



# Downtown London Request for Proposals:

Development of a Strategy and Implementation  
Plan for Downtown London (2021-2025)

## Deadline for Submissions:

January 22, 2021 at 2:00pm EST

All submissions and questions should be directed to  
Barbara Maly, Executive Director of Downtown London  
via email at [barbara@downtownlondon.ca](mailto:barbara@downtownlondon.ca)

DOWNTOWN  
LONDON 

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**CLOSES JANUARY 15, 2021 AT 2:00PM EST**

**DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN LONDON (2021-2025)**

London's downtown has played an important role in the life of Londoners, downtown residents, businesses and visitors. Like many downtowns across the province and country, the COVID19 pandemic has placed significant challenges and pressures on our Business Improvement Association and our members. The impact of COVID is ever changing and difficult to determine what the state of the downtown will be post pandemic, but we recognize that it will look significantly different than before.

**Background**

Made up of two organizations including - London Downtown Business Association (LDBA) and MainStreet London (MSL), Downtown London is the catalyst and connector for a shared community vision of London's downtown. To achieve this vision, Downtown London works on behalf of its members, in partnership with the City of London and major economic development, cultural, education and private sector stakeholders.

Established in the 1970s, LDBA looks after the concerns and interests of our members. Broadly, our programming improves and enhances Downtown London through business retention and recruitment, beautification, lobbying and organizing and/or sponsoring events. In addition, LDBA is responsible for marketing Downtown London as London's most exciting and diverse neighbourhood.

In 1999 and in response to the City of London's Downtown Millennium Plan, MainStreet London was established as a not for profit corporation. MSL is committed to the continued improvement of Downtown London and seeks to improve the streetscape of Downtown London by encouraging quality urban design through our financial incentives. More recently these incentives have been directed to programs to help in COVID recovery for our members. We also leverage and help promote the City's Community Improvement Plan incentives to rehabilitate our downtown buildings, which is currently under review by the City.

Each organization has its own board, with some members serving on both boards. Together, Downtown London's mission is to steward the levy paid by business members by leading and championing programs and investment that make London's downtown a destination of choice and an economic centre that supports the entire community.

London's downtown has been known for its unique mix of mainstreet businesses (retail, restaurants and hospitality and personal services) and corporate offices. Downtown London has approximately 450 storefront businesses and 380 offices (Downtown London's CRM database).

Please note that the information and statistics to follow are based on pre-COVID data.

Prior to COVID, there were approximately 55,000 daytime workers in the downtown. Downtown London is home to several large employers that include many regional and corporate offices including Canada Life, Libro Credit Union, TD Bank, Scotia Bank. Several digital and technology based offices are also located downtown including Digital Extremes, Autodata Solutions, Voices.com, InfoTech Research Group, IBM Canada and Bell Canada. Additionally many of London's shared and flex office spaces are located downtown including Innovation Works, Wrkhub, The Century Building, Talbot Court Corporate Studios and The Executive Centre.

Approximately 7,000 people live in the downtown with another 10 high-rise residential developments recently completed, close to completion or soon to begin. These developments will provide approximately 3,500 residential units in the downtown core when complete.

Here are some quick facts about Downtown London. (Note: unless otherwise stated, the information below comes from the LiveWorkLearnPlay Report that Downtown London commissioned in 2017):

- Culture, entertainment and tourism are major economic drivers for Downtown London and annually, approximately 2.7 million Londoners, tourists and business visitors attend over 940 events in the downtown. This includes a number of downtown destinations including Budweiser Gardens, Covent Garden Market, Grand Theatre, RBC Place, Museum London, Centennial Hall, London Music Hall, Central Library, Victoria Park and the newly constructed Dundas Place
- Downtown London is home to two Fanshawe College campuses - Centre of Digital and Performing Arts, School of Information Technology and the, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts - providing a downtown student population of just over 2,500 students and 300 faculty
- The 55,000 daytime employees working in downtown offices are in the municipal, finance, real estate, insurance, technology and education sectors
- Of the 7,000 residents who live in downtown, 48% are between the ages of 24-34
- London's office market has been flat and vacancy in downtown office space is overall quite high - in 2019 downtown's overall core office space vacancy rate was 16.9% (City of London)
- In 2017 Downtown's retail vacancy rate was 7%, higher than the City's overall rate of 6.30% (City of London - State of the Downtown, 2017)
- Downtown London's hotels compose 30% of the city's hotel rooms.

### **Project Scope**

Downtown London is seeking a Consultant/Firm to facilitate and develop an integrated strategy and operational plan that will focus on both COVID recovery as well as building upon the pre-pandemic foundational work to help advance the downtown. The proponent will work closely with the boards of Downtown London (LDBA and MSL), LDBA members and a strategic planning advisory committee to the boards, and will engage and gather input from DTL staff,

members, other downtown and community stakeholders to create a strategic plan, goals and implementation plan that will advance downtown London and guide DTL for the next 5 years.

Key deliverables include:

### **Phase 1 - Research and Analysis**

- Conduct an environmental scan and identify gaps, assets, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Carry out research on best practices, emerging opportunities, trends and key performance measures for consideration in DTL's strategy
- Conduct a market analysis and demographic assessment of downtown London to identify target markets
- Carry out an analysis of all Downtown London levy paying members and associated membership levies
- Identify data sources and methods for collecting information, specific to downtown London, that DTL can continue to use for marketing and general decision making (eg. demographics, foot traffic, downtown sales revenue, employment, commercial vacancies economic impact, etc.)
- Provide statistics and data for the development of sector profiles for different target audiences (eg. consumer market, economic, tourism, culture, entertainment, etc.) and how we can leverage this data to support DTL's marketing and communication efforts and achieve our strategic goals
- Provide a summary report and presentation of Phase 1 work to the DTL boards and strategic planning advisory committee

### **Phase 2 - Community Engagement**

- Establish and facilitate engagement sessions that includes but is not limited to the DTL boards, the advisory team, LDBA members, DTL staff, Londoners, other stakeholder groups and partners. These may include (virtual or in person when safe to do so) round table discussions, focus groups, on-line surveys, etc) to gather input, ideas and identify common areas where DTL and partners can work together to achieve its strategic goals
- Facilitate all engagement sessions and analyze and interpret data received that will inform the strategy and help map out DTL's future
- Review DTL's vision, mission and core values and update as required to ensure they are relevant and DTL remains current and responsive to opportunities, challenges and the needs of our members
- Provide a summary report and presentation of Phase 2 work to the DTL boards and strategic planning advisory committee

### **Phase 3 - Final Strategy, Implementation Plan, Governance and Resources**

- Create the final strategy and implementation plan to be executed. This plan will include but is not limited to the following:
  - Identify and recommend any changes, if required, in the governance structure of both DTL boards and identify how the boards should operate, and how LDBA and

MSL should interact and work together to achieve the strategic goals, while having clearly understood mandates and objectives. This includes the make-up and representation of board membership and any associated policy and committee updates required and are permitted under the Ontario Municipal Act for LDBA and the Ontario Corporation Act for MSL

- Review and recommend financial, human resources and changes required (if any) to the organizational structure to deliver programming that fulfills our members' needs and will advance the downtown
- Identify and recommend programs that are impactful and offer good value for our members. This includes recommending any new programs, as well as those that we should discontinue, enhance and/or partner or offload to other organizations.
- Develop annual operational and programming plans for the next 5 years, aligned with the strategy with associated key performance measures and recommended methods of tracking metrics.
- Provide a framework for DTL's business development, place-making, marketing & communication plans and key performance measures for the next 5 years
- Prepare a draft final report and presentation(s) to the boards, advisory committee and staff and refine as required
- Provide a final report that includes a high level executive summary along with a detailed strategy and implementation plan that can be available publicly. A minimum of 1 final presentation will also be required to the DTL boards, Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, staff, members and others as required

Please note throughout the project the consultant will be expected to deliver presentations with a minimum of 4 presentations in total. Each one will occur at the end of each phase of the project, (except Phase 3 which will require 2 presentations). However, if more presentations are requested the consultant should factor that into their fee structure.

### **Reporting, Roles and Responsibilities**

The Consultant will report directly to the LDBA & MSL Board Chairs and the Downtown London Executive Director.

The Downtown London Executive Director will be responsible for the day to day project management of the strategic planning process, working closely with the Consultant and will provide and arrange for logistical support for the board and the consultant as needed.

The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee will be a group of senior community leaders and subject matter specialists who will help guide and advise the Boards, provide input and ideas for consideration and identify areas of mutual interest and benefit as it relates to the strategy and its implementation

The LDBA and MSL Boards will approve and adopt the final strategy and implementation plan.

## Project Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>
January 5, 2020	Call for Request for Proposals (RFP)
January 22, 2021 at 2:00pm EST	RFP closes
January 22 - February 2, 2021	Proposals reviewed and evaluated
February 12, 2021	Notify successful candidate and commence project
Feb-March, 2021	Completion of Phase 1 and 1st interim report/presentation to Boards and Advisory Committee
March-May, 2021	Completion of Phase 2 and 2nd interim report/presentation to Boards and Advisory Committee for review and input
May, 2021	Draft of strategic highlights report/presentation to Boards and Advisory Committee
May, 2021	Completion of the draft strategy, implementation plan and presentations to Boards and Advisory Committee for input and making modifications as required before finalizing
June 2021	Completion of Phase 3 - Present the final strategy and implementation plan for board approval
June 2021	Presentation and roll out of the strategy and implementation plan to LDBA members, partners and public

## Qualifications of Proponent

The successful proponent will be Ontario based and will have the following:

- Advanced and demonstrated operational and strategic planning experience, including identifying measurable key performance indicators
- Strong experience in developing business and marketing plans for business to consumer and business to business

- Proven experience in stakeholder engagement including developing a community engagement plan and coordinating and facilitating engagement tactics - virtually and in-person
- Experience working with boards and committees
- Understanding of Business Improvement Associations and how they operate under the Ontario Municipal Act
- Economic and business development experience
- Urban planning experience would be considered an asset
- Relevant academic qualifications

## **Proposal Evaluation**

Proposals should highlight the consultant's

- Demonstrated work in organizational development including effectiveness, efficiencies and enhanced performance
- Relevant experience and success in strategy and implementation planning including any references and level of satisfaction of current/past client experience
- Previous community and stakeholder engagement experience, including tactics and methodologies used
- Overall approach and methodology to be used in creating DTL's strategic and operational plan
- Complete proposal

## **Proposal Submission Requirements**

Proposal submissions should be accompanied by a covering letter summarizing your understanding of the project and the services to be provided. Also include names of all individuals and their company name (if subcontracting any project work) who will be participating and working with the proponent. The person signing the covering letter must be authorized to bind the consultancy. The proposal should be a maximum of 10 pages plus CVs.

The proposal will include:

- Detailed CV of each individual working on the project and providing service (including any subcontractors and their firm's name), along with their qualifications and experience
- Identification of the project manager of the consulting team, detail of what each consulting team member will be responsible for and will carry out as part of the project
- Critical path that clearly identifies the project tasks and timelines
- Any previous experience and relevant projects that have been carried out
- A fee schedule including deliverables, hours, rate/hour and total cost to complete the work in each phase of the project
- Total costs must include all service costs and reimbursable expenses. No additional charges will be considered unless there is a change in the scope of work that has been mutually agreed upon by both parties in writing

- Minimum of three references detailing the work the consultant and any subcontractors have carried out
- Must be addressed to Downtown London and sent electronically in PDF format
- Proposal submissions will be received up to **January 15, 2021 up until 2:00pm EST**

Questions should be directed to Barbara Maly, Executive Director between January 4-21, 2021.

The goal will be to answer each question within two working days of its receipt. These questions and answers will be posted regularly at [www.downtownlondon.ca](http://www.downtownlondon.ca) up until January 14, 2021 for all bidders to access.