



# **Downtown Wawa Financial Incentive Programs**

**OVERVIEW OF GRANTS  
HOW TO APPLY**



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# Wawa Downtown Community Improvement Plan

## Financial Incentive - Overview Package

This information package contains outlines Wawa's Downtown CIP Financial Incentive Programs and available grants to property and building owners in the Downtown Wawa CIP area, shown in the area map below. The purpose, description and eligibility requirements for each grant available is outlined in this document.

Applicants may apply for individual grants or combine multiple grants for a single site or development to no more than \$20,000 per property per funding round, subject to the approval of Wawa Municipal Council. Any grants are subject to approval and municipal budget allocations by Council on an annual basis.

### **AVAILABLE INCENTIVES**

- 1) Residential/Office Rehabilitation and Conversion Grant
- 2) Activation Grant for Vacant Buildings
- 3) Building Façade & Signage Improvement Grant
- 4) Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant)
- 5) Tax Increment Equivalent Grant

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## General Eligibility Requirements

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All Downtown CIP Financial Incentives must meet the following general requirements, as well as the individual requirements specified under each program.

- 1** Qualifying properties and buildings must be in the Downtown CIP Area;
- 2** Projects must contribute to achieving the vision and goals of the Downtown CIP;
- 3** Projects must represent a permanent improvement to the property or building and not a lifecycle replacement of existing materials or structures. Trailers, sheds, hanging planters and other non-permanent structures will not be considered for funding;
- 4** Projects shall be in accordance with the Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, Municipal Property Standards By-law and all other by-laws and regulations applicable;
- 5** Projects valued less than \$500 will not be eligible for funding;
- 6** Complete applications must be submitted to the Municipality and approved by Council prior to the commencement of any eligible costs;
- 7** If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make an application;
- 8** Applications must include plans, estimates, reports, and details to satisfy the Municipality with respect to costs and conformity to program requirements;
- 9** The applicant shall be required to enter into an agreement with the Municipality which will specify the terms, duration, and default provisions of the incentive to be provided;
- 10** The Municipality reserves the right to audit the cost of any expenses claimed;
- 11** If the applicant is in default of any program requirements, the Municipality may delay, reduce or cancel the approved grant/incentive and require repayment of all assistance;
- 12** Municipality staff, officials, and/or agents may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the Financial Incentive Programs offered by the Municipality;
- 13** Eligible applicants may apply for one (1) or more of the incentive programs and the total of all tax assistance and grants may not exceed the eligible cost of the improvements;
- 14** All expenses incurred will be reimbursed when the work has been completed and paid invoices are submitted to the Municipality. Owner/Applicant labour not eligible;
- 15** Applicants and owners must not be in default of any property taxes or other municipal charges. Any outstanding work orders must be addressed prior to any grant approval;

# **Application Process**

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## **Step 1: Pre-application Consultation, Application Submission and Acceptance**

Prior to applying, applicants are required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with the Municipality to confirm application and eligibility requirements. At this meeting, the applicant should present the following supporting materials:

- Photographs of the existing building and property condition;
- Details of the project to be completed;
- Drawings or plans showing the details of the project;
- Estimate of the associated costs to complete the project;
- A work plan for the improvements and timeline for completion; and
- Any additional materials required to review the application.

If a project is determined to be eligible for a Financial Incentive Programs, the the Applicant should submit an application. Acceptance of an application does not guarantee program approval. The applicant will be advised of approval or non-approval .

## **Step 2: Review and Evaluation of Applications**

Applications will be reviewed and submitted to the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) for review and recommendation to Municipal Council. Council approval by Resolution/By-law is required and solely at the discretion of Council.

## **Step 3: Application Approval and Incentive Program Agreement**

If approved, a Financial Incentive Program Agreement (“the Agreement”) must be entered into which will outline the nature of the works to be completed, the details of the Financial Incentive Program and timeframe for project completion and grant payment.

## **Step 4: Completion of Community Improvement Works and Grant Payment(s)**

Upon execution of the Agreement, the applicant may begin the approved project. In the case of grants, payment will occur once the approved works have been completed, as outlined in the Agreement to the satisfaction of the Municipality. The Applicant will be required to provide final supporting documentation and invoices for all eligible work completed and proof of payment. Municipal Staff may perform a site visit and inspection of the building or property to ensure the project was completed in accordance with the Agreement. If all program and Agreement requirements are determined to have been met to the satisfaction of program staff, payment will be issued to the applicant for the approved grant.

# Wawa Community Improvement Plan

## Application Steps



### 1 Meet with Program Administrator and Submit Application

- Applicant presents project to municipal staff, and
- Staff confirms eligibility and application requirements
- Applicant submits complete application

### 2 Review of Application and Recommendation

- Staff & EDTAC review application against evaluation criteria
- Staff prepare report containing EDTAC recommendation and submit to Council for final review

### 3 Application Approval and Agreement

- Application is approved and an agreement is entered into between Municipality and applicant

### 4 Completion of Work and Grant Payment(s)

- Applicant demonstrates that approved works are completed as outlined in agreement
- Grant payment is distributed to the applicant, if applicable



# DOWNTOWN WAWA CIP INCENTIVES

## **Residential/Office Rehabilitation and Conversion Grant**

### **Purpose**

A grant to offset the cost of rehabilitating and converting existing upper storey units above an existing commercial use to residential units or office uses, in compliance with the Municipality's Zoning By-law or an approved Zoning By-law Amendment.

### **Eligible Costs**

**1** Eligibility is contingent on the use of the main floor remaining commercial. This grant could also be used to provide financial support to rehabilitate vacant units into viable residential / office uses for prospective tenants.

**2** Eligible costs shall include materials, equipment, and contracted labour to complete the proposed improvements. Labour provided by the owner/applicant is not an eligible cost.

### **Program Details**

**1** A grant of up to half (50%) of construction costs related to the rehabilitation and conversion of upper storey units to residential dwelling units or office uses, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per unit and a total maximum of \$20,000 (or four units).

### **Eligibility Criteria**

**1** All General Eligibility Requirements on page 4 apply.

**2** The applicant must be either a registered property owner, assessed property owner, or a tenant of a property to whom the owner has assigned consent to receive assistance under the CIP.

**3** Approval of applications must be received prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

**4** Upon project completion, and once all invoices have been paid, an applicant must provide a detailed summary of costs, together with proof of payment in order to receive reimbursement equal to or less than the grant that was approved at the outset of the work. Any costs above the initial estimate are subject to approval.

# DOWNTOWN WAWA CIP INCENTIVES

## Activation Grant for Vacant Buildings

### Purpose

A grant to assist with the costs of converting and/or rehabilitating existing vacant commercial buildings into viable commercial uses, such as retail space.

### Eligible Costs

- 1** All interior and exterior retrofits required to ensure the new commercial use complies with Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, and Municipal Property Standards By-law and restores the vacant building to a condition suitable for commercial operations. Cosmetic and other minor improvements will only be eligible if they are part of a major renovation.
- 2** Design and architectural professional fees associated with the rehabilitation of the new commercial use.

### Program Details

- 1** A grant for up to half (50%) of eligible costs, to a **maximum of \$10,000** per property or as determined by Council.

### Eligibility Criteria

- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined on page 4 shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out on pages 5-6.
- 3** Properties are considered vacant if they have been vacant and unused for more than 90 days and is not fit for occupancy as confirmed by the CBO/Fire Chief.
- 4** The new commercial use that is being created has direct access to a public street.
- 5** An application for this program must be submitted to the Municipality prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

# DOWNTOWN WAWA CIP INCENTIVES

## Building Façade and Signage Improvement Grant

### Purpose

A grant to encourage aesthetic improvements to buildings as well as to business signage, lighting, awnings and general facade improvements.

### Eligible Costs

**1** The following eligible improvements apply only to front, rear, or exterior building façades that front onto a public street:

- a. façade restoration including brickwork, wood, masonry, and metal cladding;
- b. repair/replacement of entablature, eaves and other architectural details;
- c. repair or replacement of windows and doors;
- d. repair, replacement, or addition of exterior lighting;
- e. repair, replacement, or addition of awnings, marquees, and canopies;
- f. replacement of original façade elements; and
- g. redesigned shop fronts.

**2** Replacement, repair, and design costs of new signage and associated lighting on front, rear or exterior building façades of commercial buildings. Eligible signs include:

- a. Primary signs attached to buildings, particularly those that form part of a building façade's sign board area, or that are located above a building entrance or porch;
- b. Hanging signs, and Stand-alone signs, associated with landscaping, located in a yard which fronts onto a public street.

### Program Details

**1** For eligible improvements related to front, rear, or exterior building façades: A grant for up to half (50%) of the construction costs, **to a maximum of \$10,000**, with maximum amount of a grant for professional architectural services to not exceed 50% of the grant.

**2** For eligible improvements related to signage: A grant for up to half (50%) of the construction costs, **to a maximum of \$5,000**, or as determined by Council.

### Eligibility Criteria

**1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined on page 4 shall apply and applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out on pages 5-6.

**2** Improvements shall comply with the Municipality's Property Standards By-law, Sign By-law and the Ontario Building Code and AODA Regulations.

**3** An application for this program must be submitted to the Municipality prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit.

# DOWNTOWN WAWA CIP INCENTIVES

## Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant

### Purpose

A rebate of planning application fees and demolition/building permit fees applicable to costs of development or redevelopment of a site or existing building.

### Eligible Costs

- 1** Development or redevelopment of a vacant property or building for commercial, office, or housing/mixed uses.
- 2** Development or redevelopment of a vacant property or building housing;
- 3** Rehabilitation and conversion of upper-storey space in a mixed use or commercial building to residential units;
- 4** Major additions to a commercial, office, or mixed-use property, involving an increase of at least 25% of the existing gross floor area;
- 5** Infrastructure works including the improvement or reconstruction of existing on-site public infrastructure (water services, sanitary, and storm sewers);
- 6** Demolition of existing buildings on a private property, associated with redevelopment of that property, but excluding dumping fees;
- 7** Any combination of the above.

### Program Details

- 1** A rebate grant for up to a total of 50% of the Municipality's fees up to a maximum of **\$1,000** to cover the cost of planning, building permit, or demolition permit application fees.
- 2** In general, any projects which are eligible for other incentives outlined in this Plan will also be eligible for the Planning and Building Fees Grant, if the applicant is required to obtain planning approvals and/or a building permit or demolition permit.
- 3** Rebate grants associated with demolition permit applications do not include dumping fees.

### Eligibility Criteria

- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined on page 4 shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out on pages 5-6.
- 3** An application for this program must be submitted to the Municipality prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable

# DOWNTOWN WAWA CIP INCENTIVES

## Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG)

### Purpose

A grant to help offset the costs of new approved projects where the property assessment increases because of major property improvements and there is a subsequent increase in property assessment/taxes. The duration of any TIEG will be five years.

### Eligible Costs

**1** The following costs shall be considered eligible:

- a. Development or redevelopment of a property or building resulting in viable use;
- b. Adaptive reuse of a property;
- c. Major additions to a commercial, office, multi-residential (with a minimum of four (4) dwelling units) or mixed-use building resulting in an increase of at least 25% of the current assessed value of the property (prior to planned improvements);
- d. Conversion of upper-storey space to residential units or major renovations or improvements to upper storey residential space;
- e. Streetscaping or landscaping improvements required as part of a proposed development;
- f. Professional services by an engineer, architect, and/or professional planner; or
- g. Any combination of the above.

### Program Details

**1** The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is offered to eligible property owners only where the property assessment increases by 25% or more because of improvements and there is an increase in municipal property taxes. Property taxes include the municipal portion of the taxes only and does not include education or any other special charges.

**2** Grants shall be equal to a declining percentage of the municipal tax increase resulting from the improvements and shall be paid to the owner each year for a maximum duration of five (5) years. The total amount of all Tax Increment Equivalent Grants shall not exceed 50% of the total eligible costs of the improvements.

**3** The amount of the grant in the first year will not be calculated until the incremental assessment has been determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and provided to the Municipality, which may take up to two (2) years. Grants for subsequent years shall be paid annually to property owners within three (3) months of payment of the full property tax.

**5** The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant shall not be paid and shall not accumulate for any year when taxes remain unpaid by the due date. Any failure to pay taxes in any year shall disqualify the owner for further grant payments.

## Example Scenario

A hypothetical property pays \$10,000 in annual municipal property taxes this year. If the property is redeveloped and a reassessment results in municipal property taxes of \$15,000 annually, the tax 'increment' is \$5,000 (i.e.,  $\$10,000 + \$5,000 = \$15,000$ ).

Council has approved a Tax Increment Equivalent Grant for the property, with a duration of 5 years. In the first year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$5,000, representing 100% of the tax increment.

In the second year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$4,000, representing a decrease of 20% from the previous year. The grant amount would continue to decrease by 20% each year in years 3, 4, and 5.

The grant expires after five (5) years, based on the grant duration determined by Council. This example assumes that all eligibility criteria are met.

## Eligibility Criteria

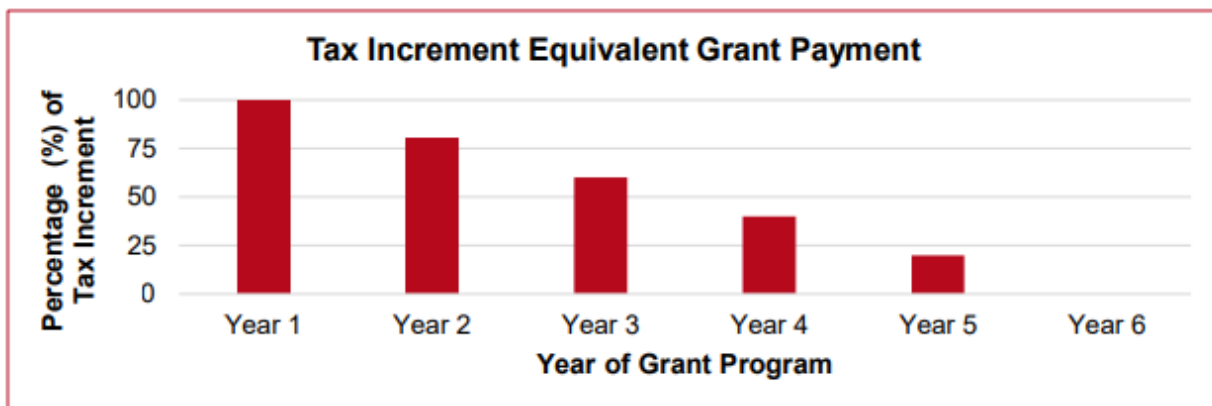
- 1** All General Eligibility Requirements outlined on page 4 shall apply.
- 2** Applications shall be in accordance with the application process set out on pages 5-6.
- 3** At its sole discretion, the Municipality may require the applicant to submit a business plan, prepared to the satisfaction of the Municipality, in relation to an application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant.
- 4** To be eligible for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, the property shall be improved such that the amount of work undertaken results in an increase of at least \$500 in the assessed value of the property, or the improvement involves more than 25% of the existing gross floor area.
- 5** In order to determine the suitability of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, prior to submitting an application for the program, eligible applicants may be required to estimate the total potential value of the tax increment, based on current assessment values and anticipated investment.
- 6** If the total value of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is significantly less than the applicant's estimated value, at the sole discretion of the Municipality, the applicant may be given the opportunity to withdraw their application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant program, and submit an application for one or more of the other incentive programs in this Plan as may be applicable to the project.
- 7** Should an eligible applicant be approved for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, and if the subject property is sold, in whole or in part, before the original grant period lapses, the original owner may not be entitled to receive the remaining grant payments, in accordance with the terms of the program agreement. The payments are also non-transferrable to the new owner, unless specifically stipulated as part of the Financial Incentive Program Agreement executed between the original owner and the Municipality.

**8** The property owner is responsible for the entire cost of the development or redevelopment project.

**9** An application for this program must be submitted to the Municipality prior to the commencement of any site works and/or issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

**10** Greenfield properties are not eligible for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant. Greenfield properties are generally considered vacant properties that: have no prior history of development; cannot be serviced by existing municipal services; and/or do not represent an extension of the built-up area. In determining whether a property is considered a greenfield, Council, in consultation with the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee, shall have sole discretion.

**11** Pre-project Municipal taxes will be determined before commencement of the project at the time the application is approved. For purposes of the grant calculation, the increase in municipal property taxes (tax increment) will be calculated as the difference between pre-project municipal property taxes and post-project municipal property taxes that are levied as a result of re-valuation of the property by the MPAC following project completion. The tax increment does not include any increase/decrease in municipal taxes due to a general tax increase/decrease, or a change in assessment for any other reason.



# Downtown Wawa CIP Incentive Design Guidelines

The following Design Guidelines should be considered by all applicants and designers.

## Design Themes

### The Wawa Goose

The “Wawa Goose” has stood at the entry point to the community for over 60 years. The Goose is the most defining and distinguished symbol in the community and has achieved recognition at a national level. Given the prominence of this long-standing community-symbol, it is recommended that the Goose also be included where possible on buildings.

### The Nature

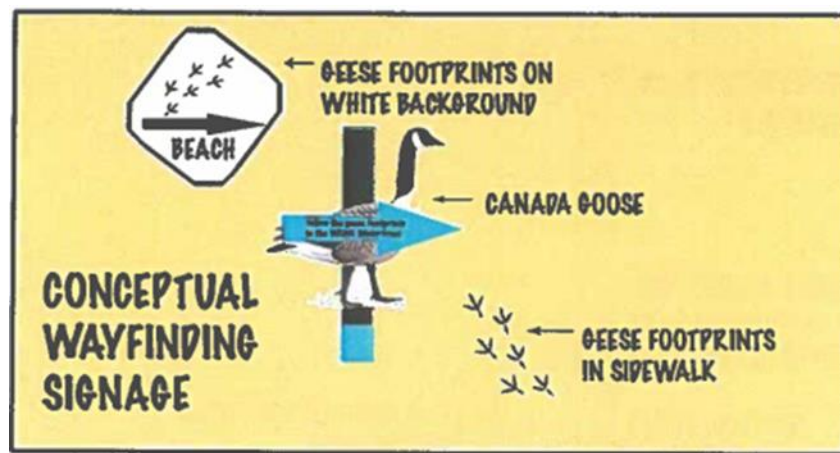
Wawa’s geology and location as the entrance to the Boreal Forest and the area’s abundance of waterfalls, northern wildlife including moose, bears and many species of birds. Outdoors sports are available for every season, including water sports such as kayaking, canoeing and fishing for several types fish including walleye, trout and salmon in winter and summer. Wawa’s snowmobile trails are unmatched.

### The Water

Downtown Wawa is next to Wawa Lake. The community also has physical, economic and historic ties to Lake Superior and Michipicoten River. These relationships reflect a sense of marine culture that is also recommended as a design theme in properties.

### The History

Celebrating Wawa’s rich history and culture including the history, heritage, resilience and contribution of indigenous people is encouraged.



# Downtown Wawa CIP Incentive Design Guidelines

## Building Façades

**1** Building frontages should be supportive of and encourage pedestrian activity through a combination of human-scaled features, active and clear fenestration (the arrangement of windows and doors on a building façade), and weather protection, where possible.

**2** Building façades should be generally divided into individual units or storefronts through the use of entrances, canopies or signage overhangs, vertical breaks and/or raised pier details to create visual interest.

**3** A variety of architectural elements should be employed to create a distinctive character for streetscapes. This may include:

a. **Wall articulation** through the incorporation of bays, recessed doorways, entry thresholds / porches, columns, and material detailing. Longer building façades and walls especially should be broken up visually via wall articulation (e.g. vertical recesses/breaks or raised pier details or masonry features), and repeating landscaping elements, such as planters and planter boxes.

b. **Windows** should be articulated with sills, frames, vertical breaks, recesses, mullions and/ or grilles. Long expanses of glazing should be avoided. Retail frontages should employ at least 50% glazing (windows or glass) on the ground floor and along the street.

c. **Entrances** should be defined through a combination of canopies, material changes, increased height, and/or recesses and wall articulation.

d. Architectural elements of new or improved building façades should **reflect the character and charm** of Downtown Wawa and the **theme of the CIP**. This may be achieved by incorporating details that allude to these elements.

**4** Window displays are encouraged for retail uses and to encourage pedestrian activity.

**5** Where possible, a higher degree of wall articulation should be provided at intersection corners and especially at gateway entrances to the Downtown.

**6** Building elevations at corners will address both street frontages with consistent building material, architectural details, and window styles and details.

**7** For mixed-use buildings, defined horizontal breaks (e.g., change in material, change in fenestration, or decorative banding) should be provided between the at-grade storey and use and the upper floors of the building to provide visual interest and denote separation.

**8** Non-street facing building façades exposed to public view, open spaces, or facing parking areas should be addressed through the provision of windows, cladding materials and colours, wall articulation and/or architectural detailing consistent with the main façade.



*Conceptual Façade improvement for buildings located at 14 and 16 Broadway Avenue.  
2008 Downtown Wawa Community Improvement Plan (Meridan Planning Consultants Inc.)*

## Materials

This section provides a recommended list of preferred materials which respect the historic context of Downtown, however, other materials may be used, provided that they are compatible with the existing character of the Downtown.

### 1 Preferred material includes:

- a. Brick, reclaimed brick, stone cladding, and reconstituted stone;
- b. Timber, reclaimed timber, and high-quality composite timber where it is appropriate to the architectural style;
- c. Cement boards / siding (e.g. hardi-board); and
- d. Robust metals, preferably with integrated colours such as stainless steel, Corten (weathered) steel (where staining is not a concern), or anodized aluminum may be utilized as accent materials.

**2** Material cladding to be avoided include vinyl and aluminum siding, stucco as primary cladding, and wood or asphalt shingles.

**3** Materials used in renovations or additions should also be complementary to the existing building through replication of the same materials, or through being complementary in texture, form, and/ or colour.

**4** Where possible, all materials should be sustainably sourced, reusable and/or recyclable.

**5** Attractive, but cost-effective materials are generally preferred.

**6** All materials are to be suitable to Wawa's climatic conditions (e.g., tolerant of the application of salt in winter, slip resistant, and able to withstand the freeze-thaw cycle, etc.), robust, low maintenance, easily repaired/replaced, and appropriate to their location and anticipated use.

# Downtown Wawa CIP Incentive Design Guidelines

## Signage and Lighting

Signage and lighting are important components to the overall feel and character of a building and the Downtown streetscape. Building signage provides an opportunity to add visual interest and emphasize building entrances, while describing or advertising the buildings' service or use. Signage should not dominate the streetscape and should be scaled for pedestrians rather than automobiles.

## Signage

- 1** Aging or missing storefront signs should be restored or refurbished.
- 2** Signage should be clearly visible, provide visual interest, and be sized to be complementary to the building's architecture and pedestrian scale.
- 3** Fascia signage (signage on the front façade of a building) should not be placed beyond the height of the at-grade storey of the building and should generally not exceed 75 cm (2.5 feet) in height.
- 4** Signage should not obscure windows, cornices, columns, or other architectural elements. It should be limited to the storefront of a building and placed in a consistently defined area on the façade for commercial and mixed-use buildings.
- 5** Signs should be made from natural materials; back-lit or internally illuminated and plastic fascia signs are discouraged. Signage should be lit through an external fixture or light source (e.g., down lighting, overhang lighting, goose neck lighting, etc.).
- 6** Signs with individual cut letters that are backlit or lit indirectly through lighting fixtures are encouraged.
- 7** Projecting / hanging signs, perpendicular to the building façade, should be permitted as they can add to the pedestrian experience. They may encroach into the public realm provided that they do not project more than 1.0 m from the building, and have a minimum 3.35 m clearance between the bottom of the sign and grade. Refer to Municipality's Sign By-law for additional requirements.
- 8** Natural Materials such as wood are encouraged as well as earth tone colours.
- 9** Where possible, the sign should creatively reflect or be associated with the themes of the CIP.
- 10** Signage should be compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), specifically for pedestrians.

## Lighting

- 1** The municipal address should be clearly visible and well lit on all buildings.
- 2** Building entrances and façades should be lit with wall mounted or recessed mounted lights.
- 3** Lighting should be directed downwards to accentuate the building façade and shielded from bleeding light beyond the frontage.
- 4** Should a building be designated as a heritage structure; historical photographs should be consulted to establish the types and styles of signs appropriate to it. Architectural signs marking historical dates and names should be integrated into the building fabric and constructed from cast metal, stone, or tile.

## Canopies and Awnings

- 1** Continuous awnings or canopies are encouraged to provide weather protection and should provide an identifiable break or gap between storefronts.
- 2** Awnings or canopies should be designed and located to not interfere with signage or architectural features of the building. Bubble-style or box-style awnings / canopies are to be avoided.
- 3** The bottom of the awning should be between 2.1 m and 2.4 m above the sidewalk, or at a height that does not obstruct storefront entrances.
- 4** Where signage is provided on the canopy or awning, it should be stencilled or painted on its surface; it should not be illuminated.
- 5** The colour of awnings / canopies should be coordinated with the colour package of the building's main cladding materials and color scheme.
- 6** Canopy / awning materials should be of high quality to ensure durability and preservation, including high quality canvas, cloth, or metal. The use of aluminum, vinyl or plastic awning / canopies are discouraged.



**Need Assistance?**  
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