



**SIOUX LOOKOUT**  
Hub of the North

# COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

THE MUNICIPALITY OF SIOUX LOOKOUT  
MARCH 2024  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL MARCH 25, 2024



**MHBC**  
P L A N N I N G  
U R B A N D E S I G N  
& L A N D S C A P E  
A R C H I T E C T U R E

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## Schedules:

Schedule A: Sioux Lookout Main Central Improvement Area

Schedule B: Gateway Community Improvement Area

Schedule C: Hudson Community Improvement Area

Schedule D: Airport Community Improvement Area

## APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Design Guidelines

## 1.0 Basis

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout in the District of Kenora is located halfway between Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Winnipeg, Manitoba, nestled on the shores of Pelican Lake, Abram Lake and Lac Seul. It includes the communities of Sioux Lookout and Hudson and has a population of approximately 5,800 people. The Municipality also provides essential services for 30,000 people in 29 remote Indigenous communities.

Sioux Lookout has a vibrant economy that can be attributed to the Municipality's ability to adjust to change. The economy of Sioux Lookout was once based upon primary industry. However, now a greater focus is placed on the knowledge-based economy as well as the Municipality's role of being a service centre to the surrounding Indigenous communities. Sioux Lookout is considered by many to be the "Hub of the North"; this can be attributed to Sioux Lookout's strategic location as a full service community as well as being home to the second busiest airport in Northwestern Ontario.

In June of 2020, the Municipality adopted its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. One of the initiatives presented in the Strategic Plan was the development of a Community Improvement Plan.

This Community Improvement Plan has been prepared with the intention of attracting and supporting the rehabilitation and revitalization of private lands and buildings in the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. In order to provide financial incentives to encourage this private development, it is necessary for the Municipality to prepare a Community Improvement Plan under Section 28 of the *Planning Act* RSO 1990, c.P. 13.

This Community Improvement Plan provides objectives for private property improvements and establishes financial incentives for property owners to encourage the revitalization and continued economic stability of the four highlighted improvement areas within the Municipality. These areas are identified as the Main Central Area, the Gateway Area, the Hudson Core Area and the Airport Area.

This Community Improvement Plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the *Planning Act* RSO 1990, c.P.13, as amended, and implements the Community Improvement policies of the Official Plan for the Municipality of Sioux Lookout.

## 2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Community Improvement Plan is to establish a program for Municipal financial incentives to encourage the rehabilitation and improvement of public and private lands. The intent of the plan is to target improvements to existing buildings and properties; however, there is the inclusion of an incentive for new residential developments within the Community Improvement Areas.

### 3.0 Community Improvement Project Areas

The four identified project areas are illustrated on Schedules A, B, C and D to this Plan. These areas include the:

- Main Central Area,
- Gateway Area,
- Hudson Core Area, and
- Airport Area.

## 4.0 Objectives

Throughout each of the Community Improvement Project Areas, the following objectives shall apply:

- To improve the success of retail business in Sioux Lookout by encouraging more attractive areas and a wider variety of goods and services.
- To encourage the development of additional residential units as infilling within the Community Improvement Areas of Sioux Lookout and Hudson.
- To encourage the improvement of private and public properties in a manner that reflects a caring and inclusive community.
- To encourage future development within the Municipality of Sioux Lookout by reducing the costs for initial development and ensuring that there are incentives to increase the overall value of lands within the Municipality.

## 5.0 Community Improvement Incentive Programs

In order to meet the objectives identified in Section 4.0, the Municipality may provide the following incentives to private property owners and business owners. The incentive programs outlined in the Section are available in the various Project Areas as set out in Section 6.0.

### 5.1 Façade Improvement Grant

The Municipality may provide a one-time grant of 50% (up to a maximum of \$5,000) of the costs to assist commercial building owners to improve a building façade in accordance with the Downtown Revitalization Study and the Community Improvement Plan Background Report (available from the Development Services Department). The grant would include building materials, labour and professional fees.

### 5.2 Improved Signage Grant

The sign improvement program may provide property owners a grant of 50% (up to a maximum of \$2,000) toward the cost of replacing an existing sign that does not comply with the sign design guidelines outlined in this Plan. Grants will be paid upon completion and installation of the sign.

### 5.3 Landscaping

A grant of 50% (up to a maximum of \$1,000) of the costs may be available for landscape improvements between parking areas and roadways or laneways. The grant will be payable upon completion of the works.

### 5.4 Application Fees Grant

Where a property owner is undertaking improvements to a building in the designated improvement area in accordance with this program, the Municipality may provide a grant equivalent to the cost of the normal application fees for approved projects in accordance with the provisions of Section 69 of the *Planning Act* as follows:

- Site Plan Approval \$800 for construction valued \$0-\$800,000  
0.1% of costs (Maximum \$5000) for construction valued greater than \$800,000
- Zoning By-law Amendment \$800
- Minor Variance \$400
- Building Permit 50% to a maximum of \$3,000.

## 5.5 Residential Intensification Grant

Notwithstanding Section 6.0, the Residential Intensification Grant shall be available throughout the entire Municipality.

Where new residential dwelling units are created within the Community Improvement Project Areas and where permitted by the Municipality of Sioux Lookout Zoning By-law, the Municipality may provide a grant of up to \$3,000 per residential unit created where the unit is developed on an existing serviced lot or within an existing building. Where residential units are less than 60 square metres the Municipality may provide a grant of up to \$1,500 per residential unit.

The grant is for a maximum of \$9,000.

## 5.6 Tax Increase Increment Grant

Where property owners have improved lands and buildings under this Community Improvement Plan and those improvements have resulted in increased assessment on the property, the Municipality may provide a grant to offset the tax increase in the first year of a maximum of 50% of the tax increase to a maximum of \$10,000.

Conditions of Tax Increase Increment Grant:

- Must be improvement to developed land
- Grant applies to regular Tax Levy, not Supplemental Tax Levies
- Previous year's taxes must be paid in full
- Grant applies to previous year's taxes
- Grant will be applied as a credit on the subject property's tax account
- The Tax Increase Increment Grant will only be available where the property and building improvements undertaken result in an increase in the Municipal share of taxes resulting from increased assessment and exceed \$200 per year. The actual costs associated with an individual application may be subject to an independent audit at the request of the Municipality and at the expense of the property owner.

## 5.7 Municipal Land Development Grant

Where the Municipality sells public lands for the purposes of development as described in the Official Plan, the Municipality may sell the land at less than market value. If there are comparable private lands for sale at the same time the Municipality must sell at an appraised market value to ensure non-compete with the private market.

An agreement must be registered on title requiring the lands to be developed within 24 months of the close of the purchase, unless the Municipality provides a written extension.



## 5.8 Building Renovation and Improvement Grant

The Building Renovation and Improvement Grant provides financial assistance to improve upon the physical appearance of properties in the Main Central area and the Hudson Core Area, as well as to assist in creating barrier free environments, and interior improvements. The purpose of this program is to support capital projects that will allow for the establishment of new businesses, enhancement of existing businesses, or the creation of new mixed-use, or residential units.

### Grant option:

The maximum grant amount is \$10,000 per development to a maximum of 50% of the value of the improvements.

It is at Council's/Committee's discretion to offer this incentive based on available funds, and Grant Agreements.

## 5.9 Accessibility Grant

A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 to assist property owners to encourage the provision of accessibility improvements to existing buildings. Examples of the types that projects that may qualify for the grant include, but are not limited to: remove barriers, install ramps, elevators, lifts, automatic doors, and design services by a professional for the required project.

## 5.10 Relocation of a Home Occupation/Home Industry

Where a business owner is relocating an existing home occupation or home industry to a commercial building in a Community Improvement Plan area, the Municipality may apply a grant of 100% of the Municipal planning related fees and building permit-related fees up to a maximum of \$10,000.

## 6.0 Grant Eligibility Requirements

- 6.1 Council shall appoint a Committee to review applications for financial incentives. The Committee shall review all applications based on these eligibility requirements and the degree to which the project implements the Official Plan, Downtown Revitalization Plan and Community Improvement Plan (available from the Development Services Department).. The final decision on an application will be made by either Council or delegated Committee, depending on the set decision-making threshold.
- 6.2 No improvements carried out prior to the approval of the application will be eligible for funding. Only approved projects will be eligible for grants.
- 6.3 Grants would be available to a property owner or business owner occupying an assessed building in the Community Improvement Area upon satisfactory completion of the project. Assistance granted under any of the financial incentive programs to a particular property is not transferable to any other property.
- 6.4 Building façade grants will be granted based on a primary grant for the building façade that forms the primary entrance to the building. A secondary grant for a building side that faces the street or back lane but is not the primary entrance to the building may be provided after the primary grant.

Where a building has more than two building faces abutting a street or a lane the Municipality may consider a further secondary grant based on funding availability.

Where the primary building entrance is deemed by the Committee to comply with the objectives of this Community Improvement Plan, and no previous Façade Improvement Grants have been given, the primary grant may be approved for improvements to the rear of a building facing the street.

- 6.5 Façade Improvement Grants will only be available for entire building faces. Partial improvements to a portion of a building face will not be eligible. However, one façade may be improved on buildings that have side or rear facades that are also eligible for grants.
- 6.6 The Recipient and the Municipality of Sioux Lookout will be required to enter into an Agreement specifying the amount to be paid and the payment period. Where the Agreement is between a business owner and the Municipality, the property or building owner must consent to the Agreement.
- 6.7 Properties and buildings shall not have any tax arrears, outstanding utility charges or any other legal claim, lien or order that may affect the title of the land.
- 6.8 The grant programs outlined in Section 5.0 may be combined in a manner that will permit more than one grant per property. Where this is done, the total grant amount shall be based on the amounts listed in Section 5.0, however, the expenditure on each element of the grant shall be flexible, subject to the approval of the Municipality. In no

- instance shall grants exceed 50% of the cost of rehabilitation or a total of \$15,000 per property.
- 6.9 Grant applications will be assessed against the Objectives in Section 4.0 of this Plan and the Design Guidelines attached to this Plan as Appendix 1.
  - 6.10 The Recipient will be required to enter into an Agreement with the Municipality regarding the conditions under which a grant is provided. The Municipality may register the Agreement on the title of the lands guaranteeing all of the improvements where grants have been provided.
  - 6.11 The total of the grants made in respect of particular lands and buildings under this Community Improvement Plan, and the tax assistance that is provided in respect of the lands and buildings in this Community Improvement Plan shall not exceed the total cost of rehabilitating the lands and buildings.

## 7.0 Implementation

### 7.1 Administration

This Community Improvement Plan will be administered by the Municipality of Sioux Lookout as part of the implementation of the Community Improvement Policies of the Official Plan. The Municipality will market the Community Improvement Plan and post details on the Municipality's website for property and business owners to review.

Applications can be submitted anytime between January 1 to March 31 – the Application Intake Period -- to ensure applications are processed in a timely fashion for the summer construction season. Decisions will be made no later than the May Council meeting in any year. Applications received after March 31 will be processed the following year. Processing of applications will generally be on a first-come first-served basis, and is subject to the budgeted Community Improvement Plan funds.

Notwithstanding the above, applications for CIP Programs in 2024 may be submitted between April 1 and June 21, 2024, and will generally be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Decisions will be made no later than the July Council meeting.

### 7.2 Permits Required

Grants will only be made available to business or property owners once all of the required Municipal, Provincial and Federal permits for the project have been secured. The business or property owner shall be responsible for acquiring the necessary permits.

### 7.3 Design Guidelines

Preliminary Design Guidelines for signs and building facades are attached as Appendix 1 to this Plan. The Municipality may complete more detailed Design Guidelines to guide future development in the Community Improvement Area to augment the revitalization and rehabilitation programs outlined in this Plan. The Design Guidelines would provide detailed recommendations to augment the policies of the Official Plan, and establish a basis for reviewing new development, and to ensure that development is consistent with the Community Improvement Plan objectives.

The Guidelines may also include additional details regarding building and landscape design that may be used by the Committee to assess applications for grants provided under this Plan. Approval of more detailed Guidelines will not require an amendment to this Plan.

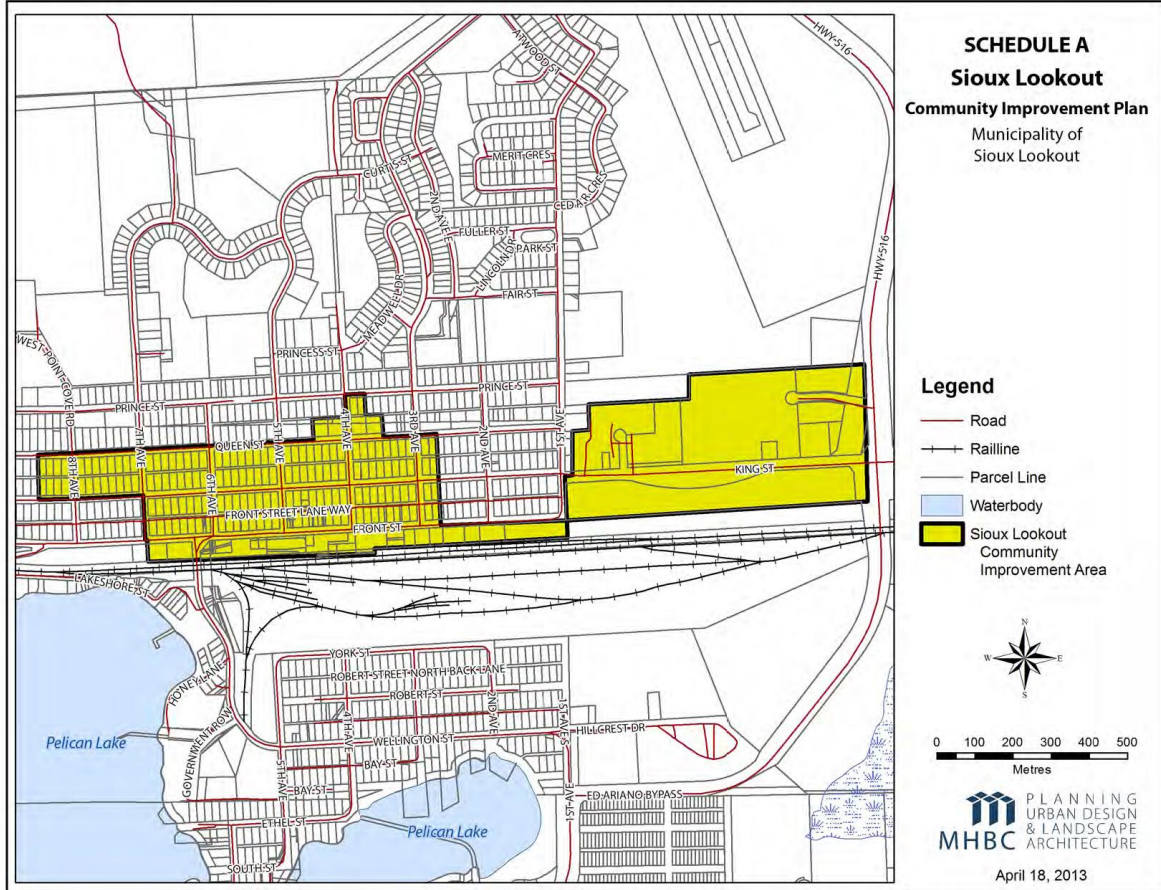
## 7.4 Sign By-law

The Municipality may adopt a sign by-law to reflect this Community Improvement Plan.

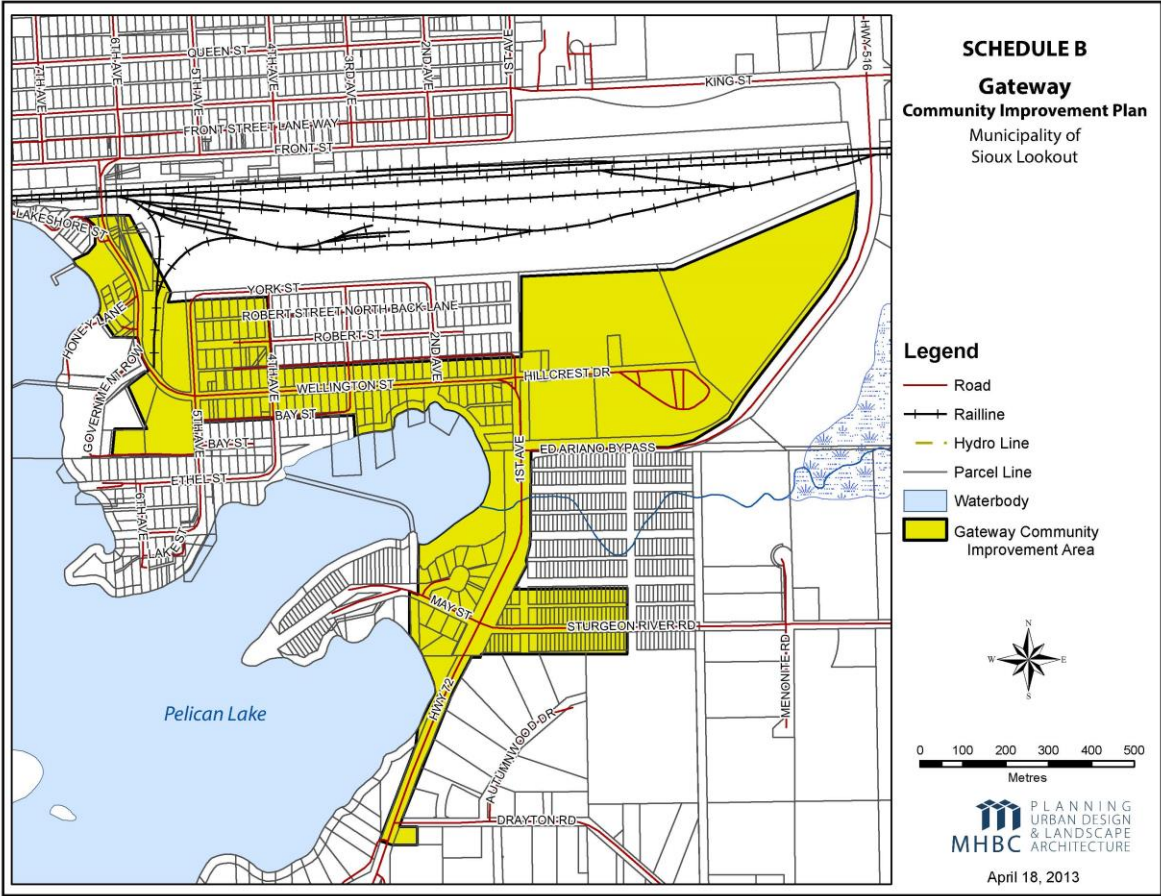
## 7.5 Monitoring and Amendments

Staff will prepare an annual report for Council to review the programs and activities relating to Community Improvement to determine their effectiveness. Council may amend this Plan as is necessary to ensure that the objectives outlined in this Plan are achieved. Council may eliminate any of the incentive programs outlined in Section 5.0 in order to focus financial incentives on other programs. Any increase in program financing permitted under Section 28 of the *Planning Act* will require an amendment to this Plan.

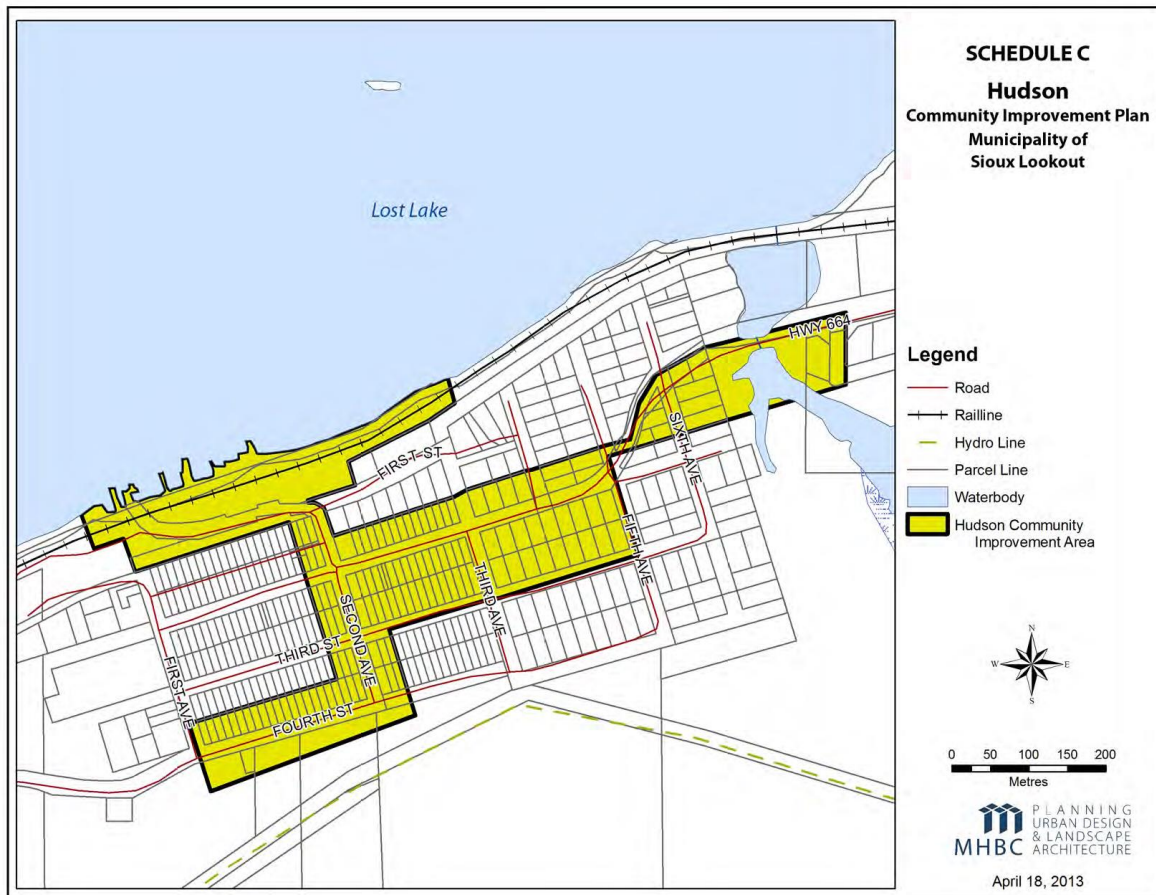
# SCHEDULE A Main Central Area



# SCHEDULE B Gateway Area

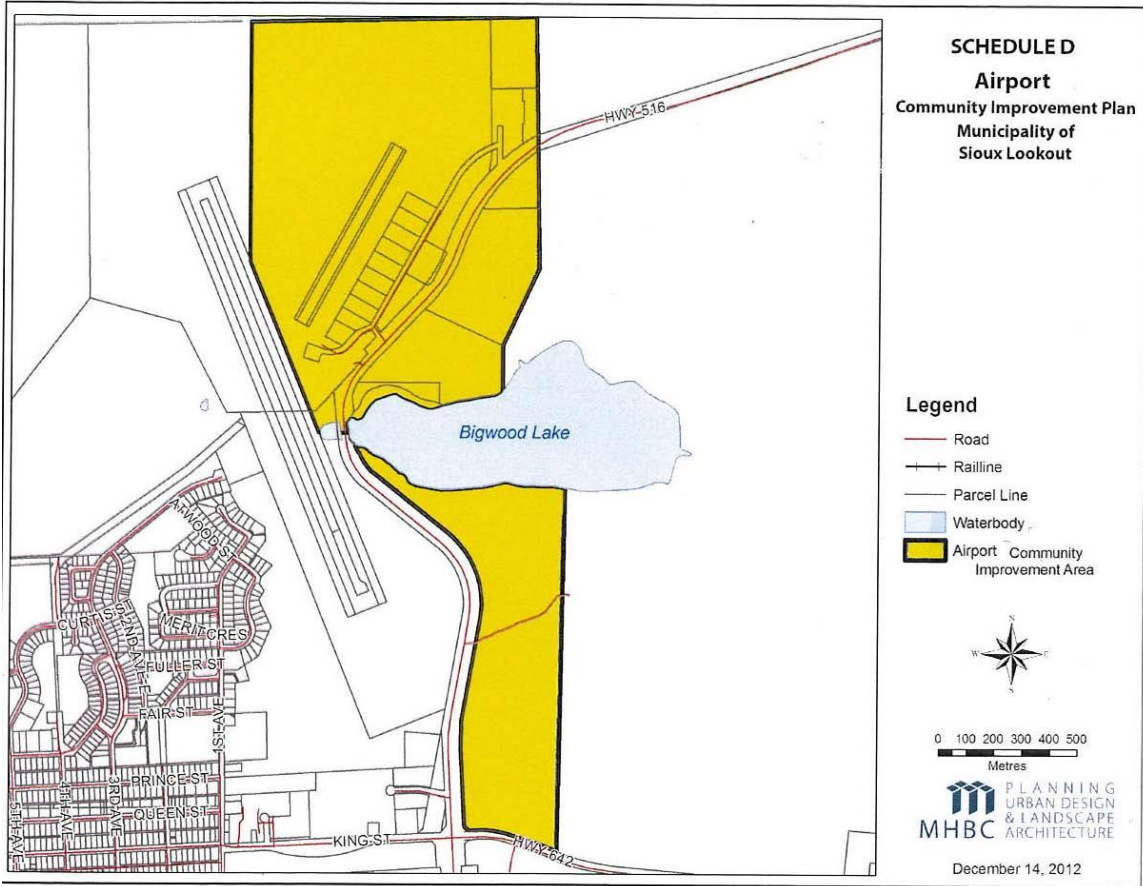


# SCHEDULE C Hudson Core Area





# SCHEDULE D Airport Area



## APPENDIX 1 - DESIGN GUIDELINES

In order to be eligible for a façade improvement grant, buildings should satisfy some basic design principles. The current building stock in the Main Central area has a mix of buildings including brick, metal and synthetic stone façades. There are a number of beautiful examples of brick buildings including the post office and the CIBC building. However, many of the original brick buildings have decayed to the point that the decayed brick has been covered with sheet metal siding. It is recognized that it is unlikely that repairs to the brick on some of these buildings is possible. Therefore alternative façade options should be considered. However, the pointing and replacing brick in buildings which had originally had brick façade should be a primary objective of the façade improvement program.



There are a number of buildings in the Main Central Area that have historic foundations and façade that are natural stone. Wherever possible these façades should be preserved in their current state to demonstrate some of the historical building techniques utilized in Sioux Lookout.



A façade treatment that could work with some interest and continuity in the Main Central Area could be to take elements of the wonderful architecture at the Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre and apply those same principles within the Downtown areas of Sioux Lookout and Hudson. The architectural style of the Health Centre combines natural wood, specifically stripped logs, and natural stone in a manner that creates a unique façade utilizing locally obtained natural materials. While new façade treatments should not be a direct copy of the Meno-Ya-Win architecture, elements of this form of façade design, using large timbers or logs and natural stone on the bottom kneewall or first floor could provide a consistent natural appearance to the downtown which would complement buildings that continue to be or are improved with brick façades. This design concept of using natural materials, stone and wood is utilized in a number of resort towns with great success.



The Sobeys food store in Collingwood Ontario has utilized a similar approach in developing a facade treatment that changes a typical big box store into something with architectural details reminiscent of historic construction.






Photos of Banff Alberta illustrate the streetscape when individual architectural styles are combined with similar design details as described above.



Grants will not be provided for sheet metal siding.

## SIGN GUIDELINES

The following are recommended design guidelines for signs that would be eligible for the Community Improvement Sign Grant.

Building Mounted Signs			
Awning	Wall Sign	Plaque	Projected Hanging
			
<p>Printed or painted on, or attached to an awning or canopy above a business door or window</p> <p>Oriented to pedestrians from the opposite side of the street</p>	<p>Mounted flush and fixed securely to a building wall facing the street</p> <p>Does not extend beyond the frontage</p> <p>Front lit only</p> <p>Typically the main identification sign for a building</p>	<p>Sign affixed to the building wall</p> <p>Not part of the typical sign band</p> <p>Above eye level</p> <p>Typically secondary to a wall or awning sign</p>	<p>Affixed at the right gable of a building</p> <p>Typically secondary to a wall sign</p>



**THE MUNICIPALITY OF SIOUX LOOKOUT**

**Community Improvement Plan, March 2024**