



**Town of Carleton Place**

# **'What We Heard' Summary of Stakeholder Interviews and Public Input**

February 2022

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# 1.0 Introduction

This document is a summary of feedback received from stakeholders and the public during the preliminary stage of the Carleton Place Community Improvement Plan (CIP) project. This “What We Heard” engagement summary provides a brief overview of the knowledge gained through targeted liaison with stakeholders in the community and a Public Information Centre (PIC), which was held on January 27, 2022. The summary then closes with a brief discussion on the major themes that the project team identified during their engagement with stakeholders and the public.

## 2.0 Stakeholder Interviews

The project team reached out to 19 potential stakeholders identified by the municipality and requested 30-minute interviews to discuss challenges and opportunities that a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) could address for the Town of Carleton Place. A total of 18 stakeholders participated with the project team in a structured interview with questions related to the four<sup>1</sup> key themes of the CIP. These four themes of discussion were brownfield redevelopment, façade improvement, accessibility, and affordable housing.

A majority of interviewees also expressed interest in attending Public Information Centres (PICs) and stated that they would be willing to answer follow-up questions during the development of the CIP, if needed.

### 2.1 Key Findings by Theme

#### 2.1.1 Brownfield Redevelopment

Brownfield redevelopment stakeholders brought up the need for these sites to be redeveloped in a way that benefits the community. For example, affordable housing was the most suggested redevelopment option for brownfield development, followed by public green space.

Several stakeholders mentioned that brownfield sites near the waterfront would be ideal areas for public green spaces, as it would allow more access to the scenic views for which the Town is known.

Stakeholders noted that the DRS building is a site that needs attention, and the SRC site, as the anchor to downtown, is a potential site for brownfield redevelopment. Findlay Foundry has also been mentioned by several stakeholders as a site with great redevelopment potential. Stakeholders mentioned that the “right-hand side” of Highway 7 (i.e., the segment of Highway 7 between McNeely Avenue and Franktown

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<sup>1</sup> The fifth key theme of streetscape improvement was not a topic of discussion during the stakeholder interviews, but it was discussed at the first Public Information Centre.

Road), where residents or visitors enter the Town from the east, may be a potential area for redevelopment<sup>2</sup>.

Some stakeholders have observed that current development seems to lean towards single-detached homes or high-end condominiums. While these housing options are important to attract new residents and families, it was said by these stakeholders that they are not suitable for the current residents of Carleton Place.

Sustainability and environmental sensitivity in new developments were mentioned by stakeholders as important aspects to consider for eligibility, in that sites that require remediation should ensure that new development avoids exacerbating or repeating previous issues. Incentivizing the use of sustainable materials or designs was mentioned by one stakeholder as a funding option.

Brownfield Redevelopment stakeholders would like to see incentives for brownfield sites to align more with Town needs and goals, as well as prevent brownfield sites from being developed into more industrial lands. Stakeholders' suggestions for funding levels included waiving taxes for five years for redeveloped sites, waiving development and permit fees, and partially reimbursing for environmental remediation efforts. Penalties for vacant sites were also suggested by a stakeholder as a "stick-and-carrot" method of incentivizing the turnover of brownfield sites.

### **2.1.2 Façade Improvement**

As noted by stakeholders, the older areas around Bridge Street are in need of revitalization, the downtown area of Carleton Place is historic, and the buildings are in need of care to restore them to their former glory.

It was also said by stakeholders that the current façade improvement plan is not working; there are contradictions written into the document that make it restrictive and not user-friendly. However, according to a stakeholder, even with the challenges, the total amount of funding is still used every year, so there is a clear interest in the program and what it provides.

Some stakeholders discussed having the façade improvement program expanded to include interior renovations that would benefit the building, or having funding to

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<sup>2</sup> The consulting team recognizes that this is not a brownfield area, per se.

replace doors or windows—key features of façades that, if replaced with more energy-efficient options, would increase the sustainability of a building.

Stakeholders introduced the idea of not restricting the façade program to the downtown area, such that the entrances to the Town, industrial sites, and private residences could also be included.

Ideas for funding from stakeholders included the possibility of having tiers of funding, either percentage-based or in flat amounts, depending on the extent of proposed improvements to a building. For example:

- lower-tier amounts could be provided for basic upgrades like paint and signage;
- mid-tier amounts could be provided for lighting or window upgrades; and,
- higher-tier amounts could be provided to those who are willing to convert their façades in a way that incorporates historic materials and designs. More than one stakeholder requested support for “Banff-style” hanging signage.

There were also concerns from stakeholders that CIP funding recipients would improve their building façade with add-on features (e.g., architectural lighting) but then remove those features, if they were to relocate their business to another building. Some stakeholders suggested that the parameters for façade improvement funding be mindful of this risk and structured to prohibit this kind of activity.

### **2.1.3 Accessibility**

Discussions with stakeholders around accessibility centered on the work planned for the downtown sidewalk (raising and grading) and how it will affect storefront access. The general consensus among the stakeholders was that raising the sidewalk will reduce the height of steps along the street overall, though some businesses on the west side may see a height increase that would actually reduce accessibility.

Some stakeholders mentioned that the upcoming sidewalk project will affect the façades of buildings and some notable heritage features, such as basement windows and front step stamps that detail original owners of buildings and their years of completion. These stakeholders expressed the importance of preserving or properly replacing these features, which should be taken into consideration in the structuring of the CIP’s Accessibility Improvement Program.

Other ideas from stakeholders for funding towards accessibility improvements included: interior renovations that would allow for wheelchair users to move around stores more easily; fully accessible washrooms; and the option to expand accessibility funding to include private residences.

It was suggested by a stakeholder that, while funding for accessibility improvements may be limited to one area or to businesses to start, the opportunity to expand accessibility funding to cover the whole of the Town and include private residences may help meet other goals of the Town, such as universal housing and housing for those with disabilities.

#### **2.1.4 Affordable Housing**

Stakeholders have expressed that affordable housing is a need that is reaching levels of concern, and they noted that rental prices have skyrocketed to take advantage of those who are not able to purchase their own homes. Stakeholders have said that “affordable” is a term with meaning that varies widely from person to person; for some people, market rent is affordable under the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) definition of 30% of income, but for others, this definition would limit them to just a couple hundred dollars per month for housing costs. Stakeholders expressed that a range of housing options must be provided, and housing providers must collaborate to house the residents of Carleton Place. Further, stakeholders indicated that rent-geared-to-income is a huge local need; the current local waitlist is long and continues to grow, as more residents face increasing economic pressures.

Stakeholders have indicated that certain demographic groups are especially vulnerable: seniors and women with children are in need of specialized affordable housing, which is hard to find in the area. Stakeholders mentioned that LGBTQ2S+<sup>3</sup> community members are also in need of housing that is safe and affordable, as they are sometimes at risk of violence or isolation.

According to stakeholders, there is a lack of multi-unit affordable housing options in Carleton Place. Stakeholders also mentioned that affordable housing should be located in areas that are walkable and do not require the need for a private vehicle;

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<sup>3</sup> LGBTQ2S+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Two-Spirit, Plus.

these stakeholders said that affordable housing should be sited to give residents the ability to walk or cycle to essential daily amenities, which would build off of the “15-Minute City” concept by Carlos Moreno (retrieved from a Dezeen article by Lizzie Crook dated October 26, 2021, downloaded from “[15-Minute City concept by Carlos Moreno wins Obel Award 2021](#)”).

Stakeholders recommended that there should be policy changes to support the provision of secondary suites and additional units in single-detached housing, which would allow individual homeowners to enter the rental market and provide more housing options. Stakeholders expressed that there is a mismatch between what the market needs and what is being built. For example, single-detached homes are being built, when it has been said by some stakeholders that one-bedroom rental units are what are most needed at the moment.

Stakeholders said that, while social housing is one affordable housing option, the bigger issue is having enough rental options on the market that:

- can qualify for financial relief opportunities like rent subsidies or supplements; or,
- may entice people who are over-housed to downsize and free up their home for those who are looking to increase the size of their living space.

Stakeholders’ suggestions for financial incentives to promote affordable housing included: waiving development permits and fees; a policy to allow secondary suites and financial incentives that encourage their development; and encouraging partnerships between developers and housing managers, which may ease some housing pressure.

# 3.0 Public Input

This section of the report summarizes public input provided up to February 9, 2022.

**Note:** public input provided after this date will be considered by the project team during the development of the Carleton Place Community Improvement Plan (CIP).

## 3.1 Public Information Centre (PIC) #1

On Thursday, January 27, 2022, the project team hosted a PIC to engage the general public in the preliminary stage of the project and gain feedback on the key focus areas for the CIP. It was held virtually from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM via the Town’s Zoom platform, where a total of 34 people attended. The event was also live-streamed on the Carleton Place City Hall Facebook page (to watch the recording of the virtual PIC, go to [Community Improvement Plan – Public Information Centre #1](#)). The PIC consisted of a presentation, an interactive feedback component, and question and answer periods by the project team.

The project team provided the public with information on the project work to date, and those who attended the PIC via Zoom were asked seven polling questions<sup>4</sup> to seek their input on the direction that the CIP should take in regard to the focus areas’ eligibility boundaries and financial priorities for the Town. Zoom attendees were invited to use the chat function to submit questions and discuss the ideas presented with other attendees.

The PIC started with an introduction to the project, the project team, and the project’s purpose. A “question and answer” period then followed to allow for initial questions from attendees to be addressed. During this period, the project team heard that the Town of Carleton Place lacks sufficient employment lands, and that seniors are in need of affordable housing options within the Town. Attendees also stated that:

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that the polling questions from the PIC were also uploaded to the project’s website on January 28, where the public had until 4:00 PM on February 7, 2022 to respond to the polls and provide their feedback.

- they would like the streetscape improvement plan to include cycling infrastructure and traffic-calming measures to reduce vehicular speeds on Bridge Street; and,
- they would like to see new developments embrace sustainable practices.

The PIC then progressed into the interactive public engagement portion, where Zoom attendees were asked to provide their opinion on various aspects of the CIP via Zoom Poll. The seven questions were split into the five focus areas of Brownfield Redevelopment, Façade Improvement, Streetscape Improvement, Accessibility, and Affordable Housing. Appendix A provides detailed tables of the polling responses from Zoom attendees.

The majority of attendees were in support of the Façade Improvement eligibility area being focused on the Downtown District, and they prioritized landscaping, public seating, and street trees as their top three streetscape improvements.

Attendees overwhelmingly favoured prioritizing accessibility improvements to businesses in the Town and picked entrance ramps, accessible washrooms, and automatic doors as the top three priority enhancements needed in the Town.

With regard to affordable housing, PIC attendees indicated that there is a need for one- and two-bedroom units in the Town, and that low-income single-parent families and individuals with disabilities are perceived to be facing the greatest core housing needs. Attendees would like to primarily see non-profit developers specialized in affordable housing building small- and mid-sized apartment buildings to meet the Town's affordable housing needs.

Following the Zoom polling, the project team opened a second "question and answer" period, where attendees who had selected "other" to Zoom polling questions were encouraged to elaborate on what other choices they would like and what further options should be considered. Additional comments from attendees ranged from concerns regarding the feasibility of interior accessibility requirements for historic buildings to the encouragement of redeveloping brownfield properties to support affordable housing development. Attendees also expressed interest in the "8 to 80" urban design principles (i.e., where public spaces accommodate people from ages of 8 to 80 with a wide range of abilities), with several locations in the Town highlighted by attendees as specific examples of where those principles could be put into practice.

The project team then concluded the evening's activities and thanked participants. Those with additional input were advised to email the project team directly.

### **3.2 Digital Correspondence**

In addition to the first PIC, interested parties had been invited to submit their thoughts and comments to the project team via email.

Some individuals that submitted comments expressed concern that they have not seen any Cycle Routes/Share the Roads signage anywhere in Carleton Place, and that there is a lack of accessibility signage at trailheads within the Town's boundaries. Coupled with a noticed increase in cycling interest and infrastructure usage, residents have a keen interest in cycling infrastructure enhancements, particularly within the downtown area of Carleton Place.

Feedback from individuals on façade improvement included suggestions to expand the Façade Improvement eligibility boundary to include areas outside of the downtown, specifically:

- the blocks closest to the river and north of the bridge on Bridge Street;
- a portion of Moore Street;
- the streets that run parallel to Bridge Street (Beckwith Street and Victoria Street); and,
- the rear façades of buildings that face Bridge Street.

Streetscape improvement was a common topic of discussion among feedback received via email. Some of the suggestions for streetscape improvement features included "parklets" (i.e., conversions of on-street parking spaces to patios or public seating areas) and traffic-calming enhancements to the Bridge Street corridor. Some individuals are interested in extending the streetscape improvement eligibility boundary across the bridge to the north into Sinclair Square, and east along Lake to the farmer's market/Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail.

Individuals who sent written feedback stated that "8 to 80" urban design and green development are a priority, and the Town needs place-making and high-quality public spaces that feature rest stops and accessibility.

Suggestions from individuals on affordable housing incentives included waiving development charges to assist in lowering the cost of construction of new rental units

and ensuring the financial incentives can be adapted to encourage the development of various unit types as needed. Three-bedroom apartments were specifically mentioned by individuals as being a high priority need in the Town to meet the housing needs of families.

Individuals' comments on brownfield redevelopment focused on the opportunities to encourage brownfield redevelopment to have a focus on green spaces and public spaces with connections to existing active transportation networks in Town. There was a suggestion from an individual that "cash-in-lieu" of development fees go towards sidewalks, paths, and green spaces within the development or the nearby community. Public input generally expressed that the CIP should incentivize brownfield redevelopment that contributes to the "public good", for example heritage preservation, affordable housing, parks, active transportation, accessibility, and water access.

### **3.3 Online Survey**

An online survey ran from January 28, 2022 to February 7, 2022. The questions used for the online survey were the same seven polling questions that were presented to the public at PIC #1 through Zoom. A total of 61 respondents completed the survey. Detailed tables of online survey responses can be found in Appendix B.

The majority of respondents were in support of the Façade Improvement eligibility area being focused on the Downtown District, and they prioritized landscaping, street trees, and pedestrian-scaled lighting as their top three streetscape improvements.

Respondents overwhelmingly favoured prioritizing accessibility improvements to businesses in the Town, and they picked entrance ramps, accessible washrooms, and railings as the top three priority enhancements needed in the Town.

With regards to affordable housing, online survey respondents indicated that there is a need for two-bedroom units in the Town, and that low-income single parent families and individuals with disabilities are facing the greatest core housing needs.

Respondents would like to primarily see non-profit developers, who are specialized in affordable housing, build small- and mid-sized apartment buildings to meet the Town's affordable housing needs.

## 4.0 Conclusion/Major Themes

The project team identified major themes that will guide future work on the CIP, and these themes reflect the feedback received through the stakeholder interviews, public information centre, digital correspondence, and online survey. A simple tabulation of the number of times each major theme was discussed is below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Major themes identified in stakeholder interviews and public consultation**

Major Theme	Number of Times Discussed in Stakeholder Interviews	Number of Times Discussed in Public Input	Total per Theme
Sustainability	3	3	6
Sidewalk accessibility	3	3	6
Heritage & history	5	0	5
Vulnerable populations	4	1	5
"15-minute cities" development	3	2	5
Bicycle infrastructure	0	5	5
Adjusting CIP boundaries	0	5	5
Signage	3	1	4
Mixed-use development	3	0	3
Homelessness	3	0	3
Energy efficiency	3	0	3
Secondary suites	2	0	2
"8 to 80" urban design	0	2	2

As the project progresses, the project team will continue to seek out stakeholder and public input as it designs the financial incentives programs and prepares the CIP.

# Appendix A – Zoom Poll Results

Which option for the Façade Improvement eligibility area (limited to commercial properties/buildings only) do you prefer?	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Option A – Downtown District	11	36.67%
Option B – Highway 7 & McNeely Avenue area	1	3.33%
Option C – Downtown District and Highway 7 & McNeely Avenue area	8	26.67%
Option D – All of Carleton Place	10	33.33%

**Total Respondents: 30**

What streetscape improvements would you like prioritized in your downtown (select all that apply)?	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Public seating	23	71.88%
Pedestrian-scaled lighting	10	31.25%
Textured pavers	8	25.00%
On-street parking	8	25.00%
Landscaping	24	75.00%
Street trees	22	68.75%

**Total Respondents: 32**

What accessibility improvements do you feel need priority within the Town (select all that apply)?	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Entrance ramps	29	87.88%
Railings	14	42.42%
Automatic doors	22	66.67%
Accessible washrooms	24	72.73%
Elevators	5	15.15%
Other	3	9.09%

**Total Respondents: 33**

Would you prefer funding for accessibility improvements to be available to:	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Businesses	23	67.65%
Businesses and private residences	11	32.35%
Private residences	0	0.00%

**Total Respondents: 34**

<b>Knowing that there are those who are under-housed in Carleton Place, what configuration could best meet this need in the community (select all that apply)?</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of total respondents</b>
Studio unit	17	50.00%
One-bedroom unit	23	67.65%
Two-bedroom unit	23	67.65%
Three-bedroom unit	19	55.88%
Other	4	11.76%

**Total Respondents: 34**

<b>What age demographic is in greater core housing need and should be prioritized for affordable housing support in Carleton Place (select all that apply)?</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of total respondents</b>
Retired adults	21	61.76%
Middle-aged adults	7	20.59%
Young adults	16	47.06%
Individuals with disabilities	24	70.59%
Low income single parent families	25	73.53%
Low income dual parent families	19	55.88%
Other	3	8.82%

**Total Respondents: 34**

<b>Who should participate in providing affordable housing (select all that apply)?</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of total respondents</b>
Individual homeowners via secondary suites (basement apartments, coach houses, etc.)	24	70.59%
Traditional housing developers (affordable housing units mixed in with market housing units in a subdivision)	24	70.59%
For-profit affordable housing developers (small/mid-sized apartment buildings)	24	70.59%
Non-profit developers specialized in affordable housing (small/mid-sized apartment buildings)	30	88.24%
Social housing provider (government agency)	27	79.41%

**Total Respondents: 34**

# Appendix B – Online Survey Results

Which option for the Façade Improvement eligibility area (limited to commercial properties/buildings only) do you prefer?	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Option A – Downtown District	24	40.00%
Option B – Highway 7 & McNeely Avenue area	5	8.33%
Option C – Downtown District and Highway 7 & McNeely Avenue area	18	30.00%
Option D – All of Carleton Place	13	21.67%

**Total Respondents: 60**

What streetscape improvements would you like prioritized in your downtown (select all that apply)?	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Public seating	28	45.90%
Pedestrian-scaled lighting	34	55.74%
Textured pavers	15	24.59%
On-street parking	21	34.43%
Landscaping	39	63.93%
Street trees	39	63.93%

**Total Respondents: 61**

What accessibility improvements do you feel need priority within the Town (select all that apply)?	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Entrance ramps	44	73.33%
Railings	27	45.00%
Automatic doors	26	43.33%
Accessible washrooms	37	61.67%
Elevators	3	5.00%
Other	4	6.67%

**Total Respondents: 60**

Would you prefer funding for accessibility improvements to be available to:	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Businesses	38	62.30%
Businesses and private residences	21	34.43%
Private residences	2	3.28%

**Total Respondents: 61**

<b>Knowing that there are those who are under-housed in Carleton Place, what configuration could best meet this need in the community (select all that apply)?</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of total respondents</b>
Studio unit	16	27.12%
One-bedroom unit	33	55.93%
Two-bedroom unit	49	83.05%
Three-bedroom unit	19	32.20%
Other	4	6.78%

**Total Respondents: 59**

<b>What age demographic is in greater core housing need and should be prioritized for affordable housing support in Carleton Place (select all that apply)?</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of total respondents</b>
Retired adults	34	56.67%
Middle-aged adults	9	15.00%
Young adults	24	40.00%
Individuals with disabilities	37	61.67%
Low income single parent families	44	73.33%
Low income dual parent families	30	50.00%
Other	1	1.67%

**Total Respondents: 60**

<b>Who should participate in providing affordable housing (select all that apply)?</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of total respondents</b>
Individual homeowners via secondary suites (basement apartments, coach houses, etc.)	19	31.15%
Traditional housing developers (affordable housing units mixed in with market housing units in a subdivision)	36	59.02%
For-profit affordable housing developers (small/mid-sized apartment buildings)	38	62.30%
Non-profit developers specialized in affordable housing (small/mid-sized apartment buildings)	43	70.49%
Social housing provider (government agency)	37	60.66%

**Total Respondents: 61**