



Report to County Council

From: Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Initiatives

Date: May 28, 2024

Subject: Elgincincentives 2023 Year End Review and 10-year Program Review

Recommendation(s):

THAT the report titled “Elgincincentives 2023 Year End Review and 10-year Program Review” from the Manager of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Initiatives dated May 28, 2024 be received and filed.

Introduction:

Since October 2015, the County of Elgin has administered a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) with the help of its Local Municipal Partners (LMPs). The CIP aims to encourage redevelopment activities that make efficient use of lands, buildings, and infrastructure, and to attract private investment in a cohesive and coordinated manner. The Elgincincentives CIP was created to stimulate economic growth and diversification, improve the quality of place for residents and visitors, and ensure the stability and sustainability of the tax base.

Elgincincentives focuses on four (4) key areas of local economic activity: downtowns and main streets, agricultural areas, ports and lakeshore areas, and other key tourist and private outdoor recreation facilities. The program offers financial incentives to encourage private investment in these areas, and its funding commitments were renewed by the County Council in April 2022.

The program was renewed to include two (2) intakes per year, refocused priorities, targeted marketing, and updated evaluation criteria. Economic Development staff continue to work with the Local Municipal Partners to conduct an annual review of the program to ensure its alignment with community needs.

A full version of the Elgincincentives Community Improvement Plan is available on the Economic Development [website: https://bit.ly/42tDTXc](https://bit.ly/42tDTXc).

Background and Discussion:

In 2023, Elgincentsives had a total of 16 approved applications from April – November with a total investment by Elgin of \$78,356.38 resulting in private investment of \$476,351.98.

Eight (8) applications were denied this year as they did not meet the minimum required score. One (1) applicant withdrew their application following grant approval.

Elgincentsives Grants	Number of Approved Projects*	Approved Grant Value
Façade	9	\$31,931.73
Signage	4	\$6,619.62
Property	1	\$1,035.32
Building Improvement	9	\$25,470.62
Building Conversion/Expansion	3	\$12,109.13
Energy Efficiency	1	\$1,189.96
Outdoor Art Grant (located in priority area)	0	0
Savour Elgin	0	0
Arts Trail	N/A	N/A
Planning and Building Fees Grant	0	0
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	0	0

**several applications were approved for more than one grant*

Municipality	# of Applications	Grant Value	Value of Projects
Aylmer	4	\$16,851.13	\$53,652.86
Bayham	1	\$4,237.08	\$30,058
Central Elgin	3	\$24,528.18	\$146,153.40
Dutton Dunwich	3	\$13,187.79	\$122,756.50
Malahide	1	\$712.53	\$2,260
Southwold	2	\$13,354.88	\$114,870.14
West Elgin	2	\$5,484.79	\$16,601.08

Future of the Elgincentsives Program and 10-year Review

In 2015, the Local Municipal Councils approved the Elgincentsives CIP for a 10-year period. According to the CIP, if Councils wish to extend or reduce the term, an amendment to the CIP is required (section 6.1/section 8.5b). The Councils of each Local Municipality must pass amendments to the CIP under the Planning Act. Municipalities must also pre-consult with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on any amendments to the CIP, and they must follow a specific process to make any amendments:

- Issue a notice of a statutory public meeting (at least 20 days before the public meeting);
- Make the background information and amended Elgincentives CIP document available for public review 20 days before the public meeting;
- Hold a statutory public meeting for the proposed Community Improvement Plan amendment;
- Bring forward a bylaw to adopt the amended Community Improvement Plan;
- Provide written notice of adoption to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Without any action, the Elgincentives CIP program will lapse in 2025. Staff are recommending a comprehensive review of the program to determine whether to amend the CIP or to develop something new. Staff recommend that a planning consultant lead the process, with the review starting in the Fall of 2024 and the \$40,000 allocated for the fall intake of the Elgincentives program to be allocated to the review. Although the spring intake would be the only intake for 2024, the review will ensure that the program continues to provide relevant incentives to improve our communities.

The project will involve three main phases:

Phase 1: Project Kickoff

- Host project kickoff meeting
- Develop an engagement strategy
- Facilitate request/transfer of necessary data and information
- Schedule a consultation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Phase 2: CIP Diagnostic & Needs Assessment

- Launch survey
- Undertake a diagnostic of the existing CIP
- Conduct a high-level scan of the County from a market perspective
- Engage with identified stakeholders to gather insights
- Benchmark the County's economic performance and incentive offerings
- Evaluate available resources and partnerships
- Undertake a review of applicable plans, policy, and legislation

Phase 3: Final Report & Workshop

- Prepare a consolidated Diagnostic & Needs Assessment Report

- Schedule a workshop with County staff to review the report's conclusions and next steps

The numbers and the project scope are based on consultation with Paul Hicks of Re:Public Urbanism. If approved by Council, the project will go out to RFP

Financial Implications:

\$40,000 from the Elgincentives budget to be allocated to the 10-year review.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Serving Elgin	Growing Elgin	Investing in Elgin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhancing quality of place.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to deliver programs and services now and in the future. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.

Local Municipal Partner Impact:

The Local Municipalities will be involved throughout the review process, and any amendments to the CIP must be adopted at the local level.

Communication Requirements:

A copy of this report and any further direction provided by Council will be circulated to each of the member municipalities.

Conclusion:

The popularity of the Elgincentives program remains strong, and it continues to improve Elgin's downtowns, waterfronts, and agricultural and tourism areas. However, the region has seen significant changes and growth since the Plan's adoption in 2015. A review of the program will ensure that it continues to align with our community's needs and that we can continue to plan for and facilitate commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Carolyn Krahn
Manager of Economic Development,
Tourism & Strategic Initiatives

Approved for Submission

Blaine Parkin
Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk