



FORMAL REPORT

To: Mayor Strathdee and Members of Council

Prepared by: Brent Kittmer, CAO/Clerk

Date of Meeting: 8 May 2018

Subject: **CAO 15-2018 Main Street funding Agreement**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this staff report is to facilitate Council's approval of the Main Street funding agreement, and determine to which projects the funding will be directed.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT CAO 15-2018 regarding the Main Street Funding agreement with AMO be received; and

THAT Council approves By-law 48-2018 which authorizes a Main Street Funding transfer agreement in the amount of \$44,072.5302 between the Town of St. Marys and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; and

THAT Council distributes the Main Street Funding to the following projects:

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BACKGROUND

On January 23, 2018 the Minister of OMAFRA and Small Business announced the Main Street Revitalization Initiative, the government's approach to the distribution of \$26 million support for Ontario's main streets / downtown areas and their business communities. All single and lower tier municipal governments (except Toronto) are receiving funding that will enhance and revitalize downtowns and main street areas.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has signed an agreement with the Province to administer and distribute the funding to municipalities (except for the City of Toronto). Funding will follow a model similar to the Federal Gas Tax Fund, and there is no application process. Each municipality is provided a one-time payment of funding. The funding allocation for the Town of St. Marys is \$44,072.53

To accept the funding, the Town will need a by-law authorizing the funding agreement with AMO (see attached in by-law section of agenda). In addition, the Town will need to identify the program category, the project(s), anticipated results and estimated cost when Council deals with the agreement by-law. This information is to be provided to AMO with the signed funding agreement.

REPORT

The purpose of this staff report is to facilitate Council's approval of the Main Street funding agreement, and to determine which projects will be funded.

The Town is able to claim any costs which have been incurred after April 1, 2018 on an eligible project. The length of the funding agreement is through to March 31, 2020.

Projects are only eligible if they are located in the Town's main street areas, as defined through an existing Community Improvement Plan or other municipal land use planning policy. The agreement sets out the types of projects which are eligible for funding, with the criteria listed below.

Eligible Projects

- 1. Community Improvement Plan** – Costs directly and reasonably incurred by the Recipient for construction, renewal, renovation or redevelopment or material enhancement activities funded under **existing** Community Improvement Plan financial incentive programs. This includes:
 - 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** – Activities funded under the Municipal Physical Infrastructure category, including projects in downtown or main street areas that will support the role of small businesses in main street areas. This includes construction, renewal, renovation or redevelopment or material enhancement activities that implement priority financial incentives in existing Community Improvement Plans 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.

When reviewing existing Town approved programs and projects, the following list of currently eligible programs/projects includes:

Under Stream #1

- Façade Improvement Program and Designated Heritage Property Grant programs (if located on Queen Street or in the Core Commercial District) - \$40,000 is included in the 2018 approved budget for these programs.
- Heritage Tax Rebate Program (if located on Queen Street or in the Core Commercial District) - \$25,000 is included in the 2018 approved budget for these programs.
- Town Hall Window Replacement Project – this project would qualify as an improvement of community energy efficiency.

Under Stream #2

- Town wayfinding signage strategy and plan – budget of \$35,000 with 50% funding, or \$17,500, from the Rural Economic Development program. The AMO funding agreement restricts the Town from stacking funding contributions beyond 50% of the total costs. Because the RED grant already funds this project at 50% Main Street funding cannot be used.
- Downtown Bike Parking Area – 2018 approved capital project with a budget of \$10,000.

- Town Heritage Festival and Car Show – as approved in the 2018 operating budget at \$13,700 for these two events.
- River Rock Festival – 2018 approved community grant of \$10,000 (if this option was chosen the Town would need to directly fund the costs that Main Street funding is used to offset. This is required to be in compliance with the funding agreement as the organizer is not an eligible recipient for funding transfer).
- Proposed Public Art Program – in the fall of 2017 the BIA requested that the Town consider a public art program. Council considered a report from staff that provided information to Council on how these programs are typically administered by municipalities (i.e. directly, and indirectly through a BIA).

At the September 12, 2017 meeting Council passed the following resolution:

Resolution 2017-09-12-08

THAT COR 34-2017 Public Art Program report be received for information; and,
 THAT Council supports a Public Art Program; and,
 THAT a Committee of Council be struck to implement and oversee this program;
 and,
 THAT staff report back on a Terms of Reference for the committee.

It was staff's intent to bring forward the terms of reference for the Public Art Committee in the fall of 2018 along with the broader review of all advisory committees that has been directed by Council.

The St. Marys BIA prefers to see work on the public art project proceed in 2018. The planned scope of work is up to 5 murals on different buildings. The BIA has taken the initiative to develop a committee to provide assistance on this project. The members include: Carey Pop (Council/BIA), Andrea Macko (public/staff), Dan Schneider (HCD Committee), Cathy Forster (EDAC), Maggie Richardson (youth), Paul King (Heritage St. Marys), and Janis Fread (Heritage St. Marys). In addition, each building owner where a mural is planned will be included in the committee.

The BIA met on April 9, 2018 and has recommended that Council allocate some, or all, of the Main Street funding be allocated to this project. The following resolution was passed by the BIA:

THAT a request be made for partial funds from the Town's Main Street Revitalization Initiative Grant be used to partner with the BIA's public art initiative.

The BIA has confirmed that their request is for Council to allocate \$20,000 of the Main Street funding received to this project. If this option was chosen the Town would need to directly fund the costs that Main Street funding is used to offset. This is required to be in compliance with the funding agreement as the BIA is not an eligible recipient for funding transfer.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this staff report is to facilitate Council's decision on which projects will be identified to receive Main Street Funding. The Town is fortunate that a number of existing programs and projects exists, meaning that the funding can be used as a source to fund approved 2018 costs. Council has also received a recommendation from the BIA to direct some of the Main Street funding to the proposed public art program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Town will be provided a one-time payment of funding upon signing the Main Street funding agreement. The funding allocation for the Town of St. Marys is \$44,072.53

STRATEGIC PLAN

- ☒ This initiative is supported by the following priorities, outcomes, and tactics in the Plan.
 - Pillar #2 Communications and Marketing
 - **Priority:** Community Events Promotion - Actively promoting existing cultural/community events while seeking to establish new or re-branded signature events (such as festivals) may result in broader audiences and increase the appeal of the Town.
 - **Priority:** Wayfinding and Identity - A comprehensive approach to identity promotion - including wayfinding - will help St Marys in terms of both promoting itself as a destination to the outside world (tourism and attracting new residents), and supporting a sense of common community with current residents.
 - Pillar #4 Culture and Recreation, (position culture as an economic driver)
 - **Priority:** Downtown Revitalization Plan –The downtown should be perceived as a safe, central, and culturally vibrant gathering area. Ultimately, the transition will be to transform St Marys from a HERITAGE to a CULTURAL experience...
 - Tactics:
 - Make the downtown pedestrian-friendly through streetscape design.
 - Offer incentives to new businesses to occupy vacant storefronts.
 - Create the winning conditions to attract cultural/commercial enterprises into the core.
 - Investigate options for incentivizing or enforcing standards for heritage properties after the review of the HCDP.
 - Investigate the idea of providing allowances for accessibility changes to buildings under the Community Improvement Program (CIP).
 - Transform alleyways into art/craft vendor areas.
 - Investigate prospect of turning second storey downtown space into rentals or studios (see Housing pillar).
 - **Priority:** Emphasize Culture as a Key Economic Driver for the Community
 - Tactics:
 - Provide an attractive and well-functioning streetscape in the downtown core.
 - Leverage the downtown architecture, in particular the alleyways, to enhance the cultural experience in the downtown core.
 - Ensure that marketing and promotion remains a key driver in future economic development strategies.

OTHERS CONSULTED

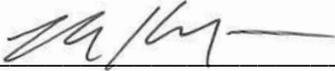
Senior Staff

ATTACHMENTS

1. Main Street Funding agreement

REVIEWED BY

Recommended by the CAO



Brent Kittmer
CAO / Clerk