

Staff Report 2023-0250

Meeting Date: June 6, 2023

Subject: Proposed Community Revitalization Projects and Caledon East Revitalization Task Force Terms of Reference

Submitted By: Jason Schildroth, Manager, Community & Cultural Development, Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the Proposed Community Revitalization Projects and Action Plan outlined in Staff Report 2023-0250, be approved;

That the Proposed Terms of Reference for a Caledon East Revitalization Task Force, attached as Schedule A to Staff Report 2023-0250, be adopted; and

That staff be directed to begin the recruitment process for the Caledon East Revitalization Task Force.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Placemaking tactics include the improvement of public spaces, beautification, public art, and grassroots engagement. These tactics provided the basis of success in the community revitalization and projects in Downtown Bolton, and are set to be applied in staff efforts around the Caledon community.
- Staff have sought funding opportunities to enhance the existing operating budget that supports the town-wide revitalization program.
- The support of multiple departments and their projects are important to the overall community and economic vitality of Caledon, and they have an important role to play in the success of the revitalization program.
- Staff suggest a Caledon East Revitalization Task Force be established to create, recommend, and initiate community projects, and provide guidance to staff.

DISCUSSION

Background

In 2021, Council directed staff to implement the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Plan (the Plan). The Plan directed staff and community task force efforts across a number of areas including; policy updates, street design, events, facilities, parks, trails, marketing, and business investment.

Using the Plan, staff and the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Task Force demonstrated the important role of “placemaking” which is a common term for efforts that create a sense of belonging and pride in the community. Placemaking is established through improving public gathering places, beautification, public art, and grassroots engagement



opportunities with businesses and residents. The success of the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan highlighted the opportunity for a community wide program for Caledon. Through council support in the 2023 budget process a Community Revitalization project was funded and will be implemented as part of the annual Community and Cultural Development workplan.

Through the 2023 Budget, Council supported the creation of a town-wide revitalization, or placemaking, program to leverage the momentum in Bolton into other villages and communities in Caledon and invest staff efforts and operating budget support to address revitalization outside of Bolton.

Proposed Community Revitalization Projects and Action Plan

The Community Revitalization project includes several key components, outlined in this report including Town-Wide Placemaking program, “Mainstreet Makeover” Community Improvement Plan updates, Community Investment program, Bylaw Research, Events Framework, Bolton Urban Design Study, First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE), Walkabout’s initiatives, and the Community and Economic Vitality plan.

Town-Wide Placemaking Program

BIA organizations exist through a model of funding that supports their efforts to activate and beautify through a special levy on businesses within the BIA’s geography. Bolton is the only community in Caledon with a BIA in place to champion beautification and activation. Other communities, such as Caledon East, have grassroots organizations convened in the past to take on beautification and activation efforts, in lieu of a BIA. This model has resulted in resident organizations absorbing fundraising and administrative burden of supporting community improvement, activations, and beautification programs, and navigating the processes of multiple levels of government.

With Council’s support, the Community and Cultural Development team is providing leadership and support of placemaking, activation and beautification efforts in the Caledon community in lieu of BIA organizations outside of Bolton,.

Staff have been developing this program to focus on tangible community activation and beautification projects (public spaces, activations, seating, public art, etc.) in communities including our identified tourism service centres, community improvement areas, and growth centres. Our list of communities slated for these community projects includes:

- Alton
- Belfountain
- Bolton
- Caledon East

- Caledon Village
- Cheltenham
- Inglewood
- Mono Mills
- Palgrave
- Southfields
- Terra Cotta
- Valleywood

Staff have applied to an aligned Provincial funding opportunity that, if successful, will offset costs, and provide opportunities for further investments. This application is currently under review.

“Mainstreet Makeover” Community Improvement Program (CIP)

An innovative CIP is central to revitalization efforts as it enables private investments and improvements to a community’s physical/built environment, supports main street revitalization, residential development and the growth and diversification of key industries.

Recognizing the importance of a robust CIP, the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Plan directed staff to review, enhance and expand the Bolton Community Improvement Plan (Action 8.E from the Plan) This review was completed in 2023, and Council supported enhancements to this incentive program, as well as the introduction of funding streams that align to the goals of the Resilient Caledon climate action plan, support patios, public art and other improvements.

As part of the approval of the updated Bolton CIP, staff committed to investing in marketing and promoting the CIP programs around Caledon and have recently launched a recognizable brand for our CIPs called “Mainstreet Makeover”.

Through the 2023 Budget, Council invested in providing additional funding to support applications to the Town’s three CIP programs. The update to Bolton’s CIP provides opportunity pilot these new program streams, with the intent to include in the review of the 2024 review of the Caledon East CIP, and the 2026 review of the Six Villages (Alton, Caledon Village, Cheltenham, Inglewood, Mono Mills, Palgrave) CIP.

Placemaking Workshops and Community Building Education

The Town’s economic development strategy directs staff to conduct workshops on community building and placemaking, to support overall revitalization. The Community and Cultural Development division will be identifying, and engaging community innovators, and thought leaders to engage and educate staff in industry-leading tactics.

Community Investment Program Review

The Downtown Bolton Revitalization Plan directed staff to 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. Specifically, this grant presented the opportunity to experiment with more flexible and strategic granting opportunities (experiment by keeping grant amounts relatively small with short planning horizons to focus on action and results).

Based on the success of the “Bolton Experiment Micro Grant”, the Community and Cultural Development team initiated an in-house review of the Town’s community investment streams (grants) to research, identify, and make recommendations for program administration, marketing, and strategic alignment opportunities. This project will be underway throughout Q2 and Q3 2023, with a report back to Council on recommended program updates and enhancements expected in Q3 2023.

Bylaw Review

Bylaws govern important services, standards, and frameworks that are relevant to quality of life for residents. The Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan directed staff to investigate existing bylaws to ensure they are in alignment with the goal of revitalization, and this will continue with a town-wide approach. Staff will be working collaboratively across departments to identify Bylaws with high impact on downtowns and investigate opportunities for updates and report back to Council as appropriate.

Events Framework

Events and activations in downtowns are important mechanisms of connecting residents and visitors to their community and generating traffic to small businesses. In this way, events and activations are a key mechanism to improving the community’s sense of diversity and inclusivity. The revitalization of Bolton relied heavily on the activation of Bolton’s downtown through events such as Cinco de Mayo, Midnight Madness, Taste of Bolton, Ye Olde Tyme Christmas, and others. These events were organized primarily by the Task Force, community stakeholders, with support from the “Bolton Experiment Micro Grant”.

Throughout 2022 and 2023, the Community and Cultural Development team proudly supported neighbourhoods and villages through in-kind support of road closures and other costs associated with hosting events like holiday parades around Caledon.

In 2023, the Community Supports team within the Recreation division of Community Services is undertaking a review of corporately supported events and supports available to community event organizers. The Community and Cultural Development division is

working closely with this team to ensure that downtown activations in Caledon's villages, supported through the town-wide revitalization program, are captured as an important community service opportunity.

Bolton Urban Design Study

In 2023, a Bolton Urban Design Study will be implemented to develop an investment strategy to guide the creation of new public spaces, and property acquisition that aligns with the Region of Peel, Toronto Region and Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Town departments.

The study area includes approximately 10km along Regional Road 50/Queen Street (between Emil Kolb Parkway to Mayfield Road), Regional Road 9/King Street (between Coleraine Drive to the Humber Valley Trail). The Urban Design Study will imagine the needs of the downtown core 20 to 30 years from now, and steer Town efforts in improvements to existing public spaces, guide the Town and Council on any acquisitions, and unify the Town's various strategies and plans such as Active Transportation, Recreation and Parks, Economic Development, Bolton Revitalization where the built environment is concerned, and of course the plans of our other public landowners.

First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE)

Community and Cultural Development staff are participating in the First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) program offered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). This initiative pairs staff at the Town of Caledon and Town of Minto in an exchange which sees residents and staff from the communities visit selected neighbourhoods and downtowns and assess them for their first impressions, and provide unbiased feedback on the attractiveness and vitality. This feedback can then be used to inform future work.

Through this program, Alton, Caledon East, and Bolton have been identified as Caledon's participating villages, while Harriston, Palmerston, and Clifford will comprise the Town of Minto's participating villages.

Walkabouts and Community Building

During the summer of 2023, the Community and Cultural Development division will lead walkabouts and brainstorming sessions with residents, service clubs, local business and town staff in priority neighbourhoods in Caledon. This work will include the provision of workshops on community building, creative placemaking, effective marketing and social media promotions for the community and staff.

This project is intended to build a community-informed roadmap for staff and residents to envision their neighbourhood as it undergoes change and transformation because of growth, investment, reconstruction and development. This project will help to create a vision for the Town and the Region of Peel on how to nurture Caledon's unique neighbourhoods as our community grows rapidly. FICE program feedback will also be integrated.

The walkabouts will include representatives across the corporation who will develop a tangible list of improvements, service requests, community projects, problems, and suggestions to be addressed in current and future budget and business planning. In addition to continuing to invest in downtown Bolton, our 2023 priority locations are Alton, Caledon East, and Southfields.

- **Alton** is a priority based on several factors including its identity as a current and future tourism, arts, and culture service centre; in combination with its proximity to TPC at Osprey Valley and Golf Canada investment in this community presents a unique opportunity from a tourism, arts, and personal services perspective.
- **Caledon East** is a priority based on several factors including the current momentum of capital projects and public realm improvements already underway including the reconstruction of Airport Road by the Region of Peel. Caledon East is one of Caledon's only communities outside of Bolton with a group of residents specifically organizing themselves to assist in community revitalization. Caledon East provides an ideal area for improvement as well based on its population, which was significant enough for the completion of an Environics Community Profile, a program through the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO)
- **Southfields** is a priority as it is a significant growth area with a lack of investment in placemaking and absence of community improvement initiatives. Southfields was also included in an Environics Community Profile program which yielded important data on priorities, and improvement opportunities.

The annual walkabouts program will be introduced in four priority communities and scale up in 2024 to include all of the villages and communities referenced earlier in this report.

Proposed Caledon East Revitalization Task Force

To successfully implement a town-wide revitalization program, staff will prioritize projects based on various factors. Caledon East presents an opportunity to be the next community for a focused revitalization initiative due the complexity of challenges associated with revitalization of the historic downtown, considerable development, the timing of several significant capital projects, and the existence of the Town's only other standalone community improvement plan.

Through the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan a Task Force was established comprised of local business owners, residents, staff and members of Council. The task force played a critical role in the successes achieved on community projects and placemaking projects.

In consideration of the pending construction projects and public realm changes underway for Caledon East, staff are proposing the implementation of a Caledon East Revitalization Task Force to provide guidance and expertise to staff in the implementation of community projects. The proposed terms of reference for this Task Force are attached to this report as Schedule A.

Community and Economic Vitality Plan

The road ahead also includes the initiation of the Town's community and economic vitality strategy (an approved capital project request through 2023). As work continues for the Strategic Plan, it has become clear that there is opportunity to consider economic development strategy as more than business support. The Tourism Strategy is due for a renewal, Revitalization is a critically important project, Culture planning is identified as a priority in our existing strategies. The scope of this strategy is now slated to include priority areas including Tourism, Culture, Revitalization, and Business Investment and Attraction, to ensure these priority areas identified throughout the strategic planning process are embedded within our strategic direction and associated work plans.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None. The projects outlined above are to be funded out of existing operating and capital budget programs.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Sustainable Growth
Connected Community
Improved Service Delivery
Good Governance

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule A: Proposed Terms of Reference for Caledon East Revitalization Task Force