

Date: 2021-08-03

Subject: **Budget Amendment & Recommendation Report – Downtown Office (now considered Downtown Action Hub)**

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Report Number: Planning, Bld & Ec Dev-2021-905

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** the report titled: **Budget Amendment & Recommendation Report – Downtown Office (now considered Downtown Action Hub)** to the Council Meeting of August 11, 2021, be received;
2. **THAT** Council approve a new City-established Downtown Office (now considered Downtown Action Hub) to facilitate strategic planning and coordinate with maintenance and operation efforts, marketing and communication, business support, and community outreach relating to the Integrated Downtown Plan, Downtown infrastructure improvements and economic revitalization efforts;
3. **THAT** Council approve two permanent full time staff resources (Downtown Coordinator and Downtown Principal Planner/Senior Supervisor) dedicated to support the Downtown Office (now considered Downtown Action Hub) for a total budget of approximately \$266,000; and,
4. **THAT** an additional two permanent full time staff resources (Downtown Economic Development Officer and Downtown Planner 1) be included in the 2022 proposed budget for a total budget of approximately \$234,000, pending Council approval.

Overview:

- **Regional Council voted on May 27th, 2021 to complete the Region of Peel's interim water and wastewater works as approved by Regional Council in July 2020, including City's roadworks that was approved by City Council in July 2020.**
- **Construction of the City's roadworks and Region's water and wastewater works is anticipated, by the Region, to commence in late September 2021 and be completed by summer 2023.**
- **At the June 2nd 2021 Council meeting, Council passed a motion to report on next steps for the establishment of a City managed Downtown Office (now considered Downtown Action Hub) that would support the Integrated Downtown Plan (IDP) and all its various components and external partners.**
- **At the July 7th, 2021 Council Meeting, Staff are asked to report back to Council over the next several weeks and expedite the creation of a Downtown Office (now considered Downtown Action Hub) and Downtown Coordinator position.**
- **This report recommends approval of a Downtown Action Hub and a complement of resources that are generally proportional to the public and private and private investment approved and/or anticipated for the downtown.**
- **It will be the responsibility of the Downtown Action Hub to help foster and enhance relationships with downtown stakeholders (businesses and residents) and internal/external departments; mitigate service interruptions as a result of construction; and to attract a variety of new investments to the downtown.**
- **The Downtown Action Hub is proposed to provide physical and virtual accessibility and ongoing support to businesses and residents. The Downtown Action Hub will help build, foster, and enhance relationships with Downtown stakeholders, including the residents, businesses, potential investors, Downtown Brampton Business Improvement Association (DBBIA), board of trade and others.**

Background:

The Integrated Downtown Plan (IDP) conceived as an action plan to coordinate and align ongoing City initiatives, developments, and infrastructure projects launched in Q1 of 2021.

A Downtown Action Hub will facilitate and implement the vision through strategic planning, coordinated operations, business promotion and community outreach.

On May 27, 2021, Regional Council voted to complete the Region of Peel's water and wastewater works. The critical infrastructure upgrades in Downtown Brampton are being tendered by the Region of Peel have an anticipated construction start date in late September 2021. The City and Region are currently finalizing the construction contract documents for the roadworks, water and wastewater works on Main Street from Wellington Street to Nelson Street West and on Queen Street from Mill Street South to Chapel Street.

Staff received Council direction on June 2, 2021, to report back on possible options, budget and next steps to establish a City-managed Downtown Office, now considered "Downtown Action Office".

Integrated Downtown Plan:

Council has prioritized the need to unlock Downtown Brampton's potential – advocating change and securing the City's future. The IDP will adhere to the guiding principles of inclusivity, innovation and sustainability. As a roadmap for action, the IDP will serve to coordinate Downtown Brampton's many ongoing initiatives, programs, and infrastructure projects while providing an evolving framework to guide future growth and strategic investment in Downtown Brampton.

The IDP focuses on achieving mutually beneficial objectives between projects - defining necessary actions to help advance short, medium and long-term solutions. The IDP, as a project management framework, brings internal alignment to City projects - leading the coordination of capital works and cross-departmental initiatives in the Downtown (such as: public realm streetscape improvements, the Transit Hub, Hurontario-Main future LRT expansion, Innovation District, Centre of Innovation, Heritage Theatre Block revitalization, and Cyclepath property revitalization). The proposed Downtown Action Hub will provide a central location for robust engagement and will continue to provide a physical space for cross-departmental coordination and collaboration to build on all the public and private investments coming to Downtown.

Downtown Action Hub:

The Downtown Action Hub will support the IDP actions including "Meanwhile" strategies and economic revitalization, serving to keep residents, business owners, and groups, like the DBBIA, aware of progress and assist with alleviating construction concerns. The physical space dedicated for Downtown Action Hub activities will provide residents and businesses a point of contact to remain informed of all Downtown initiatives. The Downtown Action Hub will be overseen by Economic Development and City Planning and Design.

The public facing area located within the Economic Development Office (EDO) on the main floor and entrance of City Hall is being considered as the physical location for the Downtown Action Hub. The Hub space will be highly visible, designed and branded to support Downtown Action with an inviting entranceway, windows for showcasing colorful posters, collaborative informal meeting areas, flexible work areas, a meeting room, and direct access to City Hall's atrium for hosting larger dynamic public events. The "vibe" will be one of activity, enthusiasm, dedication, and accountability to the Downtown and its many stakeholders.

The majority of City staff are currently working virtually from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the available technology this has proven to be surprisingly effective and resilient in managing work, coordinating meetings, and advancing projects and initiatives. The acceleration of virtual work and business is one of the most disruptive aspects of the pandemic and as we transition into a post-COVID world a "new normal" of both virtual and physical work spaces is very likely. In this context the Downtown Action Hub should also consider a strong virtual presence and work with the business community organizations such as the DBBIA to build this presence through IT tools for such infrastructure. The continued planning and phasing of the physical and virtual Downtown Action Hub will ensure that this balance is achieved.

The Downtown Action Hub will be used by all City Departments, the Region, and Downtown-focused organizations. The meeting space will serve to build relationships with the business and resident community by facilitating collaboration, engagement, and the exchange of information for Downtown issues, projects and initiatives. It will be open and readily accessible to the public and can operate during peak hours with flexible staff scheduling to accommodate a daily and variable project and special event driven workflow. Additionally, the Downtown Action Hub will provide bookable space for off-hour City-related business meetings that can be open to organizations supporting the Downtown revitalization vision.

The initial fit-out would include flexible co-working and hot-desking space for the various new/modified Downtown revitalization roles, such as: Downtown Principal Planner and Coordinator, as well as the Region's Infrastructure Ambassador. This Hub space will have the capacity to adapt as the range of initiatives in the Downtown gain momentum.

The Downtown Action Hub will assist EDO and DBBIA work to support existing Downtown businesses and attract new ones. It will serve as the physical point of contact for collaboration for the DBBIA in its relationship with municipal and regional government. Co-locating the Downtown Action Hub with the Economic Development Office and the creation of Economic Development driven positions will ensure that the City is available and well-resourced to support business attraction, retention, and entrepreneurship. The Action Hub will also facilitate strategic collaboration and public engagement on the City's future plans and initiatives in the Downtown. Consultation with the City's Facilities Operations and Interior Design Services are underway to finalize the design and arrange for furniture installations.

The Construction Site Office for the Region's upcoming construction project is separate and distinct from the proposed Downtown Action Hub. The Construction Site Office will be used only by the contractor for their administrative and storage needs. The Construction Site Office falls under the contractor's obligations for general maintenance, health and safety for the 2-year construction period. Only the Region's and City's project-related personnel will have access to the Site Office and there will be no public access.

Immediate Resourcing (Stage 1)

Phase 1 is anticipated to commence immediately upon staff mobilization. The IDP Team along with other City departments have been collaborating to align existing internal resources to leverage and advance the initiatives in the Downtown by diverting resources appropriately. As a result, two additional permanent full time positions are being requested to support the program. In addition, Regionally funded positions were created including an Ambassador from the Region for the infrastructure upgrades and additional field positions as part of the Welcoming Streets pilot project. The DBBIA Liaison position was created, and will be supported by the City's Inspector and Public Works and Engineering staff. This is in addition to the Region's consultant who will be administering the construction contract.

These positions, described below, are essential to mobilizing the Downtown Action strategy with the business community and aligning it with the immediate and long-range growth and major capital initiatives over the next five to ten years.

a) Downtown Coordinator

The Downtown Coordinator will assist local businesses, the DBBIA, resident associations, and elected officials to direct their queries to the appropriate City Departments. The Downtown Coordinator will troubleshoot maintenance, safety, and operational issues in the Downtown. Issues flagged by the Downtown Coordinator will be escalated following a clear and coordinated process with City departments or to the Downtown Area Working Group (DAWG).

DAWG is a cross functional technical staff group focused on the identification and resolution of operational and maintenance issues in the Downtown Area. Stakeholder meetings organized by external organizations and internal departments will be attended by the Downtown Coordinator. 311 calls – pertaining to operations and maintenance – will be directed through the Downtown Coordinator to ensure relevant issues have been effectively addressed. The Downtown Coordinator will stay informed about all City of Brampton and Region of Peel initiated capital projects impacting the downtown area and will work closely with City staff to assist with the communication and implementation of the IDP. It is important to note that businesses, landlords, and residents should continue to use 311 as a key communication tool with the City. The Downtown Coordinator will work closely with 311 staff, but it is not a replacement for this important resource.

b) Downtown Principal Planner/Senior Supervisor

Council has prioritized the need to unlock Downtown Brampton's potential through a strategic approach – advocating change and securing the City's future. The Downtown Principal Planner is the lead for the IDP and Downtown strategy. They are also a crucial point-of-contact for all downtown projects. The Downtown Principal Planner will work closely with the Downtown Coordinator and ensure operational considerations are addressed strategically. The Downtown Principal Planner will hot-desk at the Downtown Action Hub along with members of the IDP core team.

c) DBBIA Liaison – Strategic Communications (existing position):

A BIA Liaison staff position has already been created internally. With the expansion of the Downtown Action Hub the BIA Liaison will have opportunities to hot-desk and co-work in the Hub. They will serve as a crucial point of contact for developing and implementing communication strategies for the ongoing Downtown work and developing a streamlined one-window administrative approach to Downtown programs and approvals through the IDP

d) Staff – City's Public Works and Engineering (existing):

A City Construction Inspector will be available during the upcoming Region-led water and wastewater replacement construction. This Inspector will provide quality assurance for any City owned infrastructure. The DBBIA Liaison will have a close working relationship with the City Inspector and all relevant Public Works and Engineering Staff.

e) Ambassador - Region's Public Works and Engineering Project (budgeted Regional position):

The Region has indicated their Project Ambassador will be available full-time at the Downtown Action Hub during the upcoming construction for the Region's works until the end of the construction. The Ambassador will serve as the Region's representative to the public - communicating updates and dealing with all concerns arising from the water and wastewater replacement project and associated roadworks.

f) Welcoming Streets Pilot Program (new Regionally Funded positions)

Regional Council approved the City's June 10, 2021 report, "Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton". The Region of Peel is providing up to \$250,000 for this pilot program. The intent of Welcoming Streets is to promptly respond to businesses' concerns about the activities arising from loitering in downtown Brampton as well as concerns of community safety, littering on private property, and graffiti. The Downtown Action Hub will provide

“Welcoming Streets” staff a regular place to meet with stakeholders and senior leadership. Based in Downtown Brampton, program staff would act as liaisons between the vulnerable and downtown stakeholders to build trusting and effective relationships over time.

Additional Resources (Stage II)

Additional resources will be considered through the annual 2022 budget process, pending Council approval. These positions will ensure that the growth and development vision and key capital projects such as the high order transit initiatives (GO Station, LRT, BRT, and Transit Hub), Center for Innovation, and Heritage Theatre remain on track. Some of the key positions that the Department is considering include a level one Downtown Planner and a Downtown Economic Development Officer.

a) Downtown Economic Development Officer (1 new position):

The City’s Downtown would benefit from a dedicated Downtown Economic Development Officer to attract new investment, businesses, and development by the private sector to complement and build on the public infrastructure investments taking place in Downtown Brampton. The Downtown Economic Development Officer would report to the Director of Economic Development. The Downtown Economic Development Officer will liaise with landlords, businesses, and residents to keep them apprised of programs, initiatives, and events that may impact their day-to-day activities.

The Economic Development Officer will also attend formal and information meetings with the DBBIA and BBOT to provide input and receive feedback on various City initiatives involving the Downtown including BIA Board and subcommittee meetings. This individual will support business attraction and retention of key industries including, but not limited to, retail, restaurants, personal and professional services, hotels and other complementary investments that will support the anticipated population, employment and student growth. The Economic Development Officer will support the future growth and strategic investment portfolio of Downtown Brampton. The work not only includes promoting Peel Memorial Hospital expansion (given the economic spin-offs anticipated with this project), but working closely with the City’s Innovation District partners by supporting graduating businesses and attracting other investments to support their growth. This position will be the voice advocating for businesses and investment in the downtown working collaboratively with City departments and agencies.

b) Downtown Planner I (1 new position):

The Downtown Planner will support matters related to the Downtown community, ongoing initiatives and future planning of the Downtown. The role

may function as a branch resource in areas of specialization and undertake studies on an individual basis or as part of the IDP team.

Corporate Implications:

Economic Development Implications:

The number of public infrastructure initiatives and associated funding intersecting the Downtown and surrounding area will generate a substantial amount of economic activity. The Downtown Action Hub will help realize and sustain economic activity so the City can leverage public dollars to the fullest extent possible. Downtown revitalization will only occur if the private sector remains engaged and willing to invest in the downtown. The Downtown Action Hub and related positions will work with existing businesses and residents to navigate any interruptions from construction; and will be dedicated to bringing new businesses and investment to the downtown.

Time is money. There is clear economic benefits to establishing a Downtown Action Hub. By maintaining an ongoing, two-way communication between businesses, the BIA, resident associations and the City there are less opportunities for issues to arise due to coordination oversight. The Downtown Action Hub ensures the successful coordination and synergy for all Downtown events and initiatives as well as streamlined administrative processes.

Financial Implications:

The total financial consideration for this initiative is approximately \$524,925. The operating impact is a total of \$500,000 which equates to a 0.1% property tax increase. The capital costs are approximately \$24,925.

The initiative immediately requires two permanent full time positions which includes a Downtown Coordinator and Principal Planner/Senior Supervisor for a total of \$266,000 (inclusive of salary, benefits, WSIB and staff costs). The financial impact will be incorporated in the 2022 budget through a compensation adjustment, pending Council approval.

Two new staff requests for the Downtown Economic Development Officer and Downtown Planner, requiring a total budget of \$234,000 (inclusive of salary, benefits, WSIB and staff costs) will be identified as part of the 2022 proposed budget submission, pending Council approval.

Request	Staff Request	Total*
Downtown Coordinator	2021	\$117,000
Principal Planner/Senior Supervisor	2021	\$149,000
Downtown Economic Development Officer	2022	\$117,000
Downtown Planner 1	2022	\$117,000
	TOTAL	\$500,000*

*Total is inclusive of salary, benefits, WSIB and staff costs

The capitals costs for the refurbishment of the existing office space is approximately \$24,925. Sufficient funding is available from the following funding source:

Project #	Budget Available	Estimated Cost	Remaining Budget
201900-008	\$24,925	\$24,925	\$0

Any additional funds required will be requested as part of the 2022-2024 Budget Submission, pending Council approval.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications in this Report.

Next Steps:

Following the endorsement of these Recommendations by Council, City staff will begin work on immediate action items as described in this Report. Explore a branding and communication strategy for the Downtown Action Hub that aligns with all Downtown initiatives and the IDP.

Conclusion:

This Report supports the Terms of Council Priorities ensuring Brampton is constantly “improving day-to-day operations by streamlining service delivery, effectively managing municipal assets, and leveraging partnerships for collaboration and advocacy.” The Downtown Action Hub will support the IDP team in coordinating and implementing many of Downtown Brampton’s ongoing initiatives and infrastructure projects.

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Attachments:

Appendix A – City Organizational Reporting Structure

Appendix B – Coordinated Approach to Queries

Appendix C – Photographs of existing EDO space

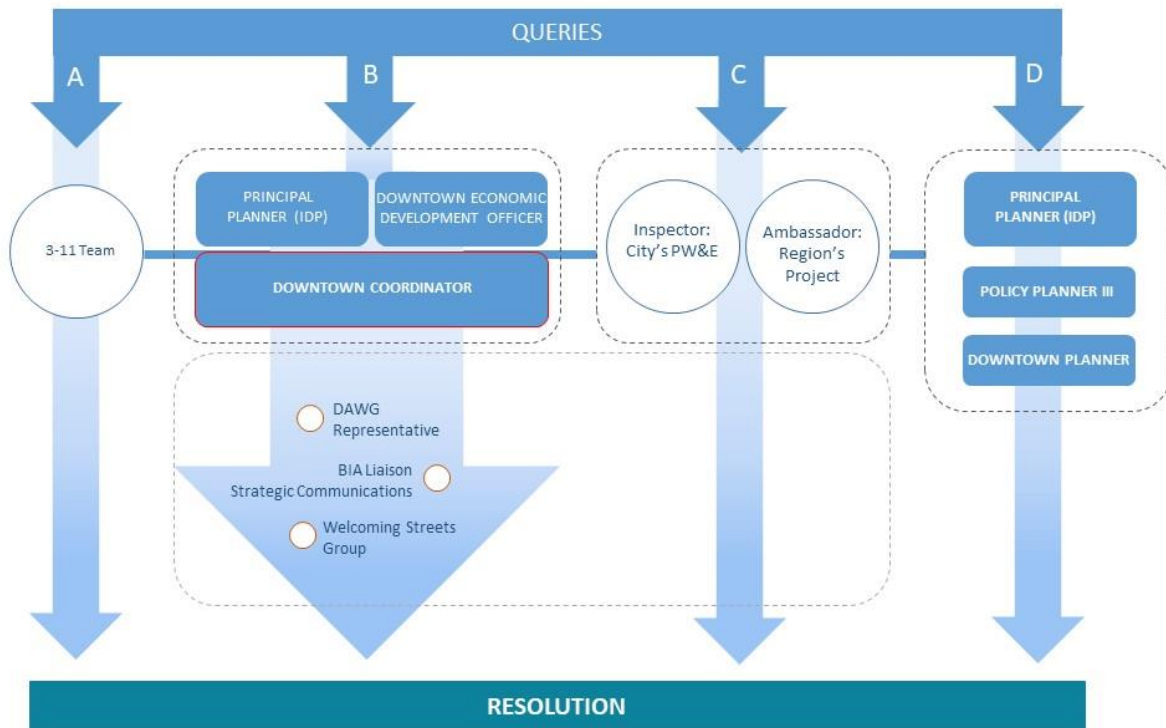
Appendix A – Proposed Organizational Reporting Structure

Downtown Office: City Organizational Reporting Structure



Appendix B – Coordinated Approach to Queries

Downtown Office: Coordinated Approach to Queries



Queries (summary)

- A. **3-11 Team:** Fielding questions from residents, visitors, and businesses seeking general information about everything from Brampton Public Library hours to finding out where the closest covid-vaccination facility is located.
- B. **Downtown Coordinator:** Will focus on questions coming from local businesses, the BIA, resident associations, and elected officials dealing with all Downtown Brampton related concerns. The Downtown Coordinator will direct queries to all the appropriate City Departments and Working Groups for action. Reports to EDO.
- C. **Public Works & Engineering Queries:** The Inspector and Ambassador will serve as the City's and Region's front to the public - communicating updates and dealing with all concerns arising from the water main replacement project and any associated streetscape related work.
- D. **Integrated Downtown Plan Team:** Field questions or comments from residents and businesses about long term planning initiatives in the Downtown and project framework for the IDP.

Appendix C – Photographs of Existing EDO Space



Figure 2: Collaborative workspace opportunity in the Economic Development & Culture office in City Hall



Figure 1: Existing vacant desks available immediately for Downtown focused staff with service window



Figure 3: Existing Economic Development banner that may be upgraded for Downtown specific branding

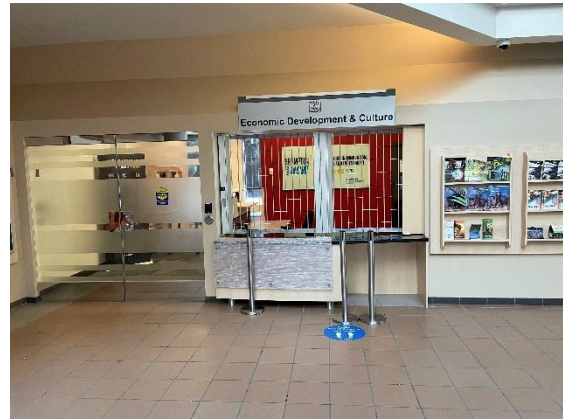


Figure 4: Economic Development & Culture service public window for inquiries from the public



Figure 5: Access from the atrium of City Hall to Downtown focused service window and offices. Atrium spill over space for public events and engagement.



Figure 6: Easy access for public from City Hall