

May 10, 2013

CL 6-2013, May 9, 2013
ICPC 6-2013, May 1, 2013
Report ICP 34-2013

Bonnie Nistico-Dunk, City Clerk
City of St. Catharines
P.O. Box 3012
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7C2

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Implementing the Smarter Niagara Incentives Program
Local and Regional Partnerships
City of St. Catharines
Enhanced Residential Grant
26 Wellington Street
ICP 34-2013

Dear Ms. Nistico-Dunk,

Regional Council, at its meeting of May 9, 2013, approved the following recommendations of its Integrated Community Planning Committee:

That Report ICP 34-2013, May 1, 2013, respecting Implementing the Smarter Niagara Incentives Program, Local and Regional Partnerships, City of St. Catharines, Enhanced Residential Grant, 26 Wellington Street, **BE RECEIVED as amended**;

That the request from the City of St. Catharines to support an enhanced Residential Grant for 26 Wellington Street **BE SUPPORTED**;

That an increased **matching** financial contribution **at the level up to** \$50,000 for a **possible** total Regional contribution of \$175,000 **BE APPROVED** subject to the **approval of matching participation by the City of St. Catharines and to the** satisfactory completion of the project as deemed by the City; and

That a copy of this report **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Municipalities for information.

A copy of Report ICP 34-2013 is enclosed for your information.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Pilon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Janet Pilon
Regional Clerk
:nld

cc: Clerks of the Local Area Municipalities
P. Robson, Commissioner, Integrated Community Planning
B. Dick, Senior Planner
C. Benson, Manager, Policy Planning
M. L. Tanner, Associate Director, Regional Policy Planning
S. McPetrie, Administrative Assistant, Integrated Community Planning
N. Smagata, Administrative Assistant



REPORT TO: Integrated Community Planning Committee

SUBJECT: Implementing the *Smarter Niagara* Incentives Program
Local and Regional Partnerships
City of St. Catharines
Enhanced Residential Grant
26 Wellington Street

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the request from the City of St. Catharines to support an enhanced Residential Grant for 26 Wellington Street **BE SUPPORTED**, and that an increased financial contribution of \$50,000 for a total Regional contribution of \$175,000 **BE APPROVED** subject to the satisfactory completion of the project as deemed by the City.
2. That a copy of this report **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Municipalities for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend Council approval of a request from the City of St. Catharines to support an increased financial contribution for a City supported enhanced Residential Grant for the development of 28 new residential condominium units at 26 Wellington Street. The report implements Council's 2012-2015 Business Plan themes "Responsive Region" and "Open for Business".

BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

Approval of this report will involve commitment of \$175,000 from the *Smarter Niagara* Incentives Program. There are adequate financial resources to support this funding request in the annual *Smarter Niagara* Incentives Program budget.

REPORT

Background

The *Smarter Niagara* strategy, supported by the *Smarter Niagara* Incentives Program, encourages urban regeneration and downtown revitalization within Niagara's urban areas as a financially-viable and more sustainable alternative to new 'greenfield'

development or to expanding urban boundaries and avoiding the resultant servicing pressures and costs.

Accordingly, the *Smarter Niagara* strategy has helped position the Region for the implementation of its own Growth Management Strategy Niagara 2031. The City of St. Catharines has a unique role in Niagara 2031 as its Downtown is the only Provincially-designated Urban Growth Centre in Niagara whereby downtown area revitalization and redevelopment is strongly encouraged.

A number of the local municipalities have been involved in downtown revitalization projects assisted by financial contributions from the Region. One of the more visible components of the *Smarter Niagara* Incentives Program has been the Residential Grant Program (RGP) whose purpose is to promote residential conversion, infill and intensification in a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) area. The goal is to create attractive and livable downtown cores by increasing the downtown resident population through expanded housing opportunities.

Residential Grant Program: 26 Wellington Street Proposal

The Penn Terra Group Limited is in the process of constructing a 28 unit residential condominium building at 26 Wellington Street located in the Downtown St. Catharines CIP area. To support the construction of the building, the owner has applied to the City for financial assistance in the form of an enhanced Residential grant. The applicant has requested consideration of the grant application for all 28 residential units for a total grant contribution of \$175,000 from the City. The City of St. Catharines supports the enhanced grant request for the 28 units with a formal request for the Region to provide an equal level of financial assistance.

In its current format, the RGP does not permit Regional staff to give administrative approval of an application that does not meet the program's eligibility criteria. Accordingly, Regional Council's approval is necessary to support the City's request. The Region's contribution to a RGP project typically includes, in the form of a grant, the maximum funding amount of \$7,500 per unit, supported by the local municipality contributing an equal amount for a total of \$15,000 per unit. As well, the total contribution is presently restricted at a maximum of 20 units per property.

In this particular circumstance, the City of St. Catharines only offers a maximum financial contribution of \$6,250 per residential unit in their CIP program and as such the Region will only match the municipality's contribution for a combined total of \$12,500 per unit. It should be noted that the City also restricts the RGP to a maximum of 20 units per property.

The proposed 28 unit residential building at 26 Wellington Street is consistent with the objectives of the *Smarter Niagara* Program as this development represents the first condominium apartment building to be built downtown in approximately 30 years. Supporting this application will establish a precedent as the Region would be providing funding above our normal contribution level of \$125,000 for this project to also include

an additional \$50,000 (for the additional 8 condominium units) for a total Regional contribution of \$175,000.

The City has been undertaking a considerable effort to revitalize its downtown core. As these new units will be marketed to urban professionals and empty nesters they will not necessarily assist in expanding the affordable housing stock in St. Catharines. Nonetheless, the increase in the number of people (of all income levels) residing downtown will be critical in ensuring the success of its ongoing revitalization effort and should be supported. Staff will continue to look for opportunities through the *Smarter Niagara* Incentives to expand the stock of affordable housing within the Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre.

PREVIOUS REPORT PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

- N/A

Submitted by:



Patrick Robson
Commissioner
Integrated Community Planning

Approved by:



Mike Trojan
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared by Brian Dick, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner and reviewed by Curt Benson, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Regional Policy Planning and Mary Lou Tanner, MCIP, RPP, Associate Director, Regional Policy Planning.