



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: July 3, 2018

Report Number: SRCAO.18.15

Department: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Subject: SRCAO.18.15 Ontario Main Street Revitalization Initiative

Purpose:

To recommend projects to be implemented through the Ontario Main Street Revitalization Initiative funding and to request that Council authorize entering into a funding agreement.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That the Main Street Revitalization Initiative funding be used to fund an enhanced Façade, Signage, Landscaping and Building Renovation grant program as described in SRCAO.18.15;
- b) That the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Financial Services and Treasurer be authorized to sign and execute the Main Street Revitalization Initiative Funding Agreement.

Contact Person:

Daniel Olding, Manager of Grants & Strategic Initiatives

Sybelle von Kursell, Manager of Planning Policy

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Gwen Manderson, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Regulatory Services

Approved by: Neil Garbe, Chief Administrative Officer

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), Town Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and Chief Administrative Officer. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

The Main Street Revitalization Initiative is a \$26 million fund to help municipal governments undertake main street revitalization initiatives that support and benefit small businesses. Richmond Hill has been allocated \$202,115 under the Main Street initiative.

Eligible project categories for the Main Street funding include:

1. Community Improvement Plan – construction, renewal, renovation or redevelopment or material enhancement activities that implement priority financial incentives in existing Community Improvement Plans such as:

- a. Commercial building façade improvements
- b. Preservation and adaptive reuse of heritage and industrial buildings
- c. Provision of affordable housing
- d. Space conversion for residential and commercial uses
- e. Structural improvements to buildings (e.g. Building Code upgrades)
- f. Improvement of community energy efficiency
- g. Accessibility enhancements

2. Other Municipal Land Use Planning Policy – construction, renewal or material enhancement activities to fund strategic Municipal Physical Infrastructure and promotional projects such as:

- a. Signage – wayfinding/directional, and gateway.
- b. Streetscaping and landscape improvements – lighting, banners, murals, street furniture, interpretive elements, public art, urban forestation, accessibility, telecommunications/broadband equipment, parking, active transportation infrastructure (e.g. bike racks/storage, cycling lanes and paths) and pedestrian walkways/trails.
- c. Marketing plan implementation – business attraction and promotion activities, special events.

Eligible projects must commence after April 1, 2018 and be completed by March 31, 2020. Municipalities can fund 100% of total project costs with Main Street dollars.

In order to receive the funding, Richmond Hill Council must identify the types of projects they wish to undertake and delegate authority to enter into a funding agreement.

Richmond Hill has an impressive history of investing in the Downtown. Significant projects include the construction of the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, the redevelopment of Ransom Parkette as a Terry Fox tribute, the restoration of the McConaghy Centre Cenotaph and the Old Post Office, and the upcoming design and installation of wayfinding signage. These are in addition to the annual streetscape beautification program, installation of interlocking brick, benches and decorative walls, etc.

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Richmond Hill has also invested directly in the Downtown businesses for many years through the Façade Restoration Program. More recently, Council approved a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) which includes Façade Restoration as well as Landscaping, Signage and Building Renovation grants ranging in value from \$1,000 to \$50,000 for projects that are related to the revitalization of the Downtown and also the creation of new office space in existing buildings within the Town's Centres and older employment areas.

Current CIP Program Structure

The CIP's current Façade, Landscaping, and Signage grant program applies within the Downtown Business Improvement Area boundary, whereas the current Building Renovation grant program applies within the Downtown Local Centre and also the Oak Ridges Local Centre, Newkirk Employment Area, and Beaver Creek Employment Area boundaries. More details on the current CIP program structure are provided below:

Façade Grant

- Matching grant of up to 50% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$15,000 per property for a single facade, whichever is less.
- Matching grant of up to 50% of eligible improvement costs or a maximum grant of \$25,000 per property, whichever is less for façade improvement projects involving more than one façade. This includes buildings located on a corner lot (a property with frontage on two municipal streets) or on a lot with access onto the linked system of courtyards.
- The minimum grant is \$2,500 per property. Project applications including matching assistance of less than \$2,500 will not be considered.

Signage Grant

- Matching grant of up to 50% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$2,500 per property, whichever is less.
- The minimum grant is \$1,000 per property. Project applications including matching assistance of less than \$1,000 will not be considered.

Landscaping Grant

- Matching grant of up to 50% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$2,500 per property for a single frontage, whichever is less.
- For combined street-front and side-lot or rear-lot landscaping improvements: Matching grant of up to 50% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$5,000 per property, whichever is less.
- The minimum grant is \$2,000 per property. Project applications including matching assistance of less than \$2,000 will not be considered.

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Building Renovation Grant

- The grant maximum is \$50,000 per property and the grant minimum is \$10,000 per property; and
- The grant is provided on a matching funds basis, to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs.

The receipt of Main Street funding is an opportunity to further incentivize community improvements in the Downtown. Staff are recommending that Main Street funding be used to enhance the current Town funding, to provide, in effect, up to 90% of the Façade, Signage, Landscaping and Building Renovation grant funding. Each of the existing programs will therefore change from matching (50%) funding to cost-shared (90%) funding for the duration of the enhanced program. Projects already approved by Council, but not yet started will also be eligible for the Provincial Grant without having to reapply. All other requirements and criteria for the program would remain the same.

Once the Main Street funding is fully allocated, the Façade, Signage, Landscaping and Building Renovation grant program will revert back to the previous matching funding model of up to 50% of eligible projects.

Proposed Enhanced Program Structure

The proposed enhanced program structure would apply only within the Downtown as that is the focus of the Main Street Revitalization Initiative and the Downtown remains a priority to support as a destination. Specifically, the enhanced Façade, Landscaping, and Signage grant program would apply within the Downtown Business Improvement Area boundary and the enhanced Building Renovation grant program would apply within the Downtown Local Centre boundary.

More details on the proposed enhanced program utilizing Main Street funding are provided below:

Façade Grant

- Cost-shared grant of up to 90% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$27,000 per property for a single facade, whichever is less.
- Cost-shared grant of up to 90% of eligible improvement costs or a maximum grant of \$45,000 per property, whichever is less for façade improvement projects involving more than one façade. This includes buildings located on a corner lot (a property with frontage on two municipal streets) or on a lot with access onto the linked system of courtyards.
- The minimum grant is \$4,500 per property. Project applications including cost-shared assistance of less than \$4,500 will not be considered.

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Signage Grant

- Cost-shared grant of up to 90% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$4,500 per property, whichever is less.
- The minimum grant is \$1,800 per property. Project applications including cost-shared assistance of less than \$1,800 will not be considered.

Landscaping Grant

- Cost-shared grant of up to 90% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$4,500 per property for a single frontage, whichever is less.
- For combined street-front and side-lot or rear-lot landscaping improvements: Cost-shared grant of up to 90% of eligible costs or a maximum grant of \$9,000 per property, whichever is less.
- The minimum grant is \$3,600 per property. Project applications including cost-shared assistance of less than \$3,600 will not be considered.

Building Renovation Grant

- The grant maximum is \$90,000 per property and the grant minimum is \$20,000 per property; and
- The grant is provided on a cost-shared basis, to a maximum of 90% of eligible costs.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

Richmond Hill has been allocated \$202,115 from the Main Street Revitalization Initiative. Staff are proposing that this funding be allocated to an enhanced Façade, Signage, Landscaping and Building Renovation grant program.

The current Façade, Signage, Landscaping and Building Renovation grant program has a budget of \$185,000. The enhanced Façade, Signage, Landscaping and Building Renovation grant program would combine the current Town budget with the funds received from the Main Street Initiative for a combined budget of \$387,115 in 2018. Unallocated Main Street funding will be carried forward into 2019 and combined with the Town-approved budget for Façade, Signage, Landscaping and Building Renovation programs in 2019. By partnering this grant program with the Town's existing CIP, there are no additional financial costs associated with the administering of these funds.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

Application for funding for Town projects aligns to Goal Four: Wise Management of Resources by serving as a role model for municipal management. Funding improvements in the Downtown aligns to Goal Two: Better Choice by facilitating business development along Yonge Street.

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Conclusion:

Richmond Hill has been allocated \$202,115 under the Main Street Revitalization Initiative. Pairing the Provincial Grant money with the 'in effect' Community Improvement Plan within the Downtown provides an opportunity for the Town to work with landowners to invest in the revitalization of the Downtown. This revitalization will occur through façade improvements, landscape improvements, new signage, and/or new job creation through incentives to renovate buildings to provide new office space and, in some instances, new non-residential development. Council approval is required to designate signing officers and authorize the execution of the Funding Agreement.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCAO.18.15 - Ontario Main Street Revitalization Initiative.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 13, 2018

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Gwen Manderson - Jun 12, 2018 - 3:58 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Jun 13, 2018 - 3:06 PM

David Dexter - Jun 13, 2018 - 3:12 PM

Neil Garbe - Jun 13, 2018 - 4:05 PM