

Date: 2021-12-06

Subject: **John Street Junction Activation**

Contact: **Ryan Lynn, Acting Downtown Coordinator**

Report Number: Planning, Bld & Ec Dev-2021-1279

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** the report from Ryan Lynn, Acting Downtown Coordinator, Economic Development, dated December 6, 2021 to the Budget Committee Meeting of December 6, 2021 re: John Street Junction Activation – Ward 4 be received;
2. **THAT** Council approve a grant of up to \$58,733 to My Nose Initiative Inc. in order to improve the space at the rear and in proximity to 29 -31-33- 35 Queen Street East, funded from the 2021 Operating Budget, subject to the following conditions:
 - i) That satisfactory detailed cost estimates and drawings be submitted to the City of Brampton for review;
 - ii) Written authorization from the landowner(s);
 - iii) That the applicant satisfies the requirements of the City and enters into any necessary agreements with the City of Brampton;
3. **THAT** the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to sign the agreement with content satisfactory to the Director of Economic Development in a form approved by the City Solicitor or designate and that staff be authorized to take the necessary steps to implement the terms of the agreement.

Overview:

- **The Integrated Downtown Plan (IDP) conceived as an action plan to coordinate and align ongoing City initiatives (that includes an Urban Design Activation Strategy that recommends an appropriate improvement strategy for laneways), developments, and infrastructure projects.**
- **On May 27, 2021, Regional Council voted to complete the Region of Peel's water and wastewater upgrades along Main Street and Queen Street in the City's Downtown.**

- **The critical infrastructure upgrades in Downtown Brampton that are anticipated to begin in January 2022, are expected to cause some disruption to the businesses that front on to the impacted streets.**
- **Many of these businesses have front and rear entrances. Given the potential disruption many for the businesses and City will be considering ways to ensure businesses remain active, which can include direct consumers/clients to the rear entrances.**
- **Tracy Pepe, the principal of My Nose Initiative Inc delegated to Council on December 1, 2021 requesting financial assistance in the amount of \$58,733 to augment the grant of \$113,000 she is receiving from the My Main Street Community Activator Program**
- **The purpose of this report is to provide the details of the project and outline how the City can potentially assist with the project as a first step to activating other laneways and rear entrances in the downtown.**

Background:

On Wednesday October 13th, 2021 Tracy Pepe, CEO of My Nose Initiative Inc., delegated to Council to present the John St Junction project. An initiative geared toward activating the back doors of the businesses at 29, 31, 33, and 35 Queen St East on the Queen Street block, between Main Street and Chapel Street.

My Nose Initiative Inc. notes in their My Main Street Grant application that John St Junction is a backdoor approach:

“A backdoor approach is physically using the backdoors of the small business, this supports current client base and small business to adapt with the construction. By reshaping the laneways and incorporating a new customer base of cycling, this project will focus on incorporating the side streets of community to encourage walking, strollers, and active living. Reimagine a parking lot, by using asphalt colour stickers, communication, local art murals, dog stations, benches, and a safe place to rest or “be”, this area surrounded by residential, and business helps to incorporate community in a healthy, artistic manner. The junction will support additional living space for residents of low economic area and intergrading diversity between class and culture by using art and physical attraction.”

My Nose Initiative Inc. has received a conditional reimbursement grant through the My Main Street program in the amount of \$113,000 and the funds must be spent by December 31st 2021. The Recipient Funding Agreement with My Main Street administrators is under development.

As communities continue to adapt to COVID-19, this program provides support for projects that seek to revitalize neighbourhoods and reimagine public spaces including main streets, downtown strips and plazas as vibrant and inclusive places that work for everyone.

My Main Street supports placemaking, an approach that asks people to collectively reimagine and reshape public space to maximize its shared value. Placemaking can take the form of events that draw people into a community, murals that brighten neglected streetscapes and celebrate local artists, seating and temporary patios that allow people to gather safely outdoors, new uses for neglected or empty spaces, and more.

The My Main Street Community Activator Program is reimbursement based. The John St Junction application was received in their Year 1 intake. Approved applicants may submit invoices for work carried out within the eligibility period of June 8, 2021 to December 31st, 2021. My Nose Initiative Inc. will be applying for the next intake in February 2022 for other My Nose Initiative Inc. activities such as the launch of the Smelling Pink Festival.

Integrated Downtown Plan (IDP)

My Nose Initiative Inc.'s initiative fits well within the overall IDP's Meanwhile Strategy that attempts to beautify and program the Downtown's underused and vacant spaces for the benefit of the community. These efforts will provide a way forward for the Downtown that needs to cope with the aftereffects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the upcoming Infrastructure Replacement. It should be noted that:

1. The IDP Staff is developing an *Urban Design Activation Strategy* to study Laneway opportunities for temporary and long-term urban design activations throughout an area bounded by Nelson Street, George Street, and Queen Street. The purpose of this plan is to inspire interest from adjoining property owners, businesses and residents to create high quality urban spaces that encourage active use to enhance public life in downtown Brampton. It should be noted we are working closely with other City Departments in these activation strategies – engaging with groups like STEPS and 8-80 to apply for My Main Street grant funding to activate these Downtown laneways.

2. As part of the IDP, a Streetscape Manual, will be produced. This Manual, in addition to other City's standard design and construction requirements, will guide the design, construction and maintenance of sidewalk, boulevard, and laneway improvements on Downtown Brampton's road network. Key components of the study include developing:

- A streetscape typology that includes laneways;
- A palette of unit paving and site furnishing;
- A public art and marketing zone; and
- Streetscape and lighting details.

Current Situation:

Phase one of the project will see the activation of the rear entrances at 29, 31, 33, and 35 Queen St East.

Phase two of the project aspires to see the activation of the City owned laneway property adjacent to 27 Queen St East back entrance and Harmsworth Lane and the rear entrances of the potential participating landowners.

Expenses

My Nose Initiative Inc.'s project costs are \$ 171,733. They have received conditional approval for \$113,000 from the My Main Street program leaving a shortfall of \$58,733 according to the cost estimates received from My Nose Initiative Inc. At the time of writing this report, City Staff have not received all the direct quotations or purchase order information to verify these costs from My Nose Initiative Inc.

This is not just a request for a \$58,733 grant, but also a request for the City to advance the funds to My Nose Initiative Inc. These funds would be reimbursed by My Nose Initiative Inc to the City through the My Main Street Program grant.

My Nose Initiative Inc. is eligible to receive up to 25% of the grant total upfront through My Main Street once the agreement is confirmed. My Nose Initiative Inc. is confirming eligibility for this project.

Note: The submitted budget estimates Appendix 2.

Table 1: Budget Estimate (Summary)	
Total project cost	\$171,733
Funding from My Main Street (reimbursement based grant)	\$113,000
Loan requested from the City	\$113,000
Grant requested from the City	Up to \$58,733
25% advance funding from My Main Street	Up to \$28,250

Detailed Drawings:

Aside from what is shown in Appendix 3, the City has not received any drawings or schematics of what is to be installed of the proposal on either the private (29, 31, 33, and 35 Queen St East) or public (Harmsworth Lane) properties or any other abutting property owners.

Landowner Participation

According to the delegation, there is one private landowner that is participating, which the following addresses 29, 31, 33, and 35 Queen St East. To date no other landowners have confirmed participation and the project could be limited to the one property. Furthermore staff have yet to receive written authorization from the primary property owner where the modifications are proposed by My Nose Initiative Inc.

Downtown Brampton Business Improvement Area (DBBIA) Participation

To date the DBBIA is not actively participating in the development of the vision or implementation of the project. The DBBIA is actively participating in other projects where the beautification and activation of public lands occur. It is unknown whether the DBBIA will become participants in this project going forward.

The BIA recently learned on December 1, 2021 their My Main Street Community Activator Program grant was approved. \$50,000 of the grant was approved for laneway activations. Funding from one project cannot be put towards the expenses of another project. Applications were adjudicated based on the budgets submitted and they are unable to pool monies together

In Kind Staff Support

City Staff have supported My Nose Initiative Inc. since the inception of this initiative. This includes:

- Building department record of drawings/site plans
- Bike Brampton (providing funding for bike rack and repair kit).
- Option to have Traffic and Road Operations staff create signage specific for the laneway and for directing people to the back area.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Staff recommend providing a one-time grant of \$58,733 for this initiative, to be funded from the 2021 Operating Budget, subject to the conditions indicated in Recommendation #2.

In addition, there has been a subsequent request from the delegate to cash flow the \$113K grant received by My Main Street Community Activator Program. Staff do not recommend providing this grant. However, should Council wish to proceed with cash flowing the \$113K, staff recommend setting up a net zero project, funded through future receivables from the delegate, via the My Main Street Community Activator Program. A loan agreement between the City and the delegate would need to be entered into, subject to Council approval.

Term of Council Priorities:

Brampton is a City of Opportunities – The recommendations in this report will allow the businesses to thrive during a time of disruption in the downtown because of significant infrastructure upgrades.

Brampton is a Healthy and Safe Community- Beautifying and activating the back entrances of the businesses will help create a safer environment for consumers, residents and employees of these businesses.

Conclusion:

The critical infrastructure upgrades in Downtown Brampton that are anticipated to begin in January 2022, are expected to cause some disruption to the businesses that front on to the impacted streets. The proposal submitted by My Nose Initiative Inc.'s to mitigate that disruption are presented in this report along with some details of how the City can assist with the information provided to date.

Authored by:

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Economic Development

Reviewed by:

Clare Barnett, Director
Economic Development

Approved by:

Richard Forward, Commissioner
Planning, Building and Economic
Development

Submitted by:

David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Appendix 1 – John Street Junction My Main Street Application
Appendix 2 – John Street Junction Proposed Budget
Appendix 3 – Backdoor Approach Presentation