



Town of Collingwood Downtown Master Plan

January 2025



FOTENN
Planning + Design

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1. Introduction

1.1. Project Overview

The Town of Collingwood is slated to grow by more than 17,000 people, nearly doubling its population by 2051. In anticipation of this growth, the Town has undertaken a two-phased approach to create a vision for Collingwood and the Downtown, including a new multi-year Community Based Strategic Plan (CBSP) 2024-2028 and a Downtown Master Plan.

The Downtown Master Plan builds 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 unique heritage attributes, promote smart and thoughtful development and desirable land uses, support additional housing options, diversify Downtown retail and programming, identify public open spaces, and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The Downtown Master Plan provides a clear vision for the long-term evolution of the Downtown, including an analysis of key findings and opportunity sites, a Vision Map for 2051, a list of Strategic Directions that are the driving threads that guide the plan, and the key Action Items to achieve the vision. The Action Items will be supported by recommended sequencing or phasing, identifying immediate (next two years), short (0-5 years), and long-term (5-20 years) priorities, roles and responsibilities, necessary resources, and anticipated budget implications (low/medium/high).

The final plan will be used as a guide by the Town, the BIA, the development community, and other stakeholders to promote thoughtful development and re-development.

1.2. Project Schedule

As Phase 2 of the broader study (i.e. with the Community Based Strategic Plan), the Downtown Master Plan took place in three phases. While some early engagement was underway simultaneously with the Community Based Strategic Plan, the majority of the project took place from April – January, 2025.

In addition, throughout each phase of the study, the Study Team was in regular communication with key project stakeholders, including the Community Based Strategic Plan consultant (StrategyCorp.), the Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), the Board of Management, the Heritage Committee, etc. (refer to Section 2.1 for an overview).

The key elements and timing of the process are outlined below:

Phase A: Project Kick Off

- Background Review and Analysis – April/ May 2024
- Kick-Off Meeting - May 2024
- Steering Committee Meeting – June 2024
- Draft Vision and Key Priorities – June/July 2024

Phase B: Draft Downtown Master Plan

- Public Engagement – September 2024
- Draft Downtown Master Plan – September 2024
- Council Presentation – January 2025

Phase C: Final Downtown Master Plan

- Final Downtown Master Plan – January 2025

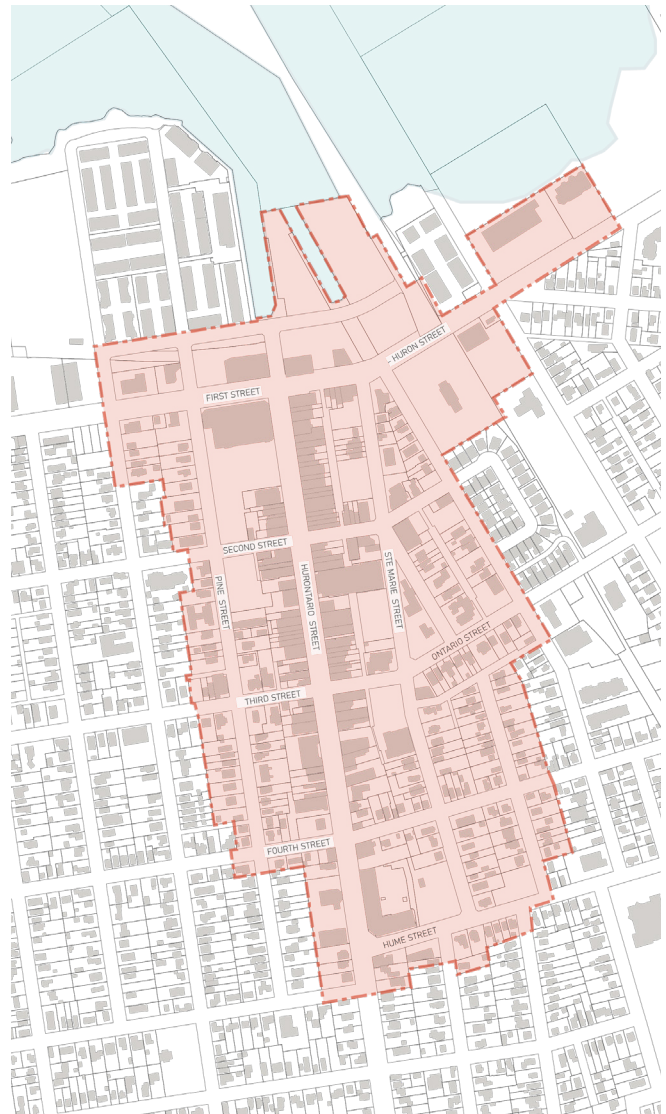


1.3. Study Area

The Town of Collingwood is a progressive community located in the heart of a four-season recreation area on the southern shore of Georgian Bay. The current population of the Town is approximately 24,811 (2021 Census Population).

The area is well known for its many natural amenities and its rich heritage. Collingwood is a destination for tourism and many businesses and sporting and cultural events. Collingwood acts as an attractive destination within the South Georgian Bay region, with stunning landscapes that encourage an active lifestyle, and inspire the local arts and culture community. Collingwood's Historic Downtown is a vibrant cultural hub with 30 plus restaurants, 60 plus boutique shops, spas for relaxing, live music, an active seasonal weekly farmers market, and was the first downtown core recognized in Canada's Register of Historic Places. More recently, through the redevelopment of the harbourfront area, including the Shipyards Public Realm Plan, the harbourfront area is emerging as an extension of the Downtown with plans for expanding amenities and events to make this a much more prominent destination.

Collingwood has an active and successful Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA). The BIA and the Town collaborate regularly on plans and events and have a Memorandum of Understanding delineating their mutual support. The BIA was a key stakeholder in the development of the Downtown Master Plan and is currently embarking on their Strategic Plan work which will be informed by the Downtown Master Plan.



Downtown Visioning Master Plan Study Area

1.4. Setting the Stage

The Town of Collingwood has a robust foundation of policies, plans, studies, and guidelines. As part of the background research and analysis underlying the Downtown Master Plan, these documents were reviewed to identify their directions related to the growth and evolution of the Downtown. In some cases, the information obtained was utilized for informational and/or context purposes. However, a number of the reports below included policies that are directly relevant to the successful growth and evolution of the Downtown, and where appropriate, have been integrated into this study. Key documents reviewed included, but were not limited to:

- Town of Collingwood Official Plan, December 2023
- Collingwood Zoning By-law 2010-040, Consolidated December 11, 2023
- Heritage Conservation District Plan, 2008
- Urban Design Manual, 2010
- Waterfront Master Plan, November 2016
- Affordable Housing Master Plan, 2023
- Community Based Strategic Plan 2020-2023
- Community Based Strategic Plan 2024-2028
- The Greener Collingwood Corporate Climate Action Plan (2023)
- Community Profile, 2023
- Cycling Plan, October 2019
- Economic Development Action Plan 2020-2025
- Laneway Design Guidelines, 2014
- Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, March 2019
- Shipyards Public Realm Plan, 2024
- Collingwood Downtown Gardens Plan, 2022
- Parking Strategy Downtown Collingwood, 2009
- Downtown Collingwood, Visitor Experience and Brand Validation Assessment, July 2015

- Collingwood Downtown Data/Information/Analysis Needs Report, June 2015
- Growth Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment, March 2022
- The Downtown and Waterfront Discussion Paper, July 2020

In addition, the Project Team received regular updates on a number of ongoing studies that have implications on the Downtown Master Plan, including:

- Joint Multi-Use Recreational Feasibility Assessment (MURFA)
- Town of Collingwood Tourism Master Plan
- Collingwood Arts Centre Feasibility Study
- Master Mobility and Transportation Plan (MMTP)

The key takeaways of this background review are summarized in Section 2.2.

2. What We've Heard

1.1. Engagement Overview

In addition to the thorough review of background reports, the Downtown Master Plan has been founded on significant and ongoing engagement with the Town of Collingwood (various departments), the Downtown Master Plan Steering Committee, the BIA, community groups, and additional consultants undertaking work in the Downtown.

Key meetings included:

- Monthly Check-In Meetings with the Town of Collingwood and the Strategic Plan Team (Strategy Corp.)
- BIA Board of Management – April 4th, 2024
- Collingwood Arts Centre Feasibility Study – May 8th, 2024
- Safe Streets Collingwood – July 5, 2024
- Heritage Collingwood – September 5, 2024
- Steering Committee – September 19, 2024



Photo from Engagement Session on September 5, 2024



Photos from Engagement Session on September 5, 2024



Photo from Engagement Session on September 5, 2024

In addition to the above, significant opportunities for public engagement were encouraged throughout the Downtown Master Plan process, including:

- **Market Research Survey, April 2024 (Forum Research):** Through March and April, 2024, a statistically significant survey was undertaken by Forum Research utilizing computer-aided telephone interviews (CATI) and computer-aided web interviews (CAWI). The intention of the survey was to garner input on Town services. However, a number of questions were targeted toward identifying and understanding residents' priorities as they relate to the Downtown over the next 10 to 20 years.
- **Strategic Plan Public Input:** Though closely related, the Community Based Strategic Plan was undertaken in advance of the initiation of the Downtown Master Plan. Given the close timing of these two studies, it was strategically decided that engagement would be deferred for the Downtown Master Plan to avoid 'engagement fatigue.' However, as part of the public engagement during the Community Based Strategic Plan, feedback on the Downtown was regularly collected and forwarded to the Downtown Master Plan team. In preparation for these engagement sessions, the two teams often worked closely to incorporate specific language to elicit feedback that could be used in the Downtown Master Plan.
- **Engage Collingwood:** A joint Engage Collingwood website was created for the Community Based Strategic Plan and the Downtown Master Plan to provide project updates and opportunities for feedback. Specifically, a tab was created to encourage members of the community to provide their ideas for the study. In addition, the materials from the September 5th public engagement sessions were posted to Engage Collingwood with additional opportunities to provide feedback and input.
- **Public Engagement by Shipyards Public Realm Plan Consultant:** Public engagement as part of the Shipyards Public Realm Plan uncovered a number of findings that were related to the broader Downtown. To avoid overlapping engagement and 'engagement fatigue,' the Project Team was in communication with the Shipyards Public Realm Team to compile relevant findings for inclusion in the initial background analysis of this study.
- **Downtown Master Plan Public Engagement:** On September 5, 2024, the Consultant Team undertook in-person public engagement for the Downtown Master Plan. The meetings were held at 84 Hurontario and included an informal afternoon engagement session (1-4pm) and a formal evening public open house and presentation (5-8pm). The objective of these meetings was to present and receive feedback on the Draft Vision, Strategic Directions and Action Items. These meetings were well attended and included a mix of people dropping in to provide quick input and people who stayed to engage with a member of the consultant team and provide more involved feedback.

1.2. Key Takeaways

A significant amount of information was obtained and analyzed through the background review and analysis, and the ongoing discussions and public engagement. However, there were a number of Key Takeaways that emerged as the most common findings, including.

Opportunities

- Collingwood's ***natural waterfront location*** is one of its greatest assets and a unique feature that distinguishes it from other small-town Ontario downtowns.
- As a Heritage Conservation District, Collingwood's ***unique historical and cultural significance*** is the foundation of the Downtown.
- Collingwood's Downtown is defined by a generally ***continuous fabric of tight-knit heritage buildings***, including landmarks such as the Town Hall, the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena, and the Federal Building.
- Collingwood is a beautiful place to visit with significant investment in ***attractive gardens and landscaping throughout the Downtown***.
- Hurontario Street is a ***healthy and active retail street*** with limited commercial vacancies and a varied mix of shops and services.
- The shops and services on Hurontario Street are supplemented by a strong network of ***supporting commercial uses on side streets***, including (most notably) Simcoe Street and Pine Street.
- Collingwood's Downtown is informed by a ***strong foundation of plans, policies, and studies***, which have helped in ensuring that Collingwood's growth and evolution is well managed.
- A number of ***local community groups and organizations*** are active in Collingwood, helping to spur and inspire change at the local level.



Precedent Photos of Existing Opportunities in Collingwood

Challenges

- There is a *disconnect between the Downtown and the waterfront* due to the significant traffic on First Street and 'gaps' in the public realm approaching the waterfront.
- The Downtown is *perceived as a car-oriented destination*, with vehicle traffic creating safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists.
- There is a *lack of a formalized and centrally-located open space* in the Downtown to host civic events and gathering opportunities.
- There is a *lack of evening programming and commercial uses* to regularly attract visitors to the Downtown outside of peak times.
- As a Heritage Conservation District, there are *conflicting opinions on growth and height* in the Downtown.
- As with the rest of the Town, there is a *lack of affordable and/or available housing* within the Downtown.
- There is a *perception that the Downtown is uncomfortable* and there are specific challenges within and around the existing bus terminal and public washrooms
- There is a *lack of clear wayfinding signage* for pedestrians and cyclists when moving throughout the Downtown.



Precedent Photos of Existing Challenges in Collingwood

3. Downtown Vision and Strategic Directions

2.1. Vision Statement

To build on the opportunities and address the challenges identified in Section 2.2, the following Vision statement encapsulates what Downtown Collingwood will be in 2051. The Vision reflects and is informed by the Strategic Directions in Section 4 and will serve as a compass in directing the collective efforts of the Town, the BIA, and the Collingwood community toward the shared goal of creating a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable Downtown.



Downtown is the heart of Collingwood.

It is a beautiful and inviting destination nestled along 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.



2.2. Strategic Directions

The following Strategic Directions outline the foundational pillars of our Master Plan and are instrumental in achieving the Vision in Section 3.1. The Strategic Directions are the overarching objectives that frame the more detailed Action Items in Section 4. They build on the qualities that make Collingwood unique while representing a direct response to the challenges uncovered through the Downtown Master Plan process.

The Strategic Directions will ensure that future public and private realm investment is both responsive and forward-thinking. By setting clear directions, and the actionable steps that follow, this framework will drive sustainable growth, enhance quality of life, and foster a long-term commitment to the continued success of Downtown Collingwood.



01
**Establish a Strong
Foundation for
Downtown Growth**



02
**Celebrate and
Connect to
Collingwood's Unique
Waterfront Location**



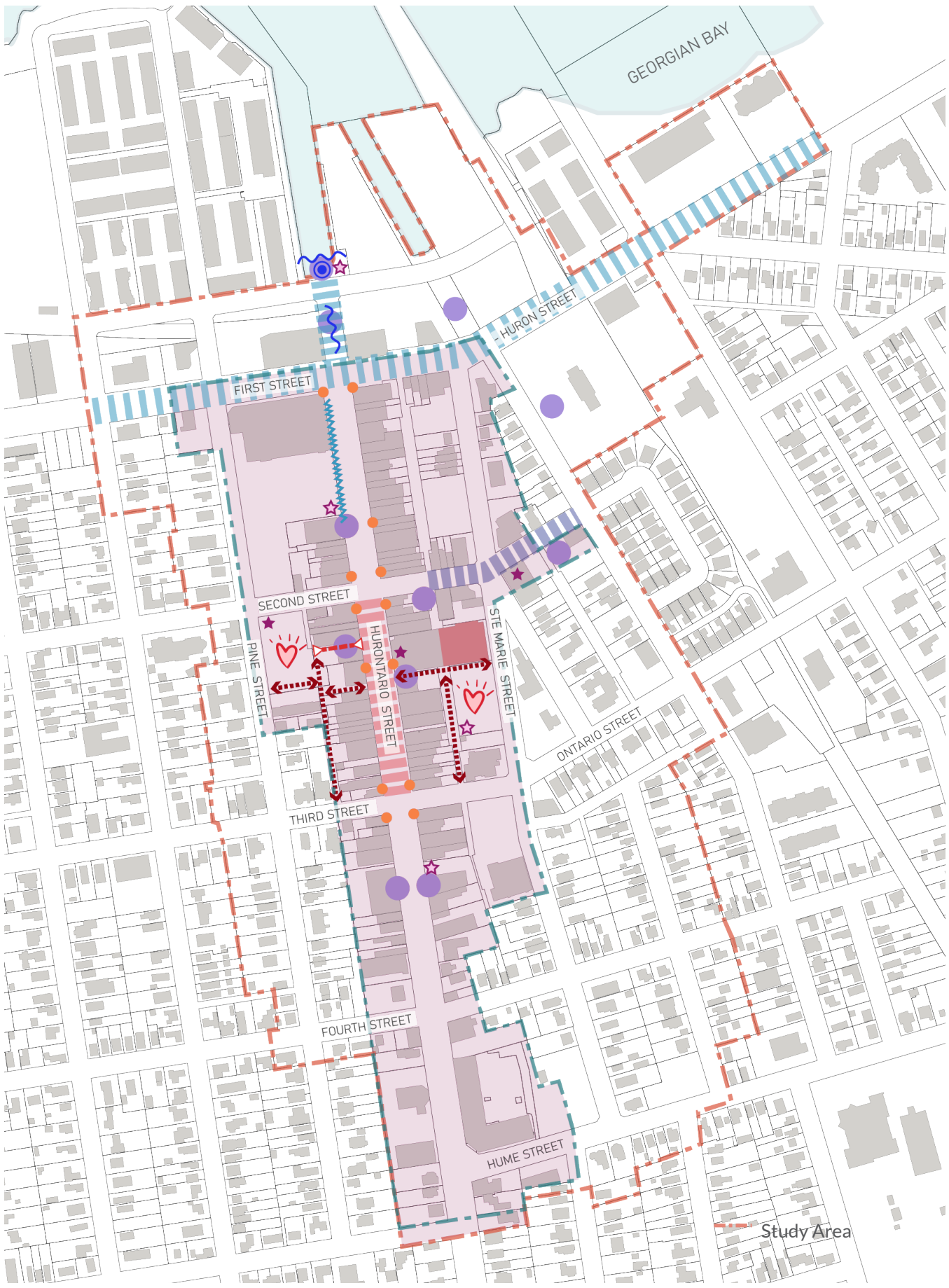
03
**Establish a Heart
In Downtown
Collingwood**



04
**Activate the
Downtown in
the evening and
throughout the year**



05
**Reinforce a
Beautiful and
Enjoyable Pedestrian
Experience**



DOWNTOWN VISION MAP

The Downtown Vision Map illustrates a series of Key Actions recommended for the Town of Collingwood in the immediate, short and long-term. Collectively, these Key Actions will achieve the Vision and Strategic Directions outlined on the previous pages.


LEGEND:


01 Establish a Strong Foundation for Downtown Growth


 Intensification Study

02 Celebrate and Connect to Collingwood's Unique Waterfront Location

 Key directions of the Shipyards Public Realm Plan

 Attractive and memorable public anchor


 Opportunities to physically engage with Georgian Bay

 Enhance and activate the Loblaw's frontage

03 Establish a Heart In Downtown Collingwood

 Town Square (possible location)


 84 Hurontario as a public space

 A Downtown Landmark at Eddie Bush Memorial Arena


 Laneway Activation (Pilot Project)

 Pedestrian priority on Hurontario Street

04 Activate the Downtown in the evening and throughout the year


 Rapid ARU Program/ Adaptive Re-use of Strategic Buildings


 Public washrooms (new)

 Public washrooms (existing)

05 Reinforce a Beautiful and Enjoyable Pedestrian Experience

 Pocket Parks

 Formalize Creative Simcoe Street

 Updated Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan

4. Action Items

The 24 Action Items outlined in this section will occur incrementally, over many years. They reflect a mixture of staff resourcing, public realm projects, private partnerships, additional studies, and policy and process amendments that the Town should implement over the next 20 years. They include both outstanding recommendations from previous reports and studies, as well as new recommendations, to present the Town with a clear and manageable roadmap to guide Council decisions over the next two decades.

The Action Items do not reflect all of the key recommendations outlined in previous studies but instead focus on those that are directly capable of achieving the Vision and Strategic Directions of this Master Plan. Where funding and resources exist, the Town should continue to implement the recommendations in the documents outlined in Section 1.4. Similarly, it is recognized that additional studies will be completed over the implementation timeframe of the Downtown Master Plan that may have implications on the Downtown.

The Downtown Master Plan provides high-level advice related to priority and timing, but it is recommended that the Town regularly review the Downtown Master Plan against ongoing and emerging priorities and opportunities and adjust as appropriate beyond the initial few years.

The Action Items are described in detail in the sections that follow, and include a broad description and rationale for the recommendations, as well as outlining:

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Outlines the resources responsible for the implementation of an Action Item, including the Town department lead and/or outside consultants.
- **Partnerships:** Identifies key partnerships required to implement an Action Item, including internal (i.e. BIA, Advisory Committees) and external (i.e. property owners, advocacy groups) resources.
- **Priority:** Prioritizes the project (High/Medium/Low) based on impacts on the Downtown, ease of implementation, and impacts on additional Action Items.
- **Timeline:** Outlines the recommended timeline for implementation, including Immediate Action (years 1 and 2); Short Term Priorities (0-5 years); and Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years).
- **Budget Implications:** Provides a high-level overview (High/Medium/Low) of the anticipated budget impacts, including both capital costs and ongoing costs. Where appropriate, additional funding mechanisms are explored.

The Action Items are organized based on the Strategic Direction they are related to. For quick reference, they are summarized in the table below based on overall priority and timeline. This prioritization is for guidance only and it is anticipated that, beyond years 1 and 2, the Town will flesh out the implementation details annually as part of the budgeting process.

Climate Action and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Greener Collingwood Corporate Climate Change Action Plan (2023) advocates that ‘...environmental impacts should be considered and incorporated into all applicable policies, procedures and future master plans produced by the Town.’ It is recommended that all of the Action Items identified in this plan be implemented in a climate-positive manner, with GHG reduction and climate change mitigation as a key priority.

Collingwood has been deeply engaged in collaborating with partners, including the Urban Economic Forum and UN-Habitat, to promote and enhance the achievement of the UN’s SDG goals, and notably SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

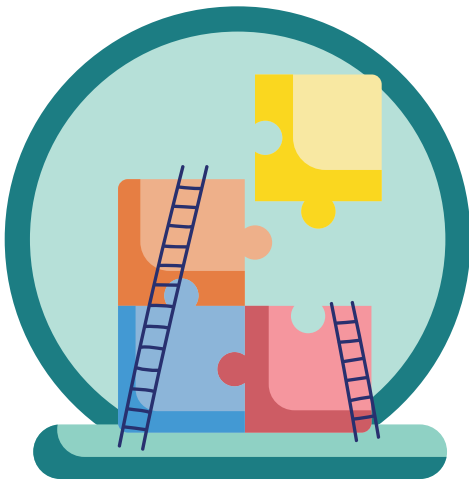
With its partners, the Town has hosted three World Summits, which strive to advocate and advance the role of small cities and towns as drivers of local, regional and national sustainability and all of its social, economic, cultural and environmental facets.

The Town established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Task Force, including members of Council, Town staff, and community members to advance these priorities. The Task Force continues to be active in adjacent projects, including the development of the updated CBSP and Downtown Master Plan.

Action Items that contribute to Collingwood’s efforts to achieve SDG 11 are identified, with a description of the specific Targets and Indicators they impact.

3.1. Strategic Direction 01

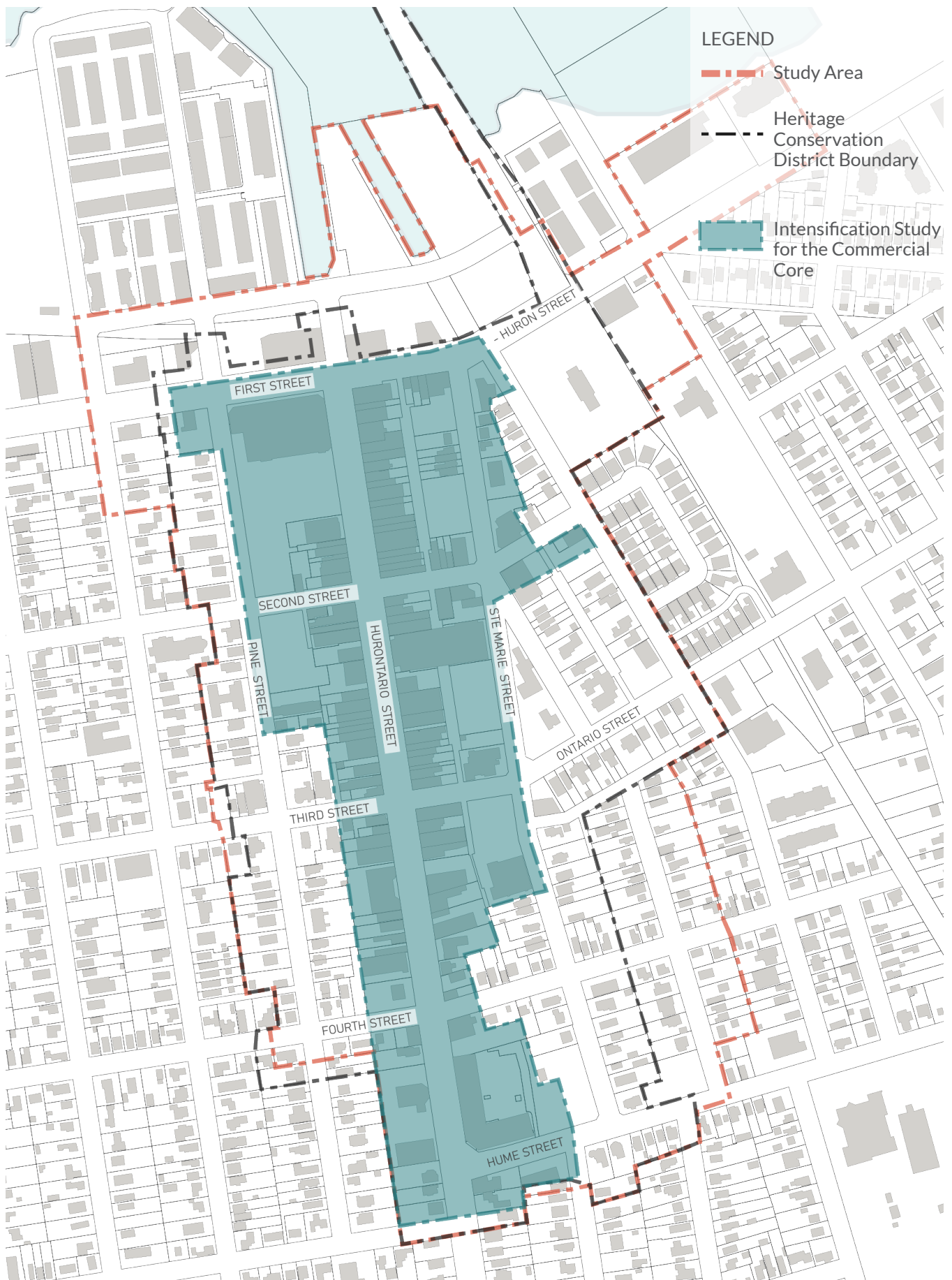
Establish a Strong Foundation for Downtown Growth



Building a strong foundation for Downtown Collingwood's growth requires the implementation of overarching policies, processes, and actions that continue to drive innovative, sustainable, and inclusive development while protecting the town's unique historic character and ensuring new development is compatible with the existing fabric of the Downtown. By instituting underlying frameworks, including key studies, strategic staff, and resourcing efforts, and ongoing public communication, the Town of Collingwood can position itself as a leader in managing growth responsibly, encouraging economic vitality and long-term community well-being.

Action Items (Overview)

1. Undertake a Gap and Opportunities Analysis of land use planning policies to inform an Intensification Study and support the success of the Downtown in response to changing paradigms and evolving priorities
2. Prepare a Strategic Decision Framework for Major Investment in the Downtown
3. Identify a Downtown Coordinator to Oversee Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan
4. Continue to Raise Education and Awareness around Mental Health and Homelessness in the Downtown
5. Actively Engage Town Committees and Boards in Implementing the Downtown Master Plan
6. Continue to Support the Evolution of the Downtown from a Car-Centric to a 'People-First' Destination



Action Item # 1:

Undertake a Gap and Opportunities Analysis of land use planning policies to inform an Intensification Study and support the success of the Downtown in response to changing paradigms and evolving priorities

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Land Use Planning (Town Lead); Urban Designer (Consultant Lead); Heritage Architect (Consultant Support)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; Heritage Advisory Committee
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:** Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Low (Consultant Report)

The Collingwood Downtown Heritage Conservation District (HCD) was initially completed in 2002 and resulted in Bylaw 02-12 which defines an HCD boundary and protects the HCD under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. In 2008, the HCD Plan was revised in response to amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act in 2005, and subsequent regulations and amendments since 2005. Most notably, s.41.1(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act required the adoption by bylaw of an HCD Plan, making its objectives, policies, and design guidelines enforceable.

With regard to height, the Collingwood Downtown HCD Plan notes that “the allowable height is as stated in the Town’s zoning bylaw.” Under the current zoning bylaw (2010-040), the properties within the HCD boundary are almost all zoned as C1 (Commercial) which allows a maximum height of 12m. The Town of Collingwood Official Plan (approved by Council in December, 2023) generally promotes new development within mid-rise buildings and permits up to 6-storeys (or 20m) in the Downtown Core designation, but notes that “within the Downtown Heritage Conservation District, building height shall be informed by the

Downtown HCD Plan and shall be limited to 12m (3 to 4-storeys).”

The Town of Collingwood is projected to grow by 17,200 people by 2051 bringing the population of the Town to 42,000. This population growth, combined with the fact that Canada is in a national housing crisis, merits the review of opportunities for greater height within Downtown Collingwood. Additional height within the Downtown potentially provides a number of benefits, including providing a greater critical mass to support local businesses, enhancing safety through additional ‘eyes on the street,’ providing opportunities for new commercial uses, and providing additional housing options within the Town (in line with the Town’s Affordable Housing Master Plan).

To date, the policies guiding height (i.e. through the HCD, zoning, and official plan) have been a ‘broad swaths’ approach that treats all sites within the Downtown the same. As an alternative, it is recommended that the Town undertake an Intensification Study for the Downtown (including both the HCD and the Downtown Commercial Core boundaries) on a site-by-site basis to identify opportunities for additional height. An Intensification Study would identify opportunity sites, including those that may be consolidated in the future, and prepare detailed 3D massing to understand achievable heights and built form based on heritage character, shadow impacts, parking requirements, etc.

A heritage architect should be a key member of the Intensification Study team, helping to understand the intangible elements that inform height and built form in the Downtown, including key views (i.e. to Town Hall), datum lines, materiality and façade design, etc. Should opportunities for greater height be identified, it is also recommended that the Downtown HCD Plan be updated to include more comprehensive urban design guidelines to ensure that new development is energy efficient and well integrated into the existing historic fabric,

respecting key datum lines, materiality, scale, etc. without mimicking styles or creating faux heritage.

Prior to undertaking an Intensification Study, the Town should undertake a Gap and Opportunities Analysis of its existing land use planning policies to identify potential regulatory updates that may inform the Intensification Study and further support the vision for the Downtown outlined in this report.

For example, a cursory review of the new Town of Collingwood Official Plan (December, 2023) shows permissive policies for the Commercial Core that generally accommodate the range of uses that would typically be expected within an evolving downtown and that are in alignment with the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan. However, a more in-depth review of specific uses could help to identify any gaps and/or space requirements in the Downtown.

Similarly, the Town should review the recent change to the Official Plan that prohibits office uses on the ground floor. As these uses are often not public and close at the end of typical business hours, it is understood why this policy was implemented in an attempt to prioritize street activation. However, it is our opinion that office uses are typically a strong addition to a Downtown setting and help to allow residents and visitors to fulfill both their daily shopping needs as well as other service needs within the Downtown (which is often the drawing factor that supports visits to nearby businesses). Prior to undertaking an Intensification Study, the Town should analyze the potential impacts of this policy to determine if it will result in the desired outcomes.

Finally, while it may face pressure from the development community, the Town should continue to prohibit future surface parking lots with direct frontage on Hurontario Street, consistent with the Official Plan, and should reflect this in an Intensification Study.

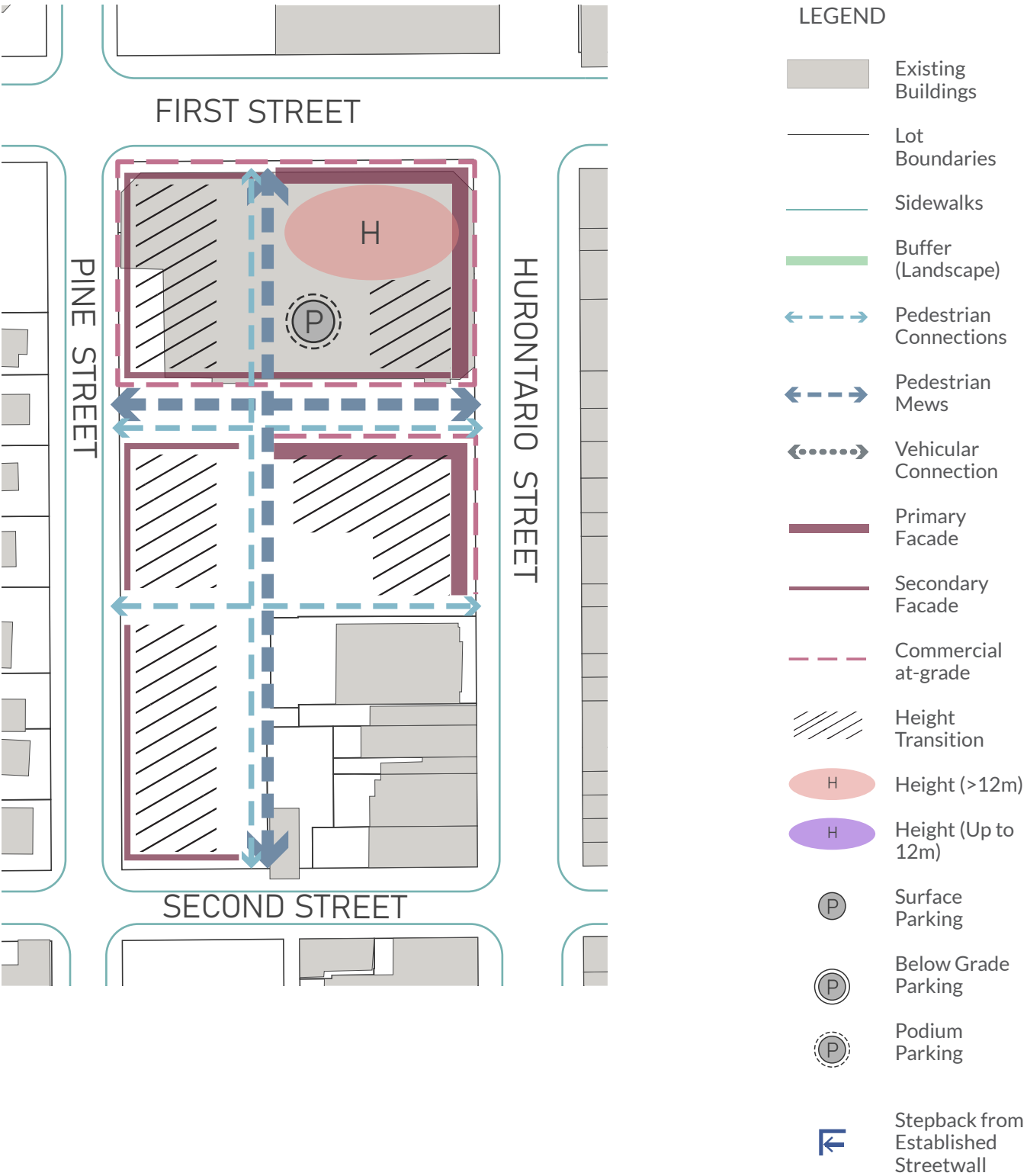
The findings of the Gap Analysis and Intensification Study should inform future amendments to the Official Plan, Zoning Bylaw, and the Collingwood Downtown HCD Plan, and if additional height and/or other updated permissions or restrictions are appropriate, remove policy and process barriers for the identified sites of the Downtown area at large. Updates to the Collingwood Downtown HCD Plan concurrently with the Gap Analysis and Intensification Study may provide for synergies and efficiencies. Importantly, if opportunities for additional height are identified through the Intensification Study, it is recommended that the HCD be updated accordingly without altering the existing HCD boundary as this helps the Town to retain control over the exterior design and visual character of new Downtown buildings (and upgrades and enhancements to existing buildings), in light of recent changes to Site Plan Control conditions as part of Bill 23.

Strategically removing barriers to new development in the Downtown (where deemed appropriate) would help to ensure that the Town's Official Plan and Zoning policies align with the Strategic Direction of the Downtown Master Plan to 'activate the Downtown in the evening and throughout the year' through the creation of greater housing options in the Downtown (through new development and residential units within upper storeys).

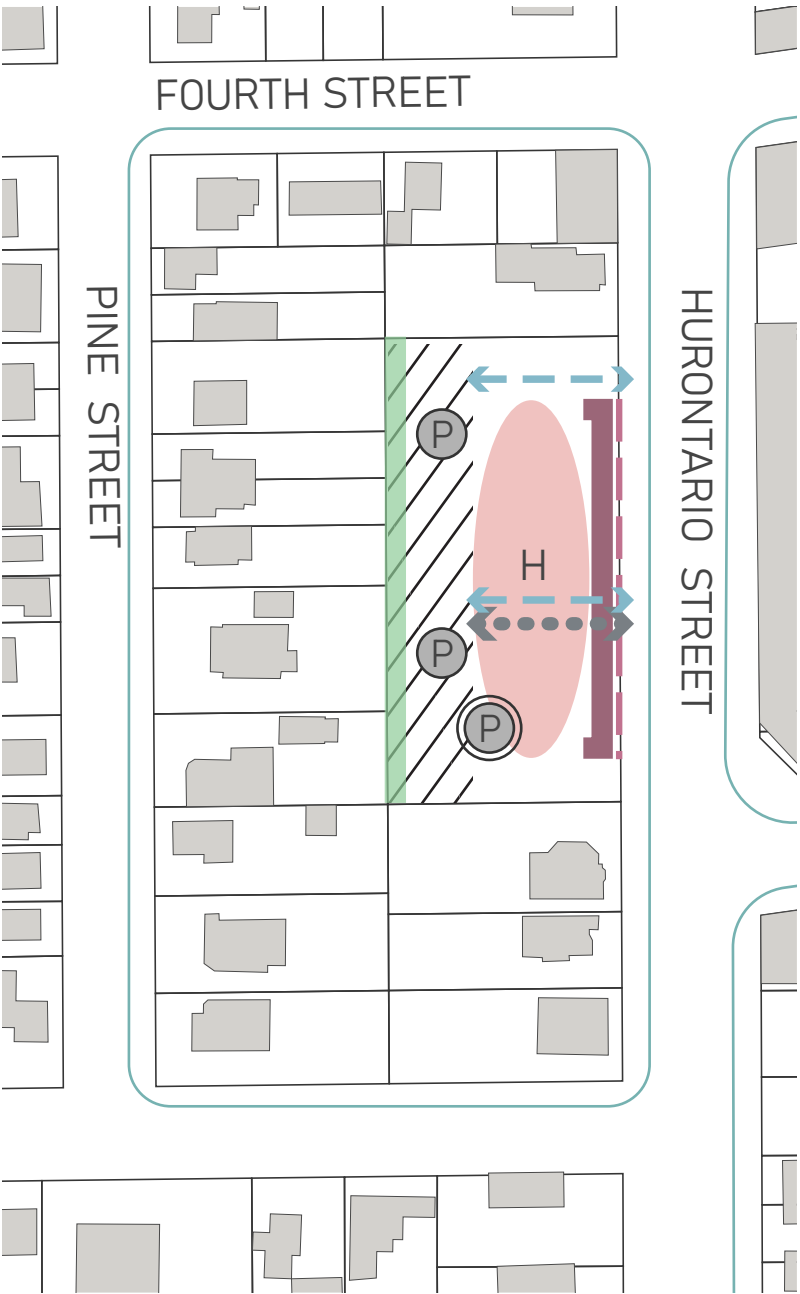
Demonstration Sites:

The following examples illustrate a series of opportunity sites identified in the Downtown and provide high level directions to indicate possible redevelopment potential. **They are for demonstration purposes only and should be confirmed through the detailed Intensification Study.**

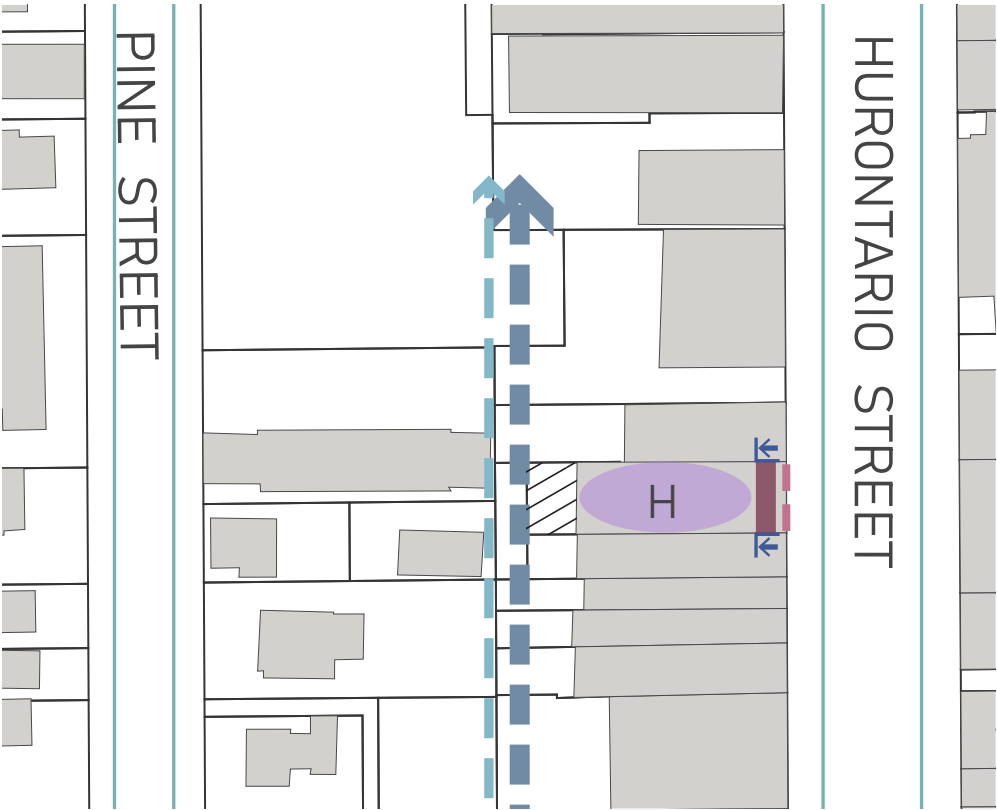
Site 1: Existing Loblaw's Site (12 Hurontario Street)



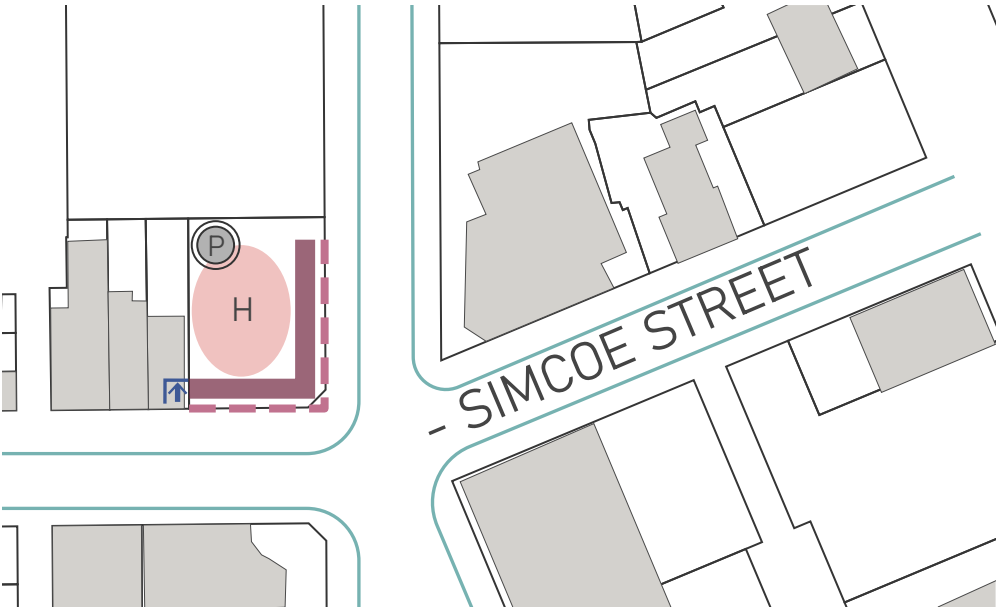
Site 2: Large Redevelopment Site (280-290 Hurontario Street)



Site 3: Single Property Infill (Example 1: Addition)



Site 4: Single Property Infill (Example 2: Redevelopment)



SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with, and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.1
- Target 11.3
- Target 11.4

Action Item # 2:

Prepare a Strategic Decision Framework for Major Investment in the Downtown

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Project Lead (i.e. Parks, Recreation and Culture for an Arts project) with support from Land Use Planning, Infrastructure, Finance and other relevant Town departments
- **Partnerships:** BIA; Economic Development
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:** Immediate Action (Years 1 and 2)
- **Budget Implications:** Low

In implementing the Downtown Master Plan, it is anticipated that there will be a number of major investments in the Commercial Core. In addition, new opportunities are likely to arise that have not been contemplated in this Plan. These investments may be competing for Town resources and/or sites, and against investments identified through other plans and studies.

It is recommended that the Town develop and implement a Strategic Decision Framework to guide major investments in Downtown Collingwood. This framework should emphasize strategic placement and cohesion to enhance the vibrancy and functionality of the Downtown.

The framework should create a set of criteria, including both quantitative and qualitative data, to evaluate potential investments, focusing significantly on the physical location's strategic value within the Downtown core. The framework may require collaborative input from multiple departments, and/or external considerations. Decisions regarding major investments in the Downtown should highlight the framework utilized to ensure appropriate transparency and accountability.

When evaluating potential investments, key considerations may include, but not be limited to:

- **Location and Cohesion:** Investments that enhance linkage and connectivity within key Downtown destinations.
- **Activation Potential:** Projects that enhance community engagement, support cultural activities, and boost economic development.
- **Spatial Integration:** Developments that contribute positively to the existing urban fabric and reflect the vision outlined in this Plan.
- **Downtown focus:** Projects that centralize development efforts within the downtown rather than adopting a dispersed strategy.
- **Fiscally Balanced:** Ancillary infrastructural investments, such as minor underground utilities, should not drive project decisions and should be carefully balanced against the above considerations (i.e. do not choose the cheapest option by default).

Once established, the Town should track outcomes and data, and the framework should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect lessons learned, and to adapt to changing urban needs or developmental priorities.



Hurontario Street, Looking South

Action Item # 3:

Identify a Downtown Coordinator to Oversee Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** CAO (Town Lead); Human Resources
- **Partnerships:** BIA; Land Use Planning; Economic Development; Simcoe County Tourism
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:** Immediate Action (Years 1 and 2)
- **Budget Implications:** Medium

The Downtown Master Plan includes a number of Action Items to guide the evolution of the Downtown. This builds on a number of existing, ongoing, and future studies (see Section 1.4) which provide (or will continue to provide) additional recommendations that impact the Downtown. Through our engagement to date, it is understood that the Town and the BIA are making continued progress toward the growth and evolution of the Downtown, but that additional capacity and resources would be helpful in implementing the Action Items in this plan.

It is recommended that the Town hire a Downtown Coordinator to provide ownership over, and liability for, the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan. This will ensure that the recommendations of this plan remain at the forefront of the Town's planning and budgeting discussions over the implementation horizon (i.e. 2051).

The Downtown Coordinator would not be a replacement for the BIA, but a partner, working closely with the BIA to provide additional capacity and resources on the Town side dedicated to Downtown revitalization (with a specific focus on the Action Items of this plan). Complementing the on-the-ground work of the



BIA Team + Strategic Partnership

BIA, the Downtown Coordinator would provide oversight of a number of strategic Town projects (i.e. Downtown Business Strategy, expansion of the Rapid ARU Program, etc.). More importantly, the Downtown Coordinator will be a 'connector' able to identify and pursue **synergies** between the various elements of this plan (i.e. Adaptive Re-use, Programming Strategy, etc.), future studies, and ongoing strategies and initiatives, through a strong understanding of downtown properties, Town-wide plans and policies, and a seamless relationship with Town and County departments, the development community, local health authorities, etc. To be successful, the Downtown Coordinator will need to be in regular contact with stakeholders across Collingwood (and beyond) to identify and facilitate potential synergies. As a highly-knowledgeable resource, the

Downtown Coordinator will be expected to implement a proactive approach to achieving the objectives of this plan. For example, if the goal is to provide additional residential units in the upper storeys of Downtown buildings, it would be the role of the Downtown Coordinator to identify potential buildings, contact the landowner, and help them through the application process for the Town's expanded ARU program (see Action Item # 16), making appropriate connections as required (i.e. architects, planners, etc.) to remove potential barriers.

Ideally, the Downtown Coordinator would be a dedicated staff position. However, given the cost of a new hire (and the Town's recent hiring of a similarly unique position in the Community Transportation Coordinator), the Downtown Coordinator could begin as a contract position (i.e. 1-year) as the role and responsibilities are further refined in practice, with the possibility of a permanent placement once a long-term need is demonstrated. Alternatively, the Downtown Coordinator could be a reallocation of responsibility for an existing Town Staff resource or multiple staff who dedicate a portion of their time to this responsibility.

Of specific importance in implementing this role is ensuring the Downtown Coordinator position does not duplicate efforts of the BIA. As the Town nears completion of its Tourism Master Plan, which will have a number of emerging directions that overlap with the Downtown master Plan, there are opportunities to expand the role of the Downtown Coordinator to focus more broadly on town-wide enhancements to further mitigate overlap with the BIA.

To date, both the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the City of Woodstock have seen great success through the hiring of a Downtown Coordinator. It is recommended that the Town reach out to these municipalities to discuss the merits of the role and the experience and attributes of the successful applicants. At a minimum, it is envisioned that the Downtown Coordinator would have a keen understanding of economic development, real estate, grants and other funding mechanisms, etc. Given the location, a background in heritage would be considered a strong asset.



Patio along Hurontario Street

Action Item # 4:

Continue to Raise Education and Awareness around Mental Health and Homelessness in the Downtown

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Community Well Being and Inclusion Coordinator (Town Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; BIA; Simcoe County; Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit; South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:** Immediate Action (Years 1 and 2); Ongoing
- **Budget Implications:** Low

Throughout the background research and public engagement for the Downtown Master Plan, a number of people expressed that the unhoused population in Downtown Collingwood, as well as those who struggle with mental health issues, create a feeling of discomfort and/or safety concerns when visiting the Downtown. While it was not within the scope of this work to study the relationship between homelessness and safety, it is important to note that ‘perception is reality’ and if people do not feel safe in the Downtown, they will not visit. As Collingwood continues to grow, these concerns are likely to increase as well.

Equally as important, it was clear through our engagement that the residents of Collingwood are not simply looking to hide or ignore their unhoused neighbours and those struggling with mental health issues, but rather that they are generally eager to provide help and support wherever possible. This is demonstrated by the ongoing work of a number of local non-profit, community, and volunteer groups, such as the Salvation Army, Society of St Vincent de Paul, the Collingwood Youth Centre, Elephant Thoughts, etc.

In collaboration with the County of Simcoe, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team, the Town of Collingwood continues to make strong progress in providing key supports and services related to mental health, food access, and homelessness, including:

- A Mental Health Response Unit that includes Mental Health Crisis Workers and trained OPP officers;
- Various counselling and therapy opportunities for those struggling with mental health and addiction;
- Food banks, community fridges and food donation centres (including the Collingwood Public Library Food Pantry); and,
- Warming shelters within the Collingwood Public Library (and farther away in Downtown Barrie).

It is recommended that the Town undertake a campaign to raise education and awareness for these, and other, initiatives that are currently underway. Specifically, efforts should be geared towards helping those who need help understand how and where they can get it, as well as informing those who would like to help who they can contact and the multitude of ways they can be involved (i.e. volunteering, donations, etc.). More importantly, as the Town continues to make additional progress, ongoing educational and awareness campaigns are encouraged throughout the Downtown to increase public awareness and to foster support for new policies, programs and initiatives.

Efforts to raise education and awareness around homelessness and mental health issues should be led by the Co-ordinator, Community Well Being and Inclusion in close collaboration with the Downtown Coordinator. Both individuals should have direct and trusted contacts related to the ongoing efforts above, and should be able to draw on them as needed to provide guidance to those in need or to offer opportunities for those looking to help.

SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with, and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG3), including:

- Target 3.5



Ongoing educational and awareness campaigns are encouraged throughout the Downtown to increase public awareness

Action Item # 5: Actively Engage Town Committees and Boards in Implementing the Downtown Master Plan

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** CAO (Town Lead - Audit); Land Use Planning (Town Lead); Committee and Board Staff Leads
- **Partnerships:** Boards and Committees
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:** Short Term Priorities (0-5 years); Ongoing
- **Budget Implications:** Low

The Town of Collingwood has a number of committees and boards that are relevant to the ongoing evolution and success of the Downtown, including (but not limited to) the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Affordable Housing Task Force, the Heritage Committee, and the Trails and Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Composition of these committees and boards vary, but are often comprised of elected officials (i.e. members of Council), representatives from the BIA, citizen members, and non-voting staff resources from relevant departments.

These advisory committees and boards offer specialized input, perspectives, and expertise that can be invaluable in shaping the outcome of a project and ensuring successful implementation. It is recommended that as elements of the Downtown Master Plan are implemented, the Town utilizes its committees and boards to their full potential and commits to eliciting meaningful and ongoing input at key stages of a project (i.e. initiation, design development, draft, and final review).

Importantly, the Town's committees and boards provide the opportunity to generate input and perspectives from a wide range of the population. For example, both the Accessibility

Advisory Committee and the Trails and Active Transportation Advisory Committee encourage members who (in addition to topical knowledge) represent youth, adults, and seniors, as well as persons with disabilities.

It is anticipated that the Town will be undertaking an internal review of its boards and committees this year (2024/25), and it is recommended that the Terms of Reference and Key Qualifications and Eligibility Requirements for Citizen Members for each committee be reviewed to ensure future membership reflects Collingwood's diverse and inclusive population, beyond simply youth, adults and seniors. Specific considerations may include (but not be limited to): Underrepresented populations (i.e. Indigenous Peoples, visible minorities, LGBTQ2+, Persons with Disabilities); Long-term and new residents; Homeowners and renters; etc.

In addition, given the role that these boards and committees will play in implementing the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan, a careful review of the Key Qualifications and Eligibility Requirements for each committee (as well as a review of the existing membership) should ensure members have the skill sets and/or interest to align with the Vision and Strategic Directions of the Downtown Master Plan. For example, the Affordable Housing Task Force identifies Housing Owner/Operator, Developer, Financial Expert, etc. as stakeholder sectors that should be included in the Community Members. A regular audit of the membership is recommended to ensure such sectors are being represented.

SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with, and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.3

Action Item # 6:

Continue to Support the Evolution of the Downtown from a Car-Centric to a 'People-First' Destination

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Manager, Growth and Development (Town Lead); EXP (MMTP Consultant)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; Roads and Transportation; Engineering Services
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:** Immediate Action (Years 1 and 2)
- **Budget Implications:** Low

The Town of Collingwood, as well as local advocacy groups (i.e. Safe Streets Collingwood), have made significant town-wide progress towards enhancing pedestrian safety and shifting the discourse to support Collingwood as a 'people-first' destination. Specific examples include (but are not limited to): Speed limited reductions in School and Community Safety Zones, the implementation of Traffic Calming Policies and Procedures (June, 2021, and currently under review as part of the Master Mobility and Transportation Plan in response to resident feedback); And, integration of new language in the Official Plan (i.e. Vision Zero, Active Transportation, Complete Streets, etc.). Despite these efforts, it was noted throughout our engagement that the perception that the Downtown is 'car-oriented' remains. Specifically, First Street/Huron Street was noted as being unsafe to cross due to vehicle speed. In addition, many people noted that Hurontario Street is unsafe due to vehicle speeds, heavy truck traffic, angled parking, and conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.

The Town is currently undertaking a Master Mobility and Transportation Plan (MMTP) with the objective of providing the Town of Collingwood with a comprehensive strategy which deals with current and future transportation issues. The

MMTP will provide the long-range planning necessary to identify needs, establish priorities between vehicles, active transportation modes (i.e. cycling, trails), and transit, and provide a planning framework for future infrastructure improvements and network development.

It is our understanding that the MMTP will provide a number of recommendations that impact the Downtown, and directly address the issues above, including infrastructure needs (i.e. cycling connections and facilities) and policies and programs (i.e. speed limit reductions, traffic calming procedures). As the Downtown Master Plan will be completed prior to the MMTP (scheduled for completion in January, 2025), It is recommended that the Town ensure that the MMTP consultants are aware of the Vision, Strategic Goals, and Action Items of this report and that they are used to inform the recommendations of the MMTP where appropriate.

In addition, it is recognized that the MMTP will have a number of recommendations that directly impact the Downtown and may directly achieve aspects of the Vision, Strategic Directions, and Action Items. In such cases, these recommendations should be considered alongside the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan in the Town's budgeting and planning efforts (i.e. a High Priority recommendation of the MMTP should be implemented prior to a Medium Priority recommendation of the Downtown Master Plan). The Downtown Coordinator should be familiar with both documents and should revisit the prioritization recommendations of this document following the Council endorsement of the MMTP.

SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with, and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.2



3.2. Strategic Direction 02

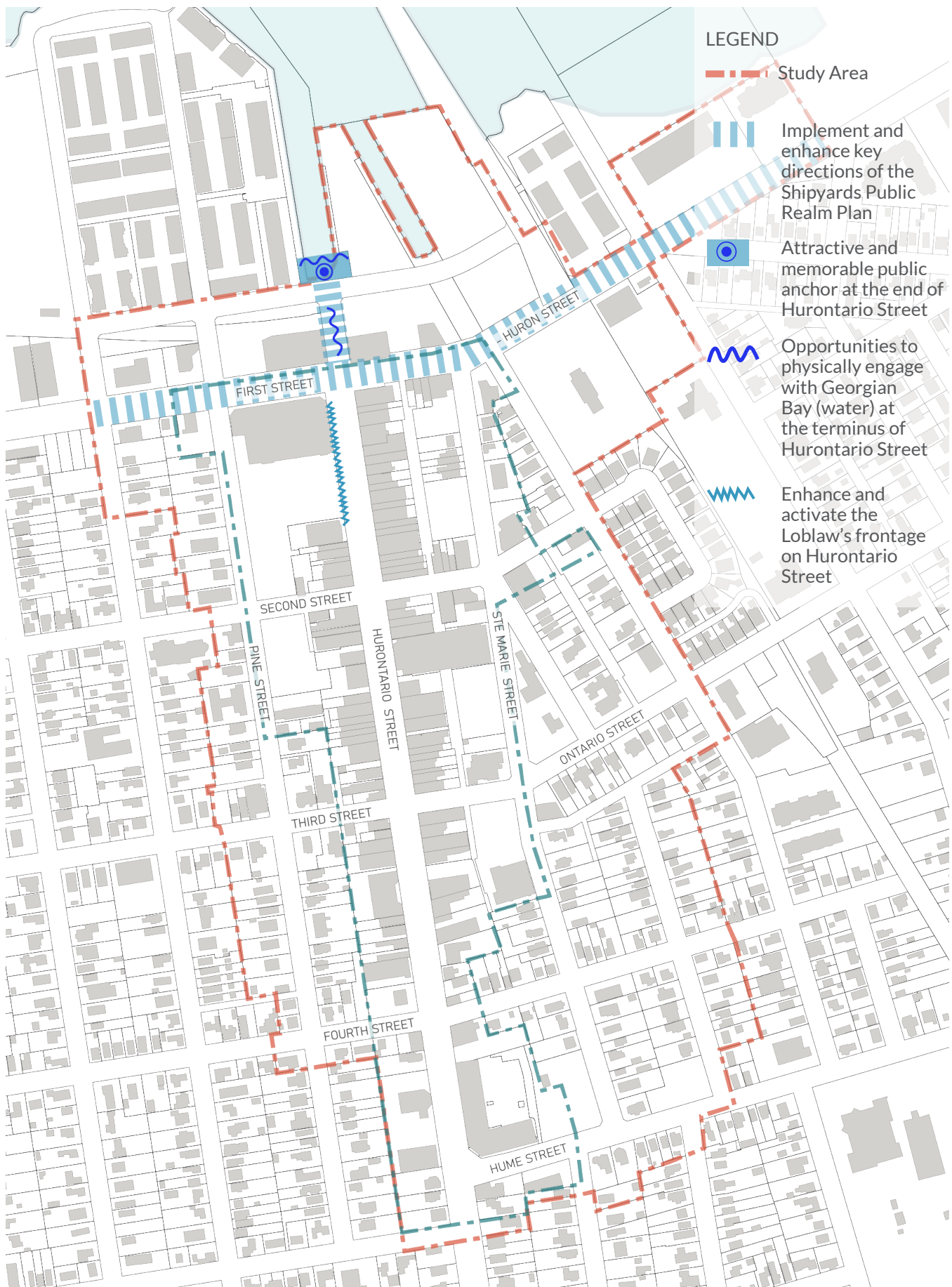
Celebrate and Connect to Collingwood's Unique Waterfront Location



Collingwood's location along Georgian Bay is one of its most valuable assets, and integrating this significant natural feature with the Downtown is key to enhancing the town's appeal. By celebrating and connecting to the waterfront, we aim to create seamless linkages between the water's edge and the urban core, encouraging both residents and tourists to explore and enjoy the area's scenic beauty and history as a vibrant and active harbour. This involves developing new open spaces, improving access and safety, and promoting activities that highlight the waterfront's unique attributes.

Action Items (Overview)

7. Implement and enhance key directions of the Shipyards Public Realm Plan with focus on Hurontario Street and First/Huron Street
8. Create an attractive and memorable public anchor at the end of Hurontario Street
9. Provide opportunities to physically engage with Georgian Bay at the terminus of Hurontario Street
10. Enhance and activate the Loblaw's frontage on Hurontario Street



Action Item # 7:

Implement and enhance key directions of the Shipyards Public Realm Plan with focus on Hurontario Street and First/Huron Street

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Parks, Recreation and Culture (Town Lead); Land Use Planning
- **Partnerships:** Private Developers; Downtown Coordinator; Parks, Recreation and Culture
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:**
Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years)
- **Budget Implications:** High

The Shipyards Public Realm Plan (SPRP) is an addendum to the Collingwood Waterfront Master Plan (Brook McIlroy, 2016). The SPRP considers public realm elements, such as lighting, seating, accessibility, amenities and infrastructure, programming, and pedestrian access and circulation, to create a cohesive vision and to guide public and private improvements along the waterfront and Shipyards development.

The SPRP was endorsed by COW/Council in June, 2024 and includes a number of recommendations that align with and complement the Vision, Strategic Directions, and Action Items of the Downtown Master Plan. Most notably:

- **First Street/Huron Street:** The SPRP recommends a revised roadway alignment, combining design interventions and enforcement measures, including the reallocation of lanes and boulevards (within the existing curb width), enhanced landscaping (including a landscaped median), advanced pedestrian signals and pedestrian interval lighting, and the extension of public realm elements (i.e. unit paving) into the roadway at crossing locations.

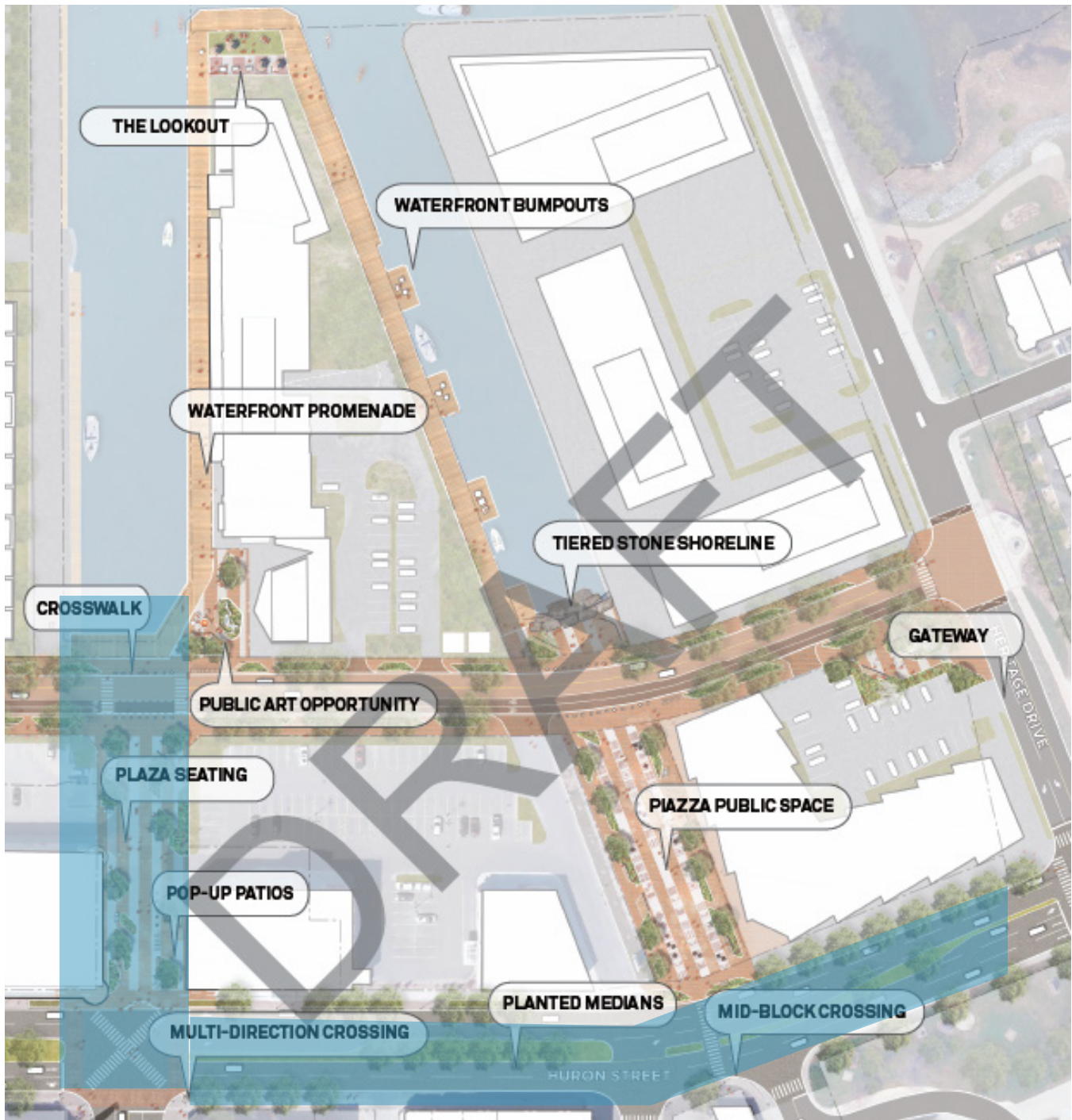
- **Hurontario Street:** The SPRP recommends the pedestrianization of the northern portion of Hurontario Street, between First Street/Huron Street and Side Launch Way, to strengthen the connection between the Downtown and the waterfront. Key elements include commercial activation, pop-up patios, diverse seating options, landscaping, and public art.

The SPRP identifies further Character Areas, and supporting design recommendations, including Side Launch Way, Lookout and Promenade, Town Square, and Piazza. Collectively, the recommendations of the Plan are grand in scope, and will further reinforce Collingwood's position as an innovative and leading place to live, work and play. However, given the scale of the recommendations, it is recognized that the Town may find difficulties in implementing them in their entirety (i.e. due to partnerships, funding, prioritization, etc.). In this regard, it is recommended that the Town prioritize the implementation of the two Character Areas highlighted above as they will be most impactful in addressing the Vision and Strategic Directions of the Downtown Master Plan, and particularly in enhancing connectivity between the Downtown and waterfront. In addition, the recommendations to pedestrianize the northern portion of Hurontario Street, and the identified planting and other design features, provide opportunities to integrate a terminus feature, pocket parks, and interpretive elements as outlined in this Plan.

The SPRP encourages a pilot project of the Hurontario Street improvements within Phase 1 (0-5 years) with full construction for Phase 2 (5-10 years). Improvements to First Street/Huron Street are targeted for Phase 3 (10 plus years).

This phasing is intended to align with anticipated private construction and should generally be followed. The recommendation above to prioritize these elements relates to the importance of realizing the vision, rather than their timeline.

Finally, notwithstanding the above, the recommendations of the SPRP will promote design excellence along the waterfront and Town Staff should do their best to ensure they are fully implemented.



Visualization from Shipyards Public Realm Plan by Brook McIlroy, highlights by Fotenn

Action Item # 8:

Create an attractive and memorable public anchor at the end of Hurontario Street

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead); Landscape Architect (Consultant Lead); Supporting Artist (Consultant)
- **Partnerships:** Land Use Planning; Parks, Recreation and Culture; Private Developers
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:** Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years).
- **Budget Implications:** High

The SPRP identifies a Town Square at the northern end of Hurontario Street that aims to provide a hub between Hurontario Street, Side Launch Way, and the promenade surrounding the pier. The Town Square is envisioned as a gathering place, with seating, landscaping, public art, and unique lighting installations. As an extension of the restaurant envisioned for the site, the location of the Town Square is just east of the terminus of Hurontario Street.

The location along Georgian Bay is one of the most unique attributes of Downtown Collingwood, distinguishing it from other small Ontario downtowns. More specifically, the alignment of Hurontario Street and its termination at the waterfront provides a direct terminus view to the waterfront from along Hurontario Street serving as a reminder of the Town's rich indigenous history and bustling shipping and shipbuilding past.

It is recommended that the location of the Town Square be either shifted west or if a connection to a future restaurant is required, extended to create a more substantial public anchor at the terminus of Hurontario Street. This would create an attractive and inviting public open space at the water's edge

while reinforcing a more centrally-located public destination within the more private Shipyards development. In addition, this creates the opportunity to integrate a unique, engaging, and highly visible public landmark (i.e. art, structure) that is visible from further south on Hurontario Street and that will help to draw visitors to the waterfront. Such a landmark could be elaborate in scale, and a defining feature of the Town, or a more moderate installation. As one example, an interpretive art structure could celebrate Collingwood's previous status as "the Town with a ship at the end of the street." Alternatively, opportunities to commission an actual ship that was built in Collingwood could be explored to provide a destination on the water.

It is envisioned that a centrally-located open space and landmark feature would connect with, and provide a conclusion to, the heritage and interpretive elements identified throughout the Downtown Master Plan (see Action Items # 22 and 25) to provide a continuous experience that will draw residents and visitors throughout the Downtown and to the waterfront.

It is recognized that space along the waterfront is limited and that an extension of the existing (and envisioned) promenade may be required to implement the abovementioned vision. Alternatively, with the public realm improvements envisioned on Side Launch Way in the SPRP, the recommendations above could be considered on Hurontario Street, just south of Side Launch Way, with a smaller complementary feature on the north side within the existing promenade space.

Precedent Examples:



Vancouver Waterfront



The 'Sails Benches' in Vercheres park,
Quebec



Rippling Waters Sculpture, San
Antonio, Texas



Vancouver Waterfront



The Awen' Gathering Place,
Collingwood



Westminster Pier Park, New
Westminster

Action Item # 9:

Provide opportunities to physically engage with Georgian Bay at the terminus of Hurontario Street

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead); Landscape Architect (Consultant Lead); Supporting Artist (Consultant)
- **Partnerships:** Land Use Planning; Parks, Recreation and Culture; Private Developers
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:**
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years)
- **Budget Implications:** High

As previously mentioned, Collingwood's waterfront location and history are one of its most unique and valuable attributes. As part of the centrally-located open space and landmark feature discussed previously, it is recommended that the Town explore opportunities to allow visitors to engage directly with the water and to create a tangible link to Collingwood's harbour history. This could be accommodated through a substantial investment in the public realm, such as providing steps and/or landscape features that would allow visitors to put their feet in Georgian Bay. A more modest approach could include the creation of a fun and interactive public art or water play feature that allows opportunities for people to directly engage with water while enjoying views across Georgian Bay.

Allowing people to physically engage with water at the terminus of Hurontario Street affords a unique opportunity that builds on the other interpretive elements identified throughout this Plan to provide a continuous, engaging, and holistic experience that will draw people between the Downtown and the waterfront while creating a tangible link to Georgian Bay, the Town's Indigenous history and the shipping and shipbuilding history of Collingwood.

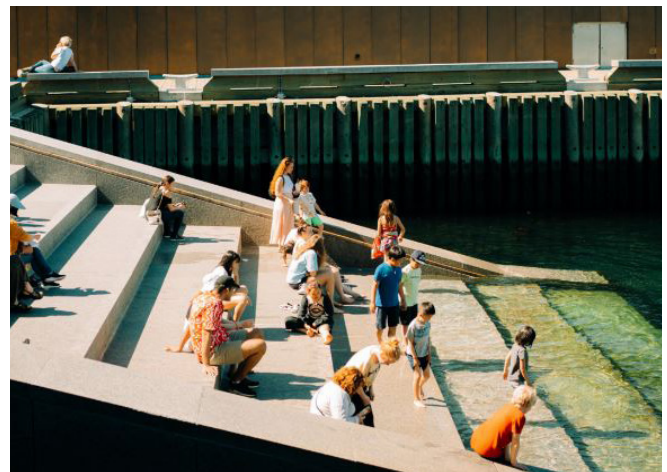
Precedent Examples:



Water Installation in Montreal



Town Branch Commons Creek



Halifax Harbourfront

Action Item # 10: **Enhance and activate the Loblaw's frontage on Hurontario Street**

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead)/BIA
- **Partnerships:** Current Landowners; Loblaws; Land Use Planning; Parks, Recreation and Culture
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:**
Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years).
- **Budget Implications:** High/Medium

As a Heritage Conservation District, Downtown Collingwood is defined by a tight-knit fabric of attractive and well-kept historic buildings. In our engagement to date, this was identified as one of the Town's most valuable attributes. This, combined with a healthy and vibrant foundation of commercial uses, helps to draw residents and visitors alike along Hurontario Street by providing continuous shops and programming. In general, this continuous character is supported through the Downtown Core designation of the Town's Official Plan, which prohibits future parking lots to have direct frontage on, or access from, Hurontario Street (Policy 5.3.1.4.j.i). Currently, the continuity of Hurontario Street (and the continuous connection to the waterfront) is disrupted by the Loblaws grocery store at 12 Hurontario Street. The large surface parking lot associated with the store creates a physical gap in the streetscape (with minimal 'buffer' planting provided), while the store itself is characterized by a large and generally blank wall on Hurontario Street that does little to reflect its historic context.

In the short term, it is recommended that the Town work with Loblaws to provide murals (or other features) along the building edge fronting Hurontario to provide a more aesthetically pleasing experience (similar to the one that exists on the corner facing Hurontario Street/First Street). Such an intervention should be carefully considered to create a continuous and cohesive experience that ties into the other heritage and interpretive elements identified throughout this Plan.

In addition, the Town and the BIA should 'lead by example' and explore opportunities to activate and animate this section of Hurontario Street in the short term through temporary efforts within the public realm, such as unique street art, boulevard painting, and/or moveable landscaping. If desirable, opportunities to temporarily utilize some existing angled parking spaces (subject to a Parking Study) could be considered to create an even larger space during peak times to truly establish a more pedestrian-focused area at this location. In either case, it is envisioned that interventions here would be relatively modest in the short-term, simply to make it clear to residents and visitors that this is an important section of Hurontario Street leading to the waterfront. The BIA could continue to explore Federal (and other) grants as a potential funding source. Any streetscape elements should be designed in a way that they can be reused elsewhere in the Downtown once a longer-term solution is implemented.

In the longer term, the Town should initiate discussions and explore partnership opportunities with Loblaws (or the property owner) to identify incentives and funding opportunities to redevelop the site into a more urban development that could include an urban-format grocery store at grade and residential uses above. Through its upcoming Parking Study, the Town should explore opportunities for reduced parking requirements

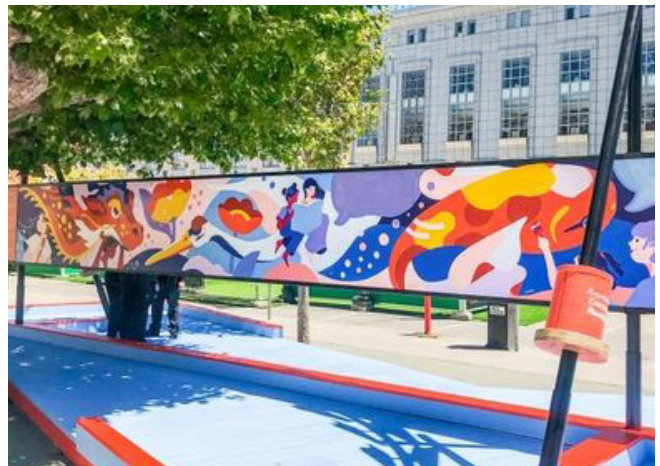
at this site, and throughout the Downtown, to support active transportation and opportunities for a continuous streetscape on Hurontario Street (i.e. uninterrupted by surface parking lots). Opportunities for underground parking should also be considered at this site. Such a development should be designed and massed to reinforce a more fine-knit and engaging character along Hurontario Street that is compatible with the adjacent 2 to 3-storey buildings and provides an appropriate transition to the residential units along Pine Street.

As an identified Opportunity Site, 12 Hurontario is explored further through Action Item # 1 and should be a key focus of a future Intensification Study.

Precedent Examples:



Temporary Park in the street, Vancouver



Mural and Installation in San Francisco



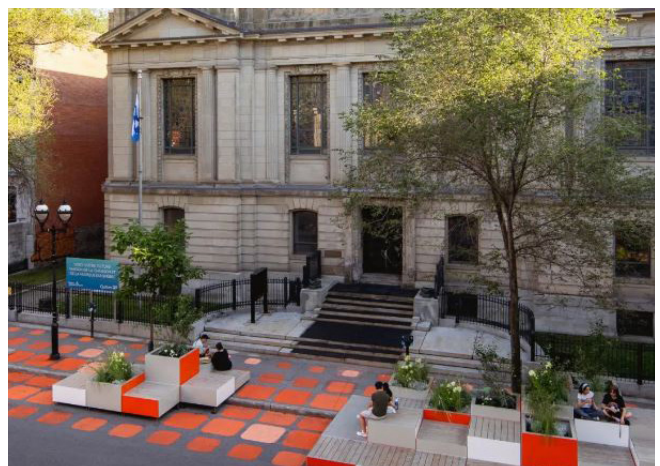
Sofa Pocket Park in San Jose, California



Heritage Park in Salem Indiana



Tactical Urbanism in Latin Quartier Montreal



3.3. Strategic Direction 03

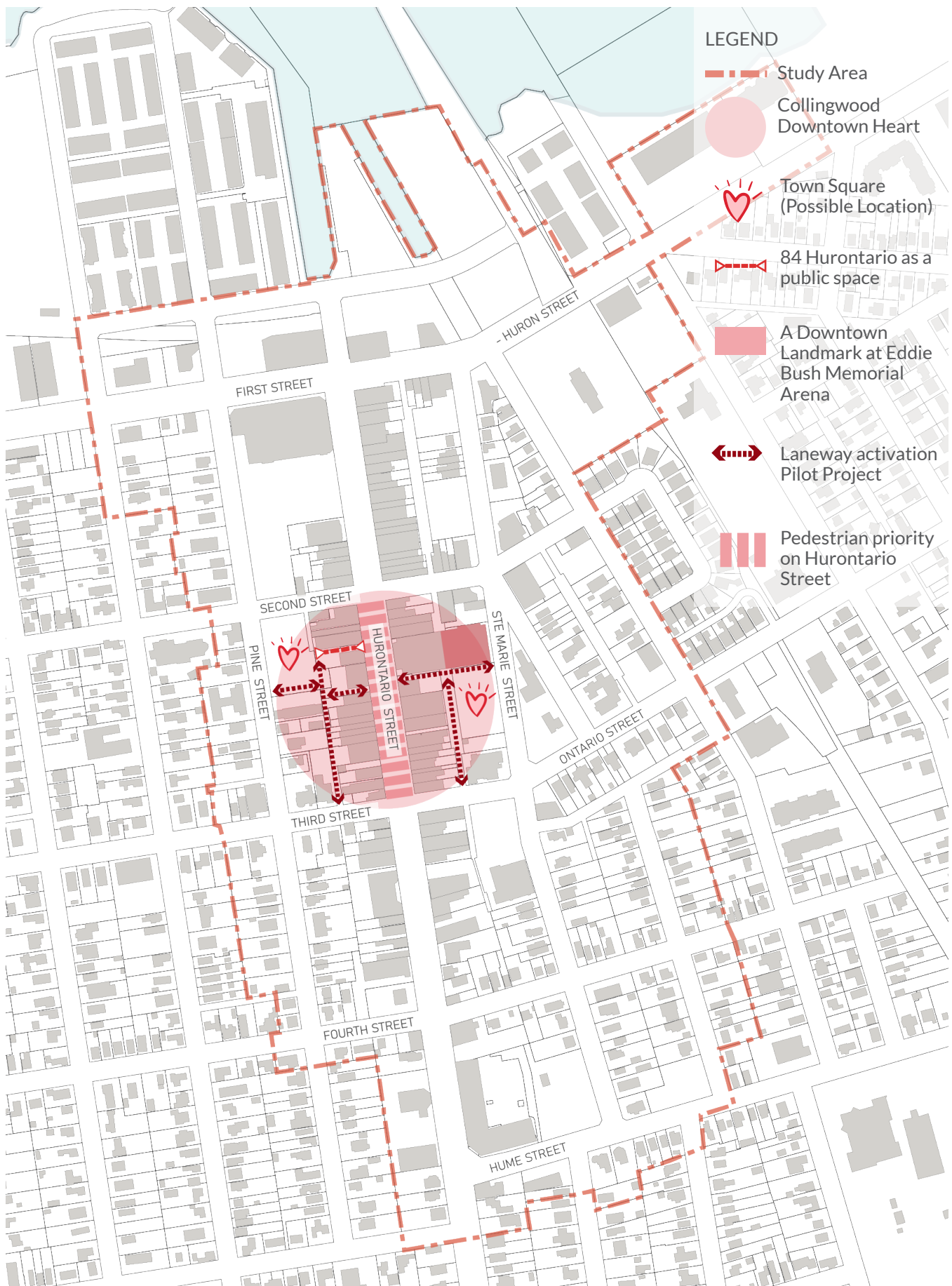
Establish a Heart in Downtown Collingwood



A thriving downtown needs a central gathering place that embodies the spirit and energy of the community - a true heart of the town! Establishing such a focal point in Downtown Collingwood will provide a space where people can come together, whether for events, the weekend market, or simply to connect with one another. This central area should be designed to reflect the Town's heritage while also accommodating contemporary needs, creating a flexible and dynamic environment that draws people in, fosters a sense of belonging, and supports activities for everyone. By cultivating a vibrant downtown heart, we can enhance the social and cultural fabric of Collingwood, making it a destination where community life flourishes.

Action Items (Overview)

11. Create a Town Square in close proximity to Town Hall
12. Formalize 84 Hurontario as a public space
13. Undertake Due-Diligence to understand the opportunities within the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena
14. Identify a pilot project to focus on laneway activation
15. Provide pedestrian priority paving on Hurontario Street between Second Street and Third Street



Action Item # 11:

Create a Town Square in close proximity to Town Hall

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Parks, Recreation and Culture (Town Lead); Landscape Architect (Consultant Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; BIA; Land Use Planning
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:**
Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years)
- **Budget Implications:** High

In our engagement to date, a lack of open space in the Downtown was regularly identified as an issue and a barrier to creating a heart in the Downtown. Establishing a Town Square in the Downtown creates a centralized and primary location for civic, social, and cultural activities and is the foundation for ensuring a hierarchy of complementary public spaces and programming opportunities.

Ideal considerations for a Town Square include:

- Close proximity to Town Hall;
- Direct frontage on Hurontario Street;
- A minimum area of 3,000m²;
- Well-connected to a broader network of open spaces and destinations;
- Ideally square or rectilinear in shape to maximize flexibility and programming opportunities; and,
- Should be framed by active uses through the enhancement of adjacent commercial buildings and/or connecting laneways.

Existing sites that achieve all of the abovementioned characteristics are limited. Should the Town have the opportunity to purchase properties along Hurontario Street in the future that meet these criteria, they should be considered a priority. However, other opportunities exist that could satisfy the intent of the above criteria, including:

- **101 Pine Street:** As the home of the Collingwood Farmer's Market, the parking lot at 101 Pine Street has already been established as a primary pedestrian destination in the Downtown and is a vibrant and active hub every Saturday throughout the market season. Through the 84 Hurontario site (see Action Item # 12), 101 Pine Street is visible from and directly connected to, Hurontario Street. 101 Pine Street is also the current location of the Downtown transit terminal, which could remain as a central point for moving people to/from the Downtown if redeveloped as a Town Square.
- **140 Ste Marie Street:** The Eddie Bush Memorial Arena (see Action Item # 12) is a well-established landmark in the Downtown. The adjacent parking lot at 140 Ste Marie Street provides a large space that is currently activated by a number of rear-facing commercial uses and framed by the historic and attractive All Saints Anglican Church of Canada on the opposite side of Ste Marie Street while also providing close connectivity to Creative Simcoe Street. This site also has direct connectivity to Hurontario Street adjacent to the Town-owned Business Development Centre and the home of the CWood sign.

Currently, the Town is undertaking a Feasibility Study to determine the preferred location for a Performing Arts Centre and 101 Pine Street has been identified as a potential location.

As the Performing Arts Centre Feasibility Study continues, it is recommended that the Vision, Strategic Directions, and Action Items identified in the Downtown Master Plan are considered in determining a preferred location. Furthermore, should an open space be considered at either 101 Pine Street or 140 Ste Marie Street, the Town will be losing a significant amount of its Downtown parking. It is our understanding that a Comprehensive Parking Strategy is currently targeted for 2025 and that by that time, a location for the Performing Arts Centre should be set to allow a comprehensive understanding of the parking implications of both a Performing Arts Centre and a Downtown open space to further inform the Town's decision.

Once a location for a Town Square is identified, it is recommended that the Town initiate a local design competition (integrating the other open spaces identified throughout this Plan) to ensure a consistent and high-quality hierarchy of open spaces throughout the Town, including the Town Square, the terminus space at the end of Hurontario Street (see Action Item # 8) and the pocket parks (see Action Item # 22). Order-of-magnitude cost estimates should be provided as part of a comprehensive design package, including capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs, to inform an updated Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan (see Action Item # 24).

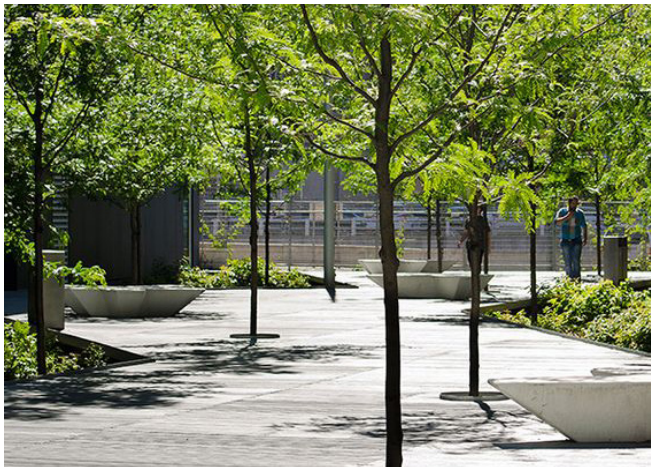
SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with, and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.7

Precedent Examples:



Meridian Place and Memorial Square in Barrie



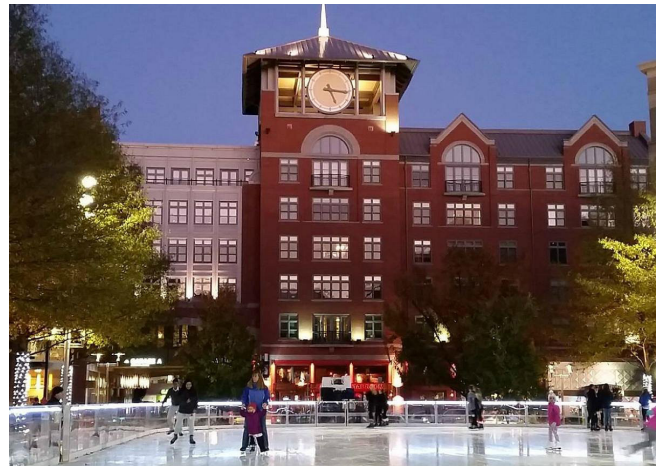
Parc Hydro, Quebec



Main Square in Marietta, Atlanta



Place Vauquelin, Montreal



Rockville Town Square, Maryland



Rotary Harbourfront Park, Cobourg

Action Item # 12:

Formalize 84 Hurontario as a public space

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Parks, Recreation and Culture (Town Lead); Landscape Architect (Consultant Lead)
- **Partnerships:** BIA; Downtown Coordinator; Land Use Planning
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:**
Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** High

Since its acquisition, the Town and the BIA have made strong progress in establishing a public space at 84 Hurontario, including an extension of the Farmer's Market, fun ongoing programming (i.e. Red Shoe Walk, Lego Zone at Pride, Pancake Breakfast, etc.), and simple, daily gathering and socialization. While this location achieves most of the characteristics of a Town Square described in Action Item # 11, it is too small to be ideal as a long-term solution for a primary civic, social, and cultural space. In the immediate and short-term horizon, however, 84 Hurontario should continue to function in its current role, establishing the area around Town Hall as a primary location for Downtown programming and activation and setting the stage for a future investment in a Town Square. The Town and the BIA should continue to explore and leverage Federal (and other) grants as a potential funding source.

It takes a significant amount of work to successfully establish a public space, and the Town should not sacrifice the efforts to date once a more permanent Town Square location is identified. Instead, 84 Hurontario should be formalized as a 'public' space in the long-term that facilitates a connection between 101 Pine Street (as either an open space, performing arts centre, or the continued use as a parking lot/Farmer's Market), Hurontario Street and onward to Town Hall and uses on the east side of Hurontario Street.

Precedent Examples:



Park in Yorkville, Toronto



Downtown Westminster Woonerf design idea, DTJ Design



Mid Main Park, Vancouver

The space could remain as a linear open space that functions much the same as it does today. However, should the ongoing Feasibility Study determine that a Performing Arts Centre would be located at 101 Pine Street, any portion of the building extending through 84 Hurontario should remain publicly accessible, and should provide opportunities for indoor public programming (i.e. a public atrium with art installation opportunities) or informal gathering (i.e. seating and attractive plantings).

SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.7

Action Item # 13:

Undertake Due-Diligence to understand the opportunities within the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Fleets and Facilities (Town Lead); Economic Development; Architect/Engineer (Consultant Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Parks, Recreation and Culture; Downtown Coordinator; Building Services; BIA
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:**
Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Low

For over 75 years, the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena has been a key recreational anchor and physical landmark in Downtown Collingwood, drawing athletes throughout the winter and accommodating concerts, fundraising events, and receptions throughout the summer months. A Strategic Options and Master Accommodations Plan (2018) tasked with analyzing existing Town-owned buildings and identifying long-term strategic opportunities, identified that the building is not accessible and that other code compliance issues exist, but ultimately noted that it is a strategic site that should be held and renovated. A subsequent Facility Condition Assessment was undertaken in 2021/2022. This assessment inventoried all facility components, assessed their condition, and estimated their remaining life. Using this information, a GHG Emission Reduction Feasibility Study identified the scope and cost to reduce emissions by 50% in 10 years and 80% in 20 years.

The Town is currently undertaking a Multi-Use Recreation Feasibility Assessment (MURFA) with the objective of engaging a variety of methods to research, analyze, and determine the required amenities to be included in a multi-use recreation facility or facilities to support the recreational needs of the Town of Collingwood and the Town

of The Blue Mountains today and into the future, and the degree to which the facility or facilities can be sustained. Presumably, as a major recreational driver in the region, the MURFA will explore opportunities for skating facilities within a joint building.

The Eddie Bush Memorial Arena should remain a landmark in the Downtown, continuing to operate as an arena if it is determined that this is feasible. Should it be determined that the building is not feasible (when compared to a newer, energy-efficient facility) or required to continue to operate long-term as an arena, the Town should explore the potential for adaptive re-use and building additions to provide a full understanding of the long-term potential of the building. Specific considerations should include activities that will replace and/or enhance the existing foot traffic create through the arena use, such as:

- **Farmers Market:** Should it be determined that 101 Pine Street is the preferred location for a Performing Arts Centre, the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena could potentially provide an indoor alternative close to the established location. Likewise, should 140 Ste Marie Street be formalized as a Town Square, the opportunities for an indoor/outdoor market could be explored.
- **Local Community Hub:** As the population of Collingwood continues to grow, and residents seek out unique, engaging spaces to explore local talent, the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena could provide flexible work/studio space to accommodate local artists, merchants, entrepreneurs, and programming, similar to Toronto's Brickworks and Wychwood Barns, Hamilton's Cotton Factory or Kingston's Woolen Mill. Such programming should be coordinated with established uses, such as Creative Simcoe Street and the Collingwood Foundry, to maximize synergies.

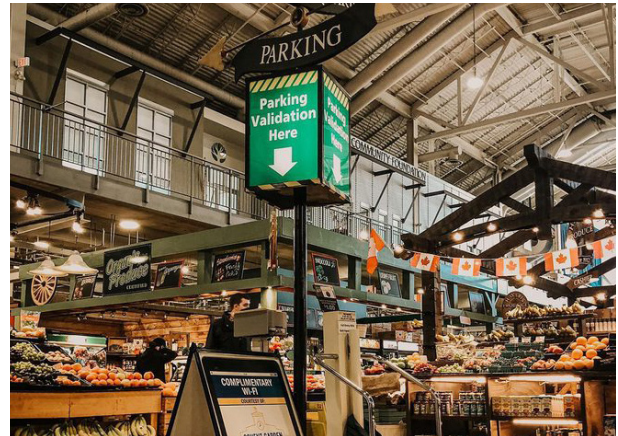
- **University Satellite Campus:** A strong addition to any Downtown context, a university satellite campus brings a steady flow of students, faculty, and staff to support local businesses while promoting an innovative and intellectual culture through student engagement, collaboration, and community involvement. A downtown campus also promotes the integration of higher education with urban life, encouraging partnerships between the university, local government, and businesses that can drive innovation and problem-solving for local challenges.

It is recommended that the Town hire an architect/engineer to build on the findings of the Facility Condition Assessment and GHG Emission Reduction Feasibility Study to understand the potential for the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena to be adaptively re-used for the abovementioned uses (or others determined at the time). This study should be undertaken in the short-term and should augment the findings of the MURFA, prior to any final decisions related to a multi-use recreational facility.

It is anticipated that the findings of an updated Facility Condition Assessment, and an understanding of the potential at the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena, would be integrated into a Downtown Business Strategy (see Action Item # 17) to provide additional opportunities to target strategic Downtown businesses, industries, or institutions.

Regardless of its future use, the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena provides a key backdrop to a number of the recommendations of this Plan (i.e. new open spaces, laneway activation, etc.), and it is recommended that the Town upgrades and enhances the façade to create a more attractive pedestrian experience through murals, repainting, landscaping, etc.

Precedent Examples:



Covent Garden Market, London ON



Le Marché St. Norbert Farmers' Market, Winnipeg

Action Item # 14: **Identify a pilot project to focus on laneway activation**

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead)/BIA; Landscape Architect (Consultant Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Land Use Planning; Parks, Recreation and Culture; Private Landowners/Businesses
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:**
Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years).
- **Budget Implications:** High

In 2014, the BIA commissioned Envision-Tatham Inc. to create the Collingwood Laneway Design Guidelines to identify and analyze existing laneways and provide design recommendations for creating an overall laneway aesthetic that is cohesive and recognizable. The Laneway Design Guidelines identified four types of laneways, including Connecting Laneways, Active Destination Laneways, Passive Destination Laneways, and Private Walkways. The recommendations of the guidelines are generally strong and provide a range of supporting amenity spaces and connections throughout the Downtown. However, none of the identified projects have been implemented to date. To simplify implementation, it is recommended that the Town and the BIA identify one or two laneways to prioritize as pilot projects. Specifically, as it relates to the other recommendations of this Plan, the Town should prioritize:

- **Laneway A:** Running north-south between Second Street and Third Street on the west side of Hurontario Street. Laneway A provides a strategic link to both 101 Pine Street and 84 Hurontario Street (a private laneway at the time the study

was completed that has since been bought by the Town) which are identified as key properties in this Plan. Laneway A is predominantly privately owned and currently has some businesses (i.e. Schoolhouse Lane, a gym) that address the laneway.

- **Laneway I:** Running north-south between Second/Simcoe Street and Third/Ontario Street on the east side of Hurontario Street (with a section broken up by the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena). Laneway I provides a strategic link to Town Hall, the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena, and the parking lot at 140 Ste Marie Street which is potentially envisioned as a Town Square in the Downtown (see Action Item # 11). Laneway I is Town-owned and has a number of businesses within The Arlington that address the laneway.

In the Laneway Design Guidelines, these laneways are both identified as Connecting Laneways which serve more of a transportation function to provide comfortable thoroughfares for pedestrians and cyclists. They are not envisioned for activities or amenities that promote long stays. As part of the Downtown Master Plan, however, we recommend the Town explore the potential for both of these laneways to become Active Destination Laneways that provide a unique alternative to Hurontario Street for secondary retail frontages, active residential frontages, spill-out uses, and small gathering spaces, and to provide a more enclosed and comfortable alternative to Hurontario Street during inclement weather.

As outlined in the Laneway Design Guidelines, it is recommended that these laneways undergo general enhancements to ensure they are safe, accessible, and well-lit. For Laneway I, the Town could 'lead by example' as the sole landowner (in partnership with adjacent businesses). For Laneway A, the Town should explore opportunities to partner with local property owners and explore policy amendments (i.e. to the HCD

Plan), incentives (i.e. through a CIP and/or other funding mechanisms), and design guidelines that promote and encourage businesses to provide upgraded facades and streetscape improvements on these laneways. Specifically, opportunities for multiple commercial uses within a single retail unit should be explored to provide smaller and more affordable retail opportunity for local entrepreneurs. In addition, a key focus of these pilot projects should be on finding an appropriate balance between creating an attractive public space while balancing the servicing and loading requirements of the adjacent commercial uses. Considerations should include appropriate screening mechanisms for waste storage, dedicated delivery times, dedicated resources for maintenance and cleaning, etc.

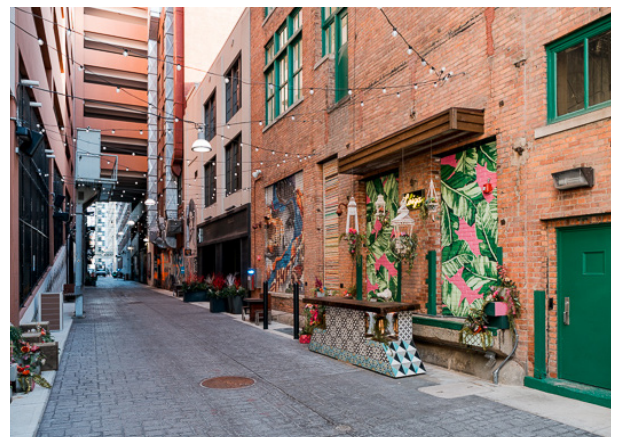
Activation of the laneways need not be a substantial undertaking. Toronto's The Laneway Project (<https://www.thelanewayproject.ca/>) provides a strong precedent for how modest (and often community-led) investments in the public realm can create attractive, inviting, and successful laneway spaces. The Town and the BIA should explore and leverage Federal (and other) grants as a potential funding source.

Ultimately, all of the laneways identified in the Laneway Design Guidelines are unique spaces that warrant enhancement and will provide strategic connections between the elements of the Downtown Master Plan. Should the Town have the opportunity to purchase any laneways that are in private ownership, particularly Laneways B, F, G, and N (which provide connections from public laneways to Hurontario Street) it is highly recommended. As pilot projects, Laneway A and Laneway I should be utilized to determine the appropriate policies, tools, and processes to ensure their revitalization. Once successful, the lessons learned can be translated to other laneways throughout the Downtown, such as Tremont Lane (which further supports the recommendations of Action Item # 23).

Precedent Examples:



Activated Laneways in Wichita, Kansas



Green Alley with retail uses in Detroit



Alley in Frederick Maryland

Action Item # 15:

Provide pedestrian priority paving on Hurontario Street between Second Street and Third Street

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Engineering Services (Town Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; BIA
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:**
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Medium

Between Second Street and Third Street, there are a number of uses that directly support the creation of a heart in Downtown Collingwood, including Town Hall, the BIA office, 84 Hurontario, the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena, and the Farmer's Market at 101 Pine Street. The Downtown Master Plan builds on these elements, recommending additional open space, laneway activation, and other investments. In addition, subject to the ongoing feasibility study, a Performing Arts Centre may be located at 101 Pine Street. To truly create a heart, it is important that pedestrians feel comfortable moving freely between these spaces, and therefore, across Hurontario Street.

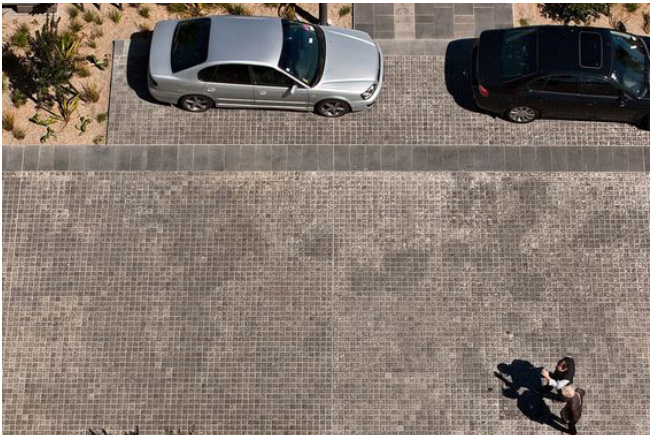
Currently, crossing Hurontario Street is facilitated through a number of strategically-located bump outs. However, in our engagement to date, it was regularly noted that pedestrians do not feel safe crossing Hurontario Street due to vehicular traffic. Building on Action Item # 6, it is recommended that the Town provide continuous pedestrian priority paving on Hurontario Street between Second Street and Third Street to signal to vehicles that pedestrians have the right-of-way in the Downtown and are free to cross the street at any location. This could be a substantial investment as part of the next streetscape upgrade (i.e. replacement of the existing surface with unique

paving) or a more modest approach that simply paints the street a unique pattern or colour to differentiate it from the rest of Hurontario Street. The Town and the BIA should continue to explore and leverage Federal (and other) grants as a potential funding source.

The pedestrianization of Hurontario Street could be a primarily visual approach aimed at slowing vehicular traffic and enhancing safety and could be augmented by further narrowing the street through temporary bump-outs during patio season. Alternatively, the Town could consider opportunities to open the street to pedestrians only in this section of Hurontario Street on-demand (i.e. using bollards) to create additional opportunities for programming in the Downtown (i.e. street festivals). The creation of a pedestrian street program is further supported in the upcoming Tourism Master Plan to increase access to and enjoyment of tourism experiences.

It is recommended that any significant changes to Hurontario Street, including those outlined above, are subject to further study through the Master Mobility and Transportation Plan.

Precedent Examples:



3.4. Strategic Direction 04

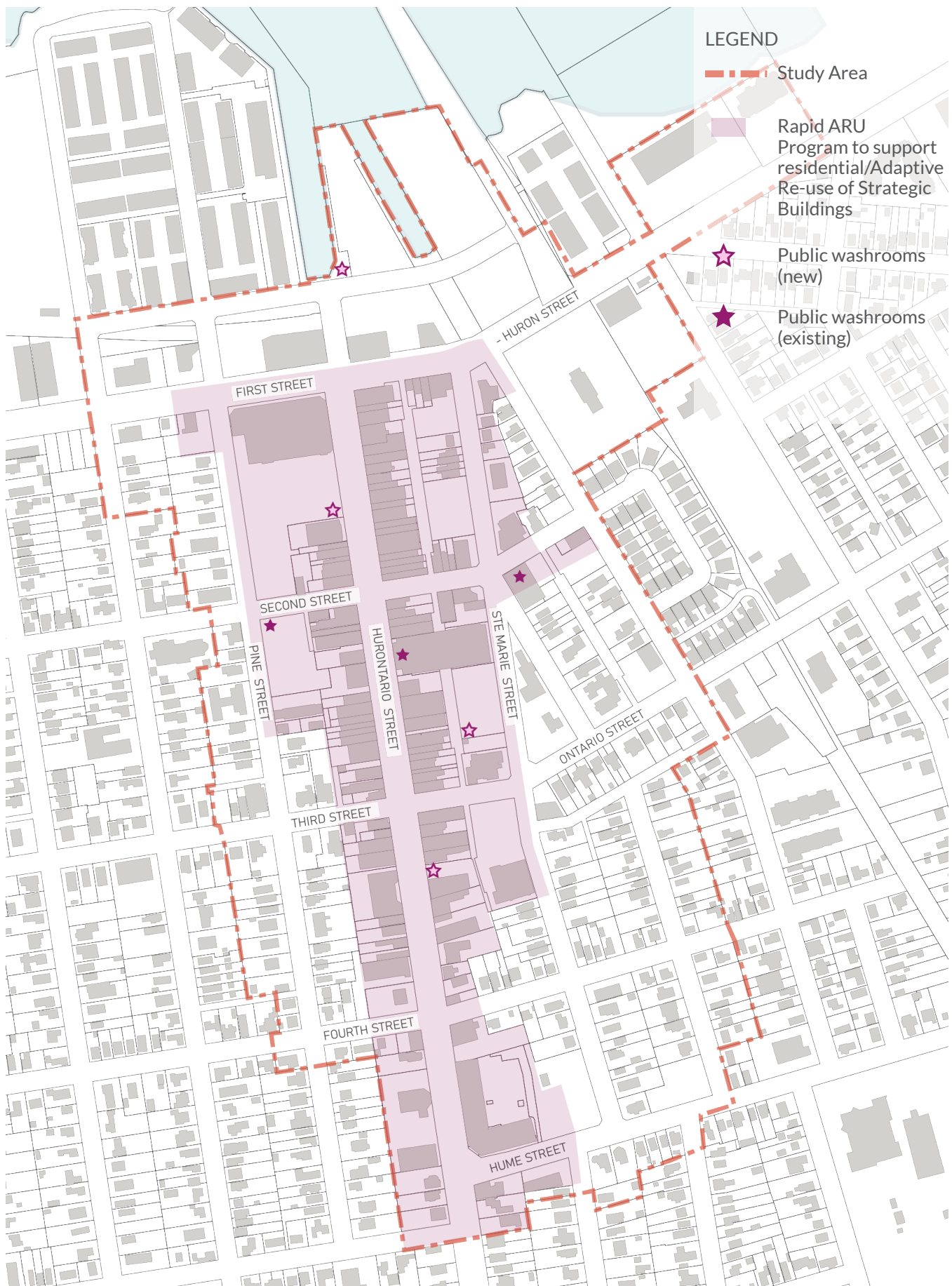
Activate the Downtown in the evening and throughout the year



To ensure Downtown Collingwood remains lively and engaging, it is essential to activate the area during the evening and throughout the year. This means offering a diverse range of activities, events, and attractions that appeal to different audiences, from cultural performances and seasonal festivals to evening shopping and dining experiences. By extending the vibrancy of the Downtown beyond regular business hours and throughout all seasons, we can create a more dynamic and attractive environment for both residents and visitors. This year-round activation will contribute to the economic vitality of local businesses and enhance the overall success of the Downtown.

Action Items (Overview)

16. Modify the Rapid ARU Program to support residential conversions and upgrades in the Downtown
17. Prepare a Downtown Business Strategy to target greater variation in uses
18. Develop a Programming Strategy to promote complementary year-round programming throughout the Downtown and waterfront
19. Pursue partnerships with property owners to adaptively re-use strategic downtown buildings
20. Provide increased transit service (time and frequency) between Downtown and Strategic Regional Destinations (i.e. Blue Mountain/ Wasaga Beach)
21. Provide year-round, all-day public washrooms in safe, accessible locations



Action Item # 16:

Modify the Rapid ARU Program to support residential conversions and upgrades in the Downtown

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Land Use Planning (Town Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:** Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Low

One of the simplest ways to ensure the Downtown remains active and vibrant at all times of day, and throughout the year, is to create opportunities for more people to live Downtown. Action Item # 1 recommends the Town undertake an Intensification Study to identify opportunities for new development and potentially additional height at strategic locations. However, new development is not the only way to accommodate additional residents in the Downtown. A number of buildings on Hurontario Street have apartments on their upper storeys which provides opportunities for people to live in the Downtown while enhancing safety through ‘eyes on the street.’ However, many multi-storey buildings are either not configured for apartment buildings or have units that are in need of repair and upgrades to provide a desirable residential space. To encourage property owners to ensure their upper storeys are occupied, the Town should take a two-pronged approach:

- **Incentivize:** The Town and the BIA should explore any incentives, funding, or grants available to assist Downtown property owners with building upper-storey residential apartments or providing upgrades and enhancements to make existing units more attractive in the market.
- **Expedite:** The Downtown Coordinator, working closely with Planning, Economic Development, and the Affordable Housing

Task Force, should be proactive in identifying properties that are candidates for upper storey residential units, and approaching landowners directly. For many property owners, funding and grant programs can be a daunting task. The Downtown Coordinator should clearly explain the available funding, and lead applicants through the process as needed, drawing on established relationships to identify potential consultant partners (planners, architects, engineers, contractors, etc.) and making themselves available to answer questions and provide additional guidance along the way.

As an initial approach, the Town of Collingwood Affordable Housing Master Plan (NBLC, 2023) recommends Downtown building owners be given access to the incentives and financial tools as part of the Town’s Rapid ARU program. In addition, where proposals align with the goals and objectives of the Affordable Housing Master Plan, additional incentives could be offered. This would require updates to the Zoning By-law which does not currently permit Additional Residential Units within the Commercial Core designation. An update would provide the enabling policies, while also identifying the parameters for such uses. Initially, it is recommended that the extension of the Rapid ARU Program focus on the mixed-use buildings along Hurontario Street. Once these vacancies are generally filled, the Town could explore opportunities to further extend the program to the more traditional residential forms within the Commercial Core zoning (i.e. Market Street, Fourth Street) to provide additional Downtown housing options in close proximity to Hurontario Street.

SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town’s alignment with and commitment to, the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.1

Examples of Buildings along Hurontario Street with Opportunities for Residential Conversions or Upgrades:



Action Item # 17:

Prepare a Downtown Business Strategy to attract, retain and activate businesses

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead); Economic Development
- **Partnerships:** BIA
- **Priority:** Low
- **Timeline:** Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Low

Downtown Collingwood has a healthy and vibrant commercial core with a strong mix of shops and services and limited vacancies. However, through our discussions to date, a number of desirable uses are still missing from the Downtown. Specifically:

- More evening uses to attract and retain visitors outside of core business hours;
- Additional businesses and services targeted toward children and youth;
- Innovative and tech uses with specific mention of trying to attract a post-secondary institution (i.e. satellite campus);
- Opportunities to accommodate local entrepreneurs, including pop-up shops, shared space models, maker spaces, etc.

Collectively, these uses will help to draw more people to the Downtown and keep them there longer.

As a key next step, it is recommended that the Town prepare a Downtown Business Strategy to identify gaps in each of the relevant sectors in the Downtown (i.e. retail, office, service, institutional), outline their space and facility requirements, and develop a strategy to attract and retain desired tenants. These elements should be considered within the broader Collingwood Community to ensure a holistic view of commercial supply and demand.

Key components of the Downtown Business Strategy should include:

- An up-to-date database of commercial properties and their detailed characteristics (i.e. floor area, fit-ups, equipment, accessibility, etc.);
- A gap analysis of existing uses and space requirements;
- A list of desirable and/or niche businesses that support the vision for Downtown;
- An Action Plan to address identified gaps, including clear goals and recruitment strategies; and,
- Measurable targets and performance indicators to evaluate success over the short, medium, and long-term.

In addition, if the Town continues to not permit office uses on the ground floor, it is recommended that the Downtown Business Strategy proactively identify upper storey units that could support office uses and engage directly with existing property owners to actively market these properties.

In recruiting new businesses to the Downtown, the Downtown Business Strategy should be a living document supported by fresh marketing materials, social media campaigns, media coverage, and awareness events.

The Downtown Business Strategy will inform, and be informed by, a number of other programs and initiatives in the Downtown Master Plan and across the Town (i.e. MURFA, Tourism Master Plan) should be overseen by the Downtown Coordinator and Economic Development to ensure synergies are captured and leveraged. The Downtown Coordinator and Economic Development should be proactive in this role, targeting and approaching specific partners and working closely with Business and Economic Development to utilize all available tools (through the Business Development Centre) to entice and assist them in locating in Downtown Collingwood.

The BIA has an extensive knowledge of existing Downtown businesses, space opportunities, and needs, and will be an invaluable partner in the creation of the Downtown Business Strategy.

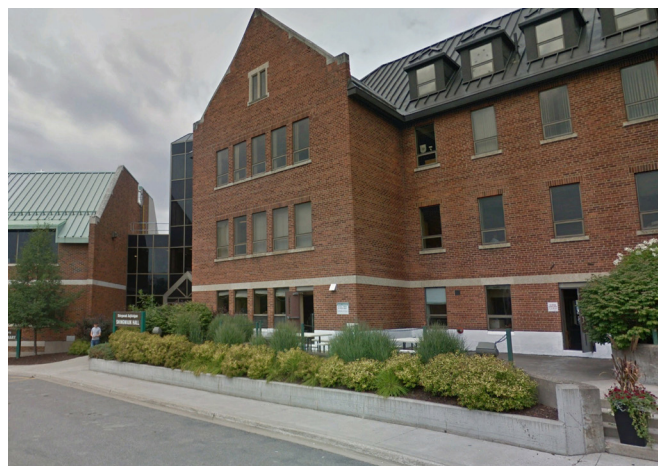
Examples of Innovative Uses (University Campuses in different Towns in Ontario):



University of Waterloo in Stratford



University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus



Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie

Action Item # 18:

Develop a Programming Strategy to promote complementary year-round programming throughout the Downtown and waterfront

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead); BIA
- **Partnerships:** Parks, Recreation and Culture; Community Well Being and Inclusion Coordinator; Community Partners
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:** Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Low

The Town of Collingwood has a strong foundation of established events put on by the Town, the BIA, and others, including formal (i.e. the Farmer's Market, Art Crawl, Holiday Christmas Market) and informal (i.e. Keys to Collingwood Street Pianos, self-guided walking tours) events. However, through our engagement to date, it was noted that additional programming is required to activate the Downtown in the evening and throughout the year. It is recommended that the Town prepare a Programming Strategy for the Downtown that builds on the established foundation and introduces new events that focus on evening activation, visitor attraction, and retention, winter programming, etc., and that supports an inclusive and accessible Downtown that appeals to all demographics. As a specific example, Miracle on Hurontario St. is an annual pop-up at the lounge inside of the Historic Gayety Theatre that offers holiday-themed cocktails seven days a week from 4 pm until midnight, with complementary events happening later in the evening. Similarly, Taps n Tunes hosts a Pride after party that offers opportunities for activation late into the evening and night. The Programming Strategy should specifically support and build off events such as these to enhance evening activity in the Downtown.

The Downtown Master Plan introduces a number of new open spaces, including a Town Square in close proximity to Town Hall, a series of pocket parks, and enhanced laneways. In addition, the SPRP introduces a number of additional open spaces and public amenity areas. A key focus of the Programming Strategy will be to clarify the purpose and role of these new open spaces (and between open spaces within the Downtown and Waterfront) and to reinforce a hierarchy of programming that supports the new Town Square as the primary civic destination in the Downtown. Where appropriate, the Programming Strategy should explore opportunities for existing events outside of the Downtown to be relocated to the Town Square to establish this as the primary destination for events in Collingwood. In addition, efforts should be made to encourage informal use of the Town Square for casual sports (i.e. frisbee, catch), outdoor exercise, and smaller cultural events (i.e. painting classes) to ensure regular activity throughout the day. Ultimately, the aim is to animate the Downtown 365 days of the year to spur public interest and investment and to establish a vibrant heart in Downtown Collingwood.

While the Programming Strategy should be founded on a number of core programming initiatives (i.e. those noted above), it is important that activities and events are constantly changing and evolving to ensure that residents and regular visitors remain engaged through new and unique experiences on each visit. Events should include significant programming (i.e. festivals) but also simpler and more regular programming that requires minimal investment (i.e. movies in the park, yoga, etc.). As an evolving document, the Programming Strategy should start slowly with the existing and established events and introduce new programming as funding and resources become available.

The Programming Strategy should be led and overseen by the Downtown Coordinator in close collaboration with the ongoing efforts of the BIA. In addition, there are a number of partners that should be regularly consulted to help identify and drive new programming opportunities, including Parks, Recreation and Culture, the Co-ordinator of Community Well Being and Inclusion, the Collingwood Museum, the Collingwood Library, Simcoe Street Theatre, local galleries, and other community partners.

Precedent Examples:



Christmas Markets in Berlin and Bonn, Germany with formalized and long-lasting structures for vendors



Yoga in Trillium Park, Toronto

Action Item # 19:

Pursue partnerships with property owners to adaptively re-use strategic downtown buildings

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead); Fleet and Facilities; Economic Development
- **Partnerships:** Landowners; CAO; Land Use Planning; Economic Development
- **Priority:** Low
- **Timeline:**
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Medium

Downtown Collingwood is characterized by a tight-knit fabric of historic and attractive buildings. As the Town considers opportunities for redevelopment and intensification (see Action Item # 1), it should also explore opportunities to adaptively re-use buildings that may contribute to fulfilling the goals and objectives of the Downtown Master Plan.

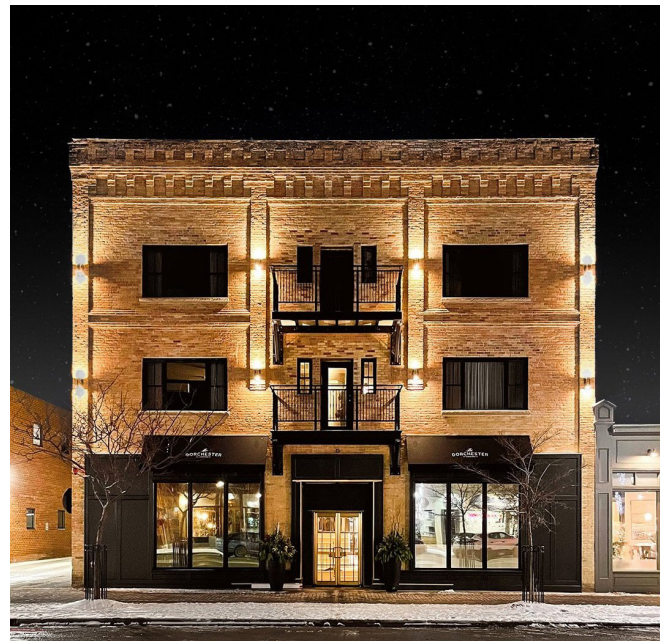
For example, the Federal Building at 44 Hurontario Street is an iconic landmark and an integral part of Collingwood's historic Downtown fabric. While it is currently occupied by Service Canada, the strategic location and historic qualities of the building make it ideal for a more active and prominent role within the Downtown. A more modest example would be the adaptive re-use of the historic building at 172 Hurontario Street to re-establish a hotel on the site of the iconic Dominion Hotel, as well as supporting uses, to enhance the ambiance in the Downtown throughout the evening.

On any underutilized historic sites, as well as opportunity sites identified through an Intensification Study that may have historic value, it is recommended that the Town pursue opportunities to partner with landowners to explore the potential to adaptively re-use the existing building. As an initial step, an architect/

engineer should be commissioned to undertake a Building Condition Assessment (BCA) to understand the ability to adaptively re-use the building without compromising the internal or external heritage value of the property. Subject to the findings of these studies, the buildings could be integrated into the Downtown Business Strategy (see Action Item # 17) and efforts made to attract a unique user that reflects the heritage value of the site, and the goals and objectives of the Downtown Master Plan, such as a university satellite campus or other institutional community use.



Federal Building at 44 Hurontario Street



The Dorchester Hotel at 172 Hurontario Street

Action Item # 20:

Provide increased transit service (time and frequency) between Downtown and Strategic Regional Destinations (i.e. Blue Mountain/Wasaga Beach)

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Community Transportation Coordinator (Town Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Simcoe County Tourism; Town of Wasaga Beach; Town of the Blue Mountains
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:** Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** High (bus availability and staffing)

Downtown Collingwood is about 10 minutes from Blue Mountain and 30 minutes from Wasaga Beach, two highly popular attractions for tourists and locals alike. As the Downtown aims to enhance evening activities and vibrancy, it will be important to ensure seamless transportation options between the Downtown and strategic destinations across the county. This is equally important in supporting the Town's broader objectives to promote alternative transportation options and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Currently, transit to Downtown Collingwood from these destinations runs hourly and has a final stop at 8:00 pm which does not encourage visitors to 'come into town' after a day of skiing or enjoying beach activities. It is recommended that the Town pilot a program for these specific routes that runs every half hour with a final stop at 10:00 pm (or later depending on uses identified in the Downtown Business Strategy). This would help to draw visitors to the Downtown later in the evening without having to worry about taxis or alternative transportation back to their accommodations. For larger groups, this could be a significant draw.

Alternatively, ensuring seamless connectivity between the Downtown and nearby destinations establishes the Downtown as an option for recreational travellers looking to stay in a more urban area while planning day trips to local attractions.

The success of such a pilot program is dependent on transportation options being clear and seamless for users. It is recommended that the Town prepare a marketing campaign for display in the Downtown, and at local accommodations in Blue Mountain and Wasaga Beach, to attract and entice visitors to the Downtown that focuses on transit as an easy and seamless transportation option. Such a campaign could be considered as part of the Downtown Business Strategy (see Action Item # 17) and should also include partnerships with local businesses to offer special deals to those using the transit service.

At the conclusion of the pilot project, if successful, the Town should explore opportunities to further expand transit service to provide connections to other county municipalities (i.e. Creemore) and destinations.

This program should be overseen by the Town's new Community Transportation Coordinator, in close collaboration with the Downtown Coordinator and Tourism Simcoe County. Increased and enhanced transit service should be subject to further exploration as part of the Master Mobility and Transportation Plan.

SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.2

Action Item # 21:
Provide year-round, all-day public washrooms in safe, accessible locations

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Fleet and Facilities (Town Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; BIA
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:**
Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years)
- **Budget Implications:** High

If expecting people to spend a significant amount of time in the Downtown, safe, convenient, and accessible washrooms need to be provided. Currently, the Town provides public washrooms within Town Hall, at the Collingwood Public Library, and the Transit Terminal. Through our discussions to date, most people did not feel comfortable using the washrooms at the Transit Terminal due to ongoing security concerns. This is likely related to their location at 101 Pine Street where there are limited other uses (with the exception of the weekend Farmer's Market) and therefore no 'eyes on the street.' Many were unaware that public washrooms were available at Town Hall.

Providing highly visible and regularly spaced washroom facilities in proximity to key Downtown destinations, such as parks, the waterfront, and near popular amenities, ensures convenience for residents and visitors enjoying the Downtown and is essential for many (i.e. families with young children, older adults, etc.).

It is recommended that the Town aims to make the Downtown more accessible and inviting by providing public washrooms at regular intervals. Specific locations to be explored include:

- Within the Town Square outlined in Action Item # 11.
- Within the open space at Side Launch Way at the terminus of Hurontario Street in alignment with the recommendation of the SPRP.
- Within the parking lot of the Loblaws site, in close proximity to the Federal Building.
- Within the Service Ontario parking lot at 191 Hurontario Street.

Washrooms would not necessarily be required at all of the above locations, but these are locations that are directly accessible from Hurontario Street and that should remain safe and comfortable as they are in highly visible locations.

As part of an updated signage and wayfinding system (see Action Item # 25), the Town should provide clear and frequent signage to all of these facilities throughout the Downtown, including existing facilities at the Town Hall and the library.

Precedent Examples:



Public Washrooms in Banff, Alberta



Public Washrooms in Winnipeg



3.5. Strategic Direction 05

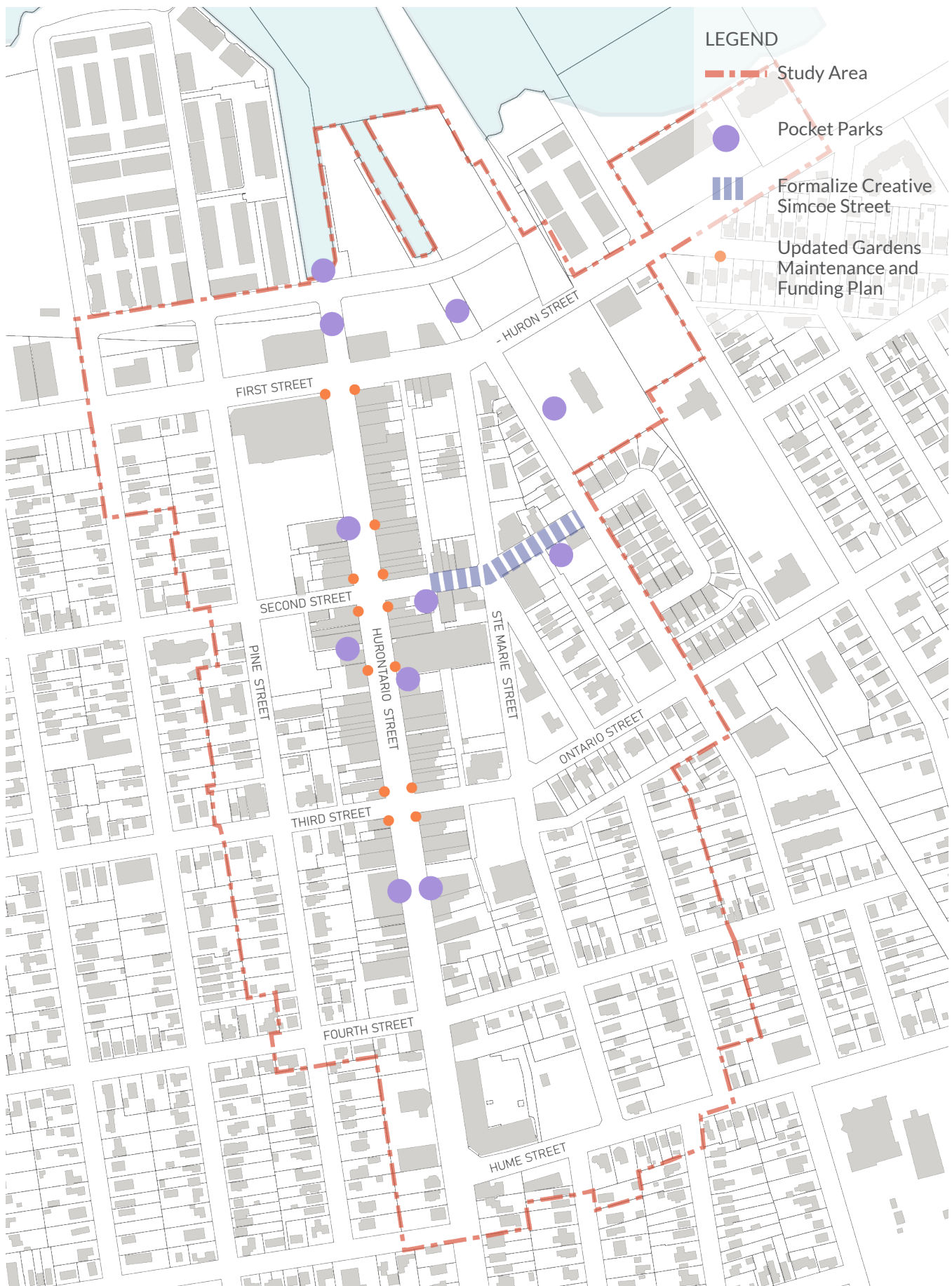
Reinforce a Beautiful and Enjoyable Pedestrian Experience



Creating a beautiful and enjoyable pedestrian experience is vital to making Downtown Collingwood an inviting place to live, work, and visit. This involves enhancing streetscapes to prioritize comfort, circulation, and aesthetic appeal, with attractive boulevard elements, high-quality landscaping, and public art and information opportunities that enhance the visual and physical environment. Improving pedestrian infrastructure, such as open space, landscaping, signage, and lighting will also contribute to a more accessible and comfortable experience for everyone. By focusing on pedestrian-friendly design, we can encourage more foot traffic, reduce reliance on vehicles, and foster a more connected and vibrant Downtown community.

Action Items (Overview)

22. Create a series of pocket parks in strategic locations throughout the Downtown
23. Formalize Creative Simcoe Street through public realm upgrades
24. Prepare an Updated Downtown Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan
25. Create an updated Signage and Wayfinding System focused on Downtown and the Waterfront



Action Item # 22:

Create a series of pocket parks in strategic locations throughout the Downtown

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Parks, Recreation and Culture (Town Lead); Landscape Architect (Consultant Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; BIA; Land Use Planning; Public Works
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:** Long-Term Priorities (5-20 years).
- **Budget Implications:** High

Visitors to Downtown Collingwood enjoy a unique and diverse mix of shops, services, experiences, and programming. This will be further enhanced as the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan are implemented. However, through our discussions to date, it was noted that while there are many enjoyable destinations throughout the Downtown, there is a lack of connectivity between them. For those who are less familiar with Downtown Collingwood, this also means destinations go completely missed during their visit.

To augment a new Town Square, as well as the open spaces envisioned through the SPRP, it is recommended that the Town explore the opportunity to design, and program underutilized and 'leftover' spaces as a series of linked pocket parks. These pocket parks could build on and augment the Town's existing gardens and particularly focus on areas that have already been established for Discovery Panels and other interpretive elements (i.e. in front of Town Hall, in front of the Federal Building, at the terminus of Hurontario Street, south of Ontario Street).

The Pocket Parks would introduce a continuous 'green' element in the Downtown, providing opportunities to reduce the urban heat island effect, support innovative stormwater management techniques (i.e. bioswales, LIDs), promote native and pollinator species, etc. to further the Town's commitment to GHG reductions and climate change mitigation.

The pocket parks would provide the opportunity to tell a continuous story or to reinforce a continuous experience, with the underlying intention of tying various Downtown destinations together and drawing people between the Downtown and the waterfront, and to destinations within the Downtown that are outside of Hurontario Street (i.e. Simcoe Street, the Collingwood Museum). While the experience at each individual park would be different, they would collectively offer an engaging experience that would encourage visitors to put in the effort to seek them all out (and enjoy other Downtown amenities along the way).

The pocket parks should be complementary to each other in design but offer a variety of scales and opportunities based on their location and available space. For example, some may be purely aesthetic (i.e. murals, installations, landscaping) while larger sites may offer opportunities for seating, individual performance space, working areas, etc. They should offer permanent elements that reflect Collingwood's unique history and waterfront location. One idea is to provide tangible and interactive water elements at each pocket park to literally bring water into the Downtown. These could serve a dual purpose as water filling stations, children's play areas, etc. Another idea is to utilize the pocket parks to share Collingwood's Indigenous history.

And while they should have permanent elements, the pocket parks should not be static. They should be a primary focus of the Programming Strategy (see Action Item # 18) and should offer a changing experience throughout the year to ensure that they remain engaging for local residents and repeat visitors. As an example, the pocket parks could be used as an opportunity to enhance awareness of Creative Simcoe Street with local artists and creatives providing temporary programming at each park or, at larger parks, actually working on-site to demonstrate and educate the public on their craft. As another example, during a busker event, the pocket parks could be the primary location for performances. Ultimately, the intention is that the pocket parks become recognized by the public as important secondary programming spaces outside of the Town Square.

Once locations are identified, it is recommended that the Town initiate a local design competition (integrating the other open spaces identified throughout this Plan) to ensure a consistent and high-quality hierarchy of open spaces throughout the Town, including the Town Square (see Action Item # 11) and the terminus space at the end of Hurontario Street (see Action Item # 8). Order-of-magnitude cost estimates should be provided as part of a comprehensive design package, including capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs, to inform an update Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan (see Action Item # 24). The Town should continue to work with the BIA to explore and leverage Federal (and other) grants as a potential funding source.

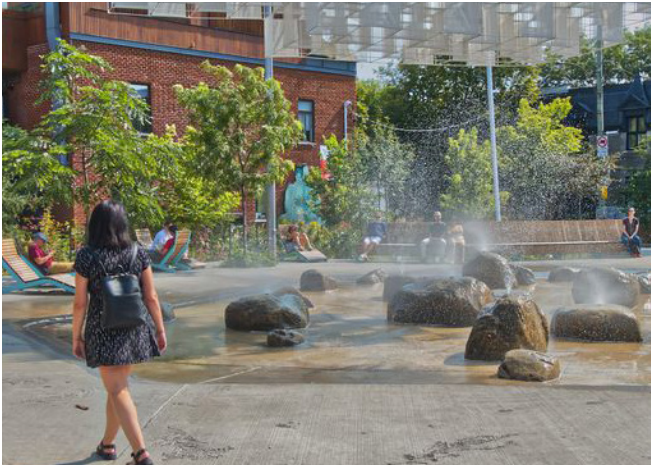
Precedent Examples:



Rue Ontario, Montreal



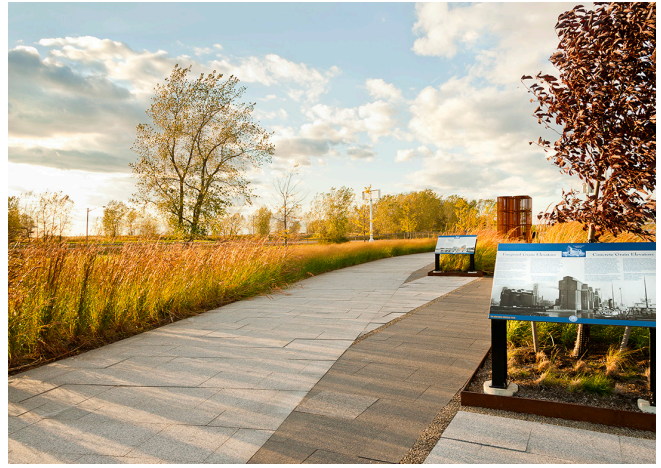
Pocket Park in Cumberland Street, Toronto



Place des Fleurs-de-Macadam, Montreal



Sponsor Memorial at Meridian Place, Barrie



Buffalo Industrial Heritage Trail

Action Item # 23: **Formalize Creative Simcoe Street through public realm upgrades**

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Parks, Recreation and Culture (Town Lead)
- **Partnerships:** Downtown Coordinator; BIA; Business Owners
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Timeline:** Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Medium

Within the Downtown, Creative Simcoe Street is an arts and entertainment district offering a unique experience, including 30 independent and artistic businesses, such as artist studios, a theatre, a dance studio, an art supply store and arts school, an arts foundation, fine crafts and gifts, several galleries, and independent restaurants. In addition, a range of outdoor programming is provided at Tremont Square. Simcoe Street is also home to the Collingwood Library, and its public atrium space abutting Tremont Square. The area is anchored by several heritage buildings, most notably the Tremont, a former hotel built in 1889.

It is recommended that the Town work closely with the property owners, local businesses, and creatives to formalize a vision for Creative Simcoe Street through investments in the public and private realm. Notably, there are currently no benches along this section of Simcoe Street and only a minimal amount of landscaping. As a successful destination already, it is not anticipated that significant investment would be required, but rather a 'light touch' to celebrate and enhance the uniqueness of this area similar to the rainbow street art that defines the entrance at Ste Marie Street. Considerations may include gateway features, fun painting within the boulevard, creative benches and street furniture, and unique wayfinding signage (i.e. similar to the sketch map

that is currently used to market the area). Another alternative is to simply paint the standard street furniture in this area, including bus stops, planters, garbage cans, parking meters, lighting, etc. using fun colours.

Within the public realm, the intersection at Ste Marie Street and Simcoe Street presents the opportunity to create a true 'four corners' gateway into Creative Simcoe Street. Currently, this intersection is occupied by the Collingwood Library, a theatre, and a brewery. These uses are all in alignment with the character of Creative Simcoe Street. On the fourth corner (37 Simcoe Street), it is recommended that the Town work with the existing property owner to explore the redevelopment of the site to promote opportunities for additional residents in the Downtown, while providing at-grade opportunities that align better with adjacent uses. At a minimum, the Town should look to expand the abovementioned public realm enhancements within the boulevard at 37 Simcoe Street to establish the significance of the four corners prior to redevelopment.

As an identified Opportunity Site, 37 Simcoe Street is explored further in Action Item # 1.

The Town should continue to work with the BIA to explore and leverage Federal (and other) grants as a potential funding source.

Precedent Examples:



Creative Wayfinding Signage in Carlton Learning Precinct, Australia



Ridgeway Elementary Mural in North Vancouver



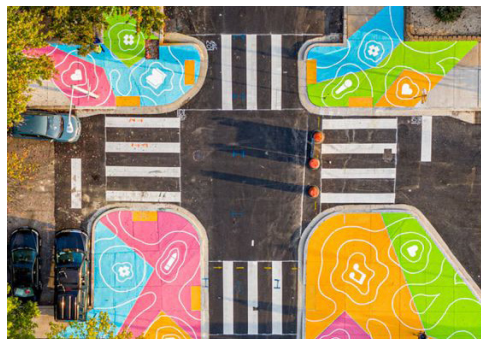
Pocket Park in Creative Hub in California



Colourful Bollards in Floral Street, London, UK



Conceptual example from The Graham Projects Curblet Commons design kit



Intersection example from Graham Projects



City of Port Phillip, Australia, Arts Precinct Creative Wayfinding



Action Item # 24:

Prepare an Updated Downtown Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead)/BIA
- **Partnerships:** Public Works
- **Priority:** High
- **Timeline:**
Immediate Action (years 1 and 2)
- **Budget Implications:** High

In 2021, the BIA, with support from the Town of Collingwood, commissioned Seferian Design Group to undertake a Downtown Gardens Master Plan to enhance the Downtown's livability, functionality, economic vitality, aesthetic quality, and pedestrian environment. Since its completion, the BIA has had great success in implementing the plan and continues to seek Federal (and other) funding to complete projects that are either directly, or closely related, to the plan such as new street furniture (benches and garbage cans), permeable paving installations around trees, and new tree guards. Most importantly, the BIA is currently exploring pilot gardens to test a new irrigation system as well as drought-tolerant and lower-maintenance gardens.

Since the completion of the Downtown Gardens Master Plan, the number of gardens in Collingwood continues to grow significantly impacting initial capital cost estimations as well as ongoing maintenance costs. In our engagement with the BIA, it was noted that the current levels of maintenance being undertaken by the BIA and the Town are not satisfactory and that many gardens have weeds and are unattractive. Building on the existing MOU between the Town and the BIA, it was noted that strategies are needed to prioritize the work and funding required to keep the Downtown looking beautiful.

In addition to the garden enhancements that are already underway, the Downtown Master Plan and the SPRP propose a number of new open spaces and garden projects (i.e. pocket parks, laneway activation) that will require further maintenance efforts (i.e. costs and staff resources).

Key to ensuring proactive funding and resourcing for the ongoing maintenance of the Downtown gardens is a clear understanding of the cost implications. It is recommended that the BIA, in close collaboration with the Town, prepare an updated Downtown Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan to reflect the current number and state of the existing gardens, as well as the planned gardens as part of the Downtown Master Plan and SPRP. Where relevant, the Action Items of this document recommend the design of new garden projects be supported by order-of-magnitude costing for construction and ongoing maintenance.

Furthermore, building on the ongoing efforts to pilot more efficient irrigation systems and drought-resistant gardens, it is recommended that the BIA explore the costs of implementing this approach throughout the Downtown. In the long-term, this will be more cost-effective for the Town and BIA, will reduce climate impacts of the gardens, and can provide a unique and innovative educational feature in the Downtown that relates to the broader objectives and vision for the Downtown.

At a minimum, the updated Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan should:

- Clearly articulate the costs of all new gardens, as well as the ongoing maintenance costs for all gardens (new and proposed) in the Downtown;
- Clarify the responsibilities of the BIA and the Town as it relates to existing and planned gardens (supported through a review and update to the existing MOU as required); and,

- Prioritize and provide a feasible implementation schedule for updates to existing gardens (i.e. based on pilot projects) and installation of new garden projects.

To ensure costs remain realistic and up-to-date, the Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan should be updated at regular intervals (i.e. 3 years), and should integrate the implementation and ongoing maintenance costs of any new parks identified through this (or future) plans and projects. Having a clear picture of the costs will help the BIA and the Town to prioritize the beautification of the Downtown annually during budget discussions.

SDG: This Action Item provides opportunities to enhance the Town's alignment with and commitment to, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11), including:

- Target 11.6
- Target 11.7



Existing Gardens in Strategic Locations



Vancouver Harbourfront with low maintenance species

Action Item # 25: **Create an updated Signage and Wayfinding System focused on Downtown and the Waterfront**

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Downtown Coordinator (Town Lead)/BIA
- **Partnerships:** Roads and Transportation
- **Priority:** Low
- **Timeline:** Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years)
- **Budget Implications:** Medium

In 2017, the Town of Collingwood and the BIA commissioned Form: Media to prepare the Collingwood Downtown Wayfinding Signage Report. The report, which has been mostly implemented, focuses on getting vehicles to the Downtown and directing them to the Downtown parking lots. Through our engagement to date, it was regularly noted that pedestrian-level wayfinding signage is lacking, and that clear direction to Downtown amenities (i.e. museum, library, splash pad) is not provided. In addition, the Town has some educational signage along Hurontario Street (and elsewhere), including a series of Discovery Panels and a panel telling 'the Story of Collingwood' outside of Town Hall. However, these panels are dated and static and offer little to repeat visitors who have already viewed them. Finally, in recent years, the BIA has invested in the Discover Collingwood App (and supporting pedestrian signage) which provides maps of the Downtown and a series of themes (i.e. Heritage Walks, Good Food Stroll, Explore the Harbour, The Creative Hub, and Happening Now) which can be explored through scanning a barcode. In theory, this is a good investment as digital wayfinding can be easily kept up to date without having to update the physical sign itself.

However, in our experience, downloading an app when visiting a Town is a level of effort/investment that most people will not take. This was generally supported through discussions with the BIA that noted that the app was not downloaded very frequently.

It is recommended that the Town build on the wayfinding efforts to date and create an updated Signage and Wayfinding System that focuses on moving people throughout the Downtown, to the waterfront and highlighting key initiatives of the Downtown Master Plan as they are implemented (i.e. Town Square, Pocket Parks, etc.). The Signage and Wayfinding System should include both wayfinding signage as well as educational and informational signage (in line with the broader objectives of this Plan). The themed approach undertaken with the Discover Collingwood app should be continued, but it is recommended that the Town explore opportunities to abandon the app, and instead provide the information directly on DiscoverCollingwood.ca. In addition, it is recommended that any future signage add a theme called 'Parks and Open Spaces' which can highlight existing open spaces (i.e. 84 Hurontario, Museum lawn, Tremont Square) in the short-term and add new open spaces from the Downtown Master Plan and SPRP as they are implemented.

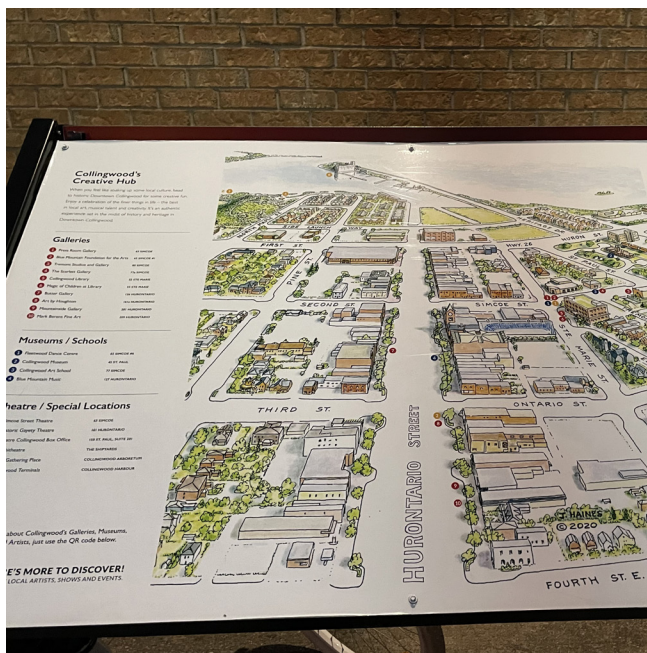
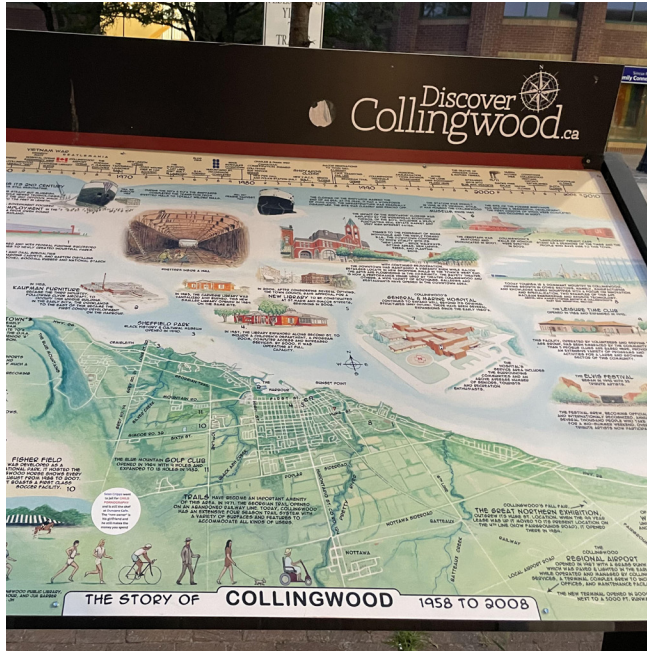
In addition to the above, an updated Signage and Wayfinding Strategy should provide recommendations related to Downtown lighting, and specifically opportunities to support lighting as a way to further activate the Downtown at all times of day, as identified in Strategic Direction # 4 of this Plan. Specific considerations could include continued illumination of the Town Hall Clock Tower (a focal point of Downtown), illumination of key heritage buildings and features, lighting installations within the Town Square and pocket parks, hanging lighting within the laneways identified in Action Item # 14, and general lighting within pedestrian areas.

An Updated Wayfinding and Signage Strategy should also consider the Downtown-specific components of a Bicycle Wayfinding System as outlined in the Town's Active Transportation Plan and Cycling Plan, and any further direction emerging through the MMTP.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that many visitors to a new area, and even local residents, simply rely on their smartphones for wayfinding, research, and business reviews. It is important for the Town and the BIA to regularly review the information on Google Maps, Apple Maps, etc. to ensure it is correct and up to date, and to report errors when it is not.

Updates to the Signage and Wayfinding System should be led by the Downtown Coordinator, in close collaboration with the BIA, to ensure alignment with other interpretive elements outlined in this Plan.

Pedestrian signage examples from throughout Collingwood



Integrated Signage in Banff, Alberta



5. Implementation

The Strategic Directions and Action Items outlined in the Downtown Master Plan aim to provide the Town with a clear roadmap for the growth and evolution of the Downtown over the next twenty years (and beyond). The Plan is, in and of itself, an implementation plan that identifies and prioritizing key design interventions and recommendations (new and existing) to help support annual Council discussions and budget decisions.

The initial and ongoing steps that the Town should undertake to initiate the Downtown Master Plan are outlined on the pages that follow.

4.1. Priorities and Funding

Most of the Action Items presented in this Plan have costs associated, though they range significantly, and in some cases, are difficult to predict until implementation. It is recommended that a key focus of the Downtown Coordinator (in collaboration with the BIA) be on the continued exploration of and application for, external grants and funding. In addition, it is recommended that the Town immediately identify and prioritize funds through the 2025 Municipal Budget to begin implementing those Action Items that are High Priority and identified for Immediate Action (Years 1 and 2), including:

- **Action Item # 2:** Prepare a Strategic Decision Framework for Major Investment in the Downtown
- **Action Item # 3:** Identify a Downtown Coordinator to Oversee Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan
- **Action Item # 6:** Continue to Support the Evolution of the Downtown from a Car-Centric to a 'People-First' Destination
- **Action Item # 24:** Prepare an Updated Downtown Gardens Maintenance and Funding Plan

Specifically, the Town should begin securing funds for the Downtown Coordinator position as this person will assume ownership over, or play a key role in, many of the Action Items of this Plan, including those outlined above.

Finally, the Town and the BIA (with appropriate partners) should prioritize and be actively exploring funding for the other high-priority, short-term (0-5 Years) Action Items proposed under each Strategic Direction.

4.2. Downtown Coordinator Job Advertisements

The Downtown Master Plan advocates the hiring of a Downtown Coordinator to oversee the implementation of the Action Items. Given the significance of this role, it is anticipated that the hiring process may take a considerable amount of time. Therefore, the Town should prepare and post the job applications well in advance of the anticipated start date. Furthermore, it is recognized that the successful candidate would be a unique individual, with many different but complementary skills. Both the Town of Stouffville (Downtown Coordinator) and the City of Woodstock (Downtown Development Officer) have utilized similar positions in the past. Specifically, the Town of Woodstock hired its Downtown Development Coordinator as recommended in its Downtown Development Plan (undertaken by Fotenn in 2019). This role has been successful in completing a number of the Key Tactics outlined in that plan. It is recommended that the Town of Collingwood reach out to both Stouffville and Woodstock to understand their experience to date, and to identify the key attributes outlined in the job application that attracted strong candidates.

4.3. Ongoing Studies/Unanswered Questions

Throughout this Plan, a number of ongoing and planned studies are mentioned, including the MURFA, the Performing Arts Centre Feasibility Study, the Master Mobility and Transportation Plan, and an upcoming Parking Study (2025). Collectively, these studies present a number of unanswered questions that have a significant impact on the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan, most notably, the future of the Town-owned parking lots at 101 Pine Street and 140 Ste Marie Street. As these studies progress/begin, it is recommended that the Downtown Master Plan be provided to the consultants and that the Town works with its consultants to ensure their recommendations are carefully balanced with the Vision, Strategic Directions, and Action Items of this plan. Where key decisions have not yet been made (i.e. is subject to the above studies), the Downtown Master Plan aims to clearly outline the intent of each recommendation to provide flexibility to the Town in implementation. As these studies are complete, and more clarity is provided, the Town should regularly revisit the Action Items in the Downtown Master Plan and adjust its approach accordingly.

A Downtown Parking Study should be a significant priority of the Town as a number of the recommendations of this Plan, and future development and programming will be subject to the findings of such a study. The last parking study (Downtown Collingwood Parking Strategy, BA Group) was undertaken in 2009. There has been substantial change in Downtown Collingwood since then, and with the planned redevelopment of the waterfront, future addition of a Performing Arts Centre, completion of the MMTP, and the initial and ongoing implementation of the Downtown Master Plan, further changes are anticipated in the short, medium and long-term and will be much more successful if grounded in a strong understanding of parking realities.

4.4. Fostering Partnerships

Each of the Action Items outlines the partnerships that will be required for successful implementation. In most cases, these are Town departments and committees, County staff, and/or local community groups that regularly collaborate with the Town. However, there are other partnerships identified that will be integral to implementing the Downtown Master Plan and the Town (and other required staff resources) should establish partnerships now to facilitate positive and collaborative long-term relationships.

Most notably, a number of Action Items require partnerships with local landowners, including the individual property owners, the owners of the current Loblaws site, and PWGSC. With many competing priorities, the results of these partnerships often take a while to come to fruition.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Town reach out to potential partners now to begin initial discussions, even for those items that are identified for the Long-Term (5-20 Years) horizon.

In addition to the above, the Downtown Master Plan provides a number of Action Items that require ongoing collaboration with the not-for-profit groups, creative entrepreneurs, volunteers, etc. that regularly collaborate with the Town and the BIA on strategic initiatives. Continuing to foster these partnerships should be a primary focus of the Downtown Coordinator.

4.5. RFPs/Terms of Reference

Where Action Items require outside consultants, a Terms of Reference will be required. Prior to, or while exploring funding options, the Town may wish to prepare the necessary Terms of Reference to help Council to better understand the funding request, and to ensure progress can be made quickly once funding is approved. Specifically, two Action Items are identified as High Priority and recommended as Short-Term Priorities (0-5 years), including:

- **Action Item # 1:** Undertake an Intensification Study for the HCD/ Commercial Core in response to changing paradigms and evolving priorities;
- **Action Item # 12:** Undertake Due-Diligence to understand the opportunities within the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena

These Terms of Reference should be prepared immediately to ensure these studies are funded and initiated within the identified timeframe as they have a significant impact on ongoing studies (i.e. MURFA) or will provide important context for all ongoing work (i.e. recommended building height and massing).

4.6. Ongoing Programming

A number of the Action Items in this report will have significant impacts on programming in the Downtown, including both how programming is organized and implemented, as well as where programming occurs in the medium-long term. Specifically, the report recommends the ongoing programming of 84 Hurontario Street, the development and continuous updating of a Downtown Programming Strategy, and the eventual development of a Town Square and network of supporting pocket parks.

While the above Action Items will have a significant impact on programming in the Downtown, it is important that the Town and BIA continue with a range of active programming while awaiting the full implementation of these Action Items. The Town should ensure that existing programming continues, and new programming is introduced, to enhance public investment and ownership in the Downtown as new elements of the Downtown Master Plan are implemented over the years to come. Most importantly, in support of reinforcing a heart in the Downtown, all efforts should be made to provide regular programming at 84 Hurontario, the 101 Pine Street Lot, Town Hall, adjacent laneways, and other areas between Simcoe Street/Second Street and Ontario Street/Third Street continue to reinforce the role of this area prior to the completion of a Downtown Programming Strategy and/or the construction of a Town Square.

4.7. Annual Progress Reports and Updates

The Downtown Master Plan represents a long-term action plan for Downtown Collingwood. Implementing the Action Items should ensure the Downtown continues to evolve and thrive and meet the needs of a diverse and growing population for decades to come.

As this is a long-term plan, it is important that the Action Items continue to respond to the evolving realities and, where appropriate, changing priorities. This is particularly important given the number of ongoing and planned studies that may inform the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan (see 5.3 above). It is recommended that the Town undertake an annual progress report to update Council on its progress, and to evaluate its success in implementing the Action Items. Updates and refinements to the priorities and timing can be made as necessary.

Similarly, the Town should undertake a comprehensive review of the Downtown Master Plan every five years to ensure the Action Items continue to reflect the evolving Downtown context and to identify areas where updates and amendments may be necessary.

Town of Collingwood Downtown Master Plan

