



inspire. connect. protect.

Downtown Oakville Strategic Action Plan

During the public engagement process for the Livable Oakville Plan, downtown Oakville was consistently at the forefront of conversations with the community, town staff and Town Council. A number of issues and concerns were raised through this process and the Downtown Oakville Strategic Review was the response.

The review's public engagement program included six months of consultation, research and community collaboration with diverse stakeholder groups, including business and residents' associations, property owners, members of council, and the public. Over 100 participants representing nearly 30 interest groups participated in the process, and 48 property owners in the study area responded to a confidential on-line survey.

The resulting Downtown Oakville Strategic Action Plan produced by this review will guide change in the downtown by building on the success of previous plans and building on the strengths of the area's existing features. The plan addresses critical factors including cultural heritage, urban design and streetscape, public facilities, economics, transportation, and sustainability.

Take a look inside for a brief overview of the strategic initiatives and key actions outlined in the Downtown Oakville Strategic Action Plan.

Inspire

Stakeholders and the public were inspired to participate in a review to help create a strategic action plan that will guide the future of downtown Oakville for the next 20 years.

Connect

Through comprehensive public engagement, the Downtown Oakville Strategic Action Plan brings together factors, interests, and opportunities that will enable downtown Oakville to realize its full potential.

Protect

The plan explores opportunities to evolve, while protecting those environmental, social, economic and historical elements that make downtown a special destination for residents and visitors.



Strategic initiatives for the future

The following is a brief overview of the strategic initiatives and key actions outlined in the Downtown Oakville Strategic Action Plan.

Vision

While downtown Oakville is identified as a Growth Area, new development is to recognize and enhance the existing vibrant mix of commercial, residential, cultural and institutional uses which contribute to its unique heritage character and sense of place.

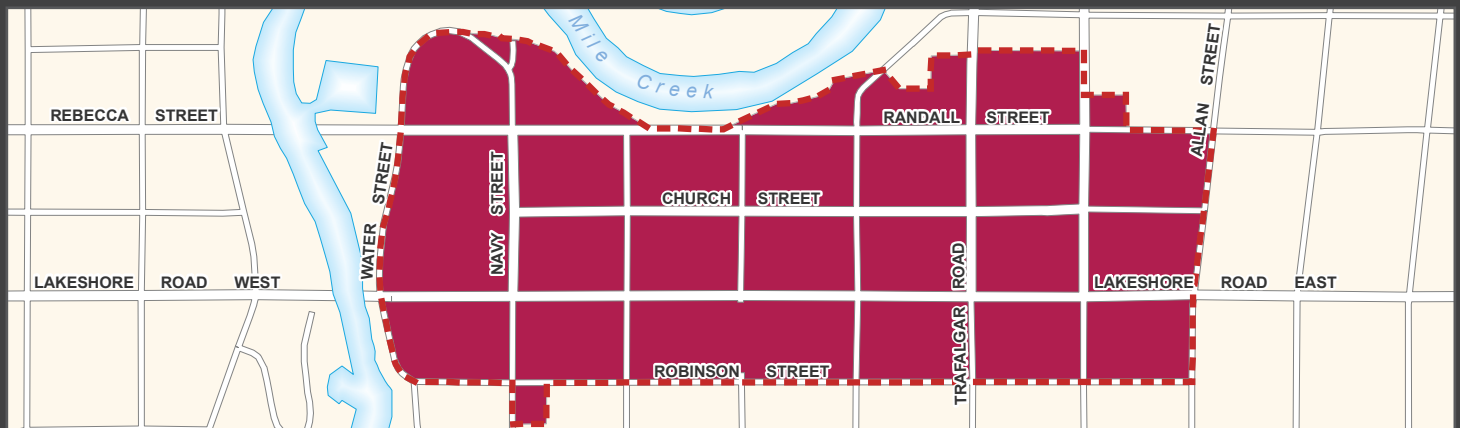
Goal

Downtown Oakville will remain a major downtown area for the town, providing a broad variety of commercial, office, entertainment, cultural and residential uses.

Objectives

- Maintain the downtown as a vibrant pedestrian-oriented mixed use centre
- Achieve a high quality level of urban design
- Protect and enhance the historic importance of the downtown

The Downtown Oakville Strategic Action Plan **confirms the vision** for downtown established in the town's official plan — the Livable Oakville Plan, and **provides a plan** for the future.





Urban design guidelines

What: Develop urban design guidelines that reflect the values, history, and 'look and feel' of downtown Oakville.

The intent of these urban design guidelines will be to provide specific direction and guidance as private lands are evaluated through the development process.

Why: This initiative implements the Livable Oakville Plan and connects with the heritage conservation district initiative. It also occurs in conjunction with the Zoning By-law Review and overhaul of the site plan process.

Who: The town will lead this initiative with input from downtown property owners and the Business Improvement Area.

When: Implementation will take one to two years.

Centennial Square facilities

What: Plan the revitalization of Centennial Square facilities (Central Library, Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, and Centennial Pool) as a mixed-use cultural precinct and major open space feature.

Why: The intent of this initiative is to use existing and future public facilities to maximize sustainable, accessible, inviting and connected public spaces. This will include expanding the scope of the feasibility study for the Oakville Centre for Performing Arts into a Centennial Square feasibility study. This initiative will also be informed by the upcoming Parks, Recreation, and Library Master Plan update and links directly to the downtown culture initiative.

Who: The town will lead this initiative with input from various stakeholders.

When: Implementation will take three to five years.



➔ Accessibility and safety

- What:** Complete an audit of the accessible and barrier-free environments of the public realm in downtown Oakville. Provide outreach and education in order to foster understanding in the private sector.
- Why:** The intent of this initiative is to provide a summary of current conditions and assist in creating an appreciation of the implications of emerging regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its relationship to other statutes.
- Who:** The town will lead this initiative with input from the Business Improvement Area and property owners.
- When:** Implementation will take three to five years.

➔ Tools and incentives

- What:** Leverage additional tools and incentives in downtown Oakville.
- Why:** Various mechanisms for implementation are available and will be used as required to maximize benefits. These include a Community Improvement Plan, funding from the Heritage Incentive Fund and consideration of rationalizing the Business Improvement Area boundaries with other area boundaries.
- Who:** The town will lead with support from appropriate stakeholders as required.
- When:** Implementation will take three to five years.

➔ Transportation, access and mobility

What: Evaluate the design and function of the transportation elements of downtown Oakville and recommend improvements to the public realm.

Why: The intent of this initiative is to study existing mobility conditions and develop options for balanced and alternative uses to meet other transportation, urban design and environmental objectives. Considerations will include street furniture, patios, vibrancy, tree habitat, cycling, walking, accessibility, and converting one-way streets to two-way streets. The role of parking and traffic will be considered in a broader context that includes other uses such as bike parking, street patios, and the future of the Church Street municipal lots. This initiative informs the anticipated Lakeshore Road resurfacing work and links to the urban design guidelines initiative.

Who: The town will lead this initiative with input from various stakeholders.

When: Implementation will take one to two years.

➔ Downtown culture

What: Review the role and function of municipal cultural facilities and activities in the downtown and define policies for use, reuse and/or redevelopment of cultural facilities.

Why: The intent of this initiative is to reinforce the direction for downtown Oakville as a major cultural hub. The downtown culture initiative will have a major stakeholder component that brings together various cultural directions including the Cultural Plan, the current Parks, Recreation, Culture and Library Master Plan and the report from the Creative Oakville Mayor's Advisory Group. This initiative also links directly to the Centennial Square facilities initiative.

Who: The town will lead this initiative with input from cultural stakeholders as well as downtown residents' associations, property owners and the Business Improvement Area.

When: Implementation will take three to five years.



➔ Retail strategy

What: Examine appropriateness of the existing retail mix, define gaps and opportunities, and promote ways of intensifying commercial activity.

Why: The intent of the retail strategy will be to sustain a robust economic environment. It will provide the necessary focus and support for other actions related to business recruiting as well as tourism, branding, marketing and signage initiatives.

Who: The Business Improvement Area will lead this initiative with support from the downtown property owners. The town will assist with inventory and mapping of assets.

When: Implementation will take one to two years.

➔ Towne Square

What: Complete a re-evaluation study of Towne Square as a major public gathering place.

Why: The intent is to revitalize this major downtown public open space. Considerations will include an examination of existing physical elements and the relationship to adjacent land uses, the possibility of increasing the amount of public open space, and linking open space to

current and future public facilities. This initiative will be informed by the upcoming Parks, Recreation, and Library Master Plan update and the links directly to downtown culture strategic initiative.

Who: The town will lead this initiative with support from the Business Improvement Area, property owners and residents' associations as required.

When: Implementation will take three to five years.

➔ Youth initiatives

What: Plan and define appropriate youth friendly activities and places for youth.

Why: It is important to plan for all members of the community. Providing youth friendly places such as improved library space and informal recreational areas benefits the entire community. This initiative will feed into the upcoming Parks, Recreation, and Library Master Plan update and links directly to the Centennial Square facilities initiative.

Who: The town will lead this initiative with support from youth stakeholders.

When: Implementation will take three to five years.





• → **Communications and coordination**

What: Investigate models for coordination of various functions in downtown Oakville.

Why: To ensure that downtown Oakville has the opportunity to implement best practices from other municipalities including models for staffing, steering groups, by-law enforcement, inspections and streamlining various processes. Consideration will include monitoring activities and impacts of interventions, and implementation of regular reporting. This initiative will link to the retail strategy initiative.

Who: The town will lead with input from the Business Improvement Area, property owners and residents' associations as required.

When: Implementation will take three to five years.

• → **Heritage conservation district**

What: Undertake the process to designate downtown Oakville as a heritage conservation district.

Why: This initiative will see the development of tools to identify and maintain the heritage importance of the downtown. The downtown Oakville heritage conservation district plan will celebrate and recognize the heritage character of the area. A plan may also include provisions for infrastructure, public works and the streetscape. This initiative will link directly to the urban design guidelines strategic initiative. Implementing such

a plan will provide for consistent review and coordination of building improvements and redevelopment to retain and conserve cultural heritage resources, significant buildings and façades in downtown Oakville. While a heritage conservation district plan is regulatory in nature, it can also provide incentives and can be designed in a way that does not impede economic development initiatives.

Who: The town will lead this initiative with input from downtown property owners, heritage stakeholders, and the Business Improvement Area.

When: Implementation will take one to two years.

• → **Post Office, 197 Church Street**

What: Undertake a study to evaluate options for the role and future use of the Post Office site.

Why: Securing a large contiguous site such as this could provide many benefits for downtown Oakville. Discussion to include how this site will fit in with other facilities in downtown Oakville and the relationship to municipal parking demand. This initiative links directly to the downtown culture, Centennial Square facilities and the transportation, access, and mobility initiatives.

Who: The town will lead this initiative.

When: Implementation will take one to two years.

Actions on strategic initiatives already undertaken

Strategic initiative

Action

Strategic area: policies and resources support

Pedestrian-friendly downtown: review all ways and means of ensuring that safe pedestrian activity is encouraged in downtown	Ongoing implementation of Active Transportation Master Plan
Tourism strategy: consolidate existing plans and implement a tourism strategy for downtown Oakville	Completion of Oakville Tourism Partnership's business plan for tourism
Downtown public art policy: develop policy to ensure that the downtown is a showcase for the town's public art policy	Implementation of Livable Oakville policies and Cultural Plan
Financial incentives: create/promote financial incentives to assist with the appropriate development of the downtown	Ongoing action through the tools and incentives strategic initiative
Accommodation: encourage the development of a greater number and variety of accommodation types in the downtown	Market response governed by Livable Oakville policies

Strategic area: site redevelopment projects

Reuse of the Odeon Theatre: examine for possible use as cultural facility	Market response governed by Livable Oakville policies
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Strategic area: communications and marketing projects

Downtown brand: develop a specific downtown Oakville brand identity (including image and logo) and use in all promotion of the area	Will be developed following retail strategy initiative
Signage: using the brand developed, create attractive signage to and within the downtown area	Will be developed following retail strategy initiative
Events: develop more events and experiences downtown	Will be developed following retail strategy initiative

Strategic area: transportation and linkages projects

Waterfront link: establish a physical linkage between the downtown and waterfront	Will form part of Centennial Square facilities strategic initiative
Gateways: construct 'gateways' identifying the entry into downtown from all four directions	Implementation of Livable Oakville policies, the development of urban design guidelines and the review of capital projects
Bicycle-friendly downtown: review all ways and means of ensuring that downtown encourages safe bicycling activity	Ongoing implementation of Active Transportation Master Plan
Street connections and linkages: connect the downtown to the rest of the community through efficient street connections east-west and north-south, and higher level of bus service into and out from the downtown	Ongoing implementation of Transportation and Active Transportation Master Plans
Parking: ensure adequate parking and signage to parking	Will be considered in the upcoming and expanded Commercial Parking, Traffic and Road Space Management Study
Create a downtown transit hub: buses and bikes	Will be considered in the next Transit Service Plan update following the upcoming Transportation Master Plan update