

Staff Report CAO2023-07

Committee of the Whole 2023-06-05

Council 2023-06-19

Amendments ☐

Submitted To: Committee of the Whole / Council

Submitted By: Sonya Skinner, CAO and Sara Almas, Director of Legislative Services / Clerk

Subject: Strategic Planning & Downtown Plan Next Steps

Recommendation

THAT Staff Report CAO2023-07, Strategic Planning and Downtown Plan Next Steps, be received;

AND THAT Council authorize proceeding with a Request for Proposal for the development of an effective high-level Community Based Strategic Plan in a phased approach with the Downtown Visioning and Plan development;

AND THAT Council support establishing a Steering Committee that will include up to 4 members of Council, key staff members and stakeholders/community members as deemed appropriate to assist in leading the market research survey, and the development of the Strategic Plan and Downtown Plan;

Amendments

None.

1. Executive Summary

The Community Based Strategic Plan (CBSP) is a vitally-important guiding document which sets and communicates Collingwood's community vision, and identifies important goals and objectives. The plan is a catalyst for plotting new directions and inspiring higher performance. It is important for all Councils at the beginning of their term to review their priorities and work with the community in setting the Strategic Plan and

identifying their vision for the Council term and the future of the municipality.

Collingwood's current 2020 – 2023 CBSP allows the new Council time to 'get their feet wet' and provide them the time to evaluate their priorities and determine the community needs and vision.

This report reviews the various plans that Collingwood utilizes and how they interact with each other, and recommends the next steps as Council embarks on their strategic planning process with the community, and focusing on a higher level approach in setting a vision, goals and objectives. A higher level approach will provide the direction needed to guide Council decisions and staff actions, while continuing with a number of active plans and the proposed Downtown visioning exercise. These will feed into a more detailed workplan that will be included in the Operational Plan as key performance Indicators as Council moves forward this term. Including the Downtown Plan as part of the consultants phased approach will also create efficiencies, synergies and alignment of these two critically important Plans. A Steering Committee that includes members of Council and staff will assist the consultants in leading this project.

The report also reviews the status and expectation of the statistically significant survey approved by Council and the importance of community input on their current level of satisfaction and desires for the municipality. This will assist in better benchmarking key community indicators for future evaluation and inform the development of the Plan(s).

2. Analysis

Background

Collingwood's Plans & Integration

Successful municipalities are those where Council, staff and the public work together as a team to achieve identified goals. A critical component to achieving those goals is developing a plan and ensuring all stakeholders have a clear understanding and acceptance of what and how that plan and its goals can be realized. The current 2020 – 2023 Community Based Strategic Plan (CBSP) has identified a vision and set of goals

and objectives that Council and Staff have been actively completing to ensure a community where 'People Thrive Here – Live More Now'. The CBSP assists in guiding Council's budget deliberations and guides updates of Master Plans, and ultimately the Operational Plan which is a database of all the key projects, Council directions, infrastructure work, etc. that includes the lead division, and all the supports, procurement/IT needs, communication requirements, progress status, and timelines. The Operational Plan essentially provides the corporate 'workplan' as a collaboration

and measurement tool that gives staff control and information in updating work, and provides transparency to Council, Staff and most importantly the public.

It is important to note that this plan does not cover all the expected daily responsibilities that staff undertake, which are fully incorporated into the Town's



Programs and Services framework (under development). Additionally, the Town maintains a complex Multi-year Financial Plan that incorporates key projects, infrastructure and Services delivery, renewal and expansion needs, cash flows, reserves, debt and more for all programs and services.

The Operational and Financial Multi-year Plans need to align with the CBSP and need to be critically and appropriately managed based on allocation of resources, both financial and staff, to ensure the best use of tax/ratepayer dollars. All three Plans work together to *'support Council and community decisions that are progressive, accountable and sustainable, protecting and leveraging Collingwood's core strengths.'*¹

Budget Approval

During the 2023 Budget Deliberations, Council approved the allocation of \$55,000 to retain the professional expertise of a strategic planning consultant and an expertise to

¹ Collingwood's Community Based Strategic Plan

undertake a statistically significant survey. Collingwood retained a professional consultant in 2015 to undertake a comprehensive strategic plan development process, that was refreshed by the previous Council, through Council and community consultation.

The RFQ for the market research statistically significant study has closed, with several bidders and under the estimated cost. Award has not been announced and due diligence review is nearing completion.

Kick-Off Strategic Plan / Multi-year Planning Session

On May 8, 2023 during the Special Council meeting the Community-based Strategic Plan and Multi-year Planning Kickoff Workshop was facilitated by CAO Skinner. The workshop introduced the 4 year+ thinking and highlighted several questions about immediate Council priorities, intentions for a community-based plan, and sequence options for delivery. The discussion highlighted the need to determine if the timing of various projects should be better refined based on priorities and projects where outcomes could influence the timing of other initiatives.

Current Plans and Projects

Currently, the Town of Collingwood has a number of major projects and initiatives underway that will have significant impact on the future decisions of this Council, including financially and to ensure that the best information is available to Council as they make decisions. Significant projects include the Official Plan Refresh, Collingwood Grain Terminal Revitalization Project, Arts & Culture Centre Phase 3 (architecture, design, sponsorship and engineering), Affordable Housing Masterplan, Transportation Masterplan, Asset Management Plan (AMP) for Non-Core Assets and Complied AMP for all assets, Multi-Use Recreation Centre Study, the Water Treatment Plant Expansion, the Wastewater Inflow and Infiltration Study and Treatment Plant expansion. There are also relevant projects by others, such as the hospital and the BIA.

Additionally, the Town recognizes the importance of the Downtown in maintaining a rich and vibrant community culture. There are a number of major decisions and projects that

will have an impact on the future of our Downtown Historical District, such as the proposed Arts & Culture Centre, Grain Terminal Redevelopment linkages, acquisition and future use of 84 Hurontario Street, Official Plan, completion of the Monaco Development, public realm plan, decisions regarding a Multi Use Recreation Facility that may have impacts on the future of the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena, etc... Council and staff have recognized the importance of undertaking a Downtown visioning exercise to ensure that the future of our core is thoughtfully and purposefully developed to meet the future needs and demands. It was scheduled to commence in 2024. However, these substantial projects and results of the various plans will have a significant impact on limited available financial and human resources of the municipality, and will be important and difficult decisions required by this Council in how the community moves forward. It's also important to note that the new BIA Board of Management is embarking upon their strategic plan work and the development of a Downtown Plan would help them understand the Town and Community vision for the future of the Downtown Core and will be beneficially on how best to manage their activities and resources. The BIA Board and membership will be keep stakeholders in the development of a Downtown Plan.

Next Steps

As approved by Council in the 2023 Budget, Staff have drafted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the next 4 year Community Based Strategic Plan that will be issued shortly. However, following the workshop and feedback received from the Special Meeting of Council held May 8th, 2023, the timing and impacts of the various projects was highlighted. It is very important that this Council works with the community to establish a Strategic Plan early in their term to properly guide the thoughtful decisions that will be required. Previous Strategic Plans have included specific and detailed workplan actions, in addition to the vision, goals and objectives. Staff have researched a number of municipal Strategic Plans and best practices, which range from highly complex and detailed, to plans that provide a high level guide and overarching approach to the community's visions, goals and objectives.

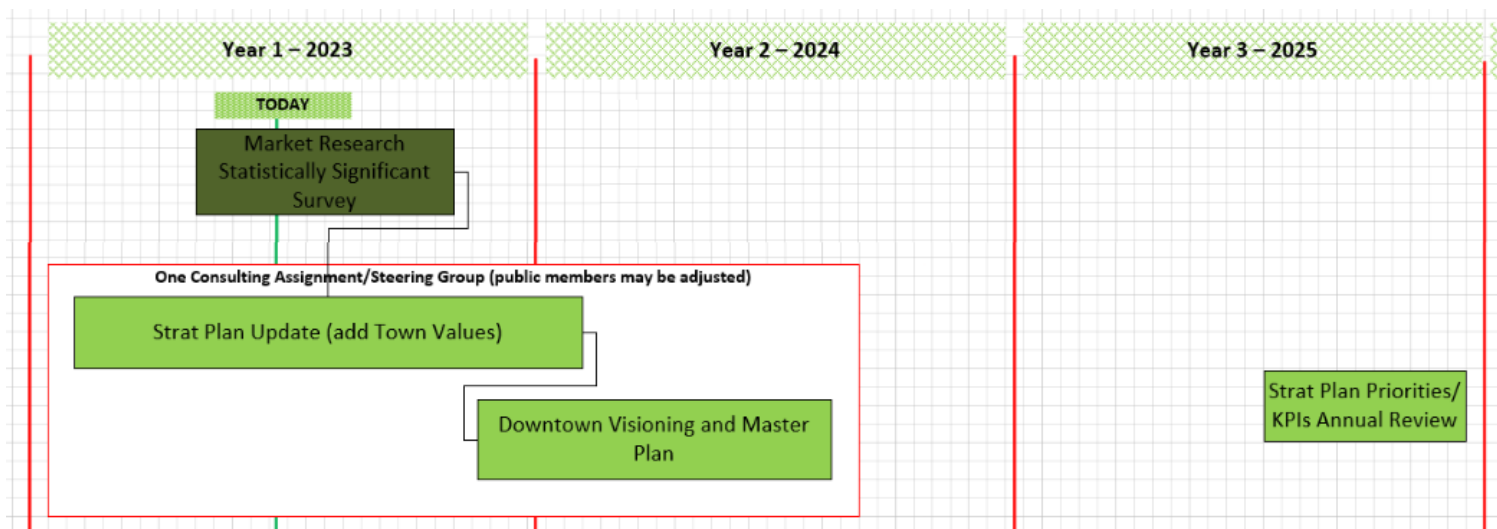
Understanding that Collingwood has a number of significant projects and plans underway that will impact future decisions and resources, staff believe that most appropriate and beneficial Strategic Plan approach includes an update of the Vision and the addition of Town Values, and should further identify the key priorities or projects for action for the next four years. Further, the Vision for the community and priorities for action can be annually reviewed during budget deliberations to reflect actions and key performance indicators that will be proposed in the 2023+ Strategic Plan. Plan. This approach will provide Council the flexibility to pivot resources as determined most prudent as they align with the guidance of a higher level Strategic Plan.

Further, this approach should be tied to the Downtown visioning exercise which would lead to a thoughtful and cohesive Downtown Master Plan. Combining the work of the Strategic Planning Consultant and the Downtown Plan Consultant would create efficiencies and eliminate redundancies that each consultant would be required to undertake in their environmental scan and background research, community consultations and engagement, and ensure there is an alignment in the future vision of the community as a whole and the vision of our vibrant downtown. It would also ensure the timeliness of the plans should Council decide to move forward with Phase 3 of the Arts & Culture Feasibility Study.

Recommendation:

It is important that members of Council be involved in leading this important project that will guide the future vision and decision making of Collingwood. It is recommended that Council authorize proceeding with the Request for Proposals for an effective high level Strategic Plan together with a phased approach to proceed with the Downtown Plan with the scope to conclude the Strategic Plan by early 2024 and the Downtown Plan to be completed by the end of the second quarter of 2024. Pre-budget approval would be required as the additional work would be allocated from the 2024 budget. The estimated budget for both projects is expected to be in the range of \$75,000 (excluding the Market Research statistically-significant survey), with an anticipated cost savings, quality and continuity improvements combining the projects.

Staff are also recommending that the up to 4 Council members assist in leading a steering committee together with key staff and the opportunity to invite key stakeholders an/or community members from time to time as needed to assist in the project as deemed appropriate. Most meetings would be virtual and the steering committee working closely with the Market Research Consultants for the survey as well as the consultants retained to complete the Plans.



Financial Impacts

The 2023 budget allocates \$55,000 for the Market Research Survey and the Strategic Plan Consultant. An additional \$50,000 will be required from the 2024 budget to include the Downtown Plan. If there is a significant cost differential, staff would return to Council for further consideration per policy.

3. Input from Other Sources

This report was reviewed by Department Heads and recommended to proceed to Committee of the Whole/Council.

4. Considerations

- ☒ Community Based Strategic Plan: Progresses towards achieving CBSP Goal
- ☐ Services adjusted if any
- ☐ Climate Change / Sustainability: [Choose an item.](#)

- ☒ Communication / Engagement: Public Engagement required
- ☐ Accessibility / Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: Consistent with Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- ☐ Registered Lobbyist(s) relating to content: No Applicable

Next steps and future action required following endorsement: Staff to proceed with finalizing and issuing the RFP, and seek interest from members of Council to participate on the Steering Committee

6. Appendices and Other Resources

Resources: [Collingwood Community Based Strategic Plan \(2020-2023\)](#)

7. Approval

Prepared By:

Sara Almas, Director of Legislative Services / Clerk

Reviewed By:

Sonya Skinner, CAO

CAO Comments: Endorsed to proceed to COW/Council