



Meeting Date: April 7, 2026

Department: Economic Development and Community Engagement

Report No.: ED-2026-02

Submitted by: Heather Lalonde, Director of Economic Development and Community Engagement
Rob Lilbourne, Director of Community and Development Services
Walter Easter, Acting Director of Engineering and Public Works

Approved by: Rob Browning, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Downtown Revitalization Consultation

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: Council direct staff to lead background research and review, undertake preliminary stakeholder consultations, consolidate information, and retain artist to prepare professional renderings. Staff will also facilitate two Strathroy PICs and two Mount Brydges PICs, and further;

THAT: an upset amount of \$40,000.00 that is funded from the future needs reserves be approved.

BACKGROUND:

Council has directed staff to develop a plan for public consultation related to Downtown Revitalization projects in Mount Brydges and Strathroy. The consultation will focus solely on the streetscape component of the overall project. The overall project includes underground works for water and wastewater and does not form part of this consultation.

The streetscape portion will involve identifying best practices from similar projects, compiling of recommended structures for consultation process, and timing of the consultation process that will result in design recommendations for Council at conclusion of the process.

COMMENTS:

There are several components to the consultation process that will result in the completion of stakeholder engagement, including Council.

Municipal Staff will implement this plan, The plan will require some outsourcing for high-level drawings for the PICs. Municipal staff do not have the ability to create the conceptual drawings that would be used for the PICs to clearly illustrate the feedback from the consultations. Preliminary best-practice research indicates that providing high-level drawings for PICs has been highly effective in obtaining community feedback. Staff will conduct the sessions to reduce the overall project costs.

Stage One – Background Collection and Review – Q2 2026

Stage One includes the establishment of the Consultation Team, which consists of the staff listed below. The Team will review best practices of similar projects that have been completed in similar communities. The review may include size of project, budgets, structure of project team and consultations that took place as part of the revitalization of downtowns. Upon completion of the review a standardized list of consultation points will be created to facilitate the preliminary stakeholder consultation. The high-level concept drawings presented to Council in 2024 will be used as visuals to initiate conversation.

Stage Two – Preliminary Stakeholder Consultation & Information Consolidation – Q3 2026

Preliminary meetings will be held with key community stakeholders that could include, but not limited to:

Strathroy BIA
Strathroy District Chamber of Commerce
Mount Brydges Business Association
County Engineer/AODA Committee
SCPS/Fire Services
The Wright Place
Strathroy-Caradoc Council

The preliminary stakeholder meetings will be conducted by Municipal staff to gather information from initial discussions.

Following the preliminary stakeholder meetings, an update report will be presented to Council at a Strategic Priorities Committee meeting.

Results from the consultation will be compiled and a high-level rendering will be developed for both locations to move to the PIC 1 stage. The drawings will be outsourced as there are no resources in-house to develop specialized drawings.

Estimated cost - \$19,000 to produce 3 drawings for Strathroy and 2 drawings for Mount Brydges.

Stage Three – Public Information Consultation 1 – Q3 2026

High-level renderings will form the basis for the first of two PICs for the community. Online engagement will occur, as well as one PIC in Strathroy and one PIC in Mount Brydges. These sessions will be moderated by municipal facilitators and designed to gather meaningful input from participants.

Feedback will focus on key functional requirements, preferred design features and overall public concerns or support for the project.

Stage Four – Stakeholder Consultation # 2 - Q4 2026

A second round of meetings will be held with individual stakeholders, including members from the preliminary stakeholder group. During these sessions, staff will present distinct, well-developed conceptual design options, one for Strathroy and one for Mount Brydges. Stakeholders will be asked to identify any further design preferences, positive or negative, to ensure all perspectives are captured. Following this input, a set of refined drawings will be created, one for Strathroy and one for Mount Brydges. The estimated cost for the drawing is \$14,000.00.

Stage Five – PIC2 – Q4 2026

The second and final round of PICs will present distinct, well-developed, conceptual designs for both Strathroy and Mt. Brydges. This engagement will include online opportunities as well as one in person session in each community. Staff will moderate both the in person and online engagement to incorporate positive/negative feedback which will inform the development of the final conceptual design. Following PIC # 2, any additional refinements would be incorporated into the final concept design for presentation to Council.

Stage Six – Final Conceptual Design – Q1 2027

Council will be presented with a summary report of findings and feedback and a recommended final conceptual design and a detailed cost estimate for both projects. The estimated cost for the final design concept drawings would be \$7,000.00

Communications Plan for Consultation Process

Communications will support the Downtown Revitalization project by developing and implementing a coordinated communications and public engagement strategy. Responsibilities include creating and maintaining a project webpage and online engagement project page (Engagement HQ); developing key messages, visual branding, and engagement materials; supporting outreach to residents, businesses, stakeholders, and accessibility groups; promoting engagement opportunities through social media, newsletters, and local media; administering surveys and feedback tools as requested; supporting Public Information Centres and stakeholder consultations; documenting and summarizing public input; and coordinating communications and project updates to support transparency and meaningful community participation throughout all project phases.

CONSULTATION:

Rob Browning, CAO

Mark Ortiz, Director of Public Works and Engineering

Rob Lilbourne, Director of Community and Development Services

Bill Dakin, Director of Finance

Walter Easter, Manager of Public Works

Greg Henderson, Manager of Environmental Services

Rachel Mead, Communications Coordinator

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

An estimate of \$40K for professional renderings for the stages of the stakeholder consultation and PIC process. This will be funded through the general government Reserve.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO THE RECOMMENDATION:

1. Direct staff to issue RFP to execute public engagement & conceptual drawings
2. Direct staff to lead background research and review, undertake preliminary stakeholder consultations, consolidate information, and retain artist to prepare professional renderings. Staff will also facilitate two Strathroy PICs and two Mount Brydges PICs. Anticipated cost to procure drawings to be approximately \$40,000.00
3. Council to provide alternate direction for staff.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

Economic Development:

Strathroy-Caradoc will have a diverse tax base and be a place that offers a variety of economic opportunities to current and prospective residents and businesses.

Managing the Challenges of Growth for the Municipal Organization

Strathroy-Caradoc will be an inclusive community where growth is managed to accommodate a range of needs and optimize municipal resources. We are committed to maintain operational efficiency and economies of scale through these times of change.

ATTACHMENTS:

Mount Brydges and Strathroy Streetscape Improvements – Aracadis, February 05, 2024