

Meeting Date: March 3, 2025
Department: Building, Planning & By-law Enforcement
Report No.: BBP-2025-21
Submitted by: Saja Alasmar, Development Services Coordinator
Reviewed by: Jake DeRidder, Senior Development Coordinator
Approved by: Rob Browning, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: **Community Improvement Applications – March 2025**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT: Report BBP-2025-21 “Community Improvement Applications – March 2025” be received for information, and further;

THAT: Council deny Mathew Laberge’s application for funding through the Beautification Program to the maximum amount of \$5,814.27.

BACKGROUND:

One complete application for CIP funding was received in Q1 of 2025. The submission was made in accordance with the CIP application guidelines. A summary of the submission is provided below:

Address of proposed works: 82 Frank Street, Strathroy ON

Applicant: Mathew Laberge

The applicant submitted a CIP application under the *Beautification Program*, specifically requesting support through the Construction Costs Matching Grant (*Single Façade*). The proposed project includes the enhancement and revitalization of the front façade, incorporating a new window, lighting, a door, painting, and the installation of a new sign at 82 Frank Street. However, the applicant completed all project works—except for the new sign—prior to submitting a complete application, which violates the eligibility condition under **subsection 7.3.2** in the CIP Manual.

CONSULTATION:

The applicant has completed all project works—except for the new sign—prior to the submission of a complete application. The applicant did not inform the CIP Coordinator that the entire façade project

had been completed before submitting the application. The applicant only disclosed that the window installation was completed prior to the submission of a complete application.

In January 2024, the applicant discussed their intention to apply to the CIP *Beautification Program* with the previous CIP Coordinator and indicated that work might begin prior to application submission. The applicant subsequently completed all project works by summer 2024 and submitted a complete application at the end of January 2025.

The CIP application was reviewed in consultation with the CIP Committee and assessed against the criteria outlined in the CIP Manual. While the application was found to be complete and generally aligned with funding requirements, it did not comply with the eligibility condition in **subsection 7.3.2**, which states:

“Applicants must obtain approval for any grant funding prior to commencing an eligible project unless otherwise permitted by the Municipality under Section 7.3.15, in its sole discretion” (*Strathroy-Caradoc Community Improvement Plan*, p. 45).

Since the applicant commenced and completed the façade work months before submitting a complete application, they are ineligible for funding for those works. Furthermore, the applicant did not clearly disclose that the entire façade project was completed prior to applying; they only mentioned the window installation.

Given these circumstances, the CIP Committee recommends that funding for the single façade project be calculated excluding the windows rather than providing the full funding amount of \$9,313.77 (all completed works including the window installation and sign). However, the final decision is at the discretion of the Council.

Regarding the new business sign, which has yet to be installed, the applicant is technically eligible for funding. However, **subsection 7.3.13** of the CIP Manual states:

“Applications for grants of less than \$1,500.00 are ineligible for funding, unless otherwise determined eligible by the Municipality in its sole discretion” (*Strathroy-Caradoc Community Improvement Plan*, p. 46).

As the sign-related funding request does not meet the minimum funding threshold, the applicant does not qualify for CIP funding unless an exception is granted by the Municipality.

The applicant has now fully completed all exterior and interior renovations and is actively operating within the building.

FUNDING OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

The CIP Committee has outlined two potential funding options for Council's consideration:

- Option 1:** Provide funding for the completed façade works, excluding the cost of the windows, despite the applicant not obtaining prior approval, which does not comply with the eligibility condition in **subsection 7.3.2** of the CIP Manual
- Option 2:** Provide funding solely for the business sign, which does not meet the minimum funding threshold under **subsection 7.3.13** of the CIP Manual, unless Council exercises its discretion to approve an exception.

It is important to emphasize that the CIP program is designed to incentivize and support local growth and investment within the community, rather than act as a reimbursement mechanism for previously completed work. However, Council retains the discretion to waive the eligibility requirement if deemed appropriate.

Table 1. Mathew Laberge (82 Frank Street, Strathroy ON) CIP Funding Summary

FUNDING PROGRAM AND INCENTIVES	FUNDING REQUEST	CALCULATED INCENTIVE AMOUNT
BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM		
Option 1: Single Façade without the windows		
1. Construction Costs Matching Grant	Single Façade 50% of Construction Costs, up to \$15,000.00 Quote 1: \$ 11,628.54 + HST Quote 2: \$ 13,836.87 + HST	50% of Lowest Quotes provided = \$ 5,814.27
2. Professional Fees Matching Grant	<i>Not applied for.</i>	<i>Not applied for.</i>
Total Incentive Amount (\$):		\$ 5,814.27
Option 2: Single façade for the sign		
1. Construction Costs Matching Grant	Single Façade 50% of Construction Costs, up to \$15,000.00 Quote 1: \$ 1,680.36 + HST Quote 2: \$ 2,775.00 + HST	50% of Lowest Quotes provided = \$ 840.18
2. Professional Fees Matching Grant	<i>Not applied for.</i>	<i>Not applied for.</i>
Total Incentive Amount (\$):		\$ 840.18

If Council moves forward with an alternate decision, the grant value recommended for this application is **\$ 5,814.27** (Table 1). Payment of the grant would be provided after a site inspection of the completed works is conducted to confirm the works have been carried out in accordance with the CIP Funding Agreement, and after receiving proof of payment for all costs claimed for eligible works.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

If Council moves forward with an alternate decision, the total value of all grants recommended is \$5,814.27. There remains **\$ 1,154,762.08** of uncommitted funds in the 2024 CIP budget.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO THE RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT: Council approve Mathew Laberge’s application for funding through the *Beautification Program* to the maximum amount of \$ 5,814.27 or;
2. THAT: Council approve Mathew Laberge’s application for funding through the *Beautification Program* to the maximum amount of \$ 840.18.
3. THAT: Council provide alternative direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

- 1) **Economic Development:** Strathroy-Caradoc will have a diverse tax base and be a place that offers a variety of economic opportunities to current and prospective residents and businesses.
- 2) **Managing the Challenges of Growth for the Municipal Organization:** Strathroy-Caradoc will be an inclusive community where growth is managed to accommodate a range of needs and optimize municipal resources. We are committed to maintaining operational efficiency and economies of scale through these times of change.

CONSULTATION:

Chief Administrative Officer
Director of Finance & IT / Treasurer
Director of Community Services
Development Commissioner

ATTACHMENTS:

[Strathroy-Caradoc CIP Manual](#)

[Downtown Strathroy Urban Design Guidelines](#)

Mathew Laberge (82 Frank Street, Strathroy ON)

- Compliance Report, *Downtown Strathroy Urban Design Guidelines*