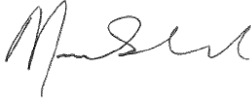




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	April 1, 2025
SUBJECT:	Our Future Downtown: 10-Year Downtown Revitalization Strategy Project Update (Ward 2)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 2
SUBMITTED BY:	Norm Schleeahn Director, Economic Development Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

The purpose of this Communication Update is to provide an update respecting the City's Our Future Downtown:10-Year Downtown Hamilton Revitalization Strategy.

Project Background

On December 11, 2024, City Council approved staff recommendations (as amended) via Report PED24163 for a number of actions intended to support Downtown revitalization, including the development of a 10-Year Downtown Revitalization Strategy (the Strategy).

The Strategy will establish a common, forward-looking vision for the Downtown over a 10-year horizon and identify the key corporate actions, plans, initiatives, investments and reporting metrics needed to achieve that vision. The Strategy's focus will be the development of priority actions that support Downtown as a place people want to live in, work in and experience while also ensuring the Strategy and its actions are informed by, in alignment with, and mutually supportive of, current actions and plans being taken by the City to address key needs in the Downtown such as affordable housing, social services supporting the unhoused, and safety and security.

Request for Qualifications Issued and Awarded

In consultation with City procurement staff, a Request for Qualifications was issued on February 11, 2025 to retain a consultant to support the development of the Strategy. In accordance with City procurement policies, a minimum of five consultants with the

required experience and knowledge to support the Strategy's development were identified by staff and invited to bid. Under a Request for Qualifications a contract is awarded solely based on the lowest compliant bid received by the closing date. The contract maximum, in accordance with Council's approval, was \$99,999.99.

The bid period closed on February 28 with five compliant bids received, the lowest of which was submitted by Cultural Spaces at \$62,400.00.

Cultural Spaces, led by Christophe Rivet, is a multi-disciplinary Ottawa-based consulting firm with experience developing urban revitalization and rehabilitation strategies. Cultural Spaces recently led the development of a revitalization strategy for Downtown Ottawa ([Envisioning A Great Downtown: Revitalizing Downtown Ottawa – A Call to Action for our City](#)), completed in November 2023, and has also supported revitalization efforts in Downtown Winnipeg.

Project Phasing and Timing

Phase One: Development of the Strategy's draft vision and guiding principles with report-back to Council in June/July 2025.

Phase Two: Development of the draft corporate priority actions with delivery of the complete draft Strategy to Council for feedback by December 2025.

Final Strategy: Presented to Council for approval no later than Q1 2026.

Project Communication and Engagement

Economic Development Division staff have been working with the City's public engagement and corporate communication teams to develop an engagement and communication plan for Phase One of the project that will enable staff to consult with the public to develop a draft vision for the Downtown over the next 10 years as well as establish the Strategy's guiding principles. This work will then inform Phase Two of the project which will focus on developing the detailed priority actions for Downtown to be undertaken by City Departments/Divisions over the short (2026-2028), medium (2029-2032) and long-term (2033-2036).

Questions which will be the focus of engagement during Phase One include:

1) What is your vision for Downtown Hamilton?

Intent: To understand how the community envisions the future of the Downtown (aspirations).

2) What do you value about Downtown Hamilton?

Intent: To gather insights about the aspects of Hamilton's Downtown that people appreciate, which could inform future growth opportunities (asset inventory).

3) We've heard a lot about the challenges people experience in Downtown. Are there other challenges or concerns that you think need attention?

Intent: To identify additional challenges or concerns not yet highlighted and gather comprehensive input for addressing potential issues in the Downtown core.

4) What's your big idea? How can we make our vision for Downtown Hamilton a reality?

Intent: To encourage creative and innovative suggestions for transforming the downtown area and to understand how people envision making the vision actionable.

Engagement will seek to reach a broad cross-section of Hamiltonians through the use of community pop-ups at major events and community destinations, both in and beyond the Downtown, virtual surveys as well as attendance at key community stakeholders' meetings. There will also be a particular focus on engagement that seeks to reach those living in the heart of Downtown and in potentially hard-to-engage settings such as apartments. In addition, staff and the consultant will seek to hear from key Downtown stakeholders, the business community as well as diverse communities, including equity-seeking groups, newcomers, and Indigenous communities to ensure their perspectives and wants for Downtown are reflected in the final Strategy.

A project page on the City's website at www.hamilton.ca/OurFutureDowntown has been created and will be updated frequently to provide project status updates and advise of new engagement opportunities occurring virtually through Engage Hamilton and in-person in the community.

To meet the project timelines, public engagement for Phase One will be concentrated throughout April and May 2025. Engagement for Phase Two of the project will occur in July through September 2025.

Contact

If you require any further information on this matter, or wish to discuss a potential engagement opportunity for staff to attend, please contact Phil Caldwell, Senior Business Development Consultant, Economic Development Division at (905) 546-2424 ext. 2359 or by email at Phil.Caldwell@hamilton.ca.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.