

## **Staff Report 2021-0067**

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Meeting Date: March 23, 2021

Subject: Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan

Submitted By: Sandra Dolson, Economic Development Officer, Office of the CAO

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan attached as Schedule A to Staff Report 2021-0067 be approved.

That the Downtown Bolton Task Force (DBTF) Terms of Reference attached as Schedule B to Staff Report 2021-0067 be approved.

That the Downtown Bolton Task Force (DBTF) be delegated the authority through the CAO to utilize the funding available in the 2021 Capital Project #2021-113 Bolton Downtown Revitalization in accordance with the Town's policies and by-laws.

That the Town of Caledon maintain ownership of the Old Bolton Fire Hall.

That in principle, the Old Bolton Fire Hall be repurposed as community space including but not limited to; vendor space, innovation hub and maker space and a drop in space for youth and/or seniors.

That staff be directed to report back with the costing and design recommendations for the building prior to the 2022 budget process.

That portable public washrooms be placed at the Old Bolton Fire Hall from May 2021 to October 2021 in the amount of \$50,000 to be funded from the Safe Restart funding provided from the federal and provincial government.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Development of the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan (Plan) is an action in the Economic Development Strategy
- MDB Insight was contracted to assist with development of the Plan
- Consultation included, Mayor, Councillor, staff and agency meetings and interviews, two stakeholder meetings, and an online survey (350+ responses)
- The Plan is based on existing policies, studies, and plans, as well as consultation and municipal best practices
- Plan consists of 72 recommendations organized within 10 actions.
- Recommended that the Fire Station at 50 Ann Street be repurposed as community space.
- Draft Plan recommendations presented at a stakeholder meeting, provided to staff, Region of Peel and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) for comment.
- Public Information Meeting held February 2, 2021.
- First action to be formation of a Downtown Revitalization Task Force.

- Task Force to prioritize recommendations setting the work plans in 12, 24 and 36-month timelines.

## **DISCUSSION**

On April 28, 2020 Council adopted Caledon 2020-2030 An Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Caledon (Strategy).

One of the short-term actions in the Strategy was to: *Develop a Bolton Revitalization Plan focused on the historic core area, incorporating relevant recommendations from current adopted Plans.*

Given the interest in revitalization of the historic Bolton core, and the COVID-19 pandemic which has exacerbated the need to support small business, staff undertook the development of the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan (Plan) immediately. MDB Insight (MDB) a firm with expertise in Economic Development was hired to assist in the development of the Plan.

MDB reviewed all relevant policies affecting the area, worked with staff to complete a rigorous consultation process including meetings and interviews with Mayor, councillors, staff, Region of Peel, TRCA, and a stakeholder group consisting of residents, Business Improvement Area (BIA), business and property owners, community groups, heritage committee, and developers. MDB has also considered municipal best practices from across the country in the formation of the Plan.

Generally, the Plan is concentrated geographically in the Bolton Heritage Conservation District (BHCD). Many of the recommendations are focused on the commercial area known as downtown Bolton and there are some recommendations regarding connections to neighbourhoods or parklands outside of the BHCD.

### **Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan**

The Plan is organized in four pillars: Organizational, Design, Economic Vitality and Promotion. Within the pillars there are 10 actions comprised of 72 tactical recommendations.

The Plan, attached as Schedule A, is intended to be implemented over the next 36 months.

### **Plan Implementation**

Downtown Bolton Task Force

Establishing the Downtown Bolton Task Force (DBTF) is integral to implementation of the Plan.

The DBTF will include the following members:

- CAO or designate
- Ward 5 Councillors
- One representative of the Bolton BIA board

- One Chamber of Commerce board member
- One downtown business owner
- One Heritage Caledon representative
- One representative from a local community group or service club

Region of Peel and TRCA staff representatives will be requested to join the DBTF in a liaison capacity.

The DBTF will be responsible for prioritizing the Plan recommendations, completing a “who does what” exercise, and developing a detailed work plan. Deliverables and outcomes would be reviewed and reported to Council regularly. Town staff will support the DBTF as assigned by the CAO.

Additional community groups, residents, business and/or property owners may be engaged to form working groups throughout the term of the Plan, if required, based on the individual recommendation projects. The proposed draft DBTF terms of reference are attached as schedule B.

### Staffing

Town staff will support the DBTF as assigned by the CAO and departmental resources will be allocated to complete tasks to implement the Plan as determined by the DBAT.

The Town’s current staff complement will be utilized to complete project tasks and project coordination for 2021. If additional staff resources are required a business case will be provided to Council through a future budget process.

### Old Bolton Fire Station

Through the consultation process, residents indicated that the Fire Station should remain in the Town’s ownership and be utilized as an anchor to attract people and entrepreneurs to the area. MDB Insight noted that publicly owned lands in downtown areas provide municipalities with the ability to control beautification, design, and flexibility of uses on those lands, which may accelerate revitalization.

The Plan recommends the following:

- Reopen the Fire Station as a neighbourhood resource centre to develop pride in place, to help residents and community groups work together to accomplish the goal of revitalizing the downtown core.
- Relocate the farmers/vendors market to the Fire Station property to foster a four-season market/destination, along with curated works from local artisans.
- Invite an established food retailer to set up a satellite local food market.
- Utilize as an experiment centre for downtown revitalization ideas, business start-ups. Add a small coworking space, combined with a makers’ space.
  - o A makers’ space is generally defined as: *a place in which people with shared interests gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge.*

It is often associated with computing/technology but can be used as a space for hands on arts, crafts, and product development.

The Caledon Public Library is currently planning two makers' spaces, one in Valleywood and the other in Caledon East, the space in Bolton would be planned in collaboration with the Library to ensure the needs of the community are met.

- Utilize as a central information point for event organizers and visitors.
- Provide public washrooms and amenities for cyclists.
- Develop a budget for Council's consideration to renovate the Fire Station as an accessible space.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate green building approaches that align with the Town's corporate and community climate change strategies and policies.

Staff are looking for Council's direction for the future use of the building in order to provide staff and the taskforce with the vision for the property. As a result of the recommendations from MDB Insight and feedback from the community staff is recommending that the Old Bolton Fire Station remain in the Town's ownership. It is recommended that the Fire Station serve as a community space and include such things as vendor space, an innovation hub and maker space and drop in space for youth and seniors.

Staff envision the long-term use include vendor space for such things as a farmer's market, artisan fairs and pop-up retail opportunities. In addition to providing vendor space the location provides a great opportunity for community space to make downtown Bolton a more desirable destination. With the assistance of the taskforce, staff will explore ideas such as drop-in space and innovation space for the community. The taskforce will be instrumental in making final recommendations to Council on how the space is to be utilized.

Once direction is provided by Council and the taskforce, staff will prepare a report prior to the 2022 budget process to Council containing the costing and design recommendations for final approval. As the Fire Station is within the Bolton Special Policy Area (SPA) and zoned as institutional. Staff will indicate what uses are currently permitted and whether other planning process must be initiated to implement the final use of the property.

## **2021 Plans**

The Plan recommends that "in the pilot phase" (prior to the building being fully renovated) pop-up displays, and sales areas be established on the ground floor. These types of uses, as part of cultural and/or community service activities and events, are permitted and may encompass part of the parking lot.

Any public use on the site will require AODA compliant washrooms. Staff is recommending that an AODA compliant portable washroom trailer be rented and placed on site between May 2021 and October 2021. Staff believe that providing public washrooms will provide a much-needed service for visitors to the downtown area during the pandemic and will accompany the potential uses for the site during the summer months.

Costs for the rental, maintenance and cleaning for the portable washrooms is estimated at \$50,000. Staff are recommending that the costs be funded from the Safe Restart program provided by the federal and provincial government.

### **Bolton Community Improvement Plan**

The Bolton Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was adopted by Council in 2009. The purpose of the CIP is to promote beautification and prosperity, improve form and function and enhance environmental features in the CIP area. The Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan recommends reviewing and updating the CIP.

It is anticipated that an RFP to complete the Bolton CIP update will be issued in the summer of 2021 and an updated CIP will be before Council for consideration early in 2022. In the meantime, the current CIP incentive grants will remain in effect. Through the 2021 budget Council approved funding the CIP update from the funds (\$175,000) set aside from the Capital Project #21-113 Bolton Downtown Revitalization.

### **Timeline**

As stated, the Plan is divided into 10 Actions. Within the actions are 72 recommendations. The DBTF will prioritize the recommendations in the Plan, and many recommendations will be initiated in 2021 based on department work plans.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Through the 2021 budget process Council approved initial funding in the amount of \$175,000 to initiate the implementation of the plan. Any future renovations of the Fire Station to be considered, will be brought forward to Council for approval and included in future budgets. Costs for the rental, maintenance and cleaning for the portable washrooms as a result of the pandemic are recommended to be funded from the Safe Restart program provided by the federal and provincial government.

\$40,000 of the 2021 Capital Project #21-113 of \$175,000, will be utilized to update the Community Improvement Plan for Bolton. Staff are recommending the DBTF through the CAO be delegated authority to allocate the remaining \$135,000 towards initiatives approved by the DBTF in accordance with the Town's policies and by-laws.

Any future budget implications associated with implementing the actions in the Plan will be brought forward as part of the annual budget process for Council's consideration.

### **COUNCIL WORK PLAN**

Sustainable Growth – Bolton downtown revitalization

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Schedule A: Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan

Schedule B: Downtown Bolton Task Force Terms of Reference

Schedule C: Examples of Maker Spaces