

## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Kelly Patzer, Development Coordinator, Township of Puslinch  
Copy: Karen Landry, CAO/Clerk, Township of Puslinch  
From: Nancy Reid and Jennifer Maestre, Meridian Planning  
Date: June 9, 2015  
**Re: Township of Puslinch Community Improvement Plan Project  
PHASE ONE OPTIONS MEMO**

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### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS MEMO**

In March 2015, the Township of Puslinch retained Meridian Planning Consultants to prepare a Community Improvement Plan (CIP), which is intended to:

1. Assist with main street revitalization and beautification efforts;
2. Support renewal within the urban centres and industrial/mixed-use corridor;
3. Support new and existing business opportunities; and
4. Promote the unique advantages of Puslinch.

The project is to be completed in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act as (discussed in Section 3.0) and will result in a comprehensive, strategic, and flexible framework for local improvements to public and private properties in key areas of the Township.

**Township staff and the project consulting team are nearing Phase One of the CIP project. The purpose of this Phase One Options Memo is to document the results of Phase One of the CIP project by:**

1. **Providing an overview of the approach, process, and legislative/policy framework for preparing a CIP;**
2. **Presenting the findings from tasks completed as part of Phase One, including a study area assessment and summary of consultation with local stakeholders/ members of the community;**
3. **Determining where community improvement tools could be applied in Puslinch based on needs and opportunities; and,**
4. **Introducing options for consideration in terms of the key elements of a CIP.**

## 2.0 STUDY OVERVIEW

The following explains what a CIP is, introduces some of the key elements of a CIP, and provides background and a process overview for the Township’s CIP project.

### 2.1 What is a Community Improvement Plan?

A CIP is a municipal planning tool under the Ontario Planning Act. Many municipalities across Ontario have prepared CIPs in order to achieve community goals, such as:

- Facilitating and coordinating transition;
- Stimulating economic growth and development;
- Assisting businesses/property owners with repair, rehabilitation, and redevelopment projects; and
- Raising awareness to local needs and priorities.

**Simply put, a CIP is a plan or framework that sets out tools and strategies for improving the built, economic, and social environment in a designated area of a municipality.**

Normally, under Section 106 of the Municipal Act, municipalities are prohibited from directly or indirectly assisting local businesses by giving or lending money. However, having a CIP in place allows the municipality to assist financially with improvements to private properties. Financial assistance may be available through incentive-based programs, such as grants and loans; reductions (or the cancellation of) certain fees required by the municipality; and tax assistance.

Typically, a CIP includes the following key elements:

- **Goals and Objectives**, which set out specifically what the CIP will aim to achieve;
- **A Community Improvement Project Area**, which designates the area to which the CIP will apply;
- **Municipal Leadership Programs**, which the Township may undertake to demonstrate leadership and an overall commitment to improving Puslinch;
- **Financial Incentive Programs**, which may be provided to local business and land owners to assist with improvements to public property;
- **A Marketing Plan**, which helps the Township “get the word out” about the CIP;
- **A Monitoring Plan**, which helps measure the extent to which the CIP is a success; and
- **An Implementation Plan**, which will set out a process for reviewing applications for financial incentives.



Figure 1:  
Elements of a CIP.

## 2.2 Background

In April 2014, the Township completed a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Project, which aimed to develop the Township's understanding of local business needs and identify ways to encourage businesses to stay, grow, and become more committed to the community. The following are some key findings of the BR&E Project:

- *There is little awareness of local economic development services;*
- *Businesses have little to no contact with local planning departments;*
- *Approximately 10% of businesses plan to expand in the near future; and*
- *Local businesses are very positive about the following advantages of Puslinch:*
  - *Terrific access to the 401;*
  - *Good cluster of business;*
  - *Thriving and diverse township;*
  - *Quality of life; and*
  - *Rural Feel.*

In addition, as a key Action Item, it was identified that a Community Improvement Plan should be prepared to assist with business retention and expansion and generally promote local economic development. In response, the Township of Puslinch has initiated the CIP project, with a specific focus on supporting revitalization, beautification, renewal, and economic activity in the following areas:

- a) Aberfoyle;
- b) Morriston;
- c) The Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor.

## 2.3 Work Program

The Township is undertaking the CIP project, with assistance from the consulting team, in accordance with the following work plan:

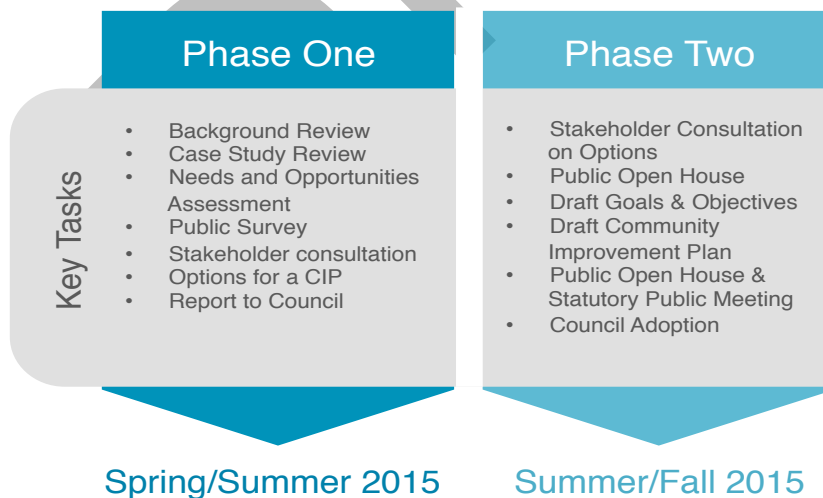


Figure 2: Work plan for the Puslinch CIP project.

## 3.0 LEGISLATION AND TOOLS

This Section provides an overview of the key legislation that enables the development of CIPs in Ontario, and establishes tools for local community improvement, such as the ability to provide grant and loans to landowners.

### 3.1 The Planning Act

The Planning Act is the primary piece of legislation that provides for the preparation of CIPs. As described in greater detail below, the Planning Act sets out:

1. Types of projects/activities/works that are considered ‘community improvement’;
2. A process by which a municipality can identify a ‘community improvement project area’ and prepare a ‘community improvement plan’;
3. Tools that can be implemented once a ‘community improvement plan’ is prepared; and,
4. Eligible costs for which a municipality can provide incentives.

#### **Community Improvement**

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(2) states that where there is an official plan in effect in a local Municipality or in a prescribed upper-tier Municipality that contains provisions relating to ‘community improvement’, the Council may, by By-law, designate the whole or any part of an area covered by such an official plan as a ‘community improvement project area’.

#### **Community Improvement Project Areas**

Section 28(1) of the Planning Act defines the term ‘community improvement project area’ as *“a Municipality or an area within a Municipality, the Community Improvement of which in the opinion of the Council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason”*.

#### **Community Improvement Plan**

Section 28(4) of the Planning Act states that once a ‘community improvement project area’ has been designated by By-law, *“the Council may provide for the preparation of a plan suitable for adoption as a Community Improvement Plan for the Community Improvement Project Area”*.

## **Tools**

The Municipality may then prepare and use a ‘community improvement plan’ to:

- Acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land (Section 28(3));
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by the Municipality (Section 28(6));
- Sell, lease or dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by the Municipality (Section 28(6)); and,
- Make grants or loans to owners and tenants of land and buildings within the community improvement project area to pay for the whole or any part of ‘eligible costs’ related to community improvement (Section 28(7)).

## **Eligible Costs**

‘Eligible costs’ are specified in Section 28 (7.1) of the Planning Act, and 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.”*

Finally, Section 28 (7.3) states that the total of the grants and loans that is provided in respect of the lands and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the community improvement project with respect to those lands and buildings.

## **Upper-tier Participation**

An upper-tier municipality has the ability to contribute financially to CIP programs adopted by the local municipalities. Section 28 (7.2) of the Planning Act states that *“The council of an upper-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of a lower-tier municipality and the council of a lower-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of the upper-tier municipality, for the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan that has come into effect, on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council considers appropriate, but only if the official plan of the municipality making the grant or loan contains provisions relating to the making of such grants or loans.”*

This means that Wellington County can participate financially in a CIP adopted and implemented by one or more of its local municipalities, including Puslinch, subject to having required Official Plan policies in place. The County’s policies are discussed in Section 4.2 below of this memo.

## **3.2 Additional Legislative Tools**

Outside of Section 28, municipalities also use provisions from Section 69 of the Planning Act (related to establishing tariffs of fees in respect to planning and building) as part of community improvement plans. Under Section 69(2), Municipalities are permitted to *reduce the amount of, or waive entirely*, the requirement for the payment of a fee in respect of an application where the Council, planning board or committee is satisfied that it

would be unreasonable to require payment; however, it is noted that a CIP is not required as a basis for implementing this tool. Alternatively, a municipality can collect fees and then provide a *partial or total rebate of fees in the form of a grant*, but this must be done through a CIP.

In addition to the range of community improvement tools established by the Planning Act, Section 5 of the Development Charges Act allows a Municipality (through its development charge by-law) to provide for full or partial development charge exemptions for certain types of development. This tool is often incorporated into municipal CIPs; however, again, a CIP is not required in order to use it.

Finally, Section 365.2 of the Municipal Act enables municipalities to implement the Heritage Property Tax Relief Program. The program encourages the maintenance and conservation of locally designated heritage properties by allowing Municipalities to pass a by-law to provide tax relief (10 to 40 per cent) to owners of eligible heritage properties, subject to agreement to protect the heritage features of their property. The Province shares in the cost of the program by funding the education portion of the property tax relief. It is noted that a CIP is not required in order to implement this tax relief program; however, it is only available to heritage properties that are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. However, grants and loans for heritage restoration and improvement can also be provided to properties that are not designated through a CIP.

## 4.0 PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

**The local context for preparing a CIP in the Township of Puslinch is addressed below, and an overview of applicable planning and economic development policies and initiatives is provided.**

### 4.1 2014 Provincial Policy Statement

As a key part of Ontario’s policy-led planning system, the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development and sets the foundation for regulating the development and use of land. There are a number of PPS policies that support the Township’s goals for community improvement. These policies are summarized in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: PPS Policies and their Support/Implications for a CIP in Puslinch*

PPS Policy	Comments
1.1.3.1 Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development, and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PPS supports initiatives that promote the vitality and regeneration of settlement areas.</li> <li>• The development of a CIP for the Urban Centres of Aberfoyle and Morriston will focus on regeneration in these areas.</li> </ul>

PPS Policy	Comments
<p>1.7.1 Long-term economic prosperity should be supported by:</p> <p>a) promoting opportunities for economic development and community investment-readiness;</p> <p>c) maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and mainstreets;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puslinch’s approach to community improvement focuses on facilitating economic growth, and enhancing its key commercial main street areas.</li> <li>• These overall goals are supported to a great extent by Policy 1.7.1 of the PPS.</li> </ul>
<p>1.2.1 A coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach should be used when dealing with planning matters within municipalities, across lower, single and/or upper-tier municipal boundaries, and with other orders of government, agencies and boards including:</p> <p>b) economic development strategies;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an opportunity to coordinate community improvement efforts with the County, and to align the Township’s CIP with the County’s economic development goals.</li> </ul>
<p>1.3.1 Planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by:</p> <p>b) providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may also be an opportunity for the CIP to promote economic development and competitiveness in the mixed-use/industrial corridor located between Aberfoyle and Morriston, along Highway 401.</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Wellington County Official Plan

The Wellington County Official Plan provides direction and a policy framework for managing growth and land use decisions throughout the County over the planning period to 2031. Since the Township of Puslinch does not have its own local Official Plan in place, it relies on Wellington County’s Official Plan to set out land use policies and designations for the entire Township.

Section 4.12 of the County’s Official Plan establishes policies related specifically to community improvement planning, as required by the Planning Act. These policies are summarized and discussed in Table 3 below.

*Table 3: Current Community Improvement Policies in the County Official Plan*

Community Improvement Policy	Comments
<p><b>4.12.2 Objectives</b></p> <p>Community Improvement Policies are intended to accomplish the following objectives:</p> <p>a. identify areas that exhibit problems of instability, building deterioration, inadequate municipal services and facilities or inappropriate arrangements of land uses;</p> <p>b. promote the long term stability and viability of identified Community Improvement Areas by reducing land use conflicts and upgrading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County’s overall objectives for community improvement have a focus on repair, renewal revitalization, and beautification within identified Community Improvement Areas. This is consistent with the Township’s intention for the development of a CIP.</li> </ul>

- municipal services;
- c. encourage coordinated municipal expenditures, planning and development activities within identified Community Improvement Areas;
- d. stimulate the maintenance and renewal of private property;
- e. enhance the visual quality of the community.

**4.12.3 Identifying Areas**

Council shall consider the following criteria in the designation of community improvement areas:

- a. a significant portion of the housing stock and other buildings are in need of maintenance, rehabilitation or redevelopment;
- b. municipal services including sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water supply systems, roads, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, street lighting or parking facilities are inadequate and in need of repair;
- c. the supply of public open space or recreation facilities is deficient;
- d. there are conflicting land uses in the area;
- e. within commercial areas, deterioration in the appearance of building facades, inadequate parking facilities or inadequate pedestrian access;
- f. a significant portion of the buildings are considered heritage resources.

- As noted in Section 3.1 of this memo, the Planning Act requires that a community improvement project area be designated for the purposes of preparing a CIP. These policies are the County’s criteria for the identification of a Community Improvement Project Area in the County, including the Township of Puslinch.

**4.12.4 Community Improvement Area**

Community Improvement areas are identified on Schedule “A” to the Plan. The boundaries of the community improvement area are considered approximate and minor adjustments may be made without amendment to this Plan provided that the overall intent is maintained.

- The County has already designated community improvement project areas throughout the County and these are identified on Schedule A. For Puslinch specifically, community improvement project areas are designated on Schedule A7-1 and A7-2 (see Figures 3 and 4 below).
- It is noted that a community improvement area has not been identified for the Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor.
- Minor adjustments can be made to these Community Improvement Areas if required.



**4.12.5 Implementation**

In order to accomplish the community improvement objectives set out in the Plan, a local Council may:

- a. prepare and carry out a community improvement program under the authority provided by the Planning Act;
- b. take advantage of federal and provincial funding programs which would benefit the community;
- c. prepare and adopt a property standards by-laws;
- d. co-operate with groups and organizations whose objectives include community improvement.

- Since the Township of Puslinch does not have its own local Official Plan, these County Official Plan policies enable the Township of Puslinch to adopt and implement a local CIP in accordance with the Planning Act.

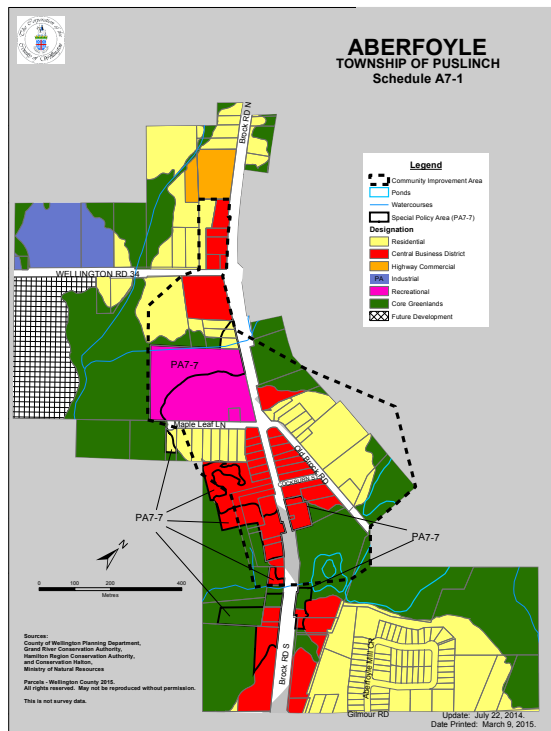


Figure 3: An existing Community Improvement Project Area for Aberfoyle has been designated by the County's Official Plan, as shown in the dashed black line.

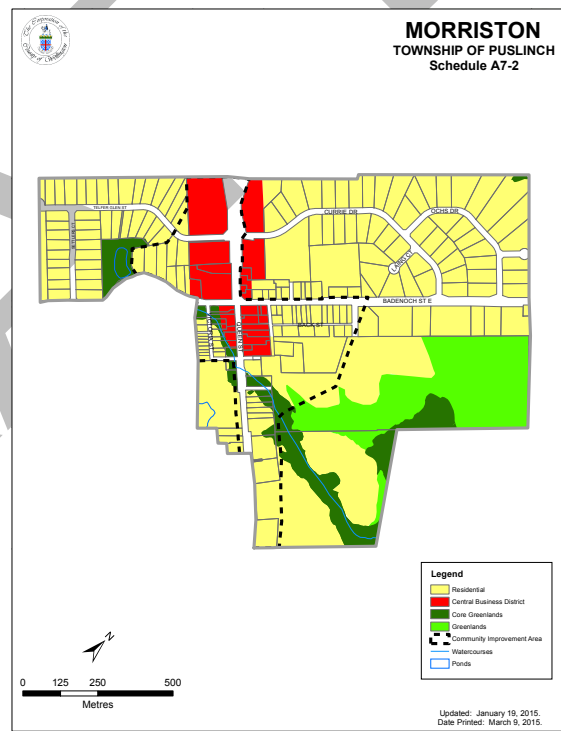


Figure 4: An existing Community Improvement Project Area for Morriston has also been designated by the County's Official Plan, as shown in the dashed black line.

In addition to the community improvement policies in Section 4.12, there are a number of long term/strategic planning policies in the County Official Plan that support the Township’s goals for community improvement. Some of these policies apply to the County as a whole, while others focus specifically on the Urban Centres. They are summarized in Table 4 below.

*Table 4: County OP Policies and their Support/Implications for a CIP in Puslinch*

County Official Plan Policy	Comments
<p><b>2.2 Our Commitment to Our Future</b>            Over the next twenty years County Council commits to pursue planning policies which achieve the following objectives:            2.2.2 Direct growth to urban areas and in particular to those with municipal sewer and water services;            2.2.3 Provide opportunities for jobs, commerce and services that are based on population growth;            2.2.5 Ensure that County residents have convenient access to commercial uses and services;            2.2.6 Maintain strong main streets in towns and villages as a focus for commerce and services;            2.2.9 Maintain the small town and rural character of the County;            2.2.20 Develop a safe and efficient transportation system for people, goods and services;            2.2.21 Broaden recreational and leisure opportunities;            2.2.22 Promote energy efficient land use and servicing decisions;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an opportunity for the Township’s CIP to help achieve these County-wide objectives for growth over the next 20 years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8.1.3 Vision Statement</b>            By the end of the planning period, it is expected that the urban centres in Wellington County will have the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) that traditional community values will be maintained and the small town character will be enhanced;</li> <li>c) that the central business district will remain the primary focus of commercial, cultural and civic functions for the municipality;</li> <li>d) that well planned industrial areas will continue to provide new job opportunities and municipal tax revenues;</li> <li>e) that the quality of life for the residents will be enhanced by the protection of natural and cultural environment, the enhancement of new recreational opportunities, and the preservation of heritage resources;</li> <li>f) that infrastructure such as roads, water, utilities, fire protection and administration will be improved and, where feasible, expanded to meet the needs of a growing community;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is also an opportunity for the Township’s CIP to help achieve these characteristics in the urban centres of Morriston and Aberfoyle, in addition to the mixed-use/industrial corridor that links them.</li> </ul>

County Official Plan Policy	Comments
<p>8.1.4 Major Objectives</p> <p>The major objectives of all urban centres are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to ensure that adequate lands, infrastructure and community facilities are available to serve the existing and future needs of the community;</li> <li>c) to provide the opportunity for an adequate supply and diversity of commerce and industry to serve the needs of a growing community;</li> <li>d) to ensure that development and development-related activity proceeds in an environmentally responsible manner;</li> <li>e) to encourage steady, economic growth in a carefully controlled manner to provide employment;</li> <li>f) to encourage economically viable and physically attractive central business district;</li> <li>g) to utilize urban design principles that ensure public safety and security for local residents and visitors;</li> <li>h) to maintain appropriate standards for development and redevelopment which encourage controlled growth and represent a long term benefit to the community;</li> <li>i) to ensure that adequate parkland, open space, and recreational opportunities are available to meet the recreational needs of every citizen;</li> <li>j) to protect, preserve and where practical enhance, the unique natural and cultural heritage resources of the community; and</li> <li>k) to provide for a safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian transportation system in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County’s objectives for urban centres can be supported by a CIP.</li> </ul>

### 4.3 2012 Wellington County Economic Development Strategic Plan

In 2012, the County implemented an Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDS), with the primary objective to foster a more collaborative approach to economic development throughout Wellington County. The EDS also provides the following vision for economic development in the County:

***“Wellington County will be a collaborative community that protects and enhances its natural and cultural heritage assets while supporting the longer term economic and social prosperity of its residents and business community.”***

In order to achieve this vision, the EDS set out the following 4 goals:

- Goal 1: Increase the Competitiveness and Success of Wellington Businesses.
- Goal 2: Build a Strong Regional Profile and Brand.
- Goal 3: Create a Community Where People Want to Live and Entrepreneurs Want to do Business.
- Goal 4: Develop Lasting Partnerships that Advance the Economic Sustainability of the County.

As noted earlier, there is an opportunity to coordinate community improvement efforts with the County, and to align the Township's CIP with the County's economic development goals. Notably, the County's EDS recognizes that there is an opportunity for CIPs to assist with local economic development effort and the Wellington County can be involved by providing financial support to CIP incentive programs.

#### **4.4 Other County and Local Planning Initiatives**

There are a number of additional recent or on-going planning initiatives at both the County and Township level that are related to the community improvement initiative in Puslinch and can provide further opportunities to align the CIP with local planning goals and priorities. These are briefly summarized below.

##### ***Morrison Highway 6 Streetscape Strategy (on-going) and other Future Transportation Planning Initiatives***

There is an on-going Morrison Highway 6 Streetscape Strategy being implemented in Puslinch, which is intended to help mitigate traffic concerns and improve the pedestrian environment. The Strategy identifies a number of locations in Morrison that might be appropriate for new plantings and signage to improve the overall streetscape, subject to approval by the Ministry of Transportation. This strategy builds upon other recent initiatives in Morrison, which include larger speed signs, zebra striping of the main intersection off Highway 6 and Badenoch Street, and the community safety zone.

It is also noted that there are other significant Provincial and County transportation planning/road improvement initiatives, either planned or in the planning process along Highway 6, Highway 401 and Wellington Road 46.

##### ***Wellington County Active Transportation Plan (2012)***

In 2012, Wellington County in association with the seven local area municipalities and Wellington-Dufferin Guelph *in motion* developed a county-wide active transportation plan. The plan provides a long-term strategy to support pedestrian and cyclist movements throughout the County for both utilitarian and recreation modes of travel. The plan provides a blueprint to guide decisions and identifies potential on and off-road trail corridors throughout the County. A number of active transportation routes were proposed for the Township, including shared roadways, signed bicycle routes, paved shoulders along County roads, and off-road walking routes. Some of the key recommended trail routes in

the Township of Puslinch (as shown in Figure 5 below) included:

- Developing an off-road trail loop at the Puslinch Community Centre in Aberfoyle and connecting Aberfoyle Public School to the Community Centre.
- Completing the connection along Downey Road/Wellington Road 35 to Concession 4 and west to Townline road to connect south Guelph with Hespeler.
- Creating a signed route connection in Morriston along Wellington Road 36.
- Investigating the potential to develop an off-road trail loop on public lands in northeast Morriston.

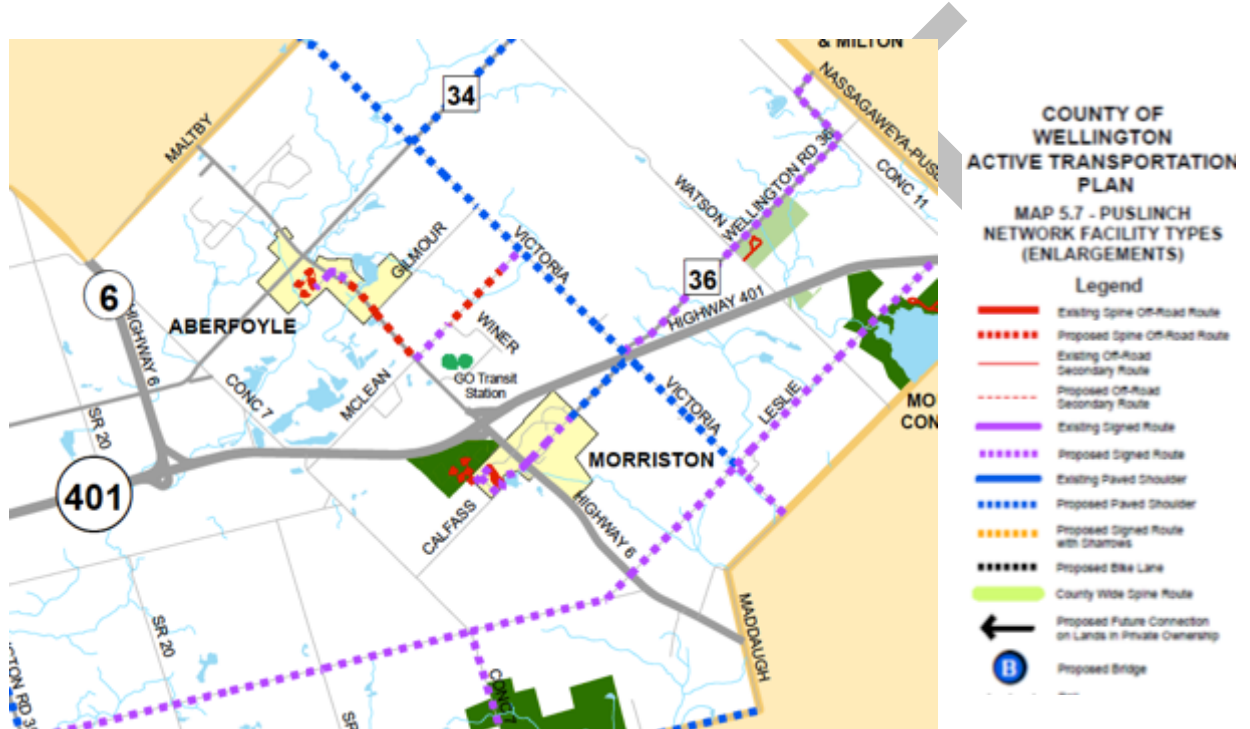


Figure 5: Proposed active transportation trails and networks for Puslinch are identified in the above map from the County's Active Transportation Plan.

### ***Puslinch Design Guidelines (2010)***

In February 2010, a set of Urban Design Guidelines were prepared for the Township of Puslinch, which identify priority geographic areas, including Brock Road from Morriston to Aberfoyle, including the industrial/mixed use corridor between the two urban centres. The guidelines are intended to be applied to commercial, industrial and institution development and redevelopment proposed to develop an enhanced streetscape along Brock Road, to improve the quality of site and building design, and to protect what makes Puslinch unique. There are three categories of guidelines set out, as well as specific goals for each, as shown in Figure 6, below. The following are some examples of key guidelines that apply to key areas of Morriston and Aberfoyle, as well as the connecting Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor:

- *Provide enhanced building design where fronting or visible from Brock Road, incorporating materials, building elements, and architectural character which complement the rural setting.*
- *Building facades should be strongly articulated through architectural detailing and changes in building materials, wall projections, and windows.*
- *Blank or single material facades are not permitted parallel to the public street or in other locations visible to the public.*
- *Outdoor storage shall not be permitted on sites with highway visibility, shall be screened with a combination of berms, landscaping and fencing from County Roads, and shall otherwise be screened from off-site view.*
- *Awnings and other elements that provide shade and animate the streetscape are encouraged.*
- *Incorporate accessible walkways to building entrances and within parking areas.*
- *Provide bicycle parking facilities for customers and staff.*
- *Provide continuous barrier curb, sidewalks, boulevards, and pedestrian/street lighting. Incorporate street trees and/or landscaping where right-of-way width is sufficient.*
- *Identify entries with primary and secondary gateway signage.*

Categories	Goals
<b>A</b> Enhancing the Streetscape	<p>To provide an appropriate relationship between new and existing development in Central Business Districts (commercial areas designated by County Official Plan) in Aberfoyle and Morrison.</p> <p>To provide for a safe and efficient transportation system that also contributes to the livability of Puslinch.</p> <p>To provide for a safe, efficient and pleasant pedestrian environment in Aberfoyle and Morrison.</p> <p>To provide effective identification for Aberfoyle and Morrison, and for the Highway 6 N (Hanlon) industrial area.</p>
<b>B</b> Promoting Quality Development	<p>To provide a high level of architectural design for commercial and institutional developments, and for industrial developments visible from highways and arterial roads.</p> <p>To maintain strong main streets in Aberfoyle and Morrison.</p>
<b>C</b> Respecting Established Character	<p>To conserve heritage assets within Puslinch.</p> <p>To preserve, enhance and integrate natural heritage resources.</p>

Figure 6: Categories and goals for urban design, as set out in the 2010 Urban Design Guidelines for Puslinch.

## 5.0 EXAMPLES OF OTHER CIP PROGRAMS

To demonstrate how CIP tools are implemented in other Ontario municipalities that belong to a similar planning and economic development context, 3 case studies are provided below.

## 5.1 Township of Wellington North CIP

The Township of Wellington North adopted a CIP in 2011 for the main streets of Arthur and Mount Forest. In 2014, the CIP was amended to include the main street of Kenilworth. This Downtown CIP attempts to align community improvement with broader economic development goals identified by the Wellington North Economic Development Committee. The CIP program identifies the following specific goals:

1. To provide incentives for businesses to enhance their building presentation to the public;
2. To stimulate pride in Mount Forest and Arthur downtowns;
3. To contribute to the overall enhancement of downtown Mount Forest and Arthur as a place for family friendly business;
4. To encourage the revitalization of vacant, underutilized and/or contaminated properties and buildings;
5. To provide a commitment to applicants with a program timeframe of Jan 1, 2012 to 2021.

Table 5 provides a summary of the structure and programs of the Wellington North CIP.

*Table 5: Overview of the Wellington North CIP*

Wellington North CIP Summary Table	
Designated CIPA	Downtown areas of Arthur, Mount Forest and Kenilworth
Municipal Leadership Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Improvement Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Urban Design Guidelines</li> <li>• Marketing Communication and Promotion Strategy</li> <li>• Streetscape, Pedestrian Crossing and Roadway Improvements</li> <li>• Open Space Improvement</li> <li>• Gateway Signage and Signage Improvement</li> </ul>
Financial Incentive Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Façade Improvement Loan and Grant Program (Interest free loan of \$2,500 repayable with a maximum amortization of five years or grants of \$2,500 following the completion of the project)</li> <li>• Tax Increment Equivalent for Rehabilitation and Redevelopment (TIERR) Grant Program (100% of the increase in municipal realty taxes for a period of three consecutive years)</li> <li>• Application Fees and Development Charges Grant (100% of the application fees and development charges up to \$1,500)</li> <li>• Public Art Grant (100% of public art project up to a maximum of \$2,500)</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Township of Centre Wellington Urban Centre CIP

The Township of Centre Wellington's Urban Centre Community Improvement Plan focuses on downtown areas and key commercial, employment and mixed-used areas of the Township. This CIP provides two different levels of financial incentives, which help to prioritize community improvement projects and distribute available funding. Level one incentives are available for eligible downtown, commercial, employment and mixed use

properties and Level two incentives are available for ‘Priority Sites’ that have been identified by Council subject to a set of criteria. The Urban Centre Community Improvement Plan identifies the following goals:

1. Pride in Place through the beautification and revitalization of public and private property;
2. Attraction and Expansion through the enhancement of investment opportunities and attraction of new/expanding businesses;
3. Growth and Intensification which support opportunities for new development;
4. Remediation and Redevelopment which support opportunities for remediation and redevelopment of properties;
5. Preservation and Promotion of the Township’s key community assets and advantages; and
6. Successful Implementation of the Plan will be championed by Township staff, with support from other levels of government.

Table 6 below provides a summary of the structure and programs of the Township of Centre Wellington Urban Centre CIP.

*Table 6: Overview of the Township of Centre Wellington CIP*

<b>Urban Centre CIP Summary Table</b>	
Designated CIPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All lands within the Elora-Salem Urban Centre, Fergus Urban Centre lands designated Central Business District, Industrial, Commercial, Highway Commercial, Residential Transition and Mixed Use</li> </ul>
Municipal Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy for County Participation</li> <li>• Township Marketing and Banding Initiative</li> <li>• Identification of ‘Priority Sites’</li> <li>• Implementation of a Heritage Property Tax Relief Program</li> <li>• Streetscape Improvement Plan/Strategy</li> <li>• Zoning Review</li> <li>• Parking Strategy</li> <li>• Establishment of a Business Incubator/Small Business Centre</li> </ul>
Level One Financial Incentive Programs for the Urban Centre CIP (for all eligible sites)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Housing Rehabilitation and Conversion Grant/Loan (50% of construction costs up to a maximum of \$4,000 per unit)</li> <li>2. Façade Improvement Grant/Loan (50% of construction costs by providing an interest free loan and/or grant to a maximum of \$10,000)</li> <li>3. Contamination Assessment Study Grant (50% of the cost to complete one or more eligible contamination assessment study, to a maximum of \$10,000 per property)</li> </ol>
Level Two Financial Incentive Program for the Urban Centre CIP (for priority sites)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (Grants will be equal to 80% of the Township portion of the tax increase for 10 year period)</li> <li>2. Brownfield Financial Tax Assistance (the value of the Township portion of the tax cancellation will be determined by the Township upon approval of a financial incentive application)</li> <li>3. Façade, Building and Property Improvement Grant/Loan (Grant and/or Loan for façade improvement would be equal to a maximum of \$15,000)</li> </ol>



### 5.3 City of Guelph CIPs

The City of Guelph has a CIP for both the Downtown area and Brownfield sites. The entire municipality is designated as a community improvement plan area in the City of Guelph’s Official Plan. The Downtown Guelph CIP is intended to stimulate revitalization and investment in the downtown area by attracting public and private sector investment to assist with the long term economic, social and cultural vitality of Downtown Guelph. The Brownfield CIP aims to promote remediation, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use of brownfield sites throughout the City. Table 7 outlines the financial incentive programs identified in both the Downtown Guelph CIP and the Brownfield CIP.

Table 7: Overview of City of Guelph CIP

Guelph CIP Summary Table	
Designated CIPA	Entire City of Guelph
Financial Incentive Programs for the Downtown Guelph CIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Façade Improvement Grant Program (50% of the cost of façade improvements up to a maximum of \$10,000 per property)</li> <li>• Feasibility Study Grant Program (50% of the cost of an eligible feasibility study to a maximum grant of \$5,000 per building)</li> <li>• Minor Downtown Activation Grant Program (30% of the capital costs of the redevelopment or rehabilitation of an under-utilized or vacant property to a maximum of \$120,000 per municipal address)</li> <li>• Major Downtown Activation Grant Program (the City will pay the agreed tax increment for each year following the completion of the agreement until the upset limit of the eligible cost are achieved)</li> </ul>
Financial Incentive Programs for the Brownfield CIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Study Grant (ESG) Program (50 % of the cost of an environmental study, a maximum of \$15,000 per environmental study with a maximum of 2 studies per property/project)</li> <li>• Tax Assistance (TA) Program (Cancellation of part of all of the municipal property taxes for up to 3 years)</li> <li>• Tax Increment Based Grant (TIBG) Program (Grant equivalent to 80% of the municipal property tax increase for up to 10 years after project completion)</li> </ul>

### 6.0 STUDY AREA ASSESSMENT

The following is a summary of the results of an assessment of the existing conditions in the following areas of focus:

- a) Aberfoyle;
- b) Morriston;
- c) The Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor.

The assessment is based on a review of background documents as well as observations made during site visits.

## 6.1 Aberfoyle Assessment

### *History (as described in the Township's 2008 Urban Design Study)*

- Aberfoyle (originally known as Shatzville) was first settled in the 1840s.
- The village was known for its mill, which operated for almost 100 years under various owners to manufacture oatmeal and flour.
- In addition to the mill, the village also housed a number of small agricultural industries such as a sawmill, foundry, tannery, blacksmith shop and wagon shop.

### **Official Plan**

- The Urban Centre of Aberfoyle is subject to a number of land use designations including Residential, Central Business District, Highway Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, and Core Greenlands, as per the County's Official Plan.
- The primary designations located within the Community Improvement Area (as identified on Schedule A7-1 of the County's Official Plan and provided in Figure 5 of this memo) are: Residential and Central Business District.
- The Residential designation permits low rise residential, a bed and breakfast, group homes, nursing homes, schools, churches, clinics, local convenience stores and home occupations. Lands designated Residential are mostly located off Wellington Road 46.
- The Central Business District designation permits a wide variety of retail, office, service, administrative, religious, cultural and entertainment uses. Lands designated Central Business District are generally located along Wellington Road 46, and represents the 'main street' of Aberfoyle.
- A number of properties are located within the Aberfoyle Floodplain Area and subject to the Floodplain policies of the County's Official Plan.

### **Zoning**

- Aberfoyle is generally zoned Highway Commercial (C2), Hamlet Commercial (C1), Hamlet Residential (HR), Agriculture (A), and Open Space (OS), as shown on Figure 7.
- In some cases, the current zoning that applies to lands within Aberfoyle does not appear to conform to the overall policy direction of the County's Official Plan.
- For example, lands that are designated Central Business District by the Official Plan are intended to permit a wide variety of retail, office, service, administrative, religious, cultural and entertainment uses; however, in some instances, the Hamlet Residential or Agricultural Zone applies.
- There are a number of site specific exception zones that have been applied to lands designated Central Business District by the Official Plan, in order to permit uses such as a clinic or professional office, commercial mall, antiques and home furnishing retail store, storage and sales of antiquesm arts and crafts and flea market.



### **Land Use and Built Form**

- There is a mix of commercial, residential, and recreational uses located along Wellington Road 46. The Township's civic buildings are located on Wellington Road 34.
- There does not appear to be a significant number of vacant buildings or properties.
- No on-street parking is permitted along Wellington Road 46.
- Off-street parking is associated with individual properties.
- Buildings are generally one to two-storey buildings with very small/no front yard setbacks.
- The physical condition of buildings throughout the area varies, but a number of these buildings (including those designated commercial) are in need of maintenance and improvement and exhibit poor visual quality.
- Building façades throughout the area vary in nature, including the condition, materials, and scale, but a number of these building facades are in need of improvement.
- The landscaping on some private properties is in need of improvement.
- There are a number of natural features in the area.
- There are five properties included in the Township's Heritage Inventory.



Figure 8: Some properties located along Wellington Road 46 are in need of maintenance and improvement and exhibit poor visual quality.



Figure 9: There are five properties in Aberfoyle that are included in the Township's Heritage Inventory.

### **Public Realm**

- The Wellington Road 46 streetscape through Aberfoyle is a car and truck-dominated environment.
- There is a sidewalk from Wellington Road 34 to just past the Antique Market on the west side of the road and a section across the Aberfoyle Mill property.
- There are very few pedestrian amenities such as landscaping and street furniture along the sidewalk.

- There are no bicycle parking facilities.
- There are no consistent street trees or plantings along the streetscape.
- There is no entrance signage or associated landscaping.
- There is no wayfinding provided.
- The speed limit of 50 km/h is posted with five signs for southbound traffic and three signs for northbound traffic.
- The speed and volume of traffic along this four-lane road creates an uncomfortable environment for pedestrians.

### ***Economic Activity***

- A limited range of specialized commercial uses is provided, with a niche antique and décor focus.
- Commercial uses cater principally to the travelling public.
- The Aberfoyle Mill restaurant and scenic grounds remain a landmark for residents and tourists/visitors.
- A number of existing commercial businesses have invested in expansions over the past few years, including Accents for Living (west side of Wellington Road 46, north of Wellington Road 34), Kerfoot Antiques (northeast corner of Wellington Road 46 and Cockburn Road) and, most recently, Ren’s Pet Food Depot (north of Accents for Living) and the Antique Market.



Figure 10: There are a number of landscaping and building improvements that have been undertaken at the Aberfoyle Antique Market in recent years, and the property owner has a ten year plan for future property improvements.



Figure 11: The Aberfoyle mill restaurant and scenic grounds remain a landmark for residents and tourists/visitors..

## 5.2 Morriston Assessment

### *History (as described in the Township's 2008 Urban Design Study)*

- Originally known as the Village of Elgin, Morriston was first settled in the late 1820s.
- At that time the village featured stores, a tailor, blacksmith, sawmill, oatmeal and grist mill and churches.
- Like Aberfoyle, the settlement of Morriston was influenced by the presence of Brock Road (Highway 6). In 1960, the Milton-Preston section of Highway 401 officially opened, crossing several Puslinch communities, including the area just north of Morriston.

### *Official Plan*

- The Urban Centre of Morriston is subject to a number of land use designations including Residential, Central Business District, Core Greenlands, and Greenlands, as per the County's Official Plan.
- The primary designations located within the Community Improvement Area (as identified on Schedule A7-2 of the County's Official Plan and provided in Figure 6 of this memo) are: Residential and Central Business District.
- The Central Business District designation is concentrated along Brock Road (Queen Street).
- It is noted that there are several properties that are designated Central Business District that are located outside of the Community Improvement Area identified on Schedule A7-2.
- The majority of the Residential designations are located on the surrounding side streets, however, there are some Residential designations along Queen Street in the southern half of Morriston. Many of these residential designations are located within the Community Improvement Area identified on Schedule A7-2.

### *Zoning*

- Morriston is generally zoned Highway Commercial (C2), Hamlet Commercial (C1), Hamlet Residential (HR), Agriculture (A), as shown on Figure 12.
- In some cases, the current zoning that applies to lands within Morriston does not appear to conform to the overall policy direction of the County's Official Plan.
- For example, lands that are designated Central Business District by the Official Plan are intended to permit a wide variety of retail, office, service, administrative, religious, cultural and entertainment uses; however, in some instances, the Hamlet Residential Zone applies. In addition, some lands that are currently designated Hamlet Residential are zoned Agriculture.

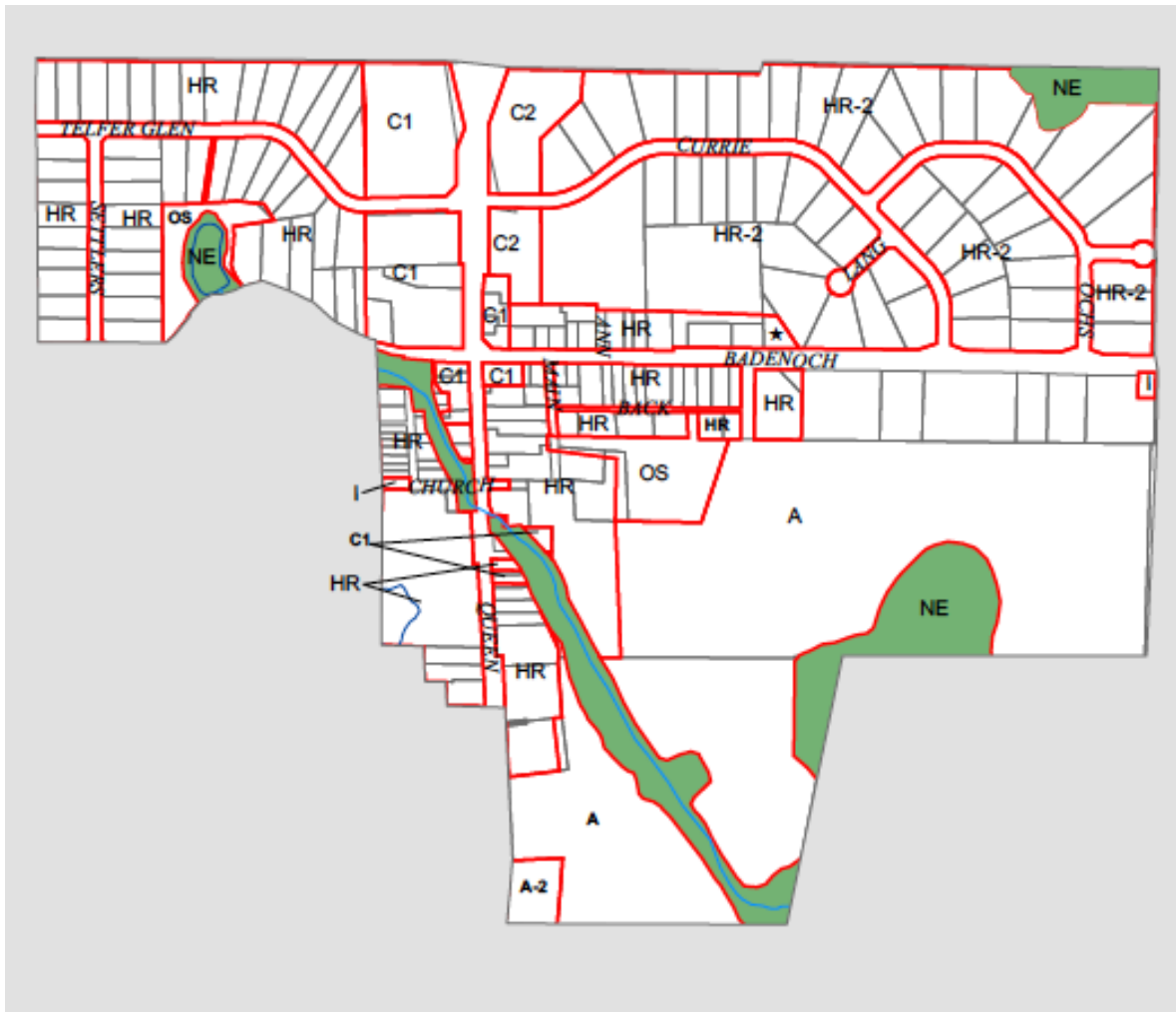


Figure 12: Map A-5 – Township of Puslinch Zoning By-law No 19/85 (Morrison).

### **Land Use and Built Form**

- Commercial businesses are primarily found at the main intersection of Morrison at Queen Street (Highway 6) and Badenoch/Calfass Roads.
- Natural features in the area include a large wooded tract owned by the Ministry of Transportation south of Highway 401, ponds and associated wetlands, and other private wooded areas.
- There are a number of residential properties on the east and west side of Queen Street.
- There does not appear to be a significant number of vacant buildings or properties.
- No on-street parking is permitted along Queen Street.
- Off-street parking is associated with individual properties.
- Buildings along Queen Street are generally one to two-storey buildings with very small/no front yard setbacks.



Figure 13: Off-street parking in Morriston is associated with individual properties or outside of the main street associated with recreational uses only.



Figure 14: There are a large number of residential uses that have been included in the designated community improvement project area for Morriston, and a number of commercial properties that have been excluded.

- The physical condition of buildings throughout the area varies, and some (including those designated commercial) are in need of maintenance and improvement and exhibit poor visual quality.
- Building façades throughout the area vary in nature, including the condition, materials, and scale, and some are in need of improvement.
- The landscaping on some private properties is in need of improvement.
- There are thirteen properties included in the Township’s Heritage Inventory, including a significant concentration located along Victoria Street.

**Public Realm**

- The Morriston streetscape, while only two lanes wide, carries a high volume of truck and passenger vehicle traffic.
- The sidewalks are narrow and where there is a boulevard, it is paved with asphalt. There are no street trees, landscaping or street furniture.
- The pedestrian environment is unpleasant and uninviting.
- The Historic Corner Block” located at the northwest corner of Queen Street and Church Street. This public park contains a monument with the school bell from the Morriston School
- There are also a number of recreational properties including baseball diamonds off Currie and Back Street.





Figure 15: There are 2 popular restaurants located in Morriston and other specialized commercial uses



Figure 16: There are some vacant buildings in need of maintenance and repair.

### ***Economic Activity***

- A limited range of specialized commercial uses is provided, including 2 restaurants, a mennonite handcrafted furniture store, a furniture/décor shop, the Morriston Village Plaza, a natural medicine centre, and Picard's Peanuts.
- Commercial uses cater principally to local residents and the travelling public.

## **5.3 Brock Road Mixed-Use/Industrial Corridor Assessment**

### ***Official Plan***

- The Brock Road mixed-use and industrial corridor is designated Rural Industrial on Schedule A7 of the County's Official Plan, with the exception of lands located south of the 401 and north of the Morriston Urban Centre, which are designated Secondary Agriculture.
- The Rural Industrial designation is primarily intended to accommodate dry industrial uses and limited commercial uses which benefit from a rural location.
- The Rural Industrial Area along Brock Road Corridor relies on rural servicing, private water and sewage systems.
- The Rural Industrial designation permits the following industrial and commercial uses:
  - Industrial - Manufacturing, processing, fabrication and assembly of raw materials or repair, servicing and storage of materials
  - Commercial - Service focused with limited accessory retail and may include business or professional offices, farm machinery sales, farm supplies, farm produce sale, small scale motels or inns, small scale restaurants and automobile sales and services.

- The Secondary Agricultural designation applies to lands that are within the Rural System but not prime-agricultural. Permitted uses include agricultural and small scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

### Zoning

- The Brock Road corridor is generally zoned Industrial (I) and Highway Commercial (C2), and Agriculture (A), as shown on Figure 17.
- Lands designated Highway Commercial are generally located along Wellington Road 46. Lands designated Industrial are located in the Kerr Industrial Park and Nicholas-Beaver Industrial Park.
- There are site-specific exceptions within the Industrial and Highway Commercial designations which permit uses such as a sale/auction facility, gas bar, transportation terminal, veterinary service and laboratory or research facility.

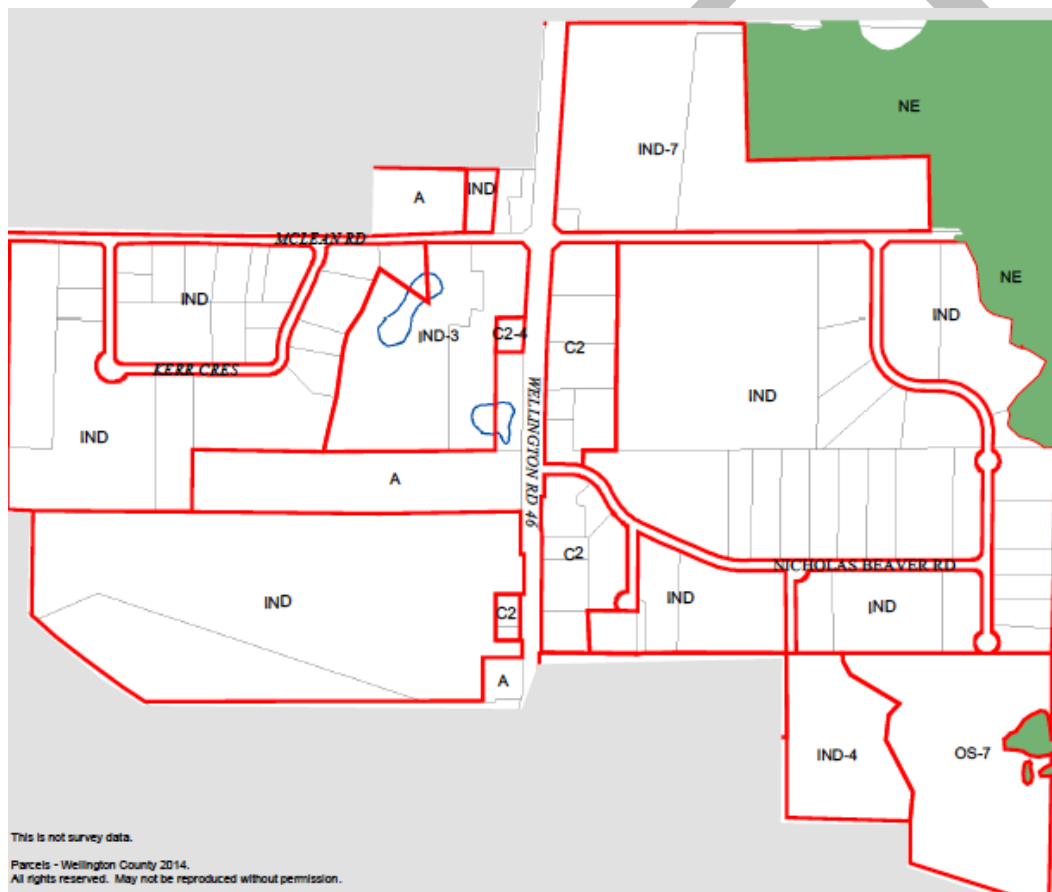


Figure 17: Map A-4 – Township of Puslinch Zoning By-law No 19/85 (Aberfoyle Industrial Area).

### **Land Use and Built Form**

- Most of the industrial uses are located in the Kerr Industrial Park and Nicholas-Beaver Industrial Park, and Highway Commercial Uses are located along Brock Road/Wellington Road 46.
- Two Heritage properties listed in the Heritage Inventory: the Crown Cemetery and Duff's Presbyterian Church.
- Significant natural features are found northwest of Nestle Waters Inc. such as the Aberfoyle Woods Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA).
- The physical condition and facades of buildings throughout the area varies. Many appear to be in generally good condition and are well maintained.
- There are few industrial eye-sores.
- The landscaping on some private properties could be enhanced.
- There are some examples of properties where outdoor storage could be screened.



Figure 18: There are no vacant, developable highway commercial properties located along the Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor.



Figure 19: There are a number of recently developed industrial properties located in the Township's industrial parks, and very few industrial eye sores.

### **Public Realm**

- This mixed-use/industrial corridor is car and truck-dominated.
- The posted speed limit along this four-lane section is 70 km/h, with gravel shoulders north of McLean Road and paved shoulders to the south.
- There is little to no landscaping or street trees. Signage is minimal.

### **Economic Activity**

- Industrial business parks offer a wide range of industrial uses and recent developments in the area include Mammoet and Maple Leaf Food.
- There are a number of gas stations and other service-related uses located in proximity to Highway 401.

- The Go Transit Park n' Ride will eventually be replaced by a permanent GO station.
- There are approximately 245 acres of vacant, developable industrial lands available (according to the County's economic development strategy). However, none of these lands are serviced.
- There are no vacant, developable highway commercial properties.

## 7.0 CONSULTATION AND SUMMARY OF INPUT

**A number of consultation activities and events were completed as part of Phase One of the CIP project, to better understand the local assets and opportunities for community improvement, the findings of which are detailed in this Section.**

### 7.1 Stakeholder Workshop

A Stakeholder Workshop was held on Wednesday May 13, 2015 as part of the Phase One consultation efforts for the CIP project. The workshop was attended by approximately 20 participants made up of local stakeholders and business representatives, County staff, and Council members.

The purpose of the workshop and open house was to:

- Introduce the project, process, and goals;
- Provide an overview of community improvement planning and some of the tools that can be implemented through a CIP;
- Discuss local issues and needs within Aberfoyle, Morriston and the Mixed-use/industrial corridor as well as opportunities for improvement in these areas; and,
- Explore opportunities to apply community improvement tools locally.

The following is a brief summary of the ideas and input obtained during the CIP Workshop.

#### ***Identifying Assets***

Participants were asked to discuss and record specific assets the CIP could build on within the community. The following key themes/ideas emerged from the workshops:

- *Morriston and Aberfoyle have an eclectic range of local heritage buildings.*
- *Morriston contains good recreation areas and a lot of greenspace.*
- *Go Transit park and ride is a transportation asset within Puslinch.*
- *Victoria Road and its heritage buildings are a gem to Morriston.*
- *The restaurant area in Morriston is attractive and welcoming.*
- *The pond in Morriston is a good feature which the community could highlight.*
- *Large number of travelling public drive through the Brock Road Corridor from Morriston to Aberfoyle.*
- *Stone buildings contribute to the village environment.*
- *Strong antique community within Aberfoyle.*
- *Proximity of the agricultural and rural community is an asset in Puslinch.*

## **Opportunities for Improvement**

Participants were asked to discuss and record specific needs and opportunities for community improvement in each of the areas discussed. The following key themes/ideas emerged from the workshops:

- *There is an opportunity to attract more visitors and tourists to Puslinch as a whole.*
- *There is a need to hold festivals and events, which could assist in attracting visitors.*
- *There is an opportunity to build on the Streetscape Project along Brock Road by providing lighting, signage/banners and flowers along the right-of-way.*
- *It is critical to have traffic calming measures in place.*
- *There is a need to get people out of their cars and to stop for a visit to the urban centres.*
- *There is a need to improve signage and wayfinding.*
- *Improved gateway features are required.*
- *There is a need for façade improvements in the downtowns/mainstreets.*
- *There are a lot of vacancies and empty storefronts.*
- *There is a need to protect/restore heritage buildings to recreate/reclaim what the community used to be.*
- *There is a need for improved trails, linkages, and connections throughout Puslinch.*
- *There is a need to improve the walkability of Morriston and Aberfoyle.*
- *There is a need to provide bicycle infrastructure for the cyclist community.*
- *Parking facilities (on and off-street) are required in Morriston and Aberfoyle.*
- *There is a need to maintain the village nature of Morriston and Aberfoyle.*
- *There is an opportunity to attract more public art to dress up the communities. Things like flower boxes, awnings, improved landscaping, sign boards, etc. could assist with improving private property.*
- *There is an opportunity to link the communities and create a Puslinch brand that features the unique assets of Morriston and Aberfoyle.*
- *Guidelines for development to achieve and maintain the village environment would be beneficial.*

## **Places of Inspiration**

During the Stakeholder Workshop, participants were asked to identify other downtown areas they like to visit, which could represent elements of a long-term vision for the urban centres/corridor of Morriston and Aberfoyle. The following downtown areas were identified as sources of inspiration/a long-term vision:

- St. Jacobs
- Erin
- Elora
- Ayr
- Georgetown
- Guelph
- Campbellford
- Brookville
- Waterdown
- Elmira



Figures 20 and 21: When asked to identify downtown areas that could be looked to for inspiration or a long-term vision for the CIP project, respondents identified St. Jacobs (left) and Waterdown (right) and others.

### **Identifying a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA)**

Participants were asked to discuss and record their thoughts with respect to identifying a Community Improvement Project Area for the Puslinch CIP. The following key themes/ideas emerged from the workshops:

- *In regards to the Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor, participants were of the opinion that there is an opportunity to link the urban centres and ‘main street’ areas of Aberfoyle and Morriston by including the Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor as part of the Community Improvement Project Area.*
- *However, given that the industrial parks located beyond Brock Road appear to be in generally good condition and developing on their own, it was also noted that only the commercial properties fronting onto Brock Road should be included in the CIPA.*
- *Time and money made available through the CIP should focus on properties located along the corridor, and not on the industrial properties located in industrial parks.*

### **Identifying Potential CIP Programs**

Finally, participants were asked to discuss and record their ideas about the types of municipal and financial incentive programs that should be included in the CIP.

The following comments/potential municipal programs were identified:

- *Streetscaping improvements are required to create a welcoming environment within the Brock Road Corridor connecting Aberfoyle and Morriston.*
- *Urban Design guidelines should be implemented to establish standards for redevelopment and improvements in the urban centres.*

- *Trail improvements are necessary to create safety for active transportation users and to connect Aberfoyle and Morriston.*

The following comments/potential financial incentive programs were identified:

- *Façade Improvements Grants*
- *Landscaping Grants*
- *Grants for public art*
- *Heritage Restoration Grants*

### **A headline for Puslinch in 2025**

As a more creative opportunity to provide input to the CIP project, stakeholders and Council members were also asked to contribute their ideas to a ‘graffiti wall.’ A large piece of paper was posted in the meeting room, and at the end of the meeting, participants were asked to come up with a newspaper headline that describes the Township of Puslinch in 2025, as a result of having a CIP in place.

The following is a list of the headlines on the ‘graffiti wall’ at the end of the workshop, as shown on Figure 22 below:

- *Puslinch a balanced, vibrant and diverse community*
- *Enjoy living and working in Puslinch*
- *Welcome to the Township of Puslinch where we care about the past but look to the future*
- *Puslinch holds great festivals*
- *Come back to your Irish and Scottish roots*

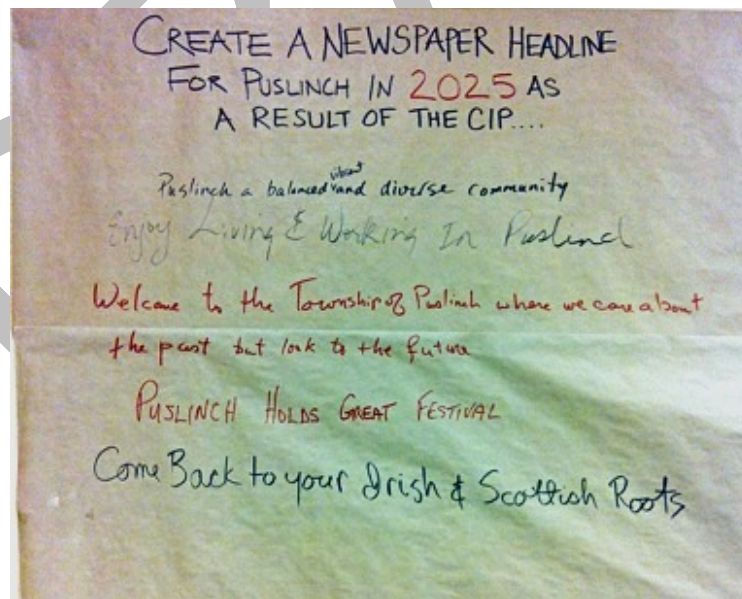


Figure 22: Participants were asked to create a headline for the Township in the year 2025, as a result of having a CIP in place.

## 7.2 Community Survey

A Community Survey was conducted as part of the consultation events for Phase One of the Township of Puslinch CIP project. The purpose of the survey was to collect information from community members, and downtown/industrial business owners/tenants. The survey was made available on the Township's website, in the local library and in Township's offices from May 1, 2015 to Friday May 29, 2015.

The survey was designed to determine:

- Local needs and opportunities for community improvement within key areas of the Township;
- Information about local businesses in terms of needs and opportunities for improvement, expansion, and business development;
- Familiarity and level of interest in community improvement plans; and
- Types of programs that may be of assistance to the business community.

The following points highlight some general information about the respondents/their businesses:

- Half of the respondents indicated they currently own a business in the Township of Puslinch;
- 75% of respondents live in either Morriston or Aberfoyle.
- 50% of respondents have heard about a CIP before
- 100% of respondents identified the need for streetscape improvements,

Respondents were asked whether or not they own a business in Puslinch and if so, they were also asked to comment on the types of improvements or changes to their businesses they would make in the near future. Of those who responded, most were interested in the following changes or improvements:

- Provide different services;
- Make structural improvements to buildings;
- Make improvements to building façade;
- Make improvements to landscaping;
- Restore heritage features; and
- Improve energy use/efficiency.

Notably, according to the respondents, the main barrier with respect to moving forward with the changes or improvements identified was the cost.

Respondents were asked why they visited downtown/main streets of Aberfoyle and Morriston. The following responses were provided:

- Stores and shops
- Restaurants/cafes
- Special events
- Recreation
- I live there
- I work there/own a business there
- I avoid this area
- Just driving through



Respondents were asked to identify the key issues and areas of improvements in the downtown/main street of Morriston and Aberfoyle and the Brock Road mixed-use/industrial corridor. The following issues were identified:

- Lack of variety of stores, shops, restaurants/cafes
- Streetscape improvements are required
- Lack of signage
- Lack of services
- No parking
- Not pedestrian friendly
- Highway 6 traffic
- Improvement to infrastructure are required
- Physical improvements to buildings, facades and signage are required
- Heritage buildings need protection
- Other improvements to private property are required such as landscaping and parking

Finally, respondents were asked to comment on the types of financial incentive and municipal leadership programs that they would like to see included in a CIP for Puslinch. The following tables summarize the responses:

*Table 8: Financial Incentive Programs Identified that Should be Included in the CIP*

Financial Incentive Programs	Responses
Façade and signage improvement grants/loans	60%
Building improvement grants/loans	60%
Space conversion for commercial/ expansion for businesses	40%
Tax assistance	60%
Rebates/cancellations of municipal/county fees	60%

*Table 9: Municipal Leadership Programs Identified that Should be Included in the CIP*

Municipal Programs	Responses
Streetscape improvements	100%
Infrastructure improvements	60%
Tourism marketing	60%
Community Branding	80%
Special Planning Studies	40%

## 8.0 OPTIONS FOR A CIP IN PUSLINCH

The following section identifies options for consideration by the Township with respect to key elements of a CIP. These options are to be discussed with Township Council and staff, stakeholders, and members of the community, and are intended to provide the basis for the development of a CIP in Phase Two of the project.

## 8.1 Summary of Findings

As a result of the background research and consultation completed and documented in previous sections of this memo, a number of specific findings with respect to the need and opportunities for community improvement in each of the areas of focus have emerged. Table 10 below provides a summary of the key findings.

*Table 10: Summary of Findings for each of the Areas of Focus*

Area	Assets to Build On	Needs/Opportunities for Improvement
Aberfoyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heritage buildings</li> <li>Natural Features</li> <li>Connection to agricultural and rural surroundings</li> <li>Aberfoyle Mill is a landmark</li> <li>Specialty commercial uses with an existing niche in antiques and décor</li> <li>Recreational and civic uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoning could be updated to be consistent with development objectives</li> <li>More parking opportunities could be provided</li> <li>Some buildings could be improved in terms of their overall physical condition and facades</li> <li>Landscaping on private properties could be enhanced</li> <li>Pedestrian environment could be safer and more welcoming</li> <li>Linkages within and surrounding Aberfoyle and Morriston could be improved to allow for safer and more convenient pedestrian movement</li> <li>Infrastructure for active transportation could be provided</li> <li>Streetscaping could be enhanced and improvements to the public realm could be made</li> </ul>
Morriston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heritage buildings</li> <li>Natural Features</li> <li>Connection to agricultural and rural surroundings</li> <li>Specialty commercial uses with 2 popular restaurants</li> <li>Recreational and open space uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateways and signage could be provided</li> <li>A wider range of commercial uses could be provided</li> <li>Some buildings/properties could be expanded or redeveloped or converted to allow for a wider range of commercial uses</li> </ul>
Brock Road Mixed-Use/Industrial Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heritage buildings</li> <li>Few industrial eye-sores</li> <li>Go Transit Park n' Ride and future permanent GO station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscaping on private properties could be enhanced</li> <li>Outdoor storage on some private properties could be screened from Brock Road Corridor</li> <li>Some buildings could be improved in terms of their overall physical condition and facades</li> <li>Streetscaping could be enhanced and improvements to the public realm could be made</li> <li>Gateways and signage could be provided</li> <li>Linkages to Aberfoyle and Morriston could be improved to allow for safer and more convenient pedestrian movement</li> </ul>

**On the basis of the above, the findings of Phase One demonstrates the following:**

1. There are a number of unique features and assets in each of the areas of focus that should remain distinct and can be highlighted and built upon through improvements to both public and private property.
2. There are also a number of needs with respect to the built, economic, and social environment that are common to all of the areas of focus, and there is an opportunity to address these needs in a coordinated manner and to connect Wellington Road 46 (the main street of Aberfoyle), Brock Road (an existing mixed-use and industrial corridor) and Queen Street or Highway 6 (the main street of Morriston) and promote one economic corridor in Puslinch.

## 8.2 Community Improvement Vision and Goals

### A Potential Vision for the Puslinch CIP

Although it is not necessary for a CIP to set out a Vision for its CIP/Community Improvement Project Area, on the basis of the findings above and the potential for the CIP to help promote/create one economic corridor in Puslinch, the Township could include the following potential Vision in its CIP:

#### *A Vision for 'Our Corridor':*

*Over the next 10 years 'Our Corridor' will be integrated and transformed into an attractive, prosperous, safe, and distinctive economic corridor. Residents and visitors will come to 'Our Corridor', to shop, eat, socialize, celebrate, play and explore. They will be able to move around through a network of roads, paths, and trails. Our corridor will be a source of inspiration and local pride.*

### Potential Goals for the Puslinch CIP

As noted in Section 2.1 of this memo, a Community Improvement Plan typically sets out a set of goals, which demonstrate what the CIP is meant to achieve. Based on the findings and possible Vision above, the following possible goals have been identified for the Township to consider:

#### *The Goals of the 'Our Corridor' CIP are to:*

1. Promote beautification and restoration of public and private property;
2. Celebrate and restore local built and cultural heritage;
3. Attract new business development;
4. Support and promote existing businesses;
5. Encourage active transportation and enhance recreational opportunities;  
and
6. Provide attractive streetscapes and improved pedestrian environments.

As part of Phase 2 of the Community Improvement Plan project, Township staff, elected officials, stakeholders and members of the public should consider the possible Vision and list of possible goals to determine which, if any, are key priorities with respect to community improvement in Puslinch.

Once the vision and key goals are identified, a set of objectives will also be developed for the purpose of monitoring and implementing the CIP. Municipal leadership programs (as discussed below) and financial incentives (also discussed below) will be tailored based on the goals identified by the Township.

### 8.3 Community Improvement Project Area

As mentioned earlier, in order to prepare a CIP, a municipality is first required to designate a Community Improvement Project area to which the CIP will apply; however, based on the Phase One background work completed for the Township's CIP project, it has been determined that two Community Improvement Project Areas are currently identified by the Wellington County Official Plan for the urban centres of Aberfoyle and Morriston, as shown on Figures 5 and 6 of this memo.

For the purpose of identifying options for a CIP that responds to the current goals, needs, and priorities of the Township of Puslinch, the existing Community Improvement Project Areas have been assessed based on the findings of the Phase One (summarized in Table 10) and the potential Vision and Goals for **'Our Corridor'** (presented in Section 8.2). The following observations have been made:

- a) The existing Community Improvement Project Areas for Morriston and Aberfoyle are very large and currently include a large number of residential properties that are not located along or adjacent to Wellington Road 46 (the main street of Aberfoyle), and Queen Street or Highway 6 (the main street of Morriston);
- b) The existing Community Improvement Project Area for Morriston does not include all commercial properties located along Queen Street or Highway 6 (the main street of Morriston); and
- c) The mixed-use/industrial corridor along Brock Road between the two urban centres is not included in the existing Community Improvement Project Areas.

On this basis, the Township should consider the following options with respect to identifying a Community Improvement Project area as part of Phase 2 of the Community Improvement Project.

#### **Option A – Maintain the Existing Community Improvement Project Areas:**

The Township could carry forward the existing Community Improvement Project areas as identified in the County's Official Plan on Schedules A7-1 and A7-2. However, with this option the Township would only be able to offer financial incentive programs and implement Municipal leadership strategies within the urban centres of Aberfoyle and Morriston and would not be able to apply community improvement tools to the connecting industrial mixed-use corridor. The potential Vision presented in Section 8.1 would not

necessarily apply.

### **Option B – Amend the Existing Community Improvement Project Areas:**

The Township could amend the existing Community Improvement Project areas as identified in the County's Official Plan in order to better address the Vision and goals identified above. However, it is noted that should the Township wish to proceed with amending the Community Improvement Project area, an amendment to the County's Official Plan may also be required subject to the extent of the proposed change. The Township would also be required to demonstrate that the area to be included in the Community Improvement Project Area meets the County's Official Plan criteria.

With respect to the specific amendments that could be made, the Township could consider the following:

- a) A more detailed property-by-property review of the existing Community Improvement Project areas could be completed to determine whether or not the residential properties that are currently included should or should not be carried forward, and to identify if any additional commercial (or other designated) properties should be included.
- b) The Township could complete a detailed property-by-property review of the Brock Road corridor (between Aberfoyle and Morriston) to determine which industrial and/or mixed-use properties should be included.

### **8.3 Municipal Leadership Programs**

As discussed, one of the key elements of a CIP is a Municipal Leadership Strategy. These Strategies identify a set of programs, studies, and other initiatives that may be implemented by the Township as part of the implementation of the CIP (subject to the Township's capital budget and the availability of resources) to act as a catalyst for private sector investment, and to demonstrate municipal commitment to addressing the needs and opportunities in the Community Improvement Project Area.

On the basis of the findings of Phase One, and the potential Vision and goals for '**Our Corridor**', the following program options could be identified as part of a Municipal Leadership Strategy to provide coordinated short and long-term support for achieving the goals of the CIP:

#### **Option A - Strategy for County Participation in the CIP**

The Township may explore the possibility for participation from Wellington County in the '**Our Corridor**' CIP. A Working Committee made up of Township and County staff may be organized in order to discuss options/develop a strategy for the County's participation, including:

- The County's goals, objectives, and policy framework for participation in local CIP programs;

- Options for County participation in certain Financial Incentives offered through the Plan; and
- Parameters for participation, such as the review/approval of applications, and agreement execution.

### **Option B - Zoning Review**

The Township could undertake a review of zones and zoning provisions that currently apply to the **'Our Corridor' Community Improvement Project Area** in order to ensure that the regulatory regime:

- Conforms to the overall policy direction of the County's Official Plan;
- Is consistent with Township development objectives;
- Is supportive of revitalization, renewal and the Township's overall vision for each of the areas;
- Facilitates the development of a particular use or form that is believed to be most beneficial for the community;
- Provides certainty to developers; and
- Implements contemporary zoning tools, such as Form base zoning, bonusing; zoning with conditions; and holding by-laws.

### **Option C - Marketing Strategy**

The Township could develop a marketing strategy to "brand" and market **'Our Corridor'** and promote businesses, tourism and recreational activities. This Strategy could convey the message and imaging that **'Our Corridor'** unique heritage communities with a high quality of life for residents and a strong appeal for businesses. Tools such as web-based resources could be developed to profile the attributes of the **'Our Corridor'**. Additional initiatives may include preparing brochures, inserts, and advertisements for local and regional newspapers.

### **Option D – Heritage Conservation Initiatives**

Under the Ontario Heritage Act, the Township could explore the potential to pass by-laws to designate properties of cultural heritage value or interest. The Township could also implement a Heritage Property Tax Relief Program under Section 365.2 of the Municipal Act, which allows the Township to provide tax assistance for owners of designated heritage buildings (as discussed in Section 3.2 of this memo). The program recognizes that historic buildings sometimes have higher maintenance and repair costs and is therefore intended to support owners who choose to protect their buildings through a heritage designation. A Community Improvement Plan is not required to implement this tool. In order to offer this incentive, the Township may develop program parameters (such as amount of relief, funding, and remedial actions) and pass a program by-law to adopt the Heritage Property Tax Relief Program. Consideration may also be made to initiating a study for a Puslinch Heritage Conservation District.

## Option E – Development of a Streetscape Strategy

The Township could undertake a Streetscape Improvement Plan initiative that will build upon other recent/on-going initiatives and establish a more comprehensive Vision and conceptual designs for improvements to public landscapes and streetscapes in/leading to **‘Our Corridor’**. The Streetscape Improvement Plan will aim to connect the main streets with other key areas of the Township, support pedestrian and vehicular circulation, improve amenities and public spaces, and promote a design that is generally consistent with the community identity. Specifically, the Streetscape Master Plan could address:

- Enhanced pedestrian routes;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Gateway features;
- Key intersections and crosswalks;
- Street furnishings, such as benches, planters, garbage bins, and planters;
- Public art installations;
- Gathering points;
- Tree planting and planting beds; and
- On-street signage and wayfinding.

## Option F – Parking Strategy

The Township may undertake a Parking Strategy for ‘Our Corridor’. The Parking Study would examine the need and options for additional parking, including Municipal, on-street, and private off-street parking spaces. Specifically, the Parking Study would:

- Inventory existing parking supply;
- Determine current demand;
- Project future demand;
- Identify and assess options in the urban centres; and
- Propose a recommended Parking Strategy.

## Option G – Festivals and Events Strategy

Since festivals and events can serve as an economic stimulator that attracts people to downtowns and mainstreet areas, the Township could develop a strategy for creating and holding one event per season in **‘Our Corridor’**. Some examples of successful events and festivals that are held elsewhere, which could be explored by the Township include:

- Arts Festivals
- Concerts
- Doors Open Events
- Farmers Markets
- Agricultural Fairs
- Heritage Festivals

## **Option H – Implementation of the Urban Design Guidelines**

The Township could implement its existing 2010 Urban Design Guidelines (where they apply) as part of the review and evaluation of applications for financial incentive programs that will be offered through the 'Our Corridor' CIP to ensure that proposed improvement projects are consistent with desired design approaches.

## **Option I - Implementation of the County Active Transportation Plan**

The Township could also implement active transportation routes proposed by the 2012 **Wellington County Active Transportation Plan**, including shared roadways, signed bicycle routes, paved shoulders along County roads, and off-road walking routes.

### **8.4 Financial Incentive Programs**

The most significant element of a CIP are the financial incentive programs that are offered, which are intended to stimulate private sector investment in buildings and properties. Incentives are usually in the form of tax assistance, grants, and loans and are provided to private landowners/tenants of buildings located in the Community Improvement Project Area, by application, provided that the proposed improvement projects will help achieve the goals and objectives of the CIP.

To further address the potential Vision and goals for the '**Our Corridor**' CIP, the following incentive options have also been identified for consideration:

#### **Option A – Façade, Signage, and Landscaping Improvement Grant Program**

The purpose of the program is to assist with the financing of improvements to a building's façade or signage, or to assist with other eligible improvements to private property (i.e., landscaping), which may otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a property owner or tenant.

#### **Option B - Building Improvement Grant Program**

This program would assist with the maintenance and physical improvement of existing buildings that may otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a property owner or tenant. Projects may be undertaken in order to meet the current Building Code, improve aesthetic quality, upgrade servicing, and to provide for safe and usable eligible uses.

#### **Option C - Building Conversion and Expansion Grant Program**

The purpose of the program is to assist in the small-scale conversion of existing vacant space into new commercial, mixed-use and other eligible uses. Additionally, this program will assist with the minor expansion of existing eligible uses to support growing businesses thereby increasing non-residential assessments.

#### **Option D - Major Redevelopment/Revitalization Tax Assistance Program**



The Tax Increase Equivalent Grant for Major Projects is intended to stimulate investment by effectively deferring part of the increase in property taxation as a result of the major development, redevelopment, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of lands or building. Grants that are equivalent to a percentage of the resulting municipal property tax increase are provided to a property owner following the reassessment of the property.

#### **Option E - Motor Vehicle and Bicycle Parking Improvement Grant**

The motor vehicle and bicycle parking improvement grant is intended to assist property owners and tenants in adding motor vehicle parking and bicycle parking to their property and improving the quality of motor vehicle and bicycle parking.

#### **Option F - Planning and Building Permit Fees Rebate**

The purpose of this program is to provide a rebate for a portion of the fees required for planning applications or building permits in relation to an improvement project. This program is intended to reduce the costs of making improvements to properties by assisting with the planning and building permit fees that may be incurred in association with an improvement.

### **9.0 NEXT STEPS**

**The completion of this Memo brings the Township and consulting team to the end of Phase One of the CIP Project.**

This Report will serve as the basis of and background to the development of a CIP in Phase 2 of the project. The following is a brief overview of the next steps in the CIP project process:

- Discussion options and recommendations contained in this Report with Township staff;
- Present the strategy to Township Council;
- Consult with Stakeholders on the options and recommendations; and
- Prepare a draft CIP document.