

REPORT

Council

Meeting Date: September 19, 2022

FROM: Community Development Commission

DATE: September 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Downtown Cultural Hub Workplan Update 2022

LOCATION:

WARD: Ward 3

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That staff be directed to proceed with capital planning based on a dispersed model of new cultural facilities in the downtown area.
2. That staff be directed to include appropriate capital budget request for Council consideration in the 2023 budget process.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Downtown Cultural Hub Master Plan is one of two implementing strategies to achieve the vision and objectives articulated in the Downtown Plan. The second is the Downtown Transportation Plan.
- Planning for a Downtown Cultural Hub builds on the vision and objectives for the Downtown Plan.
- Council considered a plan for the Downtown Cultural hub that recommended approval of a dispersed model for facility planning with phased implementation of facilities and infrastructure.
- Key components of the plan include a new central library, new home for Oakville Galleries, a new performing arts centre, revised and renewed open spaces and comprehensive review of parking needs and structures.
- Staff are intending to initiate the detailed studies to address both the location and timing of cultural assets in 2023 subject to budget approval.
- Approval of the capital funding would allow the early completion of some cultural facilities by 2027.

BACKGROUND:

The Downtown Cultural Hub was birthed out of the Downtown Plan in order to move the Town closer to the vision articulated in the Downtown Plan. The vision described in the Downtown plan is:

“to create an attractive, active, animated and vibrant downtown where people come together to live, work, shop, meet and engage. It will be the cultural, social and economic heart of our community where citizens and visitors can celebrate and experience the natural setting, heritage, culture and the arts.”

The Plan set out five objectives to achieve this vision.

1. To contribute to a successful economically vibrant downtown
2. To create a cultural focus for the town in the downtown area
3. To provide facilities and infrastructure that meet existing and future needs
4. To protect and enhance the natural environmental and cultural heritage of downtown
5. To develop solutions that are financially sustainable

There were two components to implement the vision and objectives of the Downtown Plan. These were the Downtown Transportation Study and the Downtown Cultural Hub Master Plan. Each of these components require separate capital planning but contribute to the success of the Downtown Plan.

The Downtown Cultural Hub is intended to address the cultural focus objective directly and contribute in significant ways to achieving an economically vibrant downtown and the other stated objectives of the Downtown Plan.

In October 2015 the Master Plan for the Downtown Cultural Hub presented three options to Council for implementation of the Cultural Hub (see Appendix A). Options one and two involved renewing existing facilities. Option Three, however, offered the best opportunity to advance the vision and meet the objectives of the Downtown Plan.

Option Three – New Facilities on Centennial Square and Post Office Sites, involves the complete redevelopment of Centennial Square site and is based on a dispersed development model. This option has been the basis of capital planning to date.

In all options, Centennial Poll would be demolished.

Major open space areas identified in the Plan include a Navy Street Plaza and a new Riverfront Park on Centennial Square.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

It is recommended that capital planning be initiated in 2023, subject to Council approval of the capital budget. Capital planning will establish the staging, content and location of the facilities in the Master Plan.

In order to initiate the capital planning, Council is requested to approve a dispersed model of cultural facilities.

The dispersed model of facilities offers a better opportunity to attract to residential and commercial opportunities by spreading the benefit of the substantial investment throughout the Downtown area. Dispersing activity throughout the area allows a broader area (and business) to benefit from that activity. It has the potential to draw the largest number of patrons to the broadest possible area and establish the character of Downtown as, among other attributes, a place of culture.

The dispersed model also facilitates opportunities to utilize existing, municipally-owned assets more efficiently, thus providing more opportunity to mitigate significant cost pressure.

A dispersed model is also beneficial as a tool to help manage the staging of construction across a broader area, minimizing construction disruption to the greatest extent possible.

The implementation of the Downtown Cultural Hub is now at the capital planning and delivery stage. The specific location, timing, funding and staging plans will be launched as the next phase of the DCH implementation in 2023, subject to Council's consideration of the capital request in the 2023 budget process. A detailed parking needs study will also be required at an early stage to determine future parking needs with the intent of rationalizing downtown parking and aligning parking function, location and need by looking at all municipally-owned parking facilities.

It is recommended that staff proceed with capital planning of cultural infrastructure using a dispersed model. Staff are preparing a capital plan request for Council consideration as part of the 2023 budget.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

Extensive public engagement has gone into the development of the Downtown Cultural Hub Master Plan. The next phase of capital planning will engage key stakeholders in the facility design processes.

(B) FINANCIAL

Requirements to fund the planning and delivery of the DCH facilities will be considered through the annual Capital Budget process.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

N/A

(D) CORPORATE STRATEGIC GOALS

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal(s) to:

- Be the most livable town in Canada;
- Foster a community environment that engages residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds; and
- Protects greenspace and promotes environmentally sustainable practices.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

N/A

APPENDICES:

Appendix A. Downtown Cultural Hub Master Plan, Report to Council, October 5, 2015

Submitted by:

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