

To: Economic and Development Services Committee

From: Warren Munro, HBA, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner,  
Economic and Development Services Department

Report Number: ED-23-124

Date of Report: May 31, 2023

Date of Meeting: June 5, 2023

Subject: Annual Update on Plan 20Thirty Downtown Revitalization  
Action Plan

Ward: Ward 4

File: 03-05

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## **1.0 Purpose**

On June 20, 2022, City Council considered Report DS-22-144 concerning the proposed Plan20Thirty Downtown Revitalization Action Plan and passed the following resolutions:

- “1. That, pursuant to Report DS-22-144 dated June 1, 2022, Plan 20Thirty Downtown Oshawa Revitalization Action Plan forming Attachment 3 be approved, in principle, as a general guide for continued revitalization of the downtown; and,
2. That Development Services Department prepare Terms of Reference for Council review and endorsement for a Downtown Steering Committee comprised of cross-departmental City staff and external stakeholder representation to support the continual adaptation and improvements as it relates to the Downtown, while also monitoring and supporting the implementation of Plan 20Thirty actions; and,
3. That staff report on the progress of Plan 20Thirty on an annual basis through the Development Services Committee; and,
4. That a copy of the Plan 20Thirty Downtown Oshawa Revitalization Action Plan with the related staff report and Council resolution be forwarded to the Region of Durham, the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Oshawa Business Alliance, Ontario Tech University, Durham College, Trent University Durham GTA, Durham Workforce Authority, Spark Centre and the Business Advisory Centre Durham.”

The purpose of this Report is to provide an annual report as noted in Recommendation 3 above to the Economic and Development Services Committee.

Attachment 1 to this Report is a copy of DS-22-144 which includes Plan 20Thirty as an Attachment. Owing to its size, DS-22-144 is not affixed to this Report but can be viewed at the following link: <https://pub-oshawa.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=7785>.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Economic and Development Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That Report ED-23-124 be received for information.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

In June 2021, Oshawa City Council approved Report DS-21-124 “Proposed Terms of Reference for Downtown Action Plan ‘Plan 20Thirty’”.

On September 27, 2021, City Council considered Report DS-21-166 and appointed all thirteen (13) applicants to the Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee representing the following sectors:

- Retail
- Cultural
- Culinary
- Professional Services

The Steering Committee also included downtown residents, downtown development industry representatives and Institutional Sector representatives from Ontario Tech University and the Social Services sector. A representative for the Personal Services sector was never filled.

The Steering Committee was chaired by the Director of the then Economic Development Services and production of all materials associated with this report, aside from the Vision Setting report, were produced by the then Economic Development Services team. Other City departments were engaged for dialogue on an as needed basis throughout the work of the Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee. It is the responsibility of the now Director, Business and Economic Development Services to incorporate action items into the annual work plan for the branch, and collaborate with other departments across the City to ensure the proposed work moves forward through to 2030.

Public consultation was also completed as part of forming the final initiatives within the action plan with 165 individuals completing the feedback form through a four week consultation period.

Ultimately, the work of the Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee along with public input formed the renewed revitalization action plan and introduced the following seven (7) pillars to define the areas of focus for initiatives to be undertaken:

- Business Growth, Expansion and Retention
- Residential Growth
- Social Experience
- Physical Environment
- Communication
- Modernization and Innovation
- Red Tape Reduction and Customer Service

Additionally, the vision statement was endorsed to guide the work of the Plan 20Thirty objectives as a “balanced, lively and modern urban centre where all thrive.”

Report DS-22-144, Plan 20Thirty Downtown Oshawa Revitalization Action Plan, was endorsed by City Council on June 20, 2022.

## **4.0 Input From Other Sources**

The following have been consulted in preparation of this Report:

- Commissioner, Community and Operations Services
- Chief Administrative Officer

## **5.0 Analysis**

### **5.1 Work Plan Development**

Upon endorsement of Report DS-22-144, the Director of Business and Economic Development Services produced a work plan of all 60 initiatives identified within Plan 20Thirty and focused on items for 2022 and 2023 that could be achieved within existing operating budgets and priority items as guided by public consultation and Plan 20Thirty committee input. The Plan 20Thirty document offered suggested timelines for initiative completion (see Attachment 1).

### **5.2 Completed Initiatives and Items Underway**

From the time of endorsement of the Report, City staff, along with support from various community partners, have made positive movement forward in addressing the Council endorsed initiatives. Staff have completed actions within each of the seven pillars within Plan 20Thirty. The following actions have been completed, or are nearing completion, since endorsement of Report ED-22-144:

- Pillar One: Business Growth, Expansion and Retention:
  - Retail Gap Analysis was primarily completed in collaboration with the My Main Street Local Business Accelerator program. City staff will validate these findings and develop a retail attraction strategy based upon the findings.

- Ongoing street level support to Downtown Oshawa businesses and property owners on behalf of Business and Economic Development Services staff; typically conducted by the Manager, Downtown and Business Development.
- Pillar Two: Residential Growth
  - Continued work with Post-Secondary Institutions to connect the student population to housing opportunities in Downtown Oshawa. There has been continued work in fostering relationships between the Post-Secondary Institutions and housing developers with both currently available stock and future development opportunities.
- Pillar Three: Physical Environment
  - Communications and engagement relating to the City's Urban Growth Centre Community Improvement Plan has grown and received more applications and interest since clearly promoting the opportunity. These enhanced communications have been achieved by street level business visits and digital communications to increase awareness of the program.
  - Installation of seasonal lighting at City Hall and Memorial Park for the Winter 2022 season. There are plans to increase this to other areas in Downtown Oshawa for the 2023 season.
  - Confirmation through Community and Operations Services that the Urban Growth Centre is a high priority area for snow removal and clean-ups. City staff have increased proactive communications to the downtown businesses and property owners regarding snow removal impacts and expectations regarding timing. Staff will continue monitoring this initiative and provide feedback for adjustments if, and when, necessary.
- Pillar Four: Social Experience
  - Business and Economic Development Services staff introduced a weekly event roundup of programming and offerings across businesses, organizations and institutions in Downtown Oshawa. This acts both as a tool to promote opportunities to the broader community and as an internal tool for staff to be aware of anticipated parking constraints, street cleaning and staffing needs.
  - City staff have been actively engaged, and supportive, of the newly launched Oshawa Tourism initiative. This has included input on strategic planning, support for Oshawa Tourism led events and amplifying messaging between the City and Oshawa Tourism to ensure a broader reach to aid in enhanced engagement across the community.
- Pillar Five: Communications
  - City staff have been working as a stakeholder with Oshawa Tourism to establish a robust and effective tourism strategy to enhance visitor attraction and general

promotion. It is anticipated that this strategy will be fully formed and launched in third quarter of 2023.

- Business and Economic Development Services staff have been actively marketing the new Downtown Oshawa visual brand to demonstrate the value and quality of the product downtown. All social media metrics have increased on the Downtown Oshawa Instagram account since the launch of the brand and continue to receive new followers and engagement with businesses in the downtown.
- The aforementioned Downtown Oshawa brand has been utilized to complete effective storytelling and promotion to different audiences. The social media platform generally connects with the broader community to promote what the area has to offer, the monthly newsletter shares pertinent information with businesses and property owners and investment attraction tools for developers and potential businesses have been created for individual use.
- Pillar Six: Modernization and Innovation
  - Through the re-organization of City departments in November 2022, Economic Development was merged with Events and Culture Development to more effectively coordinate the efforts between place making, experience and economic output.
- Pillar Seven: Customer Service and Red Tape Reduction
  - Business and Economic Development Services staff are actively engaged with City Licensing staff on the forthcoming Licensing By-Law review that is being conducted in 2023. Ongoing feedback from business operators is being provided, and collaborations on bringing engagement opportunities to solicit input is also ongoing. Staff collaborated to introduce an interim opportunity for licensing to reduce costs for event organizers. The impacts of this program will be evaluated throughout the Licensing By-Law review.

### **5.3 Areas of Focus for 2023-2024**

Along with items that are planned for the 2023-2024 year cycle of Plan 20Thirty, there are a few major items that City staff will direct their attention to over the course of the next year:

- Business and Economic Development Services staff will be reviewing the Urban Growth Centre Community Improvement Plan and bringing forward recommendations for program adjustments or new funding opportunities. These changes may include opportunities to provide funding to properties for streetscape beautification, to enhance patio opportunities and to evaluate the intake cycle to establish a supportive program for property owners and business operators. Other considerations may be forthcoming depending on the findings of the research and feedback from program users.
- Business and Economic Development Services will release a 'Call for Walls' to Downtown Oshawa area property owners. This public call will receive input from property owners that are interested in having public art installed on their buildings to

provide staff the opportunity to explore new and high-impact areas to bring public art experiences to the community. The results of this call will form a directory for city staff to access in art planning on a go-forward basis within the Urban Growth Centre.

- Business and Economic Development Services staff will prepare a Terms of Reference for Council review and endorsement for a Downtown Steering Committee comprised of cross-departmental City staff and external stakeholder representation. The Downtown Steering Committee will support the adaptations and improvements related to the Downtown, while also monitoring and supporting the implementation of Plan 20Thirty actions.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

Though some of strategies and actions detailed in Plan 20Thirty for Downtown Oshawa can be completed using existing staff resources and funding, it is important to highlight the potential for increased staff capacity as noted in Section 5.7 of Report DS-22-144 in order to efficiently deliver the items in Plan 20Thirty. It is recognized that to accomplish some action items, other sources of funding, partnerships and community involvement will be required.

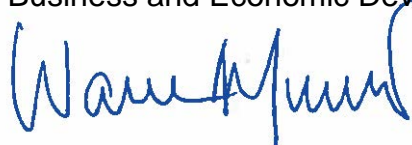
Should additional City funding be required for individual action items, appropriate reports will be presented to City Council for consideration as part of the annual budget process or a separate report.

## **7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan**

The recommendation advances the Accountable Leadership, Social Equity, Cultural Vitality and Economic Prosperity and Financial Stewardship goals of the Oshawa Strategic Plan which included a strategy to develop and implement a new downtown revitalization plan.



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