

To: Economic and Development Services Committee

From: Anthony Ambra, P.Eng., Commissioner,
Economic and Development Services Department

Report Number: ED-24-75

Date of Report: May 29, 2024

Date of Meeting: June 3, 2024

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

Ward: Ward 4

File: 03-05

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 update as noted in Recommendation 3 and to receive endorsement on the Terms of Reference for a Downtown Steering Committee as noted in Recommendation 2 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>.

Attachment 2 to this Report is the proposed Terms of Reference for the Downtown Steering Committee (Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee.)

2.0 Recommendation

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

1. That Report ED-24-75 dated May 29, 2024 concerning the Annual Update on Plan 20Thirty Downtown Revitalization Action Plan be received for information, and;
2. That Attachment 2 of Report ED-24-75 which forms the Terms of Reference for a Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee be endorsed.

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’”. Through July and August of 2021, staff activated a public call for committee participants and prepared Report DS-21-166 to appoint members and begin work for the development of Plan 20Thirty. Oshawa City Council appointed 13 members to the Plan 20Thirty committee that included representatives from the following sectors:

- Retail
- Cultural
- Culinary
- Professional Services

The 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 committee was chaired by the Director, Economic Development Services and production of all materials associated with this report, aside from the Vision Setting report, were produced by the Economic Development team. Other City departments were engaged for dialogue on an as needed basis throughout the work of the Plan 20Thirty committee and is the responsibility of the Director, 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 committee along with public input formed the renewed revitalization action plan and introduced seven pillars to define the areas of focus for initiatives to be undertaken, which include:

- 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 that was endorsed to guide the work of the Plan 20Thirty objectives was “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.

On June 26, 2023, Report ED-23-124, Annual Update on Plan 20Thirty Downtown Revitalization Action Plan was endorsed by City Council which included 13 items that were completed or in progress and three key areas of focus for 2023-2024.

4.0 Input From Other Sources

The following have been consulted in preparation of this Report:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Commissioner, Community and Operations Services Department

5.0 Analysis

5.1 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 DS-22-144 and Report ED-23-124:

Pillar One: Business Growth, Expansion and Retention:

- Through the results of the 2023 Business Count Survey, property owner relationships and street-level assessments, City staff have developed a commercial and office vacant space database for the downtown area. The development of this database has allowed City staff to efficiently connect new operator opportunities to vacant spaces in the area and aid in the ongoing investment attraction efforts to generate preferred uses.
- Planning Services staff have undertaken exercises to propose technical amendments in the Urban Growth Centre to support and ensure developments and investments are aligned with highest and best use scenarios. The proposed amendments will be presented to the Economic and Development Services Committee at the June 3, 2024 meeting.
- City staff have worked closely with office space operators to explore alternative use cases for vacant units and work in collaboration for proactive marketing of the spaces to attract new tenants.
- The Business and Economic Development Services team, in collaboration with Planning Services, Building Services and Finance Services anticipates bringing forward recommendations to make amendments to the Community Improvement Plan Grant Programs to the Economic and Development Services Committee in Fall 2024.

Pillar Two: Residential Growth

- Through 2023 and 2024, City staff have developed direct working relationships with off-campus housing offices at post-secondary institutions operating in Downtown Oshawa. This working relationship has established an opportunity for direct referrals to current students seeking off-campus accommodations with vacant residential units in the downtown. Additionally, there has been continued work in fostering relationships between the post-secondary institutions and housing developers with respect to future development opportunities.

Pillar Three: Physical Environment

- In June 2023, Culture Development staff launched a public call for walls to property owners in Downtown Oshawa. The intention behind this call was to establish a database of private properties in the downtown that would be open to having temporary public artworks (i.e., framed artworks) installed on their properties. This call was open for seven weeks and received nine interested properties. City staff will continue to work with property owners to explore opportunities to gauge interest and awareness regarding public art opportunities.
- Communications and engagement relating to the City's Urban Growth Centre Community Improvement Plan has grown and received more applications, and in turn funding extended to properties, and general interest has grown since promoting the

opportunity. These enhanced communications have been achieved by street level business visits and digital communications to increase awareness of the program.

- In Fall 2024, Business and Economic Development Services will be bringing a report forward to the Economic and Development Services Committee regarding a mid-term review of the Public Art Master Plan and an associated Mural Plan which will outline a recommendation to committee for the preservation, replacement and deaccessioning of the current wall murals in the downtown area.
- A new temporary public art installation is planned for early Fall 2024 on a eastern facing wall at the McMillan Parkade. This installation was outlined in Report ED-23-185 and endorsed by City Council on October 30, 2023.
- In 2024, Business and Economic Development Services staff launched a public Downtown Oshawa Accessibility Survey to business operators to gather information regarding accessible features in business locations to aid in promotion for local, accessible and inclusive shopping and dining options in Downtown Oshawa. In addition, the results of the survey help to identify barriers within current brick and mortar locations providing City staff an opportunity to connect with operators to explore grant incentives that may support retrofits to their establishments.
- Business and Economic Development Services supported the Innovation and Transformation Department to launch the Ramp Pilot Program, led by the Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee and StopGap Foundation. The outcomes of this program will help Oshawa businesses make their entrances more accessible by providing free temporary, custom, portable ramps for up to ten businesses across Oshawa.
- In an effort to enhance gateway features upon entrance to the downtown area, City staff are in the process of replacing banner arms on the street lights to install rectangular beautification banners which will be more robust with wind and weather conditions.
- In the area of the recently completed King Street Phase 4 Streetscaping project, City staff will be installing gateway features on a trial basis to enhance the sidewalks, north and south sides, of King Street West between McMillan Drive and Centre Street South. This installation will occur in May 2024 and will include new flower planters that correspond with the colour palette in the Downtown Oshawa brand scheme, taller plants to support the installation and experience of temporary sidewalk patios and Downtown Oshawa gateway signage produced out of metal. It is anticipated that this installation may support slowing traffic in this area with more visual elements and also support noise mitigation efforts with the foliage selected in the planters.

Pillar Four: Social Experience

- Business and Economic Development Services staff introduced a weekly event roundup of programming and offerings across businesses, organizations and institutions that attract sizeable attendance 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 volumes, street cleaning and staffing needs.

- Oshawa City Council has supported the Convergence, Music and Art Festival, in Downtown Oshawa through financial contributions to expand upon major event offerings in the area. This festival was first held in September 23, 2023 and brought an estimated 14,000 individuals to the inaugural event. City staff continue to support planning and activations for the 2024 festival, being held on September 21, 2024.

Pillar Five: Communications

- Business and Economic Development Services staff have been actively marketing the Downtown Oshawa visual brand to demonstrate the value and quality product downtown. All social media metrics have increased on the Downtown Oshawa (DTO) Instagram account since the launch of the brand and continue to receive new followers and engagement with businesses in the downtown.
 - The DTO Instagram account has doubled its followers since the launch of the brand in 2022. The account is on track to surpass 5,000 followers this year.
 - The DTO Instagram account is tracking towards being the most followed downtown social media account in Durham Region.
 - According to Hootsuite, a social media management tool, a good engagement rate on social media posts is anywhere from 1% to 5%. The DTO Instagram account posts have consistently seen engagement levels between 6% and 7% since the launch of the brand in 2022.
- The aforementioned DTO 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.
 - Subscribers to the monthly newsletter have increased by 27% over the past 12 months and the open rate of this newsletter has increased by 188% over the same time period. Additionally, the click open rate on content within the newsletter has increased by 124% in the past year. This demonstrates the pertinent and quality content being curated for the subscribers.
 - In relation to newsletters, an overall industry click open rate is approximately 2%. The average click rate for the DTO newsletter content over the past 12 months is 6.8%.
- City staff have continued to work as a stakeholder with Oshawa Tourism to establish a robust and effective tourism strategy to enhance visitor attraction and general promotion, and advise on the implementation of the strategy. This strategy was

formally launched late in 2023. In addition to this collaborative work, City staff will be undertaking a review and update of the Culture Counts Plan in 2025.

- Section 5.2 of this Report discusses the proposed formation of a Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee as directed through Report DS-22-144.

Pillar Seven: Customer Service and Red Tape Reduction

- Business and Economic Development Services staff were actively engaged with Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services staff on the consultation and recommendations for the City's Business Licensing By-law, conducted through 2023 and 2024. Staff collaborated to introduce interim opportunities for reduced licensing costs for event organizers, which were ultimately enhanced and endorsed through Report SF-24-06. The outcomes of this Report also support Plan 20Thirty goals and actions found within Pillar Four, Social Experience.
- Action Item 2 within Pillar 7 recommended a concierge approach to servicing downtown business operators, developers and prospects. The Downtown and Business Development Manager achieves this approach by conducting on-site visits, as well as virtual meetings, which covers a wide range of services. This includes, but is not limited to, direct service to businesses for operating challenges, growth and expansion opportunities, site selection support, advice regarding the Community Improvement Plan grant programs and facilitating temporary sidewalk patio applications.
- An organizational restructure in terms of direct reporting in the Business and Economic Development Services has resulted in capacity building, allowing for a greater level of focus on strategic items directed by City Council through both Plan 20Thirty and the Oshawa Economic Development Strategy. This will be important in supporting the continued implementation of action items within the approved plans and strategies.

5.2 Plan20Thirty Steering Committee Formation

On June 20, 2022, through Report DS-22-144, City Council directed staff to 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.

Attachment 2 to this Report outlines the proposed Terms of Reference for a Plan20Thirty Steering Committee, including scope of work and responsibilities, membership and membership recruitment tactics.

The Plan20Thirty Steering Committee is contemplated to begin meeting in the Fall of 2024 following membership recruitment, and would remain active until December 2030 which is the time period in which Plan 20Thirty actions are proposed to be explored, evaluated and/or, completed.

Part of the scope of work proposed for the Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee is to recommend next steps to be considered beyond Plan 20Thirty, which would be brought

forward to City Council as part of the annual reporting process on the achievements within the Action Plan.

5.3 Areas of Focus for 2024-2025

Along with ongoing items that are planned for the 2024-2025 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:

- Formal launch of a City-wide Business Retention and Expansion program that will enhance business relationships and data collection across the downtown area, and wider City;
- Completing an Upper-Storey inventory for commercial operations in Downtown Oshawa and targeting specific supports, services and investment attraction efforts accordingly;
- Completing a review and update of the Culture Counts Plan;
- Continuing with targeted investment attraction campaigns for Downtown Oshawa to attract highest and best use to the area, and promote incentives such as the waiving of City development charges in the Urban Growth Centre; and,
- Recruitment for the proposed Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee and beginning an active cycle of meetings with this stakeholder group.

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, there could be a potential need for increased staffing capacity in the future as noted in Section 5.7 of Report DS-22-144 in order to efficiently deliver some of 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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Economic and Development Services Department

Terms of Reference Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee

1.0 Purpose

These Terms of Reference (“T.O.R.”) have been developed to guide the scope of the proposed Plan20Thirty Steering Committee which will endeavor to advise stakeholders and obtain feedback regarding the activities included within the Plan20Thirty Downtown Oshawa Revitalization Plan, hereafter referred to as “Plan 20Thirty”.

Plan 20Thirty reflects Downtown Oshawa’s current needs and has replaced previous downtown action plans and recommendations while maintaining the same overarching goals to improve and promote the area as a unique experience for working, living, going to school, shopping, dining and entertainment.

2.0 Background

2.1 Downtown Oshawa Strategic Plans: 2005 to Present

In 2005, a Downtown Oshawa Action Plan was created, which led to many significant developments that spurred economic activity. The Tribute Communities Centre (formerly General Motors Centre), the Durham Region Courthouse and a Downtown Campus for University of Ontario Institute of Technology (now “Ontario Tech University”) were among the most significant changes.

In late 2013, the City and recognized community leaders began meeting with an interest to advance a new Downtown Action Plan. This new plan would address current realities and trends to continue to maximize opportunities in the downtown and minimize negative trends and perceptions with the goal of creating a vibrant, attractive and animated downtown.

By early 2014, a core group of 41 stakeholders and staff were meeting regularly to discuss the future of downtown. These stakeholders included property owners and business owners, developers and representatives of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, the Downtown Business Improvement Area, financial institutions and the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce. The stakeholder committee was referred to as “Group 20Twenty”.

Plan 20Twenty was presented by staff to the then-Development Services Committee on September 8, 2014 as a result of these meetings. No outside consultants were used.

Plan 20Twenty was broadly divided into five areas of opportunity:

- Business Growth
- Residential Growth
- Physical Environment
- Social Experience
- Communications

On September 22, 2014, City Council approved Plan 20Twenty for downtown Oshawa as a guide for further revitalization of the downtown. Plan 20Twenty was a comprehensive and community led plan intended to create a vibrant, attractive animated downtown where people come together to live, work, shop, meet and engage.

In June 2021, Oshawa City Council approved Report DS-21-124 “Proposed Terms of Reference for Downtown Action Plan ‘Plan 20Thirty’”. Through July and August of 2021, staff activated a public call for committee participants and prepared Report DS-21-166 to appoint members and begin work for the development of Plan 20Thirty. Oshawa City Council appointed 13 members to the Plan 20Thirty committee that included representatives from the following sectors:

- Retail
- Cultural
- Culinary
- Professional Services

The committee also included downtown residents, downtown development industry representatives and institutional sector representatives from Ontario Tech University and the social services sector. A representation for the Personal Services sector was never filled. In February 2022, one of the Cultural Sector representatives stepped down and due to multiple appointments in this sector, and the upcoming culmination of the committee’s work, the position was not filled.

The Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee worked collaboratively over many months and endorsed the following vision statement to guide the development of Plan 20Thirty: “A balanced, lively and modern urban centre where all thrive.”

Plan 20Thirty introduced 7 key pillars of focus that are all centred around the vision of downtown Oshawa being a lively and modern urban centre where all thrive. The action items included in the plan have been established by the Plan 20Thirty committee in collaboration, and either validated or amended based off of public input through the Community Engagement process.

The seven key pillars within Plan 20Thirty are:

- Business Growth
- Residential Growth
- Physical Environment
- Social Experience
- Communications
- Modernization and Innovation
- Red Tape Reduction and Customer Service

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

A renewed Oshawa Strategic Plan (O.S.P.) is forthcoming in Q2 2024. It should be noted that Plan 20Thirty was reviewed as part of the formative work to propose the new O.S.P. and Plan 20Thirty Action items will continue to support the overarching strategic goals

outlined within the City's Strategic Plan. As of May 2024, the draft priority areas of the new O.S.P. include:

- Vibrant Culture and Economy;
- Inclusive and Healthy Community;
- Safe and Sustainable Environment; and,
- Governance and Service Excellence.

3.0 Goals and Objectives

The goal of the committee is to engage the business and stakeholder communities including the public in the oversight of Plan 20Thirty to guide the continued transformation of the City's downtown economy and its economic development activities over the next decade. This action plan is intended to improve upon the progress of Plan 20Twenty in advancing a vibrant, attractive and animated downtown where community members come together to live, work, shop, meet and engage.

The key objectives of Plan 20Thirty are:

- Business Growth
- Residential Growth
- Physical Environment
- Social Experience
- Communications
- Modernization and Innovation
- Red Tape Reduction and Customer Service

4.0 Proposed Scope of Work

Matters that the Steering Committee would need to consider include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Implementation of Plan20Thirty Actions;
- Adaptations to Actions to Meet Current State;
- Recommendations for Next Steps to be Considered Beyond Plan 20Thirty;
- Ambassadors of Positive Change and Revitalization in Downtown Oshawa; and,
- Communication and Information Sharing Tactics.

5.0 Plan 20Thirty Project Area

The project area for Plan 20Thirty is shown on Figure 1 of these T.O.R.

6.0 Deliverables

At the conclusion of the committee, it is expected that the following documents/deliverables will be completed:

- Annual report to City Council on Plan 20Thirty Outcomes; and,
- Recommendations for Next Steps to be Considered Beyond Plan 20Thirty

7.0 Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee

7.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee is to receive updates from staff on the achievements in Plan 20Thirty and advise on current state to ensure the actions are still appropriate to achieve the desired outcomes. As downtown stakeholders, all members will represent their respective sectors and institutions to ensure collective voices are heard throughout the entire process.

7.2 Membership

A Steering committee membership of stakeholders is recommended to be invited and engaged in the ongoing execution of Plan 20Thirty, consisting of, but not limited to:

City of Oshawa staff:

- Director, Business and Economic Development Services (Chair)
- Downtown and Business Development Manager
- Director, Operations Services
- Director, Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services
- Manager, Corporate Security

One (1) Business Representative from each of the following sectors:

- Retail
- Cultural
- Culinary
- Professional Services
- Personal Services

Members from the five business sectors would be limited to individuals who own property or operate a business within the area depicted on Figure 1.

Downtown Resident who lives within the area depicted on Figure 1. (1).

Downtown Institutional Sector Representatives (3):

- Ontario Tech University
- Trent University Durham GTA
- Social services sector

A team of City and Regional staff, on an as needed basis, is also recommended to act as technical support leads in respective areas of the Downtown:

- Economic and Development Services Department
- Engineering Services
- Planning Services
- Parks Planning and Development
- Recreation and Culture Services
- Operations Services

- Corporate Communications
- Oshawa Senior Citizens Centre
- Regional staff

7.3 Membership Selection Process

A membership application form and call for applicants would be featured on www.oshawa.ca and applications for membership will be obtained through a robust communications plan that includes a variety of communications tactics and channels, including: Oshawa.ca and City News and Alerts, Connect Oshawa, e-newsletters, social media and digital advertisements.

City Council will select the membership through a report from City staff to the Economic and Development Services Committee.

7.4 Meeting Schedule

The Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee is recommended to meet on a quarterly or as needed basis.

8.0 Next Steps

Next steps include the recruiting of steering committee members based on the sectors identified under Section 7.2 of this T.O.R.

9.0 Conclusion

Plan 20Thirty is a comprehensive, community led plan that will continue to recognize our commitment to a vibrant, attractive and animated downtown where people come together to live, work, shop, meet and engage. The action plan aims to respond to current challenges by providing realistic and achievable actions with room for modifications as the downtown Oshawa landscape continues to shift. Plan 20Thirty will be monitored for its progress, and changes will be made where necessary, with the input of the Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee, staff and City Council.

