



Report
Staff Report
 The Corporation of the City of Brampton
 2/19/2025

Date: 2025-02-10

Subject: **Urban Community Hubs – Project Update and Next Steps - Ward 3**

Contact: Hanu S. Dilip, Urban Designer, Development Services & Design

Report number: Planning, Bld & Growth Mgt-2025-055

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Hanu S. Dilip, Urban Designer, Development Services & Design to the Committee of Council Meeting of February 19, 2025, re: **Urban Community Hubs – Project Update and Next Steps - Ward 3**, be received; and
2. That the Committee of Council delegate signing authority to the Commissioner of Planning, Building & Growth Management, and the Commissioner of Community Services to execute the Initial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with identified external stakeholders for the Urban Community Hubs project, and further authorize the Commissioners to sign any subsequent renewals or renegotiations of the said MoUs, and any future MoUs.

OVERVIEW:

- **The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Urban Community Hubs project and to seek delegated signing authority for the Commissioners of Planning, Building & Growth Management and Community Services to execute MoUs with identified external stakeholders for the project.**
- **The Urban Community Hub (UCH) initiative in Brampton aims to create a prototype model for dynamic and inclusive spaces that promote social interaction, economic growth, and environmental sustainability by co-locating essential community services such as education, healthcare, recreation, and cultural services within walkable, transit-oriented communities.**
- **Following Council’s endorsement of the Uptown and Queens Urban Community Hubs as pilot projects (2021), these locations have been identified within the key intensification areas, in the new Brampton Plan.**

- **The UCH initiative is pivotal in addressing urban intensification challenges related to the delivery of community services including education, recreation, and cultural facilities. The recommendation in this report will ensure that staff can advance the project through the execution of Initial MoUs.**
- **The execution of the Initial MoU establishes a framework for formalized collaboration with external stakeholders (School Board(s), Brampton Library etc.), defining roles, responsibilities, and securing their commitment to the UCH initiative.**
- **Land acquisition for the Uptown and Queens Hubs is a priority to ensure the timely realization of the UCH initiative. Staff will work on finalization of Realty Strategy to secure the land required for the Hubs, contingent upon budget approval, and advancing to the next stages of design.**
- **Staff is finalizing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to engage a consultant for site-specific proforma analyses to evaluate the financial feasibility and economic viability of each Hub. These analyses will inform project delivery models, funding strategies, and partnership agreements by assessing development costs, revenue projections, operational sustainability, and aligning with current market trends and stakeholders' requirements.**
- **There are no financial impacts from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.**

BACKGROUND:

The Urban Community Hub (UCH) initiative aligns closely with Brampton Vision 2040 and the Brampton Plan, both of which emphasize creating a sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic urban environment that meets the diverse needs of the community. As Brampton prepares for its population to grow to an anticipated 1 million residents with the next two decades, this initiative is pivotal in supporting the City's urban transition.

Council's endorsement of the Uptown Hub and Queens Hubs in 2021, marked a significant milestone in Brampton's commitment to fostering collaborative and strategic urban development. These Hubs are envisioned as dynamic, multi-purpose facilities including education, recreation, arts and culture, healthcare, and public resources into easily accessible locations. By co-locating these services into centralized community hubs, the City aims to create vibrant spaces that promote social interaction, economic growth, and environmental sustainability, while contributing to the creation of more walkable and connected communities.

A core strength of the UCH initiative lies in its multi-faceted collaborative approach. The project fosters deep partnerships and coordination across the departments (Recreation,

Parks, Culture Services, Realty etc.), to ensure a unified vision and efficient resource allocation. Beyond the City, the initiative also prioritizes engagement with external stakeholders, including Peel District School Board (PDSB), Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB), Brampton Library etc. These partnerships ensure that the Hubs are designed to cater to the unique and evolving needs of Brampton residents, from educational and recreational needs to health and cultural resources.

Uptown Hub will be located with Gateway MTSA, in the proximity of Steeles Avenue Rd. and Hurontario Rd. intersection, an area identified as an Urban Centre in Brampton Plan. This Hub, planned to serve the existing and new residents at full build out, will address existing gaps in community infrastructure while aligning with the City's broader goal of fostering 15-minute neighborhoods. Similarly, the **Queens Hub**, planned for the Queens Precinct, is poised to support approximately 40,000 residents by co-locating essential services such as school, library and recreational facilities in a strategic location.

The UCH initiative builds on the principles of Brampton Vision 2040 and Brampton Plan, which prioritize smart growth, sustainability and community wellbeing. It leverages planning frameworks, such as the Parks and Recreation Masterplan, to incorporate elements that promote active lifestyles and health-focused urban design. This alignment ensures that the Hubs not only fulfill current needs but also anticipate future challenges, particularly in areas undergoing rapid intensification.

Through strategic planning, robust partnerships, and innovative design, the UCH initiative aspires to set a precedent for community-focused urban development, demonstrating Brampton's leadership in creating vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable urban centers.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Project Progress

Since the Council Workshop in June 2023, significant progress has been made in advancing the UCH initiative. The workshop served to orient Council on the project, sharing invaluable insights from the feasibility study and defining the roadmap for the project's execution. Subsequently, the following key milestones were achieved:

Project Charter Establishment - By January 2024, the UCH project charter was finalized. This charter was developed with comprehensive feedback from various city departments, ensuring that all stakeholder views are incorporated to guide the project effectively.

Steering Committee Formation - February 2024 marked the inaugural meeting of the Community Hub Steering Committee (CHSC), which includes all Commissioners along with selected Directors and Managers. This committee plays a crucial role in providing directional oversight and ensuring the alignment of the project with broader city objectives.

Stakeholder Engagement and workshops

Starting in April 2024, a series of inter-departmental workshops were initiated. These monthly sessions are focused on refining the UCH design and programming, to ensure that the hubs are tailored to meet community needs effectively.

Alignment with Strategic City Policies and Masterplans

The UCH initiative is strategically aligned with several key city policies and masterplans, ensuring that it not only meets current urban development standards but also contributes to the City's long-term building goals:

Brampton Plan

The new Brampton Plan provides a strong policy foundation for the Urban Community Hub (UCH) initiative. It emphasizes the development of vibrant, connected, and inclusive communities through policies that encourage the integration of mixed-use developments, active transportation, and sustainable urban growth. The Official Plan outlines provisions for co-locating essential services such as education, recreation, health, arts, and culture with community hubs to ensure accessibility for residents.

Integration with Parks & Recreation Masterplan (PRMP)

The development of UCH closely aligns with the PRMP, enhancing recreational opportunities and promoting healthy, active lifestyles among the residents of Brampton.

Synergy with Culture Masterplan:

The UCH initiative supports the goals of the Culture Masterplan by fostering the growth of Brampton's artistic community and enhancing the city's cultural identity. This is achieved through the integration of inclusive and accessible cultural spaces within the hubs, which are expected to strengthen the cultural ecosystem and stimulate innovation.

NEXT STEPS

As the UCH initiative continues to progress, several key actions are planned to ensure the successful development and implementation of the two pilots. These steps are designed to address various aspects of project development, from securing necessary resources to engaging stakeholders effectively.

Initiation of Execution of Initial MoUs

Upon Council approval to delegate signing authority to Commissioners, staff will begin executing the Initial MoUs with external project stakeholders. These MoUs play a critical role in formalizing collaboration during the planning and implementation phases of the UCH initiative. The first MoU will be executed with Brampton Library, followed by School Boards and other identified partners, with the anticipated timeline for this activity completion is Q1 – Q2 2025.

The MoUs will serve as a non-binding framework that outlines mutual understandings, key principles, and the responsibilities of all parties involved. Key points to note are the following:

- **Non-Binding Nature and Flexibility:** The MoU is non-binding and allows either party to terminate the agreement by providing a 60-day written notice. This flexibility ensures both parties can reassess their involvement as the project progresses.
- **Scope of Engagement:** The MoU facilitates further discussions on design input, space allocation, funding strategies, programming needs, and operational planning, ensuring alignment with the overall objectives of the UCH initiative.
- **Future Commitments:** While the MoU is non-binding, it serves as a precursor to an Offer to Lease, which will detail specific terms such as lease duration, costs, space allocation, and operational responsibilities.

The initiation phase will involve:

- **Collaboration with Legal Services:** Finalizing the MoU documents to align with project objectives, stakeholder needs, and operational frameworks, while ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Organizing stakeholder meetings to communicate MoU terms, address feedback, and ensure consensus on roles, responsibilities, and commitments.
- **Defining Key Elements:** Establishing clear deliverables, milestones, and responsibilities, while addressing areas such as confidentiality, intellectual property, termination clauses, and public communication guidelines.

By executing these MoUs, the City will create a structured foundation for future agreements, ensuring that all parties are aligned in their goals and prepared for the successful implementation of the UCH initiative.

Other Next Steps

Land Acquisition and Design Advancement

Securing land for both Hubs is a key priority for the timely implementation of the UCH initiative. Staff will finalize a Realty Strategy aligned with Council directives, involving collaboration with the Realty team to identify and prioritize land parcels near existing or planned developments, and engaging with landowners to align acquisition with UCH goals. Concurrently, the design phase will advance with refined conceptual plans to meet community needs and align with the City's strategic framework.

External Workshop Series

Staff will conduct external workshops with internal and external stakeholders to integrate masterplan recommendations (eg. Brampton Plan, PRMP and Culture Masterplan) into UCH programming and design. These workshops will facilitate collaboration, address stakeholder concerns, share knowledge, and incorporate feedback into the project to ensure community needs are met effectively.

Proforma Analysis Development

Staff will issue an RFP to appoint a consultant for site-specific proforma analyses to assess the UCH initiative's financial feasibility and support strategic decision-making. These analyses will evaluate each Hub's economic viability, refine project delivery and funding models, and incorporate current market and demographic trends to guide partnerships, capital investments, and operational strategies.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There are no financial impacts from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

There are sufficient funds available in the Development Services & Design approved capital budget for initiating the site-specific proforma analysis work, as part of next steps.

Project	Project Description	Approved Budget	Spending to Date	Uncommitted Balance
247842-001	Urban Community Hub	\$94,000	\$0	\$94,000
257842-001	Urban Community Hub	\$170,000	\$0	\$170,000
Total		\$264,000	\$0	\$264,000

Should additional funds be required for this initiative, staff will report back to Council through the budget process or a budget amendment.

Legal Implications:

Legal services will review the terms and conditions of MoUs, executed under this authority, to safeguard the City's interests and mitigate potential risks.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

The UCH initiative is a prime example of a project that aligns with multiple strategic focus areas of the City's broader goals. The initiative intersects as follows:

- **Health & Well-being:** By promoting access to a variety of services within walking distance, the UCH initiative fosters a 15-minute neighbourhood that supports health and wellness. The hubs will include recreational facilities and green spaces that

encourage active lifestyles and social interaction, contributing to both physical and mental well-being.

- **Transit & Connectivity:** This initiative emphasizes the development of hubs in areas with strong transit links, particularly near the future Hurontario LRT and Queen St. BRT. This supports the City's aim of creating a connected infrastructure that facilitates efficient movement across the City, reducing reliance on personal vehicles and promoting sustainable transit solutions.
- **Growing Urban Centres & Neighbourhoods:** UCHs are planned in rapidly developing precincts, by providing centralized services. This supports economic growth by attracting businesses and residents to these hubs, thereby fostering vibrant, thriving communities.
- **Environmental Resilience & Sustainability:** The UCH design will be based on Brampton Net Zero requirements, promoting energy efficient buildings.
- **Government & Leadership:** Through effective collaboration with external stakeholders, the initiative showcases transparent and accountable governance. It also demonstrates innovation in City Planning and Community Services, setting a precedent for future projects.
- **Culture and Diversity:** The initiative recognizes the cultural diversity of Brampton and aims to create spaces that reflect and celebrate this diversity. The hubs are envisioned as cultural epicenters where artistic expression is encouraged and cultural activities are accessible to all residents, fostering cross-cultural understanding and community bonding.

CONCLUSION:

The Urban Community Hub initiative in Brampton is a forward-thinking campus that serves as the “beating heart” of the community.

This initiative has made substantial progress. With the establishment of the Project Charter and the formation of the internal steering committee, along with active stakeholder engagement through workshops and the drafting of the MoU, the project is well-positioned to achieve its goals. This holistic and collaborative approach not only addresses immediate community needs but also aligns with Brampton's strategic objectives for sustainable and inclusive urban development.

The report recommends that the Committee delegate the signing authority to Commissioners to execute MoUs with key project stakeholders for the UCH initiative. This delegation ensures that the project can advance without unnecessary delays. Given the scope and scale of the pilots, timely decision-making is critical to maintaining project momentum and meeting the strategic objectives laid out in Brampton 2040 Vision and Brampton Plan.

The successful implementation of the UCH initiative, through effective delegation, will not only transform urban spaces but also enhance the quality of life for residents, supporting sustainable community development and economic growth.

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