



Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan

March 2021



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1. Executive Summary

Downtown revitalization theory for decades has largely centered around the work of the National Main Street Center (mainstreet.org), a subsidiary of the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Main Street Approach is centered around Transformation Strategies, which articulate a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. Any community's work should be organized around four pillars: Organization, Design, Economic Vitality, and Promotion.

Observations were grouped into the four strategic pillars for downtown revitalization, as outlined in Section 3.

Key recommendations for the Downtown Revitalization Plan are outlined in Section 4, including, among other suggestions, the following:

- Improve communication and collaboration between the Town, the Region, the Bolton Business Improvement Area (BIA), and business owners, with a clear understanding of who does what.
- Make the parking pilot permanent, extend the moratorium on cash-in-lieu of parking policies, and fast-track other traffic-calming measures and public realm improvements.
- Implement a vacant commercial property registry and protocol to encourage business owners to sell or lease empty storefronts.
- Create the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Task Force, populated with elected representatives, community representatives, and the Chief Administrative Officer, with a three-year mandate to activate and monitor improvements to the core.
- Identify and remedy any internal procedural obstacles that may be perceived as stalling development in downtown Bolton, with the assistance of an internal Downtown Bolton Action Team, led by empowered municipal management and administrators.
- Actively seek solutions for allowing development compatible with the cultural heritage value of the Bolton Heritage Conservation District in flood-prone communities, based on flood-mitigation practices in other parts of the Province and elsewhere.
- Redesign the public realm in bite-size tangible ways to encourage more recreational and entertainment activities in the core, neighbouring public spaces, and along the river.
- Leverage current retail and hospitality assets, such as Canada's Boss Leather Furniture, Cheeks, the Royal Courtyards, and others.
- Reopen the Fire Hall as a testbed for downtown rejuvenation projects, with a significant range of complementary activities happening concurrently, including sales of local food and artisanal products, neighbourhood resource centre, events, makers' space, coworking space, youth centre, and public washrooms. Start planning now so the proposed "FireHub" can become a popular community focus when pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- Activate and aggressively promote an ongoing, regular schedule of pop-up events featuring local buskers and entertainers in public spaces or on porches of neighbouring homes.

A recommended timeline for actions is outlined in Section 5. A review of background documents and other information is outlined in the Appendix, Section 6.



2. Methodology

The Town of Caledon adopted the 2020-2030 Economic Development Strategy in 2020. There are four priority areas within the Strategy: Priority I: Support an Entrepreneurial and Small Business Economy, Priority II: Focus on Business Retention and Growth, Priority III: Improve Quality of Place, and Priority IV: Enhance Investment Readiness. Within Priority III action 3.7, the Strategy states: Develop a Bolton Revitalization Plan focused on the historic core area, incorporating relevant recommendations from current adopted Plans. The timeframe for initiating this action was categorized as short-term.

MDB Insight Inc. was contracted by the Town of Caledon to prepare a Downtown Revitalization Plan for the Bolton core area. Work on the Plan included numerous opportunities for Council, staff, business owners, community groups, and members of the public to provide suggestions and feedback.

The Consultation Summary that follows includes an aggregate report of interviews with local stakeholders, feedback from special interest interview subjects, Council members, Town staff, tourism and economic development officials, community groups, and other agencies.

A resident and business survey received 350 responses. Two online consultation workshops were organized, involving about 50 individuals in total.

Observations were summarized and shared with the steering committee. A circle-back workshop was organized, at which several key recommendations were outlined. More feedback was gathered at this session to assist in finalizing the final Downtown Revitalization Plan.





3. Key Observations

Organization

The “Organization” pillar of downtown revitalization involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources. Without this crucial piece in place, continuing to the next steps is problematic.

Leadership and Collaboration

Leadership for the revitalization of downtown Bolton is officially in the hands of three parties: Region of Peel Council, Town of Caledon Council, and the Board of Management of the Town of Caledon Business Improvement Area, known as the Bolton BIA. In 2020, Town of Caledon Council approved the development of a Downtown Revitalization Plan for Bolton.

The Bolton BIA feels that its member businesses are invested in making the downtown successful as a destination, not a drive-through. According to the BIA, the Town lacks a clear vision for downtown Bolton, one that people can get excited about and the whole community can own. There needs to be more interaction, communication, and engagement between municipal representatives (Councils and staff), property owners, and businesses. Town staff do a good job, the BIA feels, but more could be done.

The BIA also feels that if the Region and Town communicate a clear, concise vision and takes tangible actions, the community will buy-in. There will be substantial positive change, pride in buildings, and new businesses that will open and thrive. The relationship between both levels of local government and the BIA needs to be improved.

OMAFRA Downtown Revitalization Program

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has worked with numerous communities through its Downtown Revitalization program. The Ministry’s Downtown Revitalization Coordinator’s Manual provides detailed recommendations on organizing and scoping a downtown revitalization effort, as well as building a “Management Committee” or revitalization team.

OMAFRA’s model for the revitalization team is a management committee that oversees implementation of the revitalization work plan and the activities of working groups; establishes project policies, framework, and goals; approves the annual budget; ensures attainment of the goals and objectives of the project; advises and guides the Coordinator and volunteers; and liaise and maintain a climate of cooperation among other community organizations.

OMAFRA’s publication refers several times to the need for a Coordinator, the person hired to facilitate the activities of the revitalization team and working groups. The three main purposes for a Coordinator are process facilitation, communications, and promotion, and mobilizing local resources. The real benefit of a dedicated Coordinator, OMAFRA contends, is in mobilizing the community, “not merely in allowing community members to have a say in what ought to be done, but in organizing activities for which local people’s talents, skills and ambitions are harnessed and put to use. It is strongly recommended that a paid position is created for the Downtown Revitalization Coordinator.”



The implementation of a revitalization team and the hiring of a coordinator does not replace or duplicate the efforts of any business associations (BIAs or Chambers of Commerce) that already exist in the community, according to the Downtown Revitalization Coordinator's Manual: "A business association can help the downtown revitalization project by keeping the Management Committee and Coordinator informed about overlapping areas of interest to facilitate identification and coordination of joint projects. It may also provide financial assistance or be an integral part of the working group in the implementation of strategies."

Policies and Process

Official Plan / Zoning By-Law Review

Generally, when a municipality makes changes to its Community Improvement Plan (CIP), which governs public realm improvements and private realm financial incentives, the by-law needs to be aligned with an updated Official Plan. Some communities are required to place enabling wording in the Official Plan before the CIP can be amended and approved. Town of Caledon staff report that the municipality will review and update the CIP in 2021, and that no changes or additional policies are needed in the Official Plan that affect the CIP.

- Peel 2041+: The Region of Peel Official Plan Review (peelregion.ca/officialplan/review) is expected to be approved in 2022. It is currently undertaking public consultations on Growth-related Focus Areas.
- The Town of Caledon Official Plan Review (future.caledon.ca) is expected to be approved in 2022. The consultation process is currently in Stage 2 of 4, undertaking background studies to determine the Town's future needs and actively involving stakeholders to help develop an understanding of the best course of action to realize the goals of the Official Plan Review.
- The Town of Caledon Zoning By-Law Review is expected to commence in 2021 and will be completed in 2023.
- Business resistance to government rules and process is present in most rural and small communities.

Bolton Heritage Conservation District Plan

The historic core of Bolton is designated as a heritage conservation district under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The district contains approximately 400 properties and includes the main commercial core as well as a wide variety of residences. The Bolton Heritage Conservation District Plan (BHCDP) includes objectives, policies and guidelines to manage and guide future change to conserve the identity of the Village of Bolton, for all properties within the District.

- Individual business owners have expressed support for the BHCDP, specifically in terms of the Heritage Design Guidelines meant to conserve the downtown core's historic look.
- The BIA suggested that some business owners perceive the BHCDP as somehow restrictive to development and cause delays in approvals. The BIA also suggested that business owners perceive the Design Guidelines as potentially generating increased construction costs, causing reduced project viability due to increased financial demands on the developer.



Flood Plain / Special Policy Area (SPA)

In the Town of Caledon's submission to the Province, the Planning Department provided for a scenario that would see the potential for approximately 219 new residential units to be developed in the SPA. The Planning Department is awaiting a response from the Province, which has the final say on the number of units allowed.

- In the consultation workshop, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) commented that there was considerable capacity for development units in downtown Bolton.
- BIA believes the Special Policy Area's flood plain restrictions inhibit the development of downtown. The group also speculates that landowners don't want to engage with officials about potential development proposals, concerned that even a few apartments above a storefront won't be approved.

Housing

The six Census Dissemination Areas (Figure 1) that make up downtown Bolton have a total population of 5,033 (2016). There are 1,919 private dwellings in total, of which 1,848 are occupied by usual residents.

Town and TRCA staff are continuing to advocate the Province to permit existing Official Plan policy for infill within the Bolton Special Policy Area. More intensification outside of the SPA can be accommodated, and the population allocation will be determined as part of the future Caledon Official Plan Review.

- In the Resident Survey, 62% "Strongly Disagree" or "Somewhat Disagree" with encouraging more higher-density residential development in proximity to the core. 53% say "more housing" is a factor that is "Not Urgent at All" for downtown Bolton's future. 18% say it is "Most Urgent," and 18% say it is "Somewhat Urgent."



- During the agency workshop, it was reported there has been and continues to be ongoing discussions between the Town and Region of Peel regarding housing/intensification.
- Redevelopment of the property where the Albion-Bolton Community Centre is situated could provide mixed uses incorporating higher density development and connections to the trail system, which would benefit the vitality of the downtown core.
- Short-term rentals are not permitted under Town of Caledon by-laws. There is no overnight tourist accommodation available in downtown Bolton.

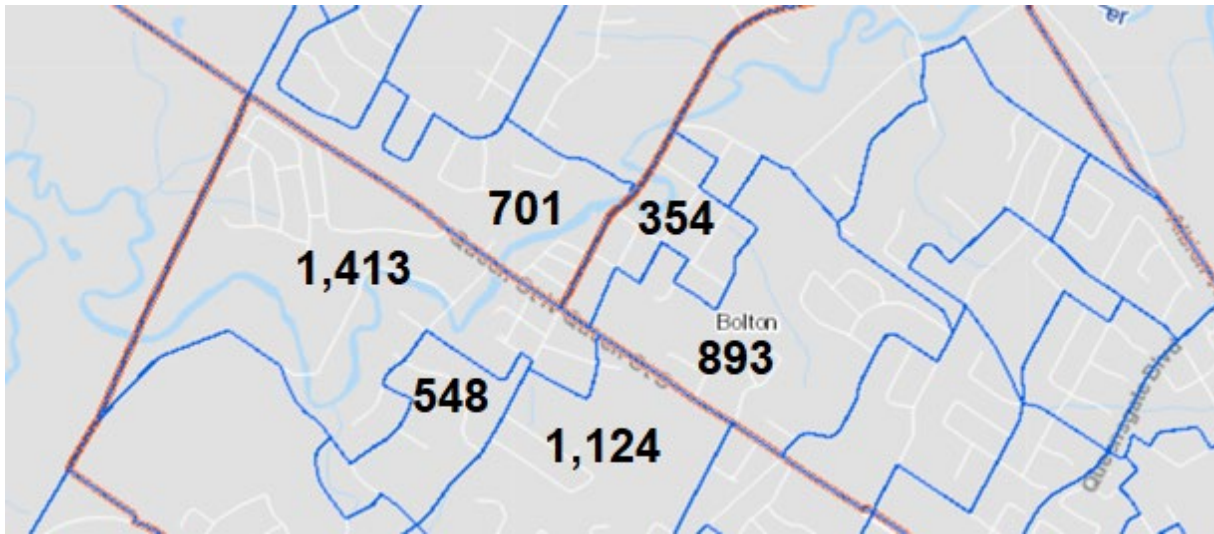


Figure 1: Bolton Dissemination Area Populations, 2016 Census

Development Approvals

In stakeholder discussions, local business owners and a Town Councillor made comments about the “very long” approval processes that currently slow Bolton’s development process.

The BIA believes developers in downtown Bolton are turned off by slow approval timelines and the high cost of fees and studies related to development applications large and small, with no guarantee that the project will be approved.

Internal Collaboration

The business community accuses the Town and Region of ongoing inertia that has stalled development in downtown Bolton.

Internal staff expresses concern about the slow pace of making policy amendments and confusing political direction.



Design

The “Design” pillar of downtown revitalization supports a community’s transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

Parking

All-day on-street parking was initiated as a pilot. A final report is anticipated in 2021.

- Traffic calming measures such as all day on-street parking, create a narrower cross section, slowing traffic making it conducive to a safer feeling environment, which encourages walking and visiting in downtown core areas.
- A number of businesses spoke in favour of making the pilot permanent.
- 72% of respondents to the Downtown Bolton survey were “satisfied” or “neutral” with the adequacy of parking in the core, and 26% were “dissatisfied.”
- 68% of respondents said developing visible parking options (e.g., parking spaces and lots that are easy to see/find) was “most or somewhat urgent,” while 28% thought it was “not urgent at all.”
- A parking study undertaken in 2012 indicated no justification for increasing parking supply or any parking changes in the core area.



Public Realm

Streetscapes and Beautification

A key mandate of the Bolton BIA board of management is to oversee the improvement, beautification, and maintenance of municipally owned land, buildings, and structures in the core. The Bolton BIA spent \$21,000 on landscape maintenance and improvements in 2019. During the consultant's site visit, flower plantings were observed throughout the downtown core, particularly on Queen Street and King Street.

- In the Resident Survey, 84% say it is "Most Urgent" or "Somewhat Urgent" to provide improved streetscapes (sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, and benches). 80% are "Interested" in more trees and gardens for downtown Bolton.
- 65% say it is "Most Urgent" or "Somewhat Urgent" to provide murals and public art. There is currently no public art in the core, apart from a mural.

The existing "gazebo" is ramshackled, has exposed electrical wires, and lacks function. It was surrounded by litter at the time of the consultant's visit in early September. Other streets with commercial properties, such as Chapel Street, appeared neglected. General maintenance and upkeep could be improved.





Public Spaces, River, Trail, and Park Connections

Public Spaces

The Town of Caledon owns ten properties in downtown Bolton, including five at the river's edge, three used for parking, the old fire hall, and a small parcel on Dalton Street. Peel Region owns two properties: one at the river's edge and a vacant lot on Mill St. The Toronto Region Conservation Authority owns Bolton Mill Park and Dick's Dam Park along the river.

- In the resident survey, 75% of respondents say it is “Most Urgent” or “Somewhat Urgent” to provide more or improved public gathering spaces. 71% are interested in a music/performance space, and 60% are interested in outdoor live theatre. 74% are interested or neutral about street performers and buskers. There was an expressed desire for a “piazza” or “town square” location with music, live attractions, theatre, restaurants, cafes.
- In conversations, workshops, and in the survey, residents wished Bolton could learn from communities such as Alton, Creemore, Elora, Erin, Kleinburg, Newmarket, Niagara-On-The-Lake, Orangeville, and Unionville.
- Residents remarked that Mill Park is underutilized. “It is a great location that may not be as well known as it could be.”



- Residents at the public workshop encouraged the Town to acquire more properties in the core – which could be used for public-private partnership opportunities.
- Royal Courtyards is an existing privately-owned property that includes a publicly accessible courtyard space.



Figure 2: Kayaking the Humber River, east of Bolton. Source: Andrew Smith, littlesvr.ca

River

Archeological evidence of human life and First Nations peoples, extending back 12,000 years, has been found along the course of the Humber River. The Humber River is within the Treaty Lands of the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation who called the river Kabechenong, meaning “gathering place to tie up.” Kayakers have been known to paddle from Dick’s Dam Park to Kleinburg (Wilderness Canoe Association, Toronto Outdoor Club), and stand-up paddleboarding is a popular sport that could be investigated (see Figure 2). TRCA rehabilitation priorities for fish stocks in the zone include brook and brown trout, and Atlantic salmon. Caledon Tourism staff report that the valley is topographically pleasing to the eye and that cyclists in the area would like to connect to the river.

- 86% of residents surveyed are interested in river outlooks connecting downtown with the Humber River. During the consultant’s visit in September 2020, the river was difficult to locate. Once discovered, there were no safe or inviting access points to river or outlooks.



- 84% of survey respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree” the Town should improve parkland and open space availability. 79% say better connections to the trail and river are “Most Urgent” or “Somewhat Urgent.”
- There are desires to enhance Bolton’s natural river features with boardwalks, unique shops, cultural attractions, cafes, restaurant patios, and walk/bike-friendly environments. Creative construction and advanced engineering could mitigate risk for development projects, e.g., river’s edge condos.
- Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is not supportive of water sports in this area, east or west, due to the depth of the river and flood mitigation features. Apparently, the river is either too shallow to navigate or too treacherous to navigate. TRCA indicated that lookouts and viewing platforms, benches, trail improvements, etc., may be feasible on the west side of Queen Street, but are not supportive of a floating dock.

Trail Connections

Bolton has about 2km of trails near the Humber River. On the west side of the core, a trail links Edelweiss Park (adjacent to the Bolton Resource Management Tract) with the downtown core. To the east, trails extend from the downtown almost to Bolton Camp. Toronto Region Conservation Authority has 520km of trails, 110 km of which are in Peel Region, 2km of which are in Bolton. Through the Town of Caledon and Bolton, the TRCA Trails Master Plan proposes to connect the “Hills of the Headwaters,” at the convergence of the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine, with the “Humber Valley Wilderness,” location of Kleinberg and home of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

The TRCA completed the West Bolton SNAP (Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan) Trail and Places Master Plan in May 2020. TRCA staff agree that a design/conceptual plan for public areas would be a good idea, including the trail area west of Queen, connections to Dicks Dam Park, and possible uses of that park. TRCA are excited to collaborate on downtown revitalization projects that align with the SNAP. For example:

- Improved or new trail connections including an enhanced cycling route to encourage people to ride into the downtown core
- Bicycle parking and repair stands, water refill stations, rest areas, benches, and public washrooms
- Public art program, heritage walking tours using mobile-friendly maps
- Wayfinding for trails and cycling, improved trailhead signs, improved road crossings, mapping of trails, features, commercial area, parks, and heritage
- Integration of parks adjacent to the core including Bolton Camp with better trail and/or cycling routes

Transportation

Pedestrian safety continues to be perceived as a concern. Walking down Hwy 50 from the north hill into the downtown core is very intimidating and unsafe, reported a resident in the survey. The sidewalk is right up against the roadway, and cars get very close.

There is limited local public transit in Bolton, operating Monday to Friday in early mornings and late afternoons. Transit by TransHelp and Caledon Community Services is available for those with disabilities.



The GO bus runs twice daily on weekday mornings from Bolton to Malton GO station, and two evening returns.

The Town of Caledon worked with the Region of Peel to complete the Bolton Transportation Master Plan. Among several recommendations were the following:

- Removal of truck through-traffic on Queen Street, all-day on-street parking, reduced vehicle speeds, “bulb outs” to reduce pedestrian crossing time, fewer travel lanes for pedestrians to cross, and promotion of Emil Kolb Parkway as the best route to take for through movements
- Streetscaping, street furniture, public art, public seating, special materials to create a sense of place, and increased number of street trees
- Expand transit service to Bolton, advocacy for a GO Train Station
- Facilities for cyclists, opportunities for bicycle parking

The Town of Caledon has hired a consultant to prepare a Multi-Modal Transportation Plan as part of the Official Plan review to:

- Help optimize transportation capacity, formulate an optimum arterial/collector road network plan, and explore traffic calming measures
- Analyze opportunities for improved public transit services including enhanced GO Transit, identify opportunities to reduce dependency on the automobile
- Enhance pedestrian, parking, and cycling infrastructure, and enhance trail connections
- Find solutions to truck traffic, improve inter-regional traffic, and develop an innovation strategy promoting technological advances in transportation.



Economic Vitality

The “Economic Vitality” pillar of downtown revitalization focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

Empty Storefronts

There are numerous empty storefronts in downtown Bolton, a situation which existed prior to the pandemic, according to local stakeholders. In the resident survey, respondents said Downtown Bolton needs places for locals to hang out, places for people to come together that offer an ambiance, good fresh food, open mic nights, etc.

Survey respondents said the Town needs to pressure owners of empty storefronts, as they are perceived to use the properties as tax shelters. They also want to see the Town entice landlords to lower rents to allow businesses to flourish.

Business owners in the core have similar concerns. 86% of Bolton business owners say it is “Very Important” for the municipality to initiate programs to encourage property owners to maintain and/or lease empty storefronts. 93% of respondents to the survey “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree” the Town of Caledon should “work to support and enhance a robust business community” in downtown Bolton.



Business Variety and Quality

A majority of residents (76%) are dissatisfied with the shopping selection and atmosphere in downtown Bolton. 74% are “Dissatisfied” with business variety in downtown Bolton. 70% are “Dissatisfied” with restaurants and entertainment establishments. 56% are “Dissatisfied” with cultural facilities and attractions.

80% of residents say cafes, restaurants (75%), boutique retail stores (61%) are needed downtown. 58% are interested in seeing more nightlife in downtown Bolton. Residents (58%) expressed interest in a local produce/artisans’ shop in the downtown. 55% would like to see a craft brewery or distillery.

More than 190 businesses are located or headquartered in downtown Bolton, representing approximately \$160 million in revenue, and employing over 750 workers¹. The average number of workers per business is 5.2.

Industry sectors represented in downtown Bolton include (Figure 3):

Figure 3: Business Counts for all Industries in Downtown Bolton

NAICS	Sector	Business Count
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0
22	Utilities	0
23	Construction	8
31-33	Manufacturing	5
41	Wholesale trade	6
44-45	Retail trade	27
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	6
51	Information and cultural industries	4
52	Finance and insurance	8
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	5
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	23
55	Management of companies and enterprises	0
56	Admin and support, waste management and remediation services	7
61	Educational services	4
62	Health care and social assistances	29
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	8
72	Accommodation and food services	14
81	Other services (except public administration)	31
91	Public administration	0
	Not Classified	6

¹ D&B Hoovers search of businesses located within the Bolton Forward Sortation Area (FSA) region of L7E, but limited to Local Delivery Units (LDUs) within the historic downtown core: 0Z9, 1A2, 1B3, 1B7, 1B8, 1B9, 1C1, 1C2, 1C7, 1C8, 1E3, 1E8, 1M4, 2A0, 2M8, 2P4, 5T5.



It should be noted that not all businesses with addresses in the downtown core of Bolton have a physical presence in the core. The business may have a headquarters or administrative address there, or a post office box. For a detailed understanding of the businesses with physical addresses in the core, a detailed business inventory must be prepared and analyzed. This task is outside the scope of this project.

Within the retail trade of downtown Bolton, the following subsectors (Figure 4) were represented in downtown Bolton:

Figure 4: Business Counts of Retail Trade Companies in Downtown Bolton

NAICS	Subsector	Business Count
441	Motor vehicle and parts dealers	0
442	Furniture and home furnishings stores	1
443	Electronics and appliance stores	2
444	Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	2
445	Food and beverage stores	3
446	Health and personal care stores	4
447	Gasoline stations	0
448	Clothing and clothing accessories stores	5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	2
452	General merchandise stores	1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	7
454	Non-store retailers	0

Commercial activity beyond the Queen Street or King Street corridor is supported by residents. Businesses should be encouraged to develop on streets such as Chapel, which was mentioned by a stakeholder. Bolton is home to Canada's Boss Leather Furniture, selling high-end sofas and chairs manufactured in the Greater Toronto Area. The store in downtown Bolton is a destination retail outlet.



Very few residents feel the need for more fitness centres, hair salons/barbers, spas, professional offices, government offices, or children's retail stores. Some residents remain skeptical: "Just about every kind of business has tried to be successful in the downtown core! From grocery stores, bakeries, florists,



restaurants, cafes, pubs, clothing, pet grooming, spas, you name it! Whether it's the heavy traffic or the lack of variety, no one seems to shop the downtown core." New condos will hopefully give Bolton a boost by having residents shop downtown. Bolton's location within Caledon is central to local food, cider, pick-your-own farms, sunflower fields, and other attractions that could be leveraged to include Bolton. There is currently little to no tourist accommodation in downtown Bolton.



Fire Station Redevelopment

Publicly owned lands in downtown areas provides municipalities with the ability to control beautification, design, and flexibility of uses on those lands, providing opportunity to accelerate revitalization.

There have been various ideas advanced through discussions with Council, Economic Development staff, the business community, and Economic Development Strategy as to how the former Bolton Fire Station could be redeveloped. Three primary concepts were considered: a community theatre, an innovation hub, and a modified hub concept.

Theatre Concept

In 2017, Town of Caledon Council contracted a professional theatre consulting firm to analyze the Bolton Fire Station at 28 Ann Street as a potential community theatre venue. The consultant determined the Firehall would not accommodate a seating capacity of 200; capital costs would be over \$2.1 million, and operating costs would be minimum of \$150,000 annually, and it would likely run at a loss for the foreseeable future. Council chose to shelve the concept.



Some councillors and residents continue to express a desire to see a theatre in downtown Bolton. During the consultation, it was communicated that several Town councillors want to see a theatre on the site. Community theatre exists in the Town of Caledon: Black Horse Village Players, Caledon Townhall Players, Inglewood Schoolhouse Performers. There is also a thriving theatre in Orangeville.

Most residents surveyed are interested in seeing outdoor live theatre (60%) in downtown Bolton, but only 49% are interested in indoor live theatre.

The consultation included interviews with three representatives of professional theatre in southern Ontario: Orangeville, Blyth, and Port Dover. The theatre representatives commented:

- The pandemic has closed all professional and amateur theatre productions well into 2021, causing some to close permanently. Others are rethinking their target demographic of aging Baby Boomers.
- Any theatre programming should be aimed at different target markets and/or in different seasons than nearby theatres. Experts in the theatre field said, “anyone who tries to start up a theatre with a handful of actors and a non-profit with no history will likely fail or limp along for years.”
- A model exists whereby a municipality owns the building and pays a theatre company to program the show schedule. Usually, the municipality takes a small cut of ticket sales. The program would always require funds from the municipality and would never turn a profit. The residual spin-off benefit of having a successful professionally run theatre in a small town can be upwards of \$3 million annually.

Innovation/Business Hub Concept

In 2018, Town of Caledon Council asked Economic Development staff to investigate the possibility of converting the Bolton Fire Station into an Innovation Hub. Staff consulted with six similar facilities in southern Ontario. The Mayor hosted a roundtable discussion with the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Staff recommended that Council create a business plan to use the Bolton Fire Station as an Innovation Hub with staff accommodation on the second floor, that a business plan be completed for the Innovation Hub as part of the 2020 Budget, and that a Mayor’s Innovation Hub working group consisting of stakeholders be established. Council chose to shelve the concept.

Residents are not drawn to the concept: 38% were not interested in a coworking / shared office space facility in downtown Bolton, and 34% were neutral to the idea. Asked if office space development was urgent, 56% of residents said it was not urgent at all.

Of the 36 businesses that answered the survey, relative importance was rated for services typically provided by a small business centre. 89% thought it was “very important” (75%) or “somewhat important” (14%) to have programs and services to support entrepreneurs and small businesses in downtown Bolton. 81% of businesses thought it was “very important” (36%) or “somewhat important” (42%) to provide Business Start-Up Services in downtown Bolton. 58% of businesses thought coworking / shared office space was “very important” (19%) or “somewhat important” (39%). Business owners were not aware of existing resources, such as the Town’s small business services – called CBIZ – (42% don’t know) or Digital Main Street / ShopHERE (61% don’t know).

Modified Hub Concept

In the stakeholder workshop, residents felt the Fire Station should remain in the public’s hands and be utilized as an anchor to attract people and entrepreneurs to the area. Groups such as the Bolton



Community Crew are made up of volunteers that need support from the Town to continue to operate. Local businesses are hungry for support and information for start-ups and entrepreneurs.

The Resident Survey exposed respondents to a wide range of potential uses of the Fire Station, many of which were embraced with enthusiasm:

- 86% of residents are interested in the farmers' market.
- Residents feel a local produce/artisan's shop (58%) and boutique retail stores (61%) are among the businesses most needed in the downtown.
- In survey comments, several residents added the need for a grocery store, bakery, fromagerie (cheese shop), butcher, and other food-related businesses.
- 52% are interested in pop-up businesses.



Community Improvement Plan Incentives

The Bolton Community Improvement Plan has eight financial incentive programs to stimulate and leverage private sector investment. The policies will need reviewing against the outcomes of this study. 50% of 36 businesses in total who responded to the survey were aware of the Town's Community



Improvement Plan but had not been involved. 19% said they had taken part, 3% plan to take advantage of it in the future, and 22% don't know.

Of residents surveyed, 73% say it is "Most Urgent" and 20% "Somewhat Urgent" that new businesses be attracted to the downtown core. 57% say it is "Most Urgent" and 30% "Somewhat Urgent" that business facades be restored.



Promotion

The “Promotion” pillar of downtown revitalization positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and a hub of economic activity while creating a positive image that showcases a community’s unique characteristics.

Advertising, Promotion and Awareness

The mandate of the Bolton BIA board of management is to promote the area as a business or shopping area. The Bolton BIA has annual revenues of \$56,000. In 2019, it had \$72,930 in expenditures: promotion (\$36,000), landscape maintenance and improvements (\$21,100), and administrative costs (\$15,830).

References to Bolton on the TripAdvisor trip-planning mobile app offers a glimpse of tourists’ perceptions of the town. According to the app, the signature experiences of the area include Landmark Cinemas and the Glen Eagle Golf Club. Water Roots Spa and The Rock Shop of Kleinburg, as well as a few day spas, are considered essential things to do in Bolton. Top dining destinations are Cheeks Bar & Grill, Casamici, and Bolton Pizza Panini.

Google Maps provides reviews of local businesses. For downtown Bolton, top rated destinations are The Rock Shop of Kleinburg Mystical Crystals (5 stars out of 5), Sakred Skinz Tattoo Studio (5.0), Canada’s Boss Leather Furniture (4.9), Caledon’s Curry and Cocktail (4.7), Ume Sushi (4.7), Founder’s Park (4.7), Happy Days Ice Cream Parlour (4.6), Bolton Parking Lot for Walk (4.6), Royal Courtyards (4.4), Riverside Grill (4.2), Bolton Fall Fair (4.2), Allegro Fine Dine (4.0), Black Bull Pub & Eatery (4.0), and Humber River Heritage Park (4.0).

76% of residents say it is “Most Urgent” or “Somewhat Urgent” to advertise better and promote the downtown core. Residents feel work needs to be done to improve an image of cleanliness for downtown Bolton. Litter is lying in several areas of the core.

There are several unique, high-end tourist accommodations within the Town of Caledon, a short drive from Bolton: the Millcroft Inn & Spa, Alabaster Acres, Mount Alverno, among others.

Local stakeholders observed that communities such as Alton Village and Belfountain are attracting tourists, and that Bolton should study these towns for possible lessons.



Festivals and Events

The Town of Caledon will strike a committee to organize a celebration of Bolton's 200th anniversary in the year 2022. The vision for the celebration will include banners, marketing, and special events. Event organizers report that it is not easy to hold events due to current road closure processes. A dedicated space would help host these events. Tourism officials suggested an outdoor movie night in a parking lot or other unique uses of public space at off-peak hours to improve business activity in the core. The Bolton Gazebo and associated landscaping are due for upgrades. Changes should fit the character of the downtown.

- 84% of residents surveyed are interested in street festivals in downtown Bolton.
- 57% are interested in heritage/historic walking tours.



4. Next Steps

Organizational Recommendations

Downtown Bolton is at a crossroads. This beautiful part of Caledon and Peel Region needs attention and care. For the downtown core to be revitalized, an intensive, concentrated efforts must be initiated now to position the area for future success. Leadership, management, and accountability are key to achieving positive outcomes. Executive direction is required, and collaborative support must be there, too. Placemaking is the buzzword for post-modern downtown revitalization efforts.

The U.S.-based [Project for Public Spaces](#) (PPS) provides ideas for communities to build belonging among its residents and visitors. PPS looks at aspects of sociability, uses and activities, access and linkages, and comfort and image in the design of a successful place. Some guiding principles inform the placemaking movement:

- The community is the expert
- Create a place, not a design
- Look for partners
- Observe and learn
- Instill a sense of pride
- Start with lighter, quicker, cheaper
- Triangulate to build relationships
- The experts will always say it can't be done
- Form supports function
- With enthusiasm, money is not an issue

Action 1: Establish a Downtown Bolton Task Force

Establish a Downtown Bolton Revitalization Task Force (DRTF) with a three-year mandate to implement the recommendations of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Task Force would develop a detailed work plan and, through the CAO or her designate, assign tasks to Town staff with specific deadlines and resource allocations. DRTF would work with the municipal staff, BIA representatives, and other stakeholders to complete a “Who Does What” exercise, assigning responsibility for recommendations in the Bolton Revitalization Plan and review deliverables and outcomes regularly. The Task Force would meet quarterly and report on progress to Town Council. Membership would include:

- the CAO of the Town of Caledon or her designate
- One (1) representative from Town of Caledon Council
- One (1) representative from Peel Region Council
- One (1) representative of the Bolton BIA
- Two (2) representative of service clubs, community groups and/or heritage committee
- One (1) representative of the downtown business community

Examples / Best Practices:

- [City of Hamilton Task Force on the Cleanliness and Security of the Downtown Core](#) (2003)
- [Hanover Downtown Revitalization Committee](#) (2011)
- [Cobourg Downtown Coalition Advisory Committee](#) (2013)



- [Kawartha Lakes Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee](#) (2017)
- [Downtown Revitalization Team – Simcoe/Norfolk County](#) (2019)
- [Central Frontenac Sharbot Lake Downtown Revitalization Management Group](#) (2020)
- [Township of Trent Hills Mayor’s Task Force on Traffic Calming](#) (2020)
- [City of Canandaigua, New York, Downtown Revitalization Task Force](#) (2020)

Internal municipal collaboration and accountability should be at the top of the DRTF’s agenda. In order that the wishes of the executive task force are given top priority, the Town must take bold action on implementing the plan.

Action 2: Resource the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan

The Bolton Revitalization Plan requires time and money to implement. All eyes are on municipal government, expecting tangible results. The primary resource required is human effort, in the form of municipal staff collaborating with businesses, community groups and others to achieve success.

Option 2A:

Hire a Downtown Revitalization Coordinator on a three-year contract to work with management and staff at the Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel to implement the Bolton Revitalization Plan. Consider implementing Option 2B as a support to the Downtown Revitalization Coordinator.

Option 2B:

Empower Senior Managers with the Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel to establish a Downtown Bolton Action Team (DBAT) with staff members from all departments, agencies, and organizations who have responsibilities related to applications and permit approvals, maintenance, project management, customer service, and other municipal activities in the downtown.

- DBAT Membership may include representatives from Planning, Building, Bylaw Enforcement, Economic Development, Tourism, Heritage, Community Services, Special Events, Fire, Public Works, Roads, Sanitation, Emergency Services, Public Health, etc.
- DBAT would take suggestions and input from the Downtown Revitalization Task Force, meet monthly, track progress, and report to the DRTF quarterly.
- Tasks and projects would be assigned to specific Departments, who would be accountable for completing the work required in a timely manner and reporting on progress.

Action 3: Ensure policies are helping Bolton’s downtown core

- a. Determine what level of interest and support the Region of Peel has for the revitalization of rural downtowns in its jurisdiction and if any actions will be addressed in the Regional Official Plan Review.
- b. Determine specifically how, where, and when revitalization of downtown Bolton can be addressed and promoted in the Town’s Official Plan Review, specifically related to amendments to the Community Improvement Plan, and via the Zoning By-Law Review. Communicate this to the public and the Bolton business community.



- c. Add the following uses to the Core Commercial Zone of the Zoning By-Law: art gallery, artist studio and gallery, bakery, farmers' market, grocery store, retail store (accessory).
- d. Accelerate opportunities for intensification and schedule the Bolton Secondary Plan project, communicating with the DRTF on these initiatives.
- e. Identify potential specific sites for medium and higher-density development immediately adjacent to the Special Policy Area.
- f. Exempt all Development Charges by the Town of Caledon on commercial and residential properties in downtown Bolton and encourage the Region of Peel to do likewise.
- g. Review parking and loading requirements for historic commercial properties and adjust policies to remove barriers to locating in the area.
- h. Provide rebates on all applicable fees related to redeveloping a commercial property in downtown Bolton or, where applicable, adaptively re-using a residential property for commercial purposes in accordance with BHCDP.
- i. Provide higher-value grants on all approved historic improvements made to commercial property in downtown Bolton, as per BHCDP design guidelines, and/or allow applicants to stack incentives also available from the Community Improvement Plan.
- j. Review existing signage by-laws with a mind to improved visibility, use of suspended signage (e.g., blade signs), consistency of height and size, and more effective advertising of stores and businesses.



Figure 5: Idea Exchange Old Post Office, Galt, Cambridge, Ontario.

- k. Advocate for a resolution to the Special Policy issue with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
- l. Investigate how other flood-prone communities have mitigated these restrictions and expanded their development capacity, e.g., Galt area of Cambridge (Figure 5), Paris, Dunnville, Port Dover).
- m. Find and discuss opportunities with developers capable of addressing approvals for infill development.



- n. Explore policy alternatives to active public transportation links to the downtown core from residential areas to the north and south.
- o. Determine the number of residential units that can be developed in downtown Bolton.
- p. Use any pilot project experiences to test how flexible the development process and customer service protocols for the Town, Region and TRCA are performing.
- q. Review processes and protocols related to having events in the core area, with a vision to support community group efforts, e.g., road closure requirements, use of public property, supply of garbage receptacles, barriers, picnic benches, etc.



Figure 6: Food Truck, Simcoe (Source: Explore Norfolk)



Design Recommendations

Action 4: Design streets and parking to help Bolton's downtown core

- a. Implement the traffic-calming measures and public realm streetscaping improvements proposed in the Bolton Transportation Master Plan.

Best Practices / Examples:

- [Town of Caledon Traffic Calming Strategy](#)
 - [Transportation Association of Canada \(TAC\) Canadian Guide to Traffic Calming](#)
 - [U.S. Federal Highway Administration Traffic-Calming Objectives](#)
 - [Institute of Transportation Engineers \(ITE\) Traffic Calming Measures – Fact Sheets](#)
- b. Make the Parking Pilot permanent to encourage shopping and dining in downtown Bolton.
 - c. Extend the moratorium on cash-in-lieu of parking for commercial properties until such time that the Town updates the existing parking study.
 - d. Identify parking spaces that are used less frequently, and include them in a plan for conversion to event space, food truck spots (Figure 6), mobile retail, etc.
 - e. Implement a scheduled and meticulous cleaning, sanitation and weed control regime for all commercial streets, sidewalks, and parking lots in the downtown core.



- f. Develop a public art program in downtown Bolton.
- g. Encourage cycling into the downtown commercial core by adding amenities for cyclists.
- h. Review the Transportation Master Plan and prioritize the recommendations and monitor implementation on a quarterly basis.
- i. Provide input to consultants undertaking the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan.
- j. Continue to review traffic management in the downtown core and implement changes that diffuse traffic volumes over more streets.
- k. Consider mixed-used parking structures if capacity becomes an issue in the future
 - Example: [Cayuga Street Parking Garage](#), Ithaca, N.Y.



Figure 7: Royal Courtyards, Bolton



Action 5: Experiment with placemaking pilot projects

- a. Create a “Bolton Experiment” micro grant fund for community groups and businesses to develop pilot projects, enhancements and activations in the downtown core to boost awareness and pedestrian traffic. Keep the grant amounts relatively small with short planning horizons to focus on action and results.

Examples:

- [Spark Grant](#), Greensboro, N.C.
 - [My Downtown Beautification Micro Grant](#), Prince George, B.C.
 - [Downtown Micro Grant](#), Faribault, Minn.
 - [Public Space Activation Grant](#), Tampa, Fla.
 - [Creative District Micro Grant, Grand Junction](#), Colo.
- b. Explore pilot project ideas with the Royal Courtyards (Figure 7) that could be experiments which are then relocated to other public spaces in the downtown core.
 - c. The Town, Region and TRCA (owners of public land in downtown Bolton and environs) should establish a framework or joint-use agreement that ensures clarity and flexibility on how the temporary use of public lands may be expanded upon for events, outdoor theatre (Figure 8), pop-up businesses, concerts, food trucks, etc.



- d. Investigate the breadth of outdoor recreational activities that can be experienced along the Caledon stretch of the Humber River and promote the safe use of this natural asset to tourists.

Examples:

- [Solstice Walk](#), New Glasgow, P.E.I.
- [Community Chalkboard](#), Beamsville, Ontario
- [Downtown Fireplace](#), Holland, Mich.
- [Urban beach](#), Detroit, Mich.
- [Cheap placemaking ideas](#), Small Biz Survival, U.S., [SaveYour.Town](#)

Figure 8: River Clyde Pageant, PEI (Source: wayblaze.com)





Action 6: Expedite completion of park, trail, and river improvements

- a. Review trail infrastructure and associated park assets within Bolton, gather feedback from trail users and improve the trail experience.
- b. Develop a design/concept plan for public areas focused on lands adjacent to the river, connections to park lands, possible event areas, etc.
- c. Prioritize collaborative projects related to public lands, river, trail, and park connections, river access and views, and outdoor event spaces and make recommendations to the Town, Region, and TRCA for funding.
- d. The Town of Caledon should work with the TRCA to develop a river outlook and access program for the Humber River, including several safe access points with detailed maps and signs, including the possibility of a seasonal floating dock for safe, non-intensive, non-motorized recreational activities.
- e. Expedite the construction of new trail connections to connect downtown Bolton to a regional network, including the Bruce Trail and The Great Trail (formerly the Trans Canada Trail).
- f. Design and install directional signage with river icons so visitors can find the river (Figure 9).
- g. Implement recommendations in the TRCA West Bolton SNAP (Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan) Trail and Places Master Plan, related to the core area, specifically, the improvement of trail connections, and addition of amenities for cyclists, rest areas, benches, public washrooms in the downtown core, improved wayfinding and trailhead signage, and public art.
- h. Connect the core area with parks adjacent to the core area (Dick's Dam Park, Founders Park, Bolton Mill Park, and Bolton Camp) with enhanced trail and/or cycling routes to encourage people to walk or ride into the core.



Figure 9: Saugeen River Access Point (Source: Bruce County)



Figure 10: Bandit Brewery, Toronto

Economic Vitality Recommendations

Action 7: Fill empty storefronts with successful businesses

- a. Update the database of contacts of all non-residential properties in downtown Bolton.
- b. Reach out to entrepreneurs, small businesses, and home-based businesses to encourage potential tenants for empty buildings in the downtown core.
- c. Establish a Vacant Commercial Property Protocol to improve communications and to encourage property owners to maintain and/or lease empty storefronts.

Examples / Best Practices – Vacant Property Protocols:

- **City of Hamilton** (2017): Building owners must register their property after 90 days of vacancy. Residential properties fit for living, and agricultural properties are exempt. First-time residential property offenders will face fines up to \$10,000 on the first offence and up to \$20,000 on subsequent offences. Commercial property owners will face fines up to \$50,000 on the first offence and up to \$100,000 on subsequent. Staff will automatically have to flag the Ministry of the Environment if there is any suspected environmental concern. Fire and bylaw staff can recommend sites be registered, members of the public can suggest properties through the city's website, and city staff will be driving around looking for vacant buildings.
- Other communities: City of Oakville, City of Windsor, City of Brantford, City of Welland, City of Winnipeg.



- d. Undertake a quarterly outreach program to owners of vacant properties to make them aware of Community Improvement Plan incentives, tenant opportunities, and offer them the opportunity to comply.
- e. Organize an annual Empty Storefront Tour highlighting key properties and monitor progress toward filling the buildings with tenants.

Examples:

- [Downtown Simcoe](#), Norfolk County, Ontario
 - [Webster City](#), Iowa
 - [Brite Space](#), Boston, Mass.
 - [Armstrong](#), B.C.
- f. Levy a fee to property owners who do not respond to new protocols and enforcement measures.
 - g. Engage Building and Fire Department officials to develop a triage process for enforcing code compliance.
 - h. Leverage the databases of property owners to promote the relocation of businesses or new business start-ups in downtown Bolton.

Note on Urgency: The concept of a Vacant Property Protocol is aimed at non-communicative, non-compliant absentee property owners. The sooner those policies and procedures are developed and approved, the better (preferably developed in 2021 for activation of the protocol in early 2022), as the implementation of the protocol will take some time to have a positive impact on the downtown.



Action 8: Attract new businesses to downtown Bolton

- a. Review Official Plan and Zoning By-Law to determine the level of flexibility for uses such as a craft distillery or brewery and outdoor patios (Figure 10).
- b. Explore experiments for pop-up retail and other experiences in key locations across the downtown core.
- c. Review planning application and building permit process timeline for businesses wishing to locate in the downtown core, using case studies to determine pinch points in application approvals, and make recommendations to Council for changes to internal policies and procedures.
- d. Implement a pilot project for outdoor street patios in Bolton for potential expansion to other communities.
- e. Review the Bolton Community Improvement Plan and introduce new, flexible incentives that are industry-leading, best-in-class concepts that will be the envy of small flood-prone towns in Ontario.
- f. Report all CIP incentives provided to projects in downtown Bolton on the Town of Caledon website, including the address, owner's name, total value of investment, incentive amount, and description of the improvements.



Action 9: Reopen the Fire Station as the 'FireHub'

- a. Reopen the Fire Station as a "FireHub" neighbourhood resource centre (Figure 12) to develop pride in place, to help residents and community groups work together to accomplish the goal of revitalizing the downtown core.
- b. Relocate the farmers market to the Fire Station property as a way to foster a four-season market/destination, along with curated works from local artisans.
- c. Invite an established food retailer to set up a satellite local food market.
- d. Utilize the Fire Station as an experiment centre for downtown revitalization ideas, business start-ups, and fearless trial balloons. Add a small coworking space, combined with a makers' space.
- e. Utilize the Fire Station as a central information point for event organizers and visitors
- f. Provide public washrooms and amenities for cyclists.
- g. Develop a budget and approve renovation of the Fire Station as an accessible space.
- h. Explore opportunities to incorporate green building approaches that align with the Town's corporate and community climate change strategies and policies.

Note on urgency: Plans for the repurposing and reopening of the Fire Station should begin as soon as possible. As pandemic restrictions are lifted, the "FireHub" can serve as a central point for enabling community support for downtown revitalization.

Note on accessibility: The Fire Station could be reopened as soon as possible using the ground floor and open bay doors in the pilot phase, where pop-up displays, and sales areas could be established. Food trucks, farm market stalls and/or community events could be accommodated in the parking lot.



Figure 11: Owen Sound Artists Coop (Source: Owen Sound Tourism)

Examples of small 'hubs' in communities:

- [Neighbourhood Resource Centre](#), Geneva, New York.
- [Owen Sound Artists Coop](#) (Figure 11)
- [The Food Shop](#), Peterborough (Figure 13)



- [The Creative Space](#), Barrie
- [Canopy Coworking](#), Springwater
- [Lost Kingdom Brewery & Fire House Tap Room](#), Ovid, N.Y.

Figure 12: “FireHub” concept



Figure 13: The Food Shop, Peterborough (ptbofoodshop.com)





Figure 14: Main Street Music Stroll, Waterford (Photo: Hamilton Spectator)



Promotion Recommendations

Action 10: Promote Downtown Bolton as a shopper, visitor, and investment destination

- a. Develop a Downtown Bolton Business Opportunity Kit online and in print aimed at expediting the business development process for start-ups and relocations into the downtown.
- b. Promote the downtown as a business investment location, particularly for shoppers who are interested in redecorating and furnishing their homes, leveraging Boss Furniture.
- c. Connect Caledon and Peel farmers and food purveyors to restaurants in Bolton to promote culinary tourism as a focus.
- d. Develop tourism packages linked to experiences in downtown Bolton, aligned with overnights at accommodations such as Bolton hotels or bed and breakfasts, as well as the Millcroft Inn & Spa, glamping at Alabaster Acres, stays at Mount Alverno, etc.
- e. Develop self-guided walking tours featuring retail, restaurant and heritage features in downtown Bolton, to drive traffic to businesses and highlight the town's history.
- f. Upgrade the Bolton Gazebo with an information kiosk, benches, and associated landscaping.



- g. Collaborate with the Royal Courtyards to create a pop-up entertainment venue and designate other public spaces within the Bolton core to be used by local artists, musicians, mobile retail, etc.
- h. Partner with the BIA and other community organizations to develop, activate and aggressively promote an ongoing, regular schedule of pop-up events in downtown Bolton featuring family events and activities, educational programs, local buskers and entertainers in public spaces or on porches of neighbouring homes

Examples:

- [Main Street Music Stroll](#), Waterford, Ontario (Figure 14)
- [Musical Porches Event](#), Geneva, New York



5. Timeline

It is recommended that all aspects of the Bolton Revitalization can be completed or sufficiently started in a span of 36 months, with dedicated financial and human resources and good will from elected leaders, municipal staff, community organizations, business owners, and residents of the community.

Some actions will take longer to complete than others, so work on all actions should commence with the establishment of the task force and resourcing of the plan.

Short Term Actions (to be completed within 3-9 months)

- Establish Downtown Bolton Task Force
- Resource Bolton Revitalization Plan
- Reopen the Fire Station as the 'FireHub'²
- Experiment with placemaking pilot projects

Medium Term Actions (to be completed within 9-18 months)

- Ensure policies are helping Bolton's downtown core
- Design streets and parking to help Bolton's downtown core
- Fill empty storefronts with successful businesses

Long Term Actions (to be completed within 18-36 months)

- Expedite completion of park, trail, and river improvements
- Attract new businesses to downtown Bolton
- Promote Downtown Bolton as a shopper, visitor, and investment destination

² See notes on urgency and accessibility, page 32



6. Appendix

Background Review

Bolton Transportation Master Plan Study, 2015

Purpose: Since Bolton is expected to experience increased growth yielding elevated vehicle traffic congestion, due to residential expansion and the extension of Highway 427, the Town of Caledon developed a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) specific to the community of Bolton. The TMP addresses existing and future developments, provincial transportation corridor plans and land-use planning objectives, impacts of other recent and ongoing regional transportation-related studies, studies related to multimodal transportation options and road character, increasing demand from residents and visitors for expanded transportation alternatives that preserve the cultural and natural significance of the community, and the impact of trucks travelling through the Bolton Downtown Core and alternative approaches to address this issue. The recommended policy and infrastructure improvements outlined in the TMP are intended to facilitate transportation planning, design, and implementation changes within the community to improve quality of life, mobility, and community growth and preservation. The master plan identifies transportation deficiencies and road network issues as well as potential opportunities for improvement, while supporting municipal planning goals for the short, medium, and long term.

Key Takeaways:

- The downtown Bolton business community wanted to reclaim the downtown for people and customers, to shift the focus from moving cars and trucks through the downtown to bringing people to the core.
- The restriction of trucks in the downtown core and the enforcement of any restrictions was the most ardent comment received from the general public. Removal of truck through traffic on Queen Street (except local deliveries) was recommended.
- The Emil Kolb Parkway, Arterial Corridor A2 and Highway 427 were new road construction projected to be completed by 2021. The widening of Mayfield Road and Coleraine Drive were also recommended by 2021. Highway 50 was recommended for narrowing. The Emil Kolb Parkway was expected to provide relief for commuters to by-pass the downtown core.
- All-day on-street parking was recommended with no time-of-day restrictions. All day on-street parking was to be located on the east side for vehicles travelling in the northbound direction.
- Enhanced pedestrian safety and amenities were recommended, including “bulb outs” to reduce pedestrian crossing time, fewer travel lanes for pedestrians to cross, public seating, streetscaping, street furniture and public art.
- Special materials such as brick paving were recommended to create a sense of place, and more street trees were recommended to be planted.
- Other physical changes or “traffic calming measures” were recommended in the downtown to reduce vehicle speeds. It was recommended that Peel Region should implement of proposed interim design alternatives for Highway 50 / Queen Street (King Street to Hickman) and King Street (Queen



Street / Highway 50 to Station Road) and undertake necessary parking studies to confirm demand of on-street parking.

- Several recommendations focused on active transportation improvements:
 - High priority signed-only bike routes were recommended for Deer Valley Road (Glasgow Road to King Street) and Hickman Street (Deer Valley Road to Queen Street / Highway 50).
 - Queen Street was to be re-purposed with two vehicle travel lanes, and bike lanes in both north and south directions. In the interim, cyclists are accommodated using “super sharrows”, which indicate that the cyclists should travel in the centre of the travel lane through this short portion of the downtown core.
 - It was also recommended that the Town prepare a detailed sidewalk gap analysis to evaluate missing links and identify priorities for future sidewalk improvements on local roads.
 - The formation of a committee focused on implementing the Bolton Active Transportation Study, under the joint purview of the Town and Region, was recommended.
- Recommendations for public transit improvements included:
 - Continued advocacy for a GO Train Station in the Bolton area. This recommendation came from the 2010 Bolton Commuter Rail Feasibility Study.
 - Continued contemplation of public transit within the community and connections to Brampton and Mississauga. It was felt that community connections to the Bolton downtown would foster additional activity and would increase the ways to access the downtown.

Bolton Residential Expansion Regional Official Plan Amendment

Purpose: Assist the Region of Peel in their consideration of the Town of Caledon’s application to amend the Region of Peel Official Plan, received on October 14, 2014, to expand the current Bolton Settlement Area Boundary. The Regional Council planning process, endorsed on November 12, 2015, is to consider the Town of Caledon’s Regional Official Plan Amendment application in an open, fair, and transparent public process that provides all stakeholders, agencies, and members of the public with an opportunity to provide their input. Approved by LPAT in early 2021.

Key Takeaways:

- Significant urban growth in the Greater Toronto Area has, over time, occurred in terms of layers or tiers of growth.
- Bolton is located in the Fourth Tier around Toronto and is well placed for significant urban growth.
- Growth in the “Fourth Tier” will be governed by new planning policy frameworks that focus on higher densities, access to transit and access to service and community infrastructure.
- All of the lands identified in the Bolton Residential Expansion Study exercise will be needed for future urban growth.
- There will be significant growth coming to Bolton through this settlement area expansion which may bring more people to the core



- It is also possible that in the very long-term the rural/agricultural lands surrounding Bolton will create a clear and distinct area for long-term urban development.

Queen Street Corridor Study Report

Purpose: The Town of Caledon initiated this study to help convey new ideas and a new way. Part of the scope of this study was to not only create a revitalized vision for the corridor, but to do so in a way that works with the existing study findings and policies for study area to also provide a new way to experience this vision, bringing new technology to an engaging public and stakeholder consultation process. Therefore, the Queen Street Corridor Study was scoped to be a different than many of the previous planning studies for the area and aimed to create a two-way dialogue through digital media, 3D modelling and visualization tools.

Key Takeaways:

- Importance of Queen Street becoming a much-improved corridor supporting economic development, active transportation, future transit improvements, housing options, celebrating cultural heritage, and creating community vibrancy
- Generally, the right-of-way is very narrow, especially when travelling through historic Downtown Bolton. Along Queen Street North there is a feeling of enclosure because the buildings sit at the lot lines and face the sidewalk on either side of the road.
- The Downtown Core has the most constraints both physically and in policy. The area is influenced by several overlapping policies including the Bolton Heritage Conservation District Boundary, the Bolton BIA Boundary, and the Bolton Special Policy Area.
- Through changes within the roadway itself there are opportunities to accommodate a primary active transportation route along Queen Street on the east side.
- Throughout this Downtown Core there are opportunities for further streetscape enhancements including planting street trees for shade, improved microclimate and visual interest as well as decorative plantings which generally are provided for in historic downtowns such as these.
- There are opportunities to improve secondary pedestrian and cycling connections to close the gaps and locate improved infrastructure and signage on both sides of Queen and King Streets. This should include consideration of wider sidewalks (min. 2m) and cycling lanes.
- At the intersection of Queen and King Streets, there is an opportunity to improve the crossing and to enhance the intersection with a decorative paving treatment, highlighting this particular node as a gateway for the Downtown. The intersection is the entrance and exit to Downtown Bolton.
- As the downtown is nearly all built up, there are limited opportunities for infill. Any potential opportunities that do exist are likely subject to the Heritage Conservation District and the Special Policy Area policies for the area.
 - The fast food café and associated parking lot property may be underutilized. Having a parking lot adjacent to the street detracts from the feeling of enclosure that a downtown streetscape typically provides, as well as protection from the elements and improved aesthetics for visitors.
 - Providing for intensification at this location has the potential to deliver a higher and better use.



- It is envisioned that the Bolton Queen Street Corridor will accommodate and support the movement of all modes of transportation, harmonizing motorized and non-motorized traffic volumes. A multi-modal corridor is a space that can easily and efficiently accommodate several modes of transportation including: active transportation, vehicular transportation and transit.
 - Infrastructure which facilitates multi-modal movement should have designated spaces for the different modes such as sidewalks, bike lanes, cycle tracks or multi-use paths.
 - Failing this, there could be signage and pavement markings to notify users that roadways are shared.
 - Gateways announce entry into a particular space. They indicate that a visitor is entering into an area that has significance.
- Features such as public art, landscaping, architectural and water features can all be utilized to delineate a gateway for a particular area. The public art can be used in the gateway or elsewhere in the area. Thematic art commissions can help to build community identity and strengthen the sense of place.

Cultural Core (Historic Village of Bolton)

- Focused around the Bolton Core as identified in the Caledon Official Plan.
- Historically planned for as the commercial core of Bolton.
- Significant factors impacting potential for future growth include:
 - Hazard protection (Special Policy Area – Flooding)
 - Cultural heritage preservation (Heritage Conservation District Policy),
 - Limited space for public realm and active transportation enhancement
 - Slopes at north and south ends of area impact active transportation opportunities

Ideas:

- Emphasize and enhance opportunities for mixed-use development, in scale with the existing area.
- Emphasize and enhance opportunities for street furniture, active transportation and connectivity along the Queen St. and Humber River feature.
- Emphasize and enhance vehicle parking in limited locations (signage, maximize spots in a manner designed to be sympathetic to the area.
- Emphasize and enhance area as a node for historic, social and passive attraction-based land uses (restaurants, boutique / specialty shops, urban greenspace, public art)
- Reduce land use focus on general commercial throughout historically residential side streets.

Bolton Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

Purpose: The purpose of the CIP is to work with the companion Urban Design Guidelines to implement the Bolton Community Improvement Strategy; establish a set of goals and objectives for community improvement in Bolton; identify a Municipal Leadership Strategy and Programs that will contribute to, motivate, and assist in community improvement; define a set of Financial Incentive Programs available



to eligible property owners in order to stimulate and leverage private sector investment; implement design principles and guidelines with respect to built form, streetscape, and open spaces, for example, as part of the eligibility criteria to access the CIP's Financial Incentive Programs; and provide an Implementation and Monitoring Program for the Bolton CIP.

Key Takeaways:

- The current CIP is more than ten years old. Thirty projects in Bolton have been funded with incentives since 2010, 12 of which were located in the commercial core.
- The CIP provides basic, traditional incentives, including:
 - Tax increment equivalent grants
 - Development charge grants
 - Application and permit fee grants
 - Building and façade improvement grants
 - Energy efficiency retrofit grants
 - Landscape improvement grants
 - Mixed use construction/conversion grants
 - Environment study grants

Bolton Special Policy Area Review – Provincial Comments

Purpose: To communicate comments from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in regard to the approval of the Bolton Special Policy Area (SPA).

Key Takeaways:

- Provincial staff have significant concerns with the potential level of risk to public health, safety and property damage in the “Existing Official Plan and Zoning” scenario which could permit an increase of five times the number of residential units that currently exist within the Bolton SPA.
- A modest infill of residential units shall be permitted over the entire Bolton SPA.
- Pedestrian and vehicular access and egress shall, at a minimum, be required for all new buildings and structures, and major additions (>50%), providing overnight accommodation and for any redevelopment where an increase in the number of units that provide overnight accommodation is proposed.
- Under no circumstances shall new residential units or an increase in overnight accommodation be permitted where safe access and egress cannot be achieved to the provincial flood proofing standard.
- The Town's Emergency Services office confirming that the Town has a specific plan to get people safely out of the Bolton SPA in the event of an emergency related to a flooding event.

Village of Bolton Heritage Conservation District (HCD)



- New construction on and/or alterations to properties are allowed provided that the District's cultural heritage value is conserved in accordance with the BHCDP.
- The District includes over 180 properties encompassing the commercial core, the main crossroads of King Street and Queen Street, and portions of the adjacent residential neighbourhoods. The Bolton HCD Plan allows the Town to manage and guide future change in the area.
- All properties identified as contributing property in the BHCDP within the Bolton HCD are eligible for the Town's Designated Heritage Property Grant Program, annual matching grants to a maximum of \$4,000 for small and mid-size restoration and maintenance projects: caledon.ca/heritage-grants.
- Commercial and industrial properties within the Bolton HCD may be eligible for the Heritage Tax Rebate Program which came into effect January 1, 2021.
- Commercial properties within the Bolton HCD may be eligible for a variety of grants under the Bolton Community Improvement Plan, available at Caledon.ca/cip.

Caledon 2020-2030: An Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Caledon

Purpose: The major expectations and outcomes of the strategy are to:

- Grow the diversity of the town's business and industrial activity, taking into consideration the limits on employment land and impact on the community
- Balance the anticipated population growth with an increase in the non-residential tax base
- Assess the opportunities for growth and urban renewal in the commercial cores
- Increase the economic viability of the town of Caledon in the short and long term
- Inform the development of annual work plans for the Economic Development and Tourism Division as well as other departments within the Town

Key Takeaways:

- The revitalization of Bolton remains a critical part of Caledon's growth and is part of Caledon Council's Work Plan for 2018-2022
- Stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the perceived high rate of vacancy and lack of consensus on the type of development that needs to be attracted to downtown Bolton.
- Priority Action 3.7: As part of an overall revitalization effort conduct walkabouts and brainstorming sessions with residents, service clubs, local business and town staff in each of the town's urban cores, villages and hamlets.
 - Develop a Bolton Revitalization Plan focused on the historic core area, incorporating relevant recommendations from current adopted Plans (i.e. Bolton Master Transportation Plan, Queen Street Corridor Study, etc.)
 - Review and update the Bolton CIP.
 - Provide workshops on community building, creative place-making, effective marketing and social media promotions.
 - Explore the potential for pop-up retail/restaurants in the rural villages.



- The 2009 Bolton Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is out-dated. An innovative CIP is central to revitalization efforts as it enables investments and improvements to a community's physical/built environment, supports main street revitalization, residential development and the growth and diversification of key industries.
- Undertake a cultural plan to identify cultural, tourism and heritage assets in the Town and to enhance the quality of place narrative and assist in the attraction of new business investment.
- Tourism is also a priority for Caledon ... focusing on specific opportunity areas such as arts, culture and heritage, cycling, sports tourism, agri-tourism, equine and rural affairs.
 - Action 3.4: Identify tourism initiatives that support a four-season destination for residents, visitors and investors.
 - i) Improve wayfinding signage in conjunction with relevant businesses and tourism operators.
 - Encourage investment in value-added agricultural products such as artisan food, crafts, breweries and wineries, farm to table experiences.
- Caledon experiences significant outflow of residents for employment; 22,000 residents commute to jobs in surrounding municipalities (retail trade, finance and insurance (credit and insurance industries workers), healthcare, and creative cultural and professional, scientific and technical occupations (architects, engineers, and post-secondary workers).
 - Creating the right conditions for adaptive re-use of older industrial areas/highway commercial areas, coworking/co-location spaces and the revitalization of downtown Bolton will reverse some of this out-commuting over time.
 - Action 3.9: Identify opportunities to expand relationships with local newcomer organizations to promote the integration of newcomers in the community.
- Community consultation suggested the need to diversify the town's housing stock and provide more choice to existing and future residents of the community. This could be achieved through intensification efforts, particularly in Bolton (e.g. downtown) and in the village cores. Targeted investments such as seniors housing development could also help to reinforce the core areas as walkable community hubs by attracting and retaining population and strengthening the local business base.
- Caledon's largest urban centre of Bolton has a population of just under 30,000 and immediately abuts King Township, the city of Vaughan and the city of Brampton.
 - Bolton's current pattern of development is dominated by low-density, single-family housing, highway commercial development and warehousing and logistic uses.
- Future plans envision Bolton having a compact, vibrant, well-integrated core that supports a range of housing and a cohesive and attractive streetscape while being environmentally sustainable.
 - Key opportunity areas for accommodating intensification is focused mainly in Bolton.
- Servicing
 - The Bolton Transit Line, the partnership with Brampton Transit, Smart Commute Brampton-Caledon, Walk + Roll Peel and improvements to the Bolton Arterial Route prepare the Town for major growth.



- Recent investments include the installation of high-speed internet service in the south Bolton industrial area over the next few months.
- Bolton, Caledon East and Mayfield West currently have full water and wastewater servicing, allowing them to be planned as compact, vibrant, well-integrated communities that support a range and mix of housing and promote active transportation while being environmentally sustainable.
- Bolton/Caledon has an industrial inventory of just over 13 million sf (2% share of total GTA) and has only added roughly 430,000 sf annually since 2009.

Staff Report: Caledon Centre for the Arts: Summary of Options

Purpose: Council received a presentation in November 2015 regarding a proposed Caledon Centre for the Performing Arts and instructed staff to further investigate.

Key Takeaways:

- Staff has completed business cases for six sites as potential immediate and long-term options for a Centre for the Arts based on Council's direction on June 20, 2017.
- Staff has engaged Novita Techne Ltd., a professional theatre consulting firm, to conduct independent analysis of each of the possible sites.
- Mandatory features included:
 - Can seat at least 200 people per performance
 - Can accommodate multiple forms of arts and the space required for each (i.e. backstage area for theatre, acoustics for music, sightlines for dance, gallery space for visual arts)
 - Have little or no displacement or negative impact on current users
 - Be operational within 3 years
 - Have access to reasonable amount of parking
 - Be accessible and meets all Building Code standards
- The Bolton Fire Hall was reviewed:
 - The facility would not accommodate the seating capacity required.
 - It could accommodate most theatre, music and dance performances, but there would not be space for any visual arts activities.
 - Capital costs for the facility would be between \$2,170,000-\$2,360,000 (plus HST, engineering and permit fees) in addition the potential revenue the Town would not receive from the sale of the property.
 - Estimated operating costs for this facility would be approximately \$150,000 annually (does not include any staff at the location full time), and it would likely run at a loss for the foreseeable future.
- The option of a new purpose-built facility was reviewed:



- Capital costs of a stand-alone facility would depend on the amenities selected for the facility. Based on what other communities have built, the costs for a stand-alone facility could range between \$15 and \$40 million dollars. This would not include any property acquisition costs.
- Capital costs could be reduced if it was instead created as a multi-use space with arts specific amenities included as part of a larger build (Community Hub model).
- Operating costs for the facility would also depend on the amenities. Based on what other communities have built, the range would likely be between \$200,000-\$300,000 net operating loss per year for a stand-alone facility. There is the possibility of reducing the annual operating loss if it was a multi-purpose space with arts amenities as part of a larger build (Community Hub model).
- Staff reviewed other municipalities who have Arts Centres, and it was clear that they are an investment in the community and not revenue generators.
- Staff engaged with over 150 residents and representatives of arts organizations as to their interest in and requirements for an Arts Centre. From this, it is clear that Caledon has a shortage of space to support arts and culture organizations; however this shortage is not enough to support a stand-alone facility.
- Additionally, the Recreation Facility Needs Assessment indicated a desire for performance space to showcase local talent, but Arts facilities were not in scope of the project.
- Each option reviewed had benefits and areas of concern. None of the options provided enough benefits to justify the expenses required in any short-term option.
- Mayfield West 2 Community Centre is ideal due to the timing for the project; its location in one of two projected population centres in Caledon, and the nature of the facility as a Community Hub.
- It was recommended that Arts amenities be included as part of the Mayfield West 2 Community Centre development discussion and included in the Town's ten-year capital forecast once capital costs are known; and that the Town of Caledon not pursue any immediate options for a Centre for the Arts.
- Council took no action on the recommendations.

Other Documents and Sources Reviewed

- Bolton Downtown Parking Study Update, 2012
- Census of Agriculture 2016, Peel Region, Dufferin County, Simcoe County
- Old Bolton Fire Station/Caledon Innovation Hub, April 2019
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs Letter August 2019: Bolton Special Policy Area Review - Response to Submission Package
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs Downtown Revitalization Coordinator's Manual
- Publicly owned properties in downtown Bolton



- Region of Peel Staff Report February 27, 2020: Update to the Downtown Bolton All-Day On-Street Parking Pilot on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) from Regional Road 9 (King Street) to 50 Metres North of Mill Street, Town of Caledon, Ward 5
- Region of Peel Staff Report June 27, 2019: Amendment to the Region of Peel Traffic By-Law 15-2013 to Remove the Time-Of-Day Stopping Prohibitions on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) from Regional Road 9 (King Street) to 50 Metres North of Mill Street – Town of Caledon, Ward 5
- Toronto Region Conservation Authority West Bolton SNAP Trail and Places Master Plan
- Town of Caledon Intensification Strategy Study
- TripAdvisor comments on restaurants and things to do in Bolton

