



MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE



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- In January 2018, the Ontario Government announced \$26 million for the Main Street Revitalization Initiative.
- The initiative supports small businesses within main street areas by providing funds to municipalities to implement Community Improvement Plans and/or to encourage public investment in public infrastructure within main street areas.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- The fund was developed in partnership between OMAFRA and AMO. AMO administers the fund using its relationships with municipal governments and expertise in delivering other funds (i.e. Federal Gas Tax).
- OMAFRA transfers funding to AMO and AMO enters into Municipal Funding Agreements with eligible municipalities and then transfers funds to eligible municipalities (413 single- and lower-tier municipalities).



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- OMAFRA determined the program objective and developed an allocation formula:

Base Funding + Small Community Adjustment + Per Capita Allocation

Amount distributed equally among all municipalities

Amount distributed equally among municipalities with population less than 25,000

Per capita allocation based on 2016 Census population

- Funding allocations are “entitlement-based” and eligible municipalities receive full allocation and self-manage using funds for identified projects.
- Municipal governments are responsible for selecting projects and ensuring identified projects meet eligibility criteria; neither AMO nor OMAFRA approve projects.
 - Many are working with their local Business Improvement Areas and small businesses to identify projects.

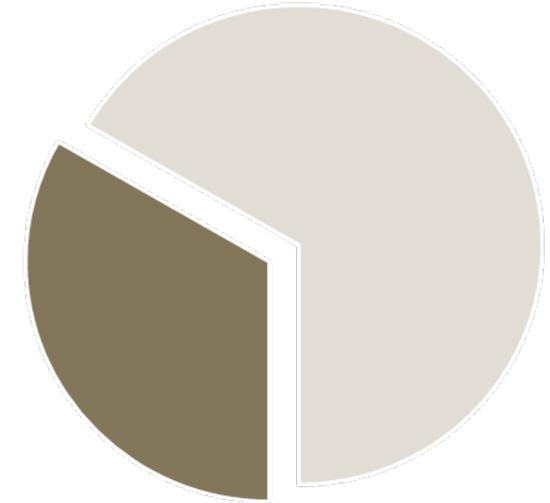
PROJECT CATEGORY 1: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Municipalities may use funding to implement financial incentive programs in existing Community Improvement Plans.

- A Community Improvement Plan is a planning tool under the *Planning Act* that identifies a designated geographic area within a municipality to target investment.

- Financial incentive programs provide municipal grants or loans to property owners or small businesses for priorities such as:

- Building façade improvements;
- Signage;
- Accessibility upgrades; or
- Community energy efficiency.



➤ Approximately 1/3 municipalities have Community Improvement Plans in place

PROJECT CATEGORY 2: MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Municipalities may also use funding for public infrastructure to improve the success of small businesses, including local tourism, or to implement business promotion activities.
- Infrastructure defined as “municipal or regional, publicly or privately owned, tangible capital assets primarily for public use or benefit in Ontario.”
 - Streetscaping projects: active transportation improvements (sidewalks or bicycle infrastructure), parking improvements, lighting, and new street furniture;
 - Installation of new signage and banners to improve wayfinding or to promote local businesses.
- Implementation of business promotion activities could include:
 - Economic development initiatives such as promotional materials, websites, etc.
 - Funding for local festivals or events that make the municipality a destination for tourism or other commercial activity





PROJECT ELIGIBILITY SMALL MUNICIPALITIES

- Many small municipalities do not have a discernible “main street” area or have limited commercial activity within the community.
- Where there is no defined main street, the funding should be used within built-up areas of the municipality (i.e. hamlets and villages).
- Smaller municipalities can undertake a number of projects such as:
 - Making improvements to parks and recreation facilities or historic/heritage sites and buildings to attract tourism;
 - Enhancing central gathering locations that are used for local economic activity such as festivals, farmers’/craft markets, etc.; or
 - Improving wayfinding within the municipality to highlight locations of interest.



PROJECT ELIGIBILITY (CONT'D)

- Municipalities can use funding for projects completed between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2020.
- Municipalities can use Main Street Revitalization funds with other funding sources (i.e. stacking), so long as the appropriate criteria for both funding sources are met.
- Municipalities cannot use funding to create a Community Improvement Plan or a marketing plan, but can hold funds and collect interest while these plans are created and use Main Street Revitalization funds to implement.

CURRENT STATUS

- As of January 28, 2019, 399 municipalities have received \$23.6M dollars.
 - The most common projects include:
 - Streetscaping improvements in main street areas such as street, sidewalk, and parking improvements, lighting installations, and new street furniture;
 - Implementing façade improvement programs under Community Improvement Plans;
 - Purchasing/installing signage to improve wayfinding and gateway signage;
 - Improvements to parks and recreation facilities or active transportation modes (e.g. cycling infrastructure);
 - Renewal/restoration of heritage buildings, historic sites, and monuments
 - Other common projects include:
 - Public art projects; public WiFi in main street areas; creating public squares; purchasing assets for recurring festivals (e.g. Christmas lights; sound/lighting equipment)