



April 9, 2026

Subject: Letter of Support – Deferred Loan Payments for Community Improvement Plans

Attention: Chair and Members
Planning and Environment Committee

I am writing to express strong support for continued flexibility regarding the deferred loan payments under the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Financial Incentive Programs, particularly as they relate to property owners and businesses within the Old East Village Business Improvement Area (BIA).

These programs — including the Façade Improvement Loan Program and the Upgrade to Building Code Loan Program — have played a critical role in encouraging reinvestment, improving building conditions, and supporting economic revitalization in older commercial districts such as the Old East Village. The interest-free structure, combined with forgivable components in designated areas including the Old East Village, has allowed many property owners to undertake improvements that otherwise would not have been financially feasible.

The improvements supported through these loans — façade upgrades, fire safety improvements, accessibility upgrades, structural improvements, and building code compliance — directly contribute to safer, more attractive commercial environments that help attract tenants and customers to the district. These investments are foundational to long-term economic recovery and revitalization.

However, businesses and property owners in the Old East Village continue to operate within a uniquely challenging environment. The district continues to experience the ongoing impacts of the street-level crisis, including open drug use, mental health challenges, encampment-related pressures, and increased demands on private property owners related to safety, maintenance, and cleanliness. These conditions create additional operating costs, reduce customer confidence, and make tenant attraction significantly more difficult.

Property owners who have invested in façade and building improvements through CIP loans are doing so while simultaneously managing increased costs related to security, property cleanup, repairs, and vacancy risk. In many cases, these investments were made specifically to stabilize buildings and support new businesses in a challenging environment. While these improvements are necessary and beneficial, the return on investment is often slower due to the realities facing the district.

The staff report notes that repayments for deferred loans are scheduled to resume in September 2026 following the Council-approved deferral period. For many property owners in the Old East Village, the timing of this repayment resumption is particularly challenging. Businesses are still working toward stabilization, and property owners are continuing to invest in maintaining safe and functional buildings amid ongoing pressures.

Providing continued flexibility — whether through extended deferrals, phased repayment options, or case-by-case consideration — would help ensure that the progress made through these programs is not undermined.

Supporting flexibility recognizes that revitalization in areas facing complex street-level challenges requires time, sustained investment, and partnership between property owners and the municipality.

These CIP programs are proven tools that leverage private investment to improve the public realm, increase property values, enhance safety, and create environments where businesses can succeed. Continued flexibility in repayment timelines would help protect these investments and allow property owners to remain focused on stabilization, tenant attraction, and long-term revitalization rather than immediate financial pressure.

On behalf of the Old East Village BIA, I strongly support measures that provide continued financial flexibility for these loan recipients. Doing so acknowledges the ongoing realities faced by businesses in the district, protects previous investments, and supports the continued revitalization of one of the City's most important core-area neighbourhoods.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin Morrison
Executive Director
Old East Village BIA