re-laying or replacing existing brick pavers); Public art / murals (31.25% felt they were very important).

	1	2	3	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
a) Street furnishings / amenity spaces (e.g. benches, waste bins)	25.00% 4	56.25% 9	18.75% 3	16	1.94
b) Landscaping / plantings	31.25% 5	50.00% 8	18.75% 3	16	1.88
c) Lighting	31.25% 5	50.00% 8	18.75% 3	16	1.88
d) Building architecture / façade improvements	31.25% 5	50.00% 8	18.75% 3	16	1.88
e) Building / business signage	56.25% 9	37.50% 6	6.25% 1	16	1.50
f) Sidewalks (re-laying or replacing existing brick pavers)	31.25% 5	37.50% 6	31.25% 5	16	2.00
g) Parking spaces	26.67% 4	53.33% 8	20.00% 3	15	1.93
h) Accessibility features (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers)	37.50% 6	43.75% 7	18.75% 3	16	1.81
i) Public art / murals	31.25% 5	43.75% 7	25.00% 4	16	1.94
j) Other (please specify below)	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3	1.00

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

Community Survey Results

In general, most of the other comments and concerns were very positive, with a majority of respondents being hopeful for the CIP project and the future of Downtown Wawa. More specifically, some commonly listed concluding comments revolved around:

- Including local groups and the public in the process;
- Helping small business owners;
- Stressing pedestrian safety;
- Importance of cleanliness;
- Improving lighting conditions;
- Conserving heritage; and
- Providing taxation relief for locals and business owners.

Youth Survey Results

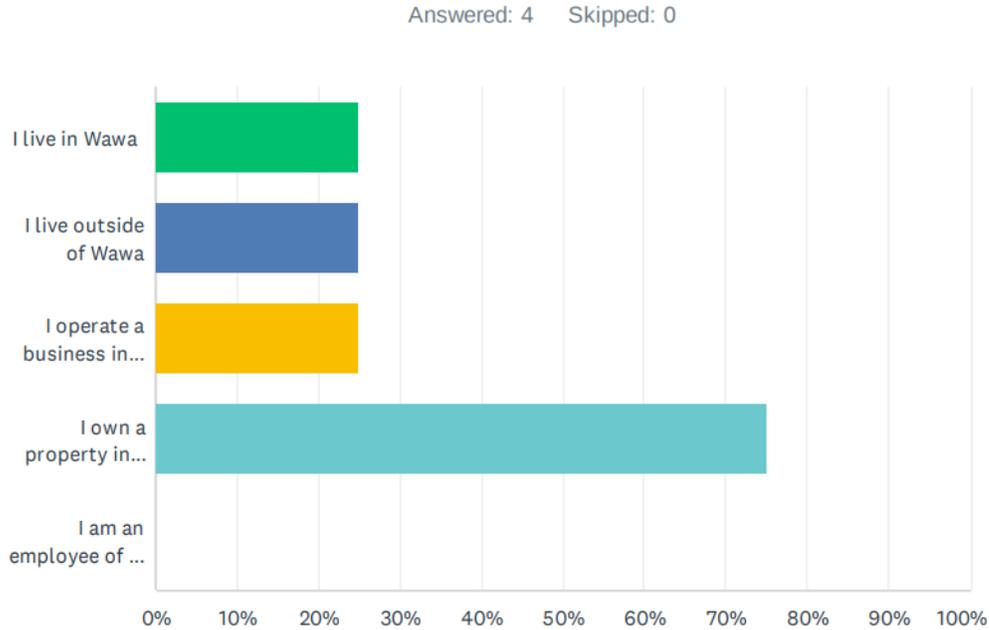
Youth respondents requested more things to do in Downtown Wawa, including the potential for a skatepark and more gardens.

Appendix B-2: Business Survey Results

In total, there were four (4) respondents to the Business survey.

Q1: Which best describes you? Please select all that apply.

The majority of respondents (75%) own a property in Downtown where their business is located.

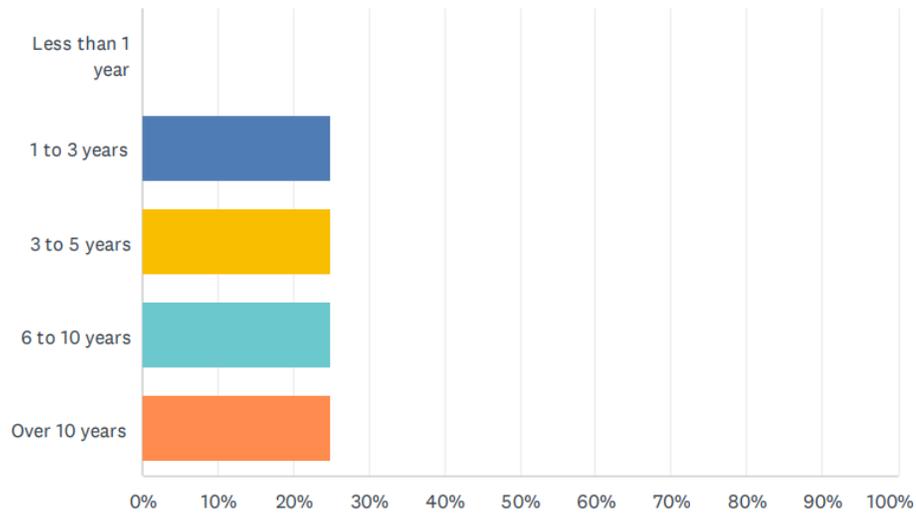


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I live in Wawa	25.00% 1
I live outside of Wawa	25.00% 1
I operate a business in Downtown Wawa	25.00% 1
I own a property in Downtown Wawa in which my business is located, or it is leased to another business	75.00% 3
I am an employee of a business in Downtown Wawa	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 4	

Q2: How many years have you had your property / business in Downtown Wawa?

The time which respondents have had their properties or businesses in Downtown Wawa ranged from one (1) to over 10 years.

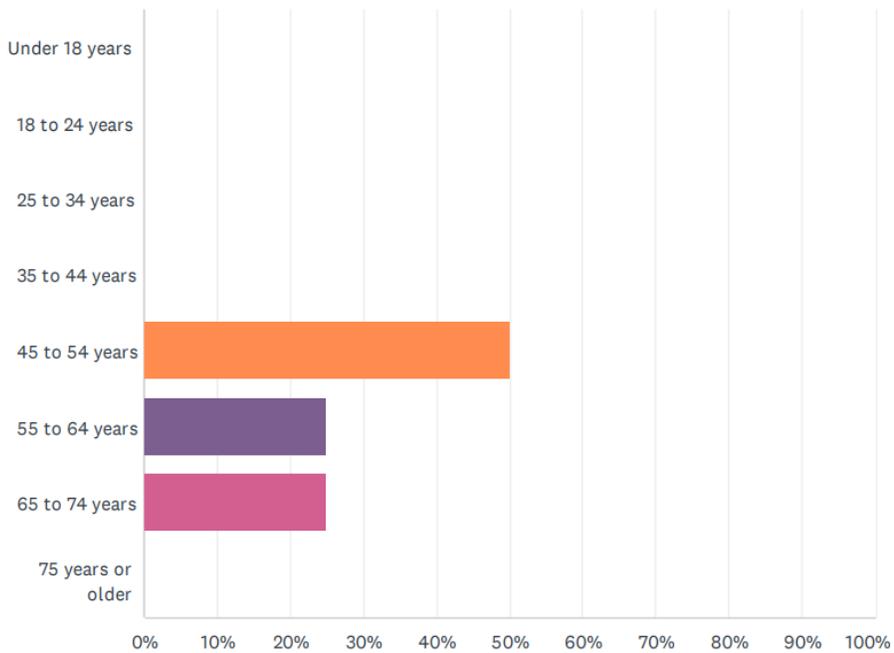
Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



Q3: Please select your age range.

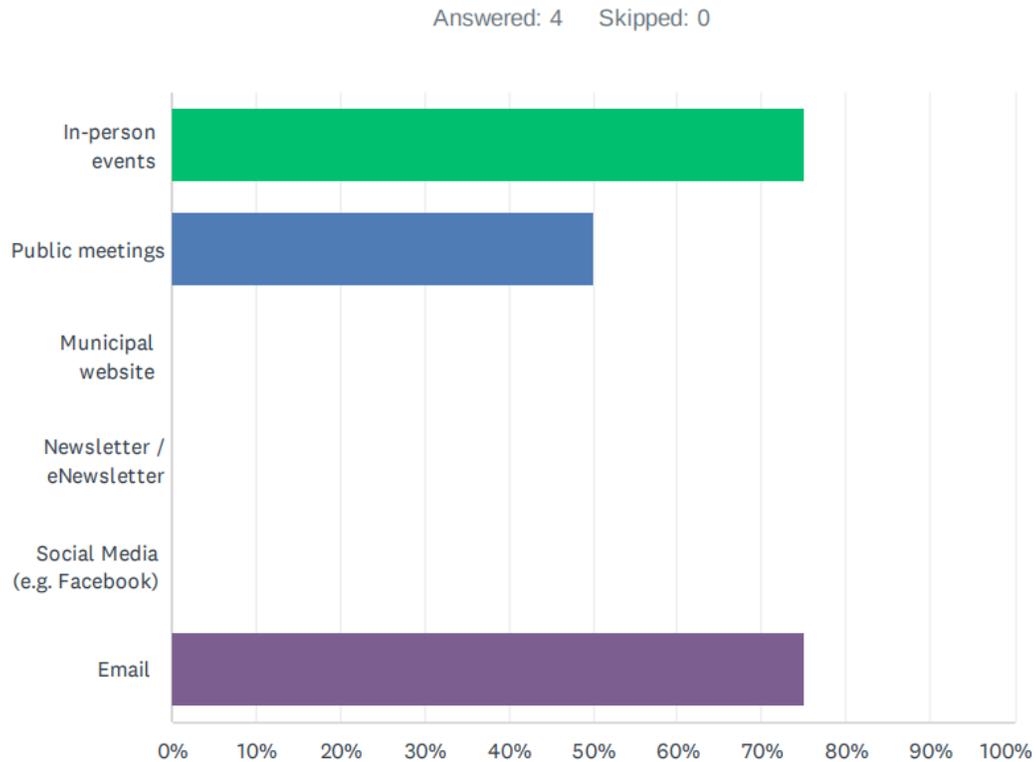
The majority of respondents were aged 45 to 54 years (50%).

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



Q4: What is your preferred method(s) of receiving communication and engaging on the CIP project? Select all that apply.

The preferred method of communication and engaging on the CIP project included in-person events (75%), email (75%), and public meetings (50%).



Q5: Describe in 1-2 words, Downtown Wawa as it is today. What does it offer? What characterizes Downtown?

Business Survey respondents described Downtown Wawa today as dismal, outdated, boring, unattractive, and depressing.



Q6: Describe in 1-2 words, Downtown Wawa as you wish to see it in the future. What will it offer? What will draw people and businesses to Downtown?

Respondents envisioned a future Downtown Wawa as welcoming, affordable, full, vibrant, beautiful, nature, and with storefronts.



Q7: Why do you choose to locate your business in Downtown Wawa?

The majority of respondents identified the potential for pedestrian and vehicle traffic as a primary attractor to locate their business in Downtown Wawa. Similarly, one respondent emphasized the opportunity to purchase and renovate an older building presented itself, and stressed the rewards of transforming an underwhelming building to something vibrant and beautiful.

Q8: What are the existing strengths in Downtown Wawa that contribute to your business' success?

Respondents noted the current economic success of the mining field in the area as a strength that contributes to their business' success, as well as the Municipal leadership team which is supportive of new business development and business retention. Some answers also stressed the importance of self-produced success and not relying on the Downtown to create success.

Q9: What are the top challenges for you as a property / business owner or operator in Downtown Wawa?

Respondents noted a range of barriers and challenges including general costs, navigating demolition rules and practices when attempting to renovate older existing buildings, and difficulties in their dealings with the Municipality and Council.

Q10: What opportunities do you see in Downtown Wawa that could encourage economic development and tourism?

Some of the opportunities that respondents felt could encourage economic development and tourism included:

- Ensuring an overall increase in storefronts with a wider variety of services;
- Beautifying the Downtown through increased green features and more pedestrian seating areas;
- Working with Municipal staff and Council, specifically the Mayor and CAO, to think outside the box; and
- Cleaning up rundown buildings and attracting new business.

Q11: Are there specific properties or locations in Downtown Wawa that you believe need improvement, redevelopment, or revitalization?

Respondents generally felt that the majority of buildings along Broadway Avenue could use some sort of improvement, especially the abandoned buildings such as the former Northern store, former IGA store, and the former Columbia restaurant, as well as vacant lots and brownfields.

Q12: What elements of Downtown Wawa’s heritage and character are important to preserve?

Some of the respondents did not feel that there were any heritage and character features important to preserve in the Downtown area, however, other respondents identified the Lion’s Beach waterfront area, Goose Nest Market (underutilized), and mining features.

Q13: How would you rank the importance of these topics. Please select one answer for each topic (1 – very important, 2 – somewhat important, 3 – least important).

Respondents ranked the following topics as most important for the CIP:

- Enhancing streetscapes (e.g. benches, lighting, hanging baskets, landscaping, street trees, public art) (100% felt it was very important);
- Improving sidewalk conditions or materials (100% felt it was very important);
- Improving building facades and building signage (100% felt it was very important);
- Redevelopment of former industrial or contaminated sites (“brownfields”) (100% felt it was very important);

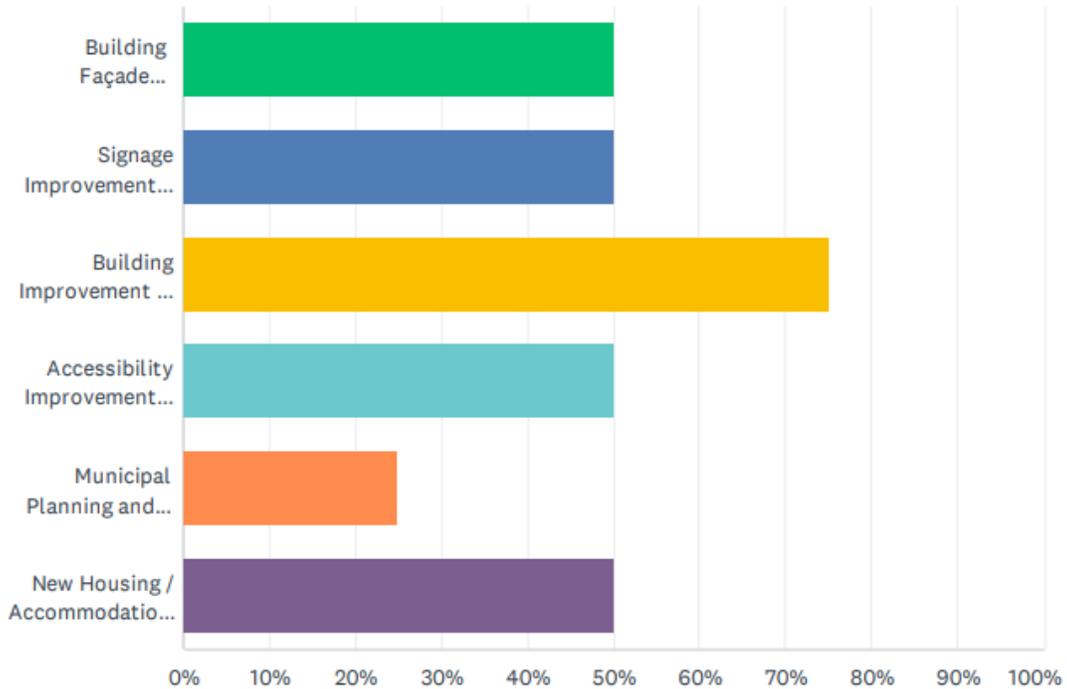
- Development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties or buildings (100% felt it was very important);
- Improving accessibility to buildings (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers) (100% felt it was very important); and
- Enhancing landscaping and parking areas (100% felt it was very important).

	1	2	3	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
a) Enhancing streetscapes (e.g. benches, lighting, hanging baskets, landscaping, street trees, public art)	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
b) Improving sidewalk conditions or materials	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
c) Improving building facades and building signage	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
d) Redevelopment of former industrial or contaminated sites ("brownfields")	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
e) Development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties or buildings	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
f) Preserving Wawa's heritage and northern character	50.00% 2	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	4	1.50
g) Encouraging housing supply and options Downtown (e.g. upper storey apartment above ground level commercial uses)	75.00% 3	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	4	1.50
h) Improving accessibility to buildings (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers)	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
i) Improving energy efficiency of buildings	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	1.25
j) Enhancing landscaping and parking areas	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
k) Improving connectivity for pedestrians and active transportation users (e.g. cyclists) between Downtown and nearby amenities (e.g. Wawa Lake)	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	1.25
l) Reducing the cost of planning and development applications and building permit approvals	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	1.25

Q14: If Financial Incentive Programs were offered by the Municipality for property and business owners/operators in Downtown Wawa, what types of programs would you potentially apply for or be interested in to help you improve your property / building? Please select all that apply.

While Business Survey respondents identified interest in all of the Financial Incentive Program options, the most selected was the Building Improvement / Energy Efficient Grant / Loan (75%).

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Building Façade Improvement Grant / Loan	50.00% 2
Signage Improvement Grant / Loan	50.00% 2
Building Improvement / Energy Efficiency Grant / Loan	75.00% 3
Accessibility Improvement Grant / Loan	50.00% 2
Municipal Planning and Development Application / Building Permit Fees Grant	25.00% 1
New Housing / Accommodation Grant / Loan	50.00% 2
Total Respondents: 4	

Q15: How would you rank the importance of the following urban design elements in Downtown Wawa? Please select one answer for each element (1 – very important, 2 – somewhat important, 3 – least important).

Respondents felt the most important urban design elements in Downtown Wawa were:

- Street furnishings / amenity spaces (e.g. benches, waste bins) (100% felt they were very important);
- Lighting (100% felt it was very important);

- Sidewalks (re-laying or replacing existing brick pavers) (100% felt they were very important); and
- Accessibility features (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers) (100% felt they were very important).

	1	2	3	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
a) Street furnishings / amenity spaces (e.g. benches, waste bins)	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
b) Landscaping / plantings	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	1.25
c) Lighting	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
d) Building architecture / façade improvements	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	1.25
e) Building / business signage	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	1.25
f) Sidewalks (re-laying or replacing existing brick pavers)	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
g) Parking spaces	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	1.25
h) Accessibility features (e.g. ramps, automatic door openers)	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	1.00
i) Public art / murals	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	4	1.75
j) Other (please specify below)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00



Municipality of Wawa

Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan Final Background and Directions Report

November 2023



Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan

Wawa ^{Canada}