

## Appendix A



# **Downtown Plan**

## **Public Participation Plan**

December 2013–July 2014



## Background

# The Downtown Plan

The Downtown Plan is comprised of two studies — the Downtown Cultural Hub (DCH), and the Downtown Transportation and Streetscape (DTS).

The Downtown Cultural Hub Study will explore opportunities to create a downtown cultural and performing arts space including: a performing arts centre, art gallery, library, outdoor program space, and indoor cultural space or digital hub that will become the cultural, social, and economic heart of our community.

The Downtown Transportation and Streetscape Study will assess the current traffic and roadway conditions in downtown Oakville and create recommendations to enhance the roadways, beautify streets, improve pedestrian/cycle ways and revitalize the Towne Square, by introducing design standards as well as increasing connectivity, mobility and accessibility.

### **Why this project and why now?**

We have aging cultural facilities in the downtown area that do not meet accessibility and technical needs, and Lakeshore Road is at or near the end of its service life and needs to be reconstructed in the very near future. This is our chance to see how to best revamp or rebuild these buildings and create streets that not only sustain transportation, but create a sense of place.

### **Why public participation?**

The Downtown Plan is one of the Town of Oakville's largest planning, development and public engagement projects to date.

Public participation is critical to ensure we capture the needs and wants of the community, user groups, business owners and visitors. We've reached out to residents and business owners across the town to get their ideas and opinions. The feedback we've collected has been extremely valuable in preparing options for the Downtown Transportation and Streetscape Study and themes for the Downtown Cultural Hub Study.

This plan lays out the public participation process and event results for both studies.

### **Why stop now?**

Public participation will continue throughout 2014 to reach a preferred option for the Downtown Transportation and Streetscape Study including the Towne Square.

For the Downtown Cultural Hub Study, the public will be involved in early 2015 as we start to define the options.

## Strategy



## Public Participation

The objective of the public participation plan is to: **inform, consult and collaborate with stakeholders and the public throughout 2014 to establish options for the Downtown Transportation and Streetscape Study and to capture ideas for a new cultural hub.**

The public participation strategy ensured two things:

### 1. Branded the project as one entity

The two studies — the DCH and the DTS — were independent studies with their own set of goals and procedures, but both contributed to the over all Downtown Plan objectives. The Downtown Plan brand was created to help the public identify this massive project and to confirm that the town would ensure that neither project would be completed in isolation of one another. There was a great deal of overlap between the two studies and by bringing the work, the consultants and town staff together, we could better communicate the progress of each study to the public.

The Downtown Plan uniquely brought together six independent consulting firms that met and worked together, and with staff, to present the project to the public as a united front.

#### Consulting firms included:

Urban Strategies Inc. — Downtown Cultural Hub Study  
 Webb Management Services Inc. — Cultural, Performing Arts Study  
 BrookMcIlroy & Hatch Mott MacDonald — Downtown Transportation and Streetscape Study  
 ward99 architects — Library Study  
 J.C. Williams Group — Economic Analysis  
 MHPM Project Managers Inc. — Downtown Plan project management

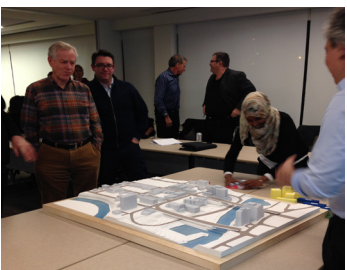
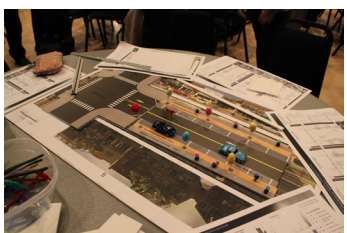
### 2. Avoided audience fatigue

In examining the audiences for each study, it quickly became apparent that they shared many of the same target audiences. To maximize the opportunity to reach out to as many residents business owners, and agencies as possible without duplicating efforts and causing the target audiences to be over-used, we created joint stakeholder, public meetings workshops and communication pieces for both studies under the Downtown Plan umbrella.

## Target Audiences



## Process



## Public Participation Techniques

The techniques used to engage the public focused on what we needed to receive from each group or individual. We used the best vehicles, both online and face-to-face, to allow the participants to freely share their needs and ideas, and discuss their concerns. The techniques used included:

### Online Discussion Forum

This online technique invited the public to post their ideas and comments in an open forum where other residents or business owners can comment or vote on the postings.

### Surveys

In consulting with the public and business owners, surveys were used to ask specific questions of targeted groups. The online surveys made it simple for people to voice their opinion and contribute by providing important information.

### Community Meetings

It was important to set up community meetings where anyone could attend to learn about the Downtown Plan. These meetings were set up at milestone intervals throughout the project. Two meetings were set up to inform the public while two were more collaborative engagement in the form of workshops. All consultants were present at each meeting.

### Presentations and Workshops

The hands-on technique of the workshops allowed residents and business owners to get a better understanding of the study details and allowed them to express their unique needs and wants. In addition to the public workshops, smaller workshops were introduced for the downtown BIA to better understand their specific needs.

### Stakeholder Meetings

The Downtown Plan has a number of vested stakeholder groups from users of the theatre and Downtown BIA merchants and property owners, to utility and environmental agencies to town staff. These meetings were conducted by the consultants either on their own or together if the stakeholder group was relevant to both studies.

### Community Leaders' Meetings

There was also a series of meetings with community leaders to discuss their group's specific needs or wants. These community groups included: the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, residents associations, Mayor's Roundtable, Downtown BIA executives, Heritage Committee, and Accessibility Committee.

### Focus Group

Public participation is about obtaining the public's view point. In order to discover the pulse of the community. A focus group was formed to act as a sounding board for the project team. The focus group was comprised of residential, cultural and business leaders in the sectors of performing arts, cycling, residents associations, the arts, library, galleries and business. The Focus Group assisted in both gaging the public's perspective of the project initiatives and sharing project information with their groups.

## Process

## Communications

Several vehicles were used to communicate with and collect information from the public and business owners including: the town's website, e-newsletters, email invites, flyer distribution, newspaper stories and advertisements, news releases, and social media.

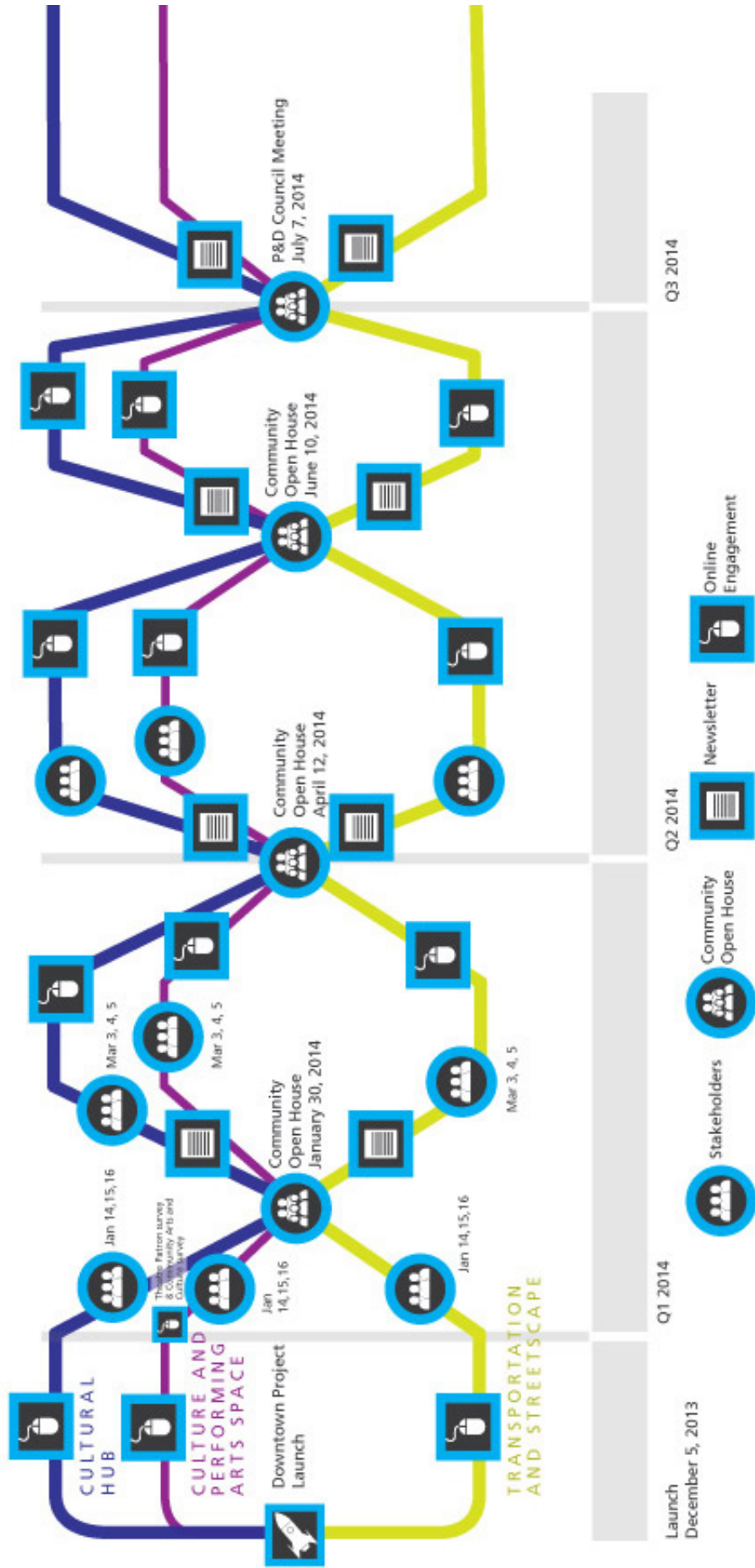
## Online Engagement

Item	Description
<b>Website - oakville.ca</b>	The town's website is a resource for all things Downtown Plan; from videos of all the community meetings for those who could not attend, and surveys, to newsletter sign-ups and contact information.
<b>E-Newsletter / E-vites</b>	An electronic newsletter was created to keep subscribers up-to-date on the Downtown Plan and to receive notices of upcoming meetings and engagement opportunities. The electronic invites made it easy for people to click and RSVP. Twelve e-newsletters were sent between November 20, 2013 and June 27, 2014 to almost 1,600 people who have subscribed to the e-newsletter to date.
<b>Discussion Forum</b>	An open discussion forum was hosted on the town's website, inviting residents to post their ideas and comments or vote in support of someone else's ideas or comments. The top two comments garnering the most votes were: Make the streets more pedestrian-friendly; and Give people better access to the waterfront/creek area.
<b>Surveys</b>	<p>We had two kinds of surveys posted online: 1) public posting that was open to the general public and 2) private posting for a targeted audience. All surveys produced information that gave insight into the public's opinion on specific subjects pertaining to the Downtown Plan.</p> <p><b>Surveys:</b> Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts Audience Survey — Private, 463 respondents Arts and Culture Community Survey — Public, 213 respondents Oakville Public Library Survey — Private, 2,123 respondents Stakholder Surveys — Private, 20 groups responded Downtown Merchant and Landlord Survey — 69 respondents</p>
<b>Engagement Map</b>	A public engagement map was posted to the website which allowed the public to click on the icons to get information on past, current or future engagement opportunities. See image on page 7.





# Public Engagement Opportunities



## Face-to-Face Engagement

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Item/Description</b>
July 17, September 12, October 18, November 22, 2013	<b>Focus Group Meeting</b>	initiated Focus Group meetings prior to launch.
December 5, 2013	<b>Community Meeting Project Launch</b>	The public launch of the project introduced Oakville residents and business owners to the two studies. Close to 400 people attended the presentation in the main theatre at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. A presentation was followed by an audience Q&A to a panel of study consultants and invited guests.
January 14, 15, 16, 2014	<b>Stakeholder Meetings</b>	Stakeholders identified in the target audiences were invited to meet with the consultants, in small groups, to discuss the needs and wants of their specific groups in creating a cultural hub and/or for the streetscape. The discussions ran over three days and several cultural and business groups were invited. See list of Stakeholders on page 11.
January 15, 2014	<b>Sheridan College Meeting</b>	Met with Sheridan College to discuss possible opportunities with Downtown Plan
January 15, 2014	<b>Resident Association Meeting</b>	Invited all resident associations to meet and share information on the Downtown Plan
January 24, 2014	<b>Focus Group Meeting</b>	Met with Focus Group to review presentation for January community workshop.
January 30, 2014	<b>Community Workshop</b>	The first community workshop was held to update the public on the Performing Arts Spaces Study findings, study outline for both DTS and DCH, and to ask them about their needs and wants for the cultural hub and streetscape. This workshop also shared what the consultants heard from the January stakeholder meetings. Close to 150 people participated.
February 20, 2014	<b>Oakville Public Library Board Meeting</b>	Attended the board meeting to update on the Downtown Plan
February 26, 2014	<b>Downtown Business Owners Meeting</b>	Coming out of the January workshop, it was clear that the business community and the general public had different needs. To better understand the business community's perspective, we held a downtown business owners' meeting. Almost 50 merchants and landowners attended to voice their concerns and ideas.
February 28, 2014	<b>Focus Group Meeting</b>	Met with Focus Group prior to the Stakeholder meetings.
March 3,4,6, 2014	<b>Stakeholder Meetings</b>	The second round of stakeholder meetings were with selected groups of stakeholders* to get more details about their needs.
March 4, 2014	<b>Citizen Group</b>	Met with a citizen's group proposing digital hub/incubation space.
March 25, 2014	<b>BIA Annual General Meeting</b>	The Downtown Plan project team was invited to speak at the BIA AGM.
March 25, 2014	<b>JCRA Annual General Meeting</b>	We met with the Joshuas Creek Residents Association to present the Downtown Plan at their Annual General Meeting.
March 28, 2014	<b>Focus Group Meeting</b>	Met with the Focus Group* to outline the April workshop.
April 1, 2014	<b>Resident Association Meeting</b>	Held a meeting with resident associations to present an update on the Downtown Plan.



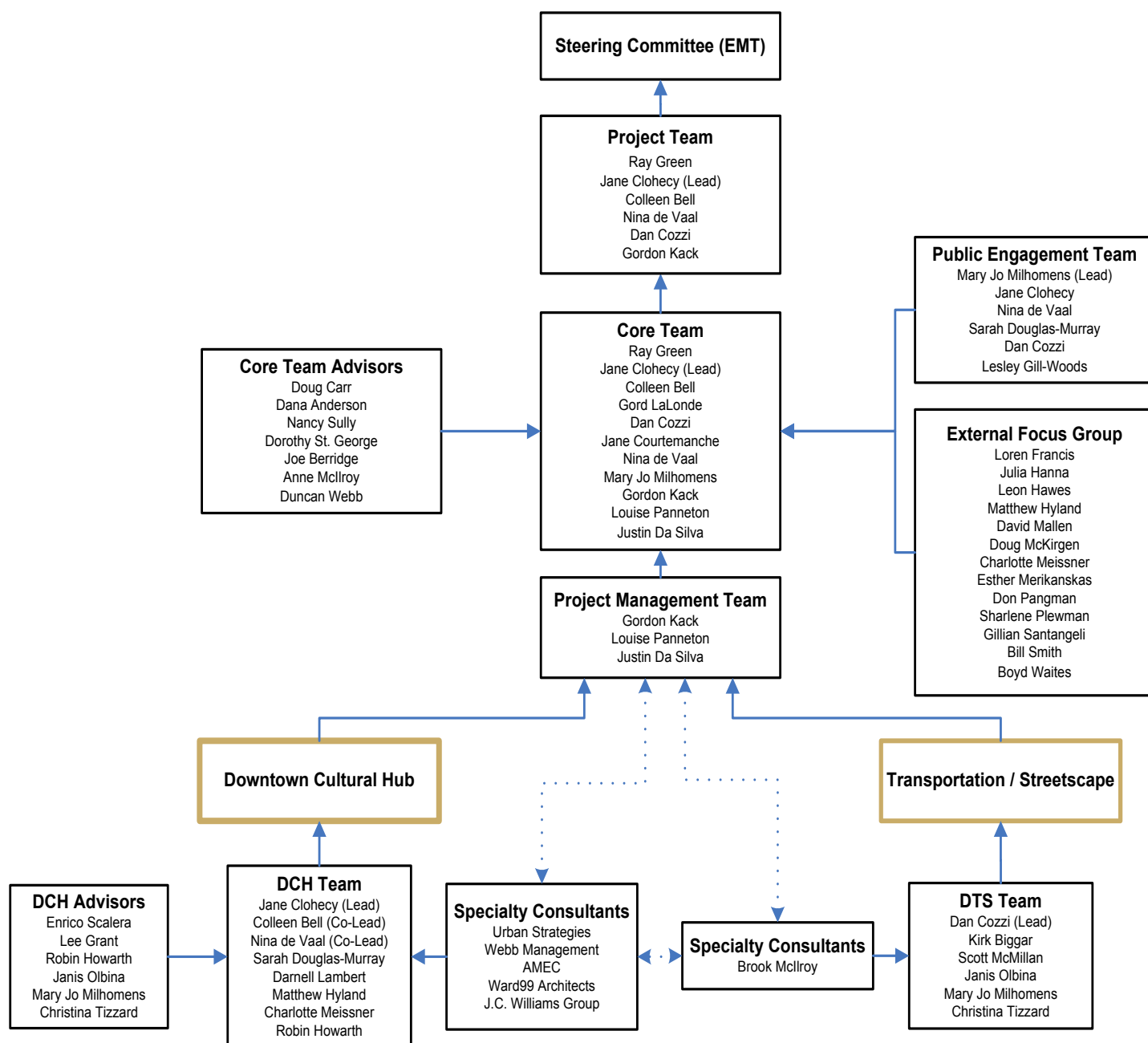
April 1, 2014	<b>Heritage Committee Meeting</b>	Updated the Heritage Committee on the Downtown Plan	
April 3, 2014	<b>Oakville Public Library Board Meeting</b>	Met with board members to update them on the Downtown Plan	
April 9, 2014	<b>Downtown BIA/Business Workshop</b>	Created a workshop specifically for businesses. About 50 business owners attended.	
April 10, 2014	<b>Oakville Chamber of Commerce</b>	Met with the Government Relations/Advocacy Committee to update them on the Downtown Plan	
April 12, 2014	<b>Community Workshop</b>	The second community workshop was a hands-on event with over 160 people in attendance. Residents had an opportunity to participate in both a DCH and DTS workshop.	
April 25, 2014	<b>Focus Group Meeting</b>	Met with Focus Group to follow up on April community workshop.	
May 12, 2014	<b>Oakville Hydro</b>	Met with Oakville Hydro senior management to present DCH and DTs and discuss opportunity for energy conservation	
May 22, 2014	<b>Conservation Halton Board</b>	Met with the board to present an update on the Downtown Plan	
May 22, 2014	<b>OLRA Annual General Meeting</b>	Met with the Oakville Lakeside Residents Association at their AGM to share an update on the Downtown Plan and next steps	
May 29, 2014	<b>Oakville Public Library Board Meeting</b>	At this meeting, we shared the Downtown Plan vision, objectives and evaluation framework as well as the cultural hub components in preparation for the June community meeting.	
May 30, 2014	<b>Focus Group Meeting</b>	This meeting was a preview of the June 10 community meeting.	
June 2, 2014	<b>Galleries Board Meeting</b>	This meeting was a preview of the June 10 community meeting.	
June 3, 2014	<b>Downtown BIA Meeting</b>	This meeting was a preview of the June 10 community meeting.	
June 10, 2014	<b>Oakville Chamber of Commerce</b>	Met with the Government Relations/Advocacy Committee and other committee members to update them on the Downtown Plan	
June 10, 2014	<b>Community Meeting</b>	The final community meeting for this phase of the project introduced the three options for the Transportation and Streetscape Study, as well as a detailed look at the themes for the Cultural Hub Study. It also laid out the critical next steps for the project. Just over 300 people attended the presentation set in the main theatre at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. The presentation was followed by an audience Q&A with over 50 questions submitted.	
June 20, 2014	<b>Focus Group Meeting</b>	The final meeting for the focus group for this phase. The group decided it was beneficial to continue and will reconvene in September 2014.	
June 20, 2014	<b>Citizen Culture Group</b>	Met with a citizen's group proposing digital hub/incubation space.	
June 25, 2014	<b>Mayor's Roundtable Meeting</b>	The meeting provided an update to this group on the June 10 meeting and next steps for the project.	
July 7, 2014	<b>Council</b>	Council will be asked to receive the Downtown Plan, DCH and DTS staff reports and to endorse next steps to move the studies into the next phase.	
July 9, July 23, December 3, 2013	<b>Conservation Halton</b>	Staff met with Conservation Halton staff early on in the project to introduce the DCH project, followed by meetings to identify any major issues/concerns and presented AMEC's geotechnical work plan for review and discussion.	

## Internal Engagement

## Staff Participation

Staff participation and coordination in the Downtown Plan is vital to the ongoing progress of this project. Staff members from across the corporation are involved on a number of teams. The following organizational chart for the Downtown Plan demonstrates the extent to which this project reached across departments. A total of 24 staff members form the Downtown Plan teams with additional staff as support.

Meetings were held in person or by phone to maximize efficiencies and time.



Stakeholders

Stakeholder  
Groups

Focus Group

Arts Council  
Oakville Symphony Orchestra  
Cycling  
Arts  
Business  
Resident Associations  
Galleries  
Library  
Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts

Council & Committees

Heritage Advisory Committee  
Accessibility Committee  
Community Roundtable  
Resident Associations

Town Staff Groups

Mayor and Town Council Members  
Parks and Open Space  
Economic Development  
Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts  
Roads and Works  
Engineering and Construction  
Recreation and Culture  
Planning Services  
Oakville Museum  
Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre  
Oakville Transit  
Parking Services  
Oakville Public Library Board  
Oakville Galleries Board

Regional and Agency Groups

Emergency Services  
Halton Region  
Conservation Halton  
Utility Groups

Business Groups

Downtown BIA Executive  
Downtown BIA members  
Oakville Chamber of Commerce  
Sheridan College  
Oakville Toursim  
Appleby College

Resident Associations

19 groups + Water Street Stakeholders

Community Theatre Groups

3 groups

Musical Groups

15 groups

Dance School Groups

9 groups

Art Groups

28 groups

