



## **STAFF REPORT** **Municipality of Wawa**



**Maury O'Neill, CAO-Clerk**

<b>To: Mayor and Council</b>	<b>Report No.: CAO 2023-03</b>
<b>Date: February 3, 2023</b>	<b>Council Meeting Date: Feb. 7, 2023</b>

### **RE: Application to Rural Economic Development Program (RED) Update Downtown Community Improvement Plan**

#### **Recommendation**

**THAT** Council receive Report No. CAO 2023-03 dated February 3, 2023 and approve that staff make application to the OMAFRA Rural Economic Development Program (RED) for funding to update the Wawa Community Improvement Plan for Broadway Avenue to develop new financial incentives to encourage commercial and residential growth on Broadway Avenue.

#### **Background**

The Municipality has a Community Improvement Plan that was passed in 2008, By-law 2143-08. The Plan covers the area on Broadway Avenue between the Hospital and the corner of Broadway and Mission Road and includes the side streets in the area up to McKinley and Toronto. A map is attached showing the area that the Plan covers and is marked as Appendix "A".

The Wawa Community Improvement Plan was developed to promote beautification, property improvements and commercial development in the downtown core area. A Community Improvement Plan is a document that is prepared in accordance with Section 28 of Ontario's Planning Act. This tool is commonly used by municipalities to promote community revitalization.

In the Community Improvement Plan, the Municipality can make grants and loans available to property owners and businesses in the defined area to improve the appearance of the private buildings. The Plan includes recommended financial incentive programs to promote business façade and signage improvements, exterior building improvements and design fees. The recommended financial incentives programs were never implemented by Council.

Since the Plan is over 15 years old, there is a need to review its relevance and effectiveness and there is an opportunity to make grants and loans available that will help businesses and property owners to rebuild the area as well as consider building additional accommodations in the CIP area. This recommended project will include a review and recommendation for commercial building design guides, priorities, target area projects, and the potential to establish new design guidelines, with a focus on providing opportunities for the municipality to provide incentive-based programs to encourage property and commercial building improvements and additional housing in commercial buildings.

The Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has a funding program open that will provide up to 50% funding to hire a Consultant to review and update the Wawa Community Improvement Plan. The funding can be requested over a two-year period and include funds for new staff.

Staff is recommending that Council approve an application to the RED program for the following project;

<b>Project Name</b>	Update Wawa Downtown Community Improvement Plan and Implement Financial Incentives to Encourage Commercial and Residential Development along Broadway Avenue
<b>Grant Stream</b>	Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) – Rural Economic Development Program (RED) – Economic Diversification and Competitiveness Stream (50% of up to \$150,000 Multi-Year)
<b>Application Due Date</b>	Thursday, February 23, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.
<b>Date</b>	Proposed 2 Year Project – July 1, 2023 – March 31, 2025
<b>Project Overview</b>	<p>The project is broken out into two years with the first year set to hire a planning consultant to update the current Community Improvement Plan (2008), and then staff work to establish application processes through the creation of an online landing page, an automated application form and marketing campaigns targeted at eligible building/property owners on Broadway Avenue in order to better reflect current needs and opportunities.</p> <p>Year Two of the project is implementation which will consist of hiring a Community Improvement Coordinator to implement and continue to market incentive programs for business/property owners located on Broadway Avenue that are included in the current CIP such as the Building Façade Improvement Program, the Sign Replacement Program, among others.</p>
<b>Project Lead</b>	Municipality of Wawa with support from the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) and Economic Development Staff
<b>Budget:</b>	<p><b>Budget Total: \$150,000 – 2 Year Project</b></p> <p>Year One:(July 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024) <span style="float:right">Total: \$75,000</span>  <span style="float:right">Hire Planning Consultant: \$50,000</span>  <span style="float:right">Marketing Costs: \$10,000</span>  <span style="float:right">Design Consultant: \$15,000</span></p> <p>Year Two:(April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025) <span style="float:right">Total: \$75,000</span>  <span style="float:right">Staff : \$70,000</span>  <span style="float:right">Supplies/Marketing: \$5,000</span></p>

The monies required by the Municipality to fund this project would be 50% or \$75,000 funded over three years; \$19,500 in 2023, \$37,500 in 2024 and \$18,000 in 2025.

The project would only proceed subject to funding.

### Wawa Strategic Plan

The staff recommendations presented in this report meet the goals and objectives set-out in the Wawa Strategic Plan (2021-2025).

The Strategic Plan includes under the Tourism and Economic Development Priorities that "Review and update the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) under Action Item #TED-7.

### Options/Alternatives

**Option 1:** Approve that staff make an application to the OMFRA RED program to update the Wawa Community Improvement Plan.

**Option 2:** Do not approve an application submission and plan for a future CIP review using internal resources.

**Option 3:** Take no action.

### Conclusion

Staff recommend that staff make application to the OMAFRA Rural Economic Development Program (RED) for funding to update the Wawa Community Improvement Plan for Broadway Avenue to develop new financial incentives to encourage commercial and residential growth on Broadway Avenue.

Submitted for Consideration:



Maury O'Neill, CAO-Clerk

**APPENDIX "A"**

**Wawa Community Improvement Area**

