



Staff Report CAO2024-09

Committee 2024-12-12

Council 2025-01-13

Amendments

Submitted To: Committee of the Whole | Council
Submitted By: Sonya Skinner, Chief Administrative Officer
Prepared By: Sara Almas, Director of Legislative Services / Clerk
Shelby Verkindt, Executive Assistant, CAO & Executive Director
Subject: Draft Downtown Master Plan Workshop & Next Steps

Recommendation

THAT Staff Report CAO2024-09, Draft Downtown Master Plan – Next Steps, be received;

AND THAT the Downtown Master Plan prepared by Fotenn Planning & Design be referred to Council for endorsement to guide the Town of Collingwood’s strategic investments, activation, planning and overall continued success and vibrancy of the Downtown;

AND THAT Council direct staff to prepare a workplan identifying the immediate, short- and long-term actions, including items currently identified in the Operational Plan, to be reviewed annually or sooner, subject to annual budget and available resources.

Amendments

None.

1. Executive Summary

In June 2023, the Council recognized the importance of streamlining efforts by recommending the phased development of a new Community-Based Strategic Plan (CBSP) and Downtown Master Plan (DMP). This approach aims to prevent redundancy, enhance operational efficiencies, and achieve significant cost savings. Following this

direction, the joint proposal from Strategy Corp and the Fotenn Group was selected through a competitive RFP process.

Historically, the Town of Collingwood has not had a comprehensive Downtown Master Plan. As emphasized in the CBSP, the vitality and sustainability of the Downtown area are crucial for the community's overall well-being. Our strategic vision for the Downtown extends beyond immediate needs, ensuring thoughtful planning that supports its role as a vibrant center now and in the decades to come.

The report outlines five Strategic Directions and identifies 25 Action Items, which will be implemented over the next 20 years to drive the community's development and enhance the Downtown's appeal. These initiatives are designed to reflect the diverse needs of Collingwood's citizens, linking economic growth with cultural enrichment and social well-being.

These strategic directions set the foundation for Collingwood's intentional growth and development, reflecting our commitment to a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable future. Additional exploration into specific policy adaptations, infrastructure innovations, and community partnership initiatives could further inform these strategic pathways.

Following the presentation by our Consultant, Fotenn, Planning & Design ("Fotenn"), Council will consider any public input, input from the BIA Board of Management, and may recommend any changes to the Downtown Master Plan ("Plan"). The final draft of the Plan will be presented at a future Council meeting for endorsement, and preparation of a work plan over the next 20 years, subject to annual budget resources.

2. Analysis

Background

Initiated as Phase 2 of the broader project paired with the Community-Based Strategic Plan (CBSP), the Downtown Master Plan seeks to bolster Collingwood's Downtown as a vibrant hub that preserves its unique cultural and historical character.

The project, coordinated from December 2023 to October 2024, garnered important public input from the statistically significant survey and CBSP consultations, in addition

to further focused engaged specific to the Downtown. This engagement occurred from April to September 2024 and included meetings with the Steering Committee, and various stakeholders including the Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), Heritage Collingwood, community citizen groups, public open house events, and others to inform and substantiate its recommendations.

The Downtown Master Plan will build on the existing vibrant downtown to further identify and promote an identity that is unique to Collingwood. In concert with other Downtown studies, the Downtown Master Plan creates a foundation to protect and enhance Collingwood’s Downtown.

Project Scope

A comprehensive Downtown Master Plan for Downtown Collingwood includes the Vision, the key priorities for action and recommended sequencing or phasing, with details for implementation in the first two years as implementation details for future phases will be fleshed out annually as part of future budgeting processes. The Vision should be set for about 2051 (which matches the Official Plan horizon and for which population numbers are projected and available) and the plan should include both short term priorities (0-5 years) and long-term priorities (5-20 years).

The image depicts the defined study area, consistent with the New Official Plan Downtown Core.



The final plan will be used as a guide by the Town and other stakeholders to promote thoughtful development and re-development, enhance the downtown retail market, increase business opportunities, improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety, determine future use and needs of existing Town owned properties and identify desired future land acquisitions, parking system management, heritage considerations, development including for additional outdoor dining, development of additional housing options appropriate for downtown districts, pedestrian/neighbourhood connectivity, redevelopment of public spaces as gathering places to promote community and/or for performing arts, work and events, a streetscape plan, and ensure consistency in development and design standards to further build on the existing vibrant downtown to further identify and promote an identity that is unique to Collingwood.

Downtown Master Plan

*Full Plan attached as Appendix A

*Full Summary of Strategic Directions, Action Items, Roles, Timelines, Partners and Budget is attached as Appendix B

It is important to note that the timelines, priority items are only targets that may require adjustments based on various factors such as budget, resources, or other priority projects.

Vision:

“Downtown is the heart of Collingwood.

It is a beautiful and inviting destination nestled along the Georgian Bay where locals and visitors alike converge, celebrate the town’s rich heritage and innovative spirit, and explore a vibrant mix of uses, cultural experiences, and programming throughout the day and at all times of year. Downtown Collingwood is grounded in its unique and charming heritage setting, scale, and character, as well as the passion and commitment of those who live and work in the community. These elements serve as an integral foundation as new and sustainable development occurs within, and around, the Downtown and will support new population growth, development, and investment in both the public and private realm.”

Staff Input: Staff acknowledge the significant public input incorporated into the vision, which brought several key components to the forefront. Nevertheless, staff recognize that during the creation of the Community-Based Strategic Plan, Council expressed a preference for a more concise vision statement. As such, refining the "Vision" could be an area Council may wish to consider for further enhancement and clarity.

Summary of Strategic Directions:

4.1 Strategic Direction 01 - Establish a Strong Foundation for Downtown Growth

4.2 Strategic Direction 02 - Celebrate and Connect to Collingwood's Unique Waterfront Location

4.3. Strategic Direction 03 - Establish a Heart in Downtown Collingwood

4.4. Strategic Direction 04 - Activate the Downtown in the evening & throughout the year

4.5. Strategic Direction 05 - Reinforce a Beautiful and Enjoyable Pedestrian Experience

Recommendation

Staff recommend that Council direct the Draft DMP to proceed to Council [subject to any further Council amendments], in principle as a guiding document for strategic investments, activation, planning and overall continued success and vibrancy of the Downtown for years to come.

Option (Not Recommended)

An alternative option is to not endorse the Downtown Master Plan, which would leave the municipality without strategic direction regarding how best to support and maintain the success and vibrancy of the Downtown. Council could also choose to endorse the TMP with amendments, in which case staff would recommend referral back to staff to consider any Council desired changes and provide staff opinions in an amended report.

Financial Impacts

Given that resources to implement the DMP are required, staff will prepare a workplan identifying the immediate, short- and long-term actions to be reviewed annually or sooner, as resource requirements are identified or secured.

3. Input from Other Sources

Draft Master Plan was provided to Departments and Managers.

Staff report was reviewed by Department Heads on December 3rd, 2024, and recommended to proceed to the Special Council meeting workshop.

4. Applicable Policy or Legislation

Community Based Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Vision: Sustainable, Connected, Vibrant Collingwood is an inclusive community that offers a healthy and active lifestyle in a beautiful waterfront setting, anchored by a responsible government, strong business and nonprofit networks, and an animated downtown.

Pillar #3: Vibrant

Goal: Enhance the downtown and waterfront as a place to be

Key Action: Complete and implement the Downtown Visioning Master Plan to guide the evolution of the downtown area to 2051, including fostering greater connection to and integration with the waterfront.

The following are also relatable CBSP components that the Downtown Master Plan supports:

Pillar #1: Sustainable

Goal: Encourage more housing options that meet community needs

Goal: Support integrated and people-scaled development that enhances livability

Pillar #2: Connected

Goal: Foster belonging through arts, culture, and events

Goal: Support a community that is safe and well

5. Considerations

2024-2028 Community Based Strategic Plan: Progress towards achieving CBSP Goal

Sustainable Connected Vibrant Responsible

- Services adjusted if any Not Applicable
- Climate Change / Sustainability: Not Applicable
- Communication / Engagement: Public Engagement has occurred
- Accessibility / Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: Not Applicable
- Registered Lobbyist(s) relating to content:

Next steps and future action required following endorsement:

Pending input from Council, the Consult may make revisions to the Draft Plan, otherwise staff will incorporate feedback into the Staff Report for final consideration.

6. Appendices and Other Resources

Appendix A: Draft Downtown Master Plan

Appendix B: Summary Chart of Strategic Directions and Action Items

7. Approval

Prepared By:

Sara Almas, Director of Legislative Services / Clerk

Shelby Verkindt, Executive Assistant

Reviewed By:

Sonya Skinner, Chief Administrative Officer

CAO Comments:

- Endorsed by CAO Skinner on December 10, 2024 to proceed to Special COW.