

ARTS IN THE CITY

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES FOR MID-SIZED CITIES

By

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Kaufman Lofts
Kitchener,
Lilcoopr, 2013

Art Crawl
Public Art
Hamilton
Michael Kooiman
2012

Downtown Hamilton
King St. East
Matt, 2009

ABSTRACT

Bringing life back into the centre of smaller cities is possible through community-led arts and culture events. This study of community and artist-led events in Barrie, Kitchener and Hamilton in Ontario suggests that these types of place-making events should be supported by smaller cities as important catalysts to downtown revitalization.

In recent decades, cities of all sizes have attempted to revitalize the downtown via a myriad of approaches and strategies. Large cities are typically more successful in downtown revitalization in comparison to smaller urban centres. This research examines downtown revitalization strategies and determines that place-making approaches that emphasize arts and culture are best suited for smaller city centres.

The City of Barrie served as the primary case study for this research. A proposal for the City of Barrie was drafted to assist in downtown revitalization efforts (see Appendix C). In order to understand the options available for the City of Barrie, the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton were examined and served as methods of best practice. The lessons learned from the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton have been considered in my proposal for the City of Barrie.

This research has revealed that smaller cities should employ place-making strategies that emphasize the arts and culture sector in order to enhance the urban fabric. Based on comparable precedents, small scaled and strategic projects prove to be more economically feasible in comparison to costly large scaled projects. Place-making strategies result in greater economic spin-offs, facilitate community engagement, foster civic pride and advance the city's prosperity.

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FOREWORD

This Major Research Project is a direct result of the learning objectives and program outlined in my Plan of Study. As stated, I wanted to become familiar with the urban planning and urban design process in relation to downtown revitalization. These objectives led to the formulation of my key research questions for this project.

Through this project, I have integrated my two components, that of urban planning and urban design, into my research. As a distinct discipline, urban planning shapes, and directs change. Through land use and zoning by-laws, planning has the ability to prime market conditions for both public and private sector development, and facilitates revitalization. In comparison, urban design is concerned about the aesthetics and functionality of a space. Pedestrian boulevards, storefront treatments lines, and facade improvements for instance, are provisions of urban design that can be seen in downtown revitalization efforts.

Through this Major Research Project, my Plan of Study, and my time at York University, I have developed an understanding of downtown revitalization and the distinct roles urban planning and urban design play. I have become familiar with available planning tools, and now know how planning practitioners can help engage communities and municipalities in planning for future generations. I have also developed an understanding of how urban design can contribute to, or hinder downtown revitalization, as well as the potential negative impacts that are often associated with revitalization efforts. In doing so, I now know what potential implications to be aware of when planning for downtown revitalization and future generations. By integrating my research with my Plan of Study, I have satisfied and accomplished my learning objectives and have mastered the topic of downtown revitalization.

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1.0 - INTRODUCTION

For the past few decades, downtowns in Canadian cities have experienced significant decline as a result of suburban development. Now, the importance of downtowns in cities is a topic that has proliferated in urban planning discourse. Cities of all sizes have attempted to revitalize the downtown via a myriad of approaches and strategies. Current literature suggests that prominent revitalization strategies are predominately geared towards larger cities with a population of or exceeding 500,000 (Robertson, 1999). There is little available research that deals with downtown revitalization in smaller urban centres.

The primary purpose of this research is to determine which revitalization strategies are best suited for smaller-scaled city downtowns, and what opportunities are available for the City of Barrie and its revitalization efforts. I have found that place-making strategies are the best tool for the revitalization of smaller-scaled downtowns because they can be fairly inexpensive to implement and can have grand, positive impacts on the city as a whole. For the purpose of this paper, a mid-sized city or a smaller urban centre is defined as a city that has a population of 50,000 - 500,000.

This paper examines the broader topic and discourse of downtown revitalization, and progresses into a narrower lens, using case studies as specific examples and methods of best practice. It can be divided into two components: the scholarly element; and the practical element. In the scholarly component, I contribute to the lack of available research encompassing downtown revitalization in smaller centers. I review and analyze prominent revitalization strategies, and determine which approaches are best suited for smaller cities. In the practical component, I examine lessons of best practice from the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton. I then provide a proposal (see Appendix C) for the City of Barrie to assist with their downtown revitalization efforts.

During the summer of 2013, I worked for the City of Barrie's planning department, where I was exposed to both the planning initiatives and challenges currently underway in the city. I became aware that the City of Barrie, the planning department, and the BIA have drafted various plans aimed at enhancing the downtown. The rapid growth and development over recent years, coupled with fiscal constraints as a result of the downloading of services from upper levels of government, have placed immense pressures on the City's socio-economic spheres. This has made the implementation of such plans difficult. This sparked my initial interest in researching downtown revitalization in smaller urban centres, and in drafting a proposal for the City of Barrie's planning department to assist with revitalization efforts.

This research investigates three questions. The first question investigates which types of strategies are best suited for smaller urban centres. This question embodies the primary interest of this research. In my proposal, I wanted to become familiar with various revitalization strategies. There are many different revitalization strategies that could have been used and examined. However, I only focused on prominent strategies that can be seen in Ontario. Through a critical analysis of relevant theory, literature, and precedents, conclusions are made and the strategies that are best-suited for smaller urban centres are revealed. Possible strategies and directions are also provided for smaller urban centres to employ. This question is designed to serve planners in smaller urban centres, as well as city builders in the City of Barrie, who are seeking to revitalize the downtown.

The second research question looks at how smaller cities differ from large cities in terms of the built environment and downtown revitalization. This question guides the research by examining the differences between smaller and large cities in the context of downtown revitalization. Large cities and smaller cities are inherently different. Observing the differences reveals potential challenges and implications that coincide with downtown revitalization efforts. This question is meant

to assist planners and city builders who are attempting to revitalize downtowns by providing solutions and revitalization strategies that are most appropriate for smaller- scaled cities.

The last research question explores the future role of downtowns. Forecasting future trends for downtowns is useful for determining which methods to use to achieve the desired goal and downtown revitalization. By examining the possible future role of downtowns in small and/or mid-sized cities, this question will provide mindful revitalization strategies that are reminiscent of municipal visions. Exploring the future socio-economic, and environmental realms of a particular city will assist planners in selecting appropriate revitalization strategies. This research question is meant to highlight potential opportunities and challenges for downtown revitalization in smaller centres.

1.1 - DEFINITIONS

In this section, I explain common terms that arise when discussing revitalization processes. The terms “revitalization”, “place-making”, “community”, and “a sense of community” are reviewed. Defining concepts and terms that are often associated with revitalization processes enables me to be conscious of potential impacts, and how I’m intervening as an up and coming planner.

Revitalization is often difficult to define because there are numerous ways to interpret the intentions and outcomes of such processes. There is a lack of a widely accepted definition of revitalization because of its complexity and controversial discourse. Revitalization can be defined as, “the physical redevelopment of blighted areas, the creation of additional jobs, the improvement of local infrastructure, and/or the elimination of ‘undesirable’ individuals or businesses” (Zielenbach, 2000, 23). In this context, revitalization is often associated with gentrification because of the potential for social polarization and displacement tendencies.

Revitalization can take one of two avenues: individual-based approaches, or place-based approaches. Individual-based revitalization approaches focus on improving the living conditions for residents in a particular area, and are variations of anti-poverty programs (Zielenbach, 2000, 24). In comparison, place-based approaches parallel economic development strategies, and emphasize the development of an area in an economic context (ibid). The primary goal of this approach is to increase property values, where bettering conditions for the existing population is placed on the back-burner (ibid).

Past revitalization strategies focused primarily on large-scaled physical and/or economic development projects. Recently, cities are opting to incorporate individual-based approaches to revitalization via place-making aspects. There are a host of definitions to describe place-making. In its broadest sense, place-making is a community driven process that creates well utilized and enjoyed places (Maddin, 2001). More specifically, place-making can be defined as, “an overarching idea and a hands-on tool for improving a neighborhood, city or region” (Project for Public Spaces Website, 2014).

Engrained within place-making is the concept of community. Broadly, the term community can refer to several aspects, including geographic locations, membership in a group, and/or a group of individuals who share similar characteristics (Herek and Glunt, 1995). Concretely, community can be defined as, “a territorial unit having certain common characteristics” (American Society of Civil Engineers, 1986, 252). However, common characteristics within a territorial unit can be diverse. The social fabric is complex and offers a myriad of characteristics, including social, economic, or political. Thus, defining the concept of community can sometimes be a difficult task.

In comparison, a sense of community has a variety of definitions as well. In one sense, it can be defined as a feeling of belonging and/or membership (Unger and Wandersman, 1985). It can also be defined as an acknowledged interdependence with one another, and a feeling of pride

by belonging to a group (Myers and Diener, 1995). By nature, humans are social beings. Facilitating a sense of community within a locale can advance the quality of life for residents, and the city as a whole.

Understanding these terms is crucial in bringing clarity and focus to the discussion. Concepts and terms need to be defined to reveal the gaps and imbalances associated with downtown revitalization efforts. If this is not done, planning interventions can become short-sighted and facilitate incomplete and substandard executions. By understanding the nature of patterns associated with urban revitalization, potential consequences and a spectrum of factors are exposed, and solutions can be devised.

2.0 - RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 - METHODOLOGY

This study examines downtown revitalization strategies for mid-sized cities. The City of Barrie serves as the primary case study for this research and is representative of many downtowns in mid-sized cities that have experienced a decline in the downtown core. Barrie's downtown is reminiscent of other mid-sized municipalities faced with the challenging task of bringing the downtown back to life.

This study used a case study approach to allow for deeper understandings of how vernacular cultural and artistic productions play into the revitalization of mid-sized cities and their downtowns. Case studies examine phenomena(s), and are highly useful in urban planning because they assists future readers in retaining the lessons learned (Yin, 2008). Case studies can either represent a larger phenomenon, or be an exception to the norm. In this case, the City of Barrie serves as a good example of a larger urban phenomenon that many smaller municipalities may endure.

Many critique qualitative case studies for being too subjective. Critics argue that case studies afford researchers the opportunity to misconstrue the data, purposely or accidentally, in order to verify their preconceptions of the issue. However, according to Flyvbjerg, "researchers who have conducted intensive, in-depth case studies typically report that their preconceived views, assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses were wrong and that the case material has compelled them to revise their hypotheses on essential points" (pg. 428, 2006). That is the case with this research.

Initially, I had intended to focus on downtown revitalization strategies and organize a nuit blanche styled event in the City of Barrie. I was under the assumption that my existing connections at the City of Barrie would have provided me with the necessary resources to host such an event. Due to time constraints, I was not able to organize an event, however, I decided to keep

the topic of downtown revitalization via artistic productions. As I began my research and looked at other comparable municipalities and their artistic productions, I became aware that the municipal governments had minimal involvement in organizing the popular art events. Rather, the successful art events tend to be controlled by local artists, community members, and non-for-profit organizations. Although the cities in question supported the event in a traditional sense, the primary orchestration was done by the community, and the events developed via a bottom-up approach. This realization countered my initial assumption which was that artistic productions are established via a top-down approach.

Interviews were also used in this research as a source of data collection. Individual, semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate for this project because of their privacy, flexibility, and their potential for personalized questions (Bariball and While, 1994). Interviews are, “encounters between a researcher and a respondent in which the latter is ask a series of questions relevant to the subject of research” (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1981, pg. 66).

A focus group could have been an option for gathering information for this project, but were not chosen for several reasons. First, a focus group could result in false information and dishonest answers due to peer pressure and/or a fear of public judgement. Since the this research deals with delicate subject matters such as gentrification, individual interviews were chosen as they have a higher chance of obtaining honest answers particularly from city officials. Additionally, scheduling mutually agreed-upon meeting times for a focus group session would also have been difficult. As such, individual interviews were selected as the information gathering technique.

2.2 - SELECTION CRITERIA

The City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton were the cities that were selected for further study. This was based on: comparability to Barrie, the arts and culture revitalization strategies, the varying stages of downtown revitalization development, and the dispersed geographic location.

Those that were selected for further study are not superior to a city that was not selected.

2.3 - PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

For the purpose of this research, city officials (including department representatives, and city planners), BIA's, local artists/community members, and organizations from Barrie, Kitchener and Hamilton were interviewed. In order to triangulate the data, academic and newspaper articles were referenced coupled with municipal documents, provincial legislation, and personal journaling.

Individual participant's were recruited differently. The city officials were recruited based on their position and title relevance at the various selected municipalities. Individual artists and community members were selected either by an already established connection or by snowball sampling. Although snowball sampling (asking participants for other possible interview contacts) harnesses the potential for bias, in this case it was useful because colleagues referred willing participants. The organization was selected because of their reputation for orchestrating a successful nuit blanche styled event.

Nine city officials were interviewed for this project, three from each municipality (Barrie, Kitchener, Hamilton). Two artists and a non-profit organization were also interviewed, one from each municipality. All the interviews were conducted separately, with the exception of Hamilton which was a focus group as a result of interested planners wanting to provide information. The interviews took between one hour and an hour and a half. These interviews were conducted during business hours, either in a private meeting room in City Hall, or at nearby coffee shops. All interviews were recorded and participants were asked the same set of questions. The full interview schedule can be found in Appendix A.

2.4 - DATA PROCESSING

Immediately after each interview, I transcribed them onto the computer. After completing the transcribing phase, I used several methods to code the data including contextualization, data

comparison, and a larger generalization of the results. Descriptive codes were utilized to categorize the initial data, where I documented themes and connections from the transcriptions in a journal. I then analyzed the descriptive codes and compared them to each municipality, as well as my personal observations for triangulation purposes. By processing the data, I was able to determine the applicability of revitalization strategies for similar cities facing the same challenges.

2.5 - ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants were not mentioned by name in the study's results because of the potential for controversial information. This project attempts to depict a variety of different perceptions, and views in a comprehensive manner. To portray the participants views and perspectives accurately, close attention was paid to the detail and subtlety within the interviews which was referred to during the transcribing phase.

3.0 - LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section provides an overview of relevant literature and helps determine which approach to revitalization is best suited for smaller-scaled cities. It begins with a historical overview of revitalization processes to provide a background context and an understanding of the current trends. It then examines prominent revitalization theories that have been, or are currently being utilized today in cities throughout Ontario. The creative city theory, and the main street approach are investigated to gain a holistic understanding of the currents that have influenced revitalization efforts and have shaped downtowns. The concept of gentrification is then examined to provide an understanding and awareness of the potential outcomes associated with revitalization approaches.

3.1 - HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF URBAN REVITALIZATION

This section provides a brief synopsis of the history of downtown revitalization efforts. It provides a background context of the topic at hand. Historical trends reveal that revitalization strategies have primarily featured large-scaled interventions in larger city centres. There is little content available that discusses revitalization strategies in smaller cities.

Following the Second World War, downtowns throughout North America have experienced a significant decline. The emergence of the automobile coupled with the surge in population growth following World War II led to the demise of downtowns (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee, 1998). To accommodate the baby-boomer population, the fringes of cities began to develop and the suburbs were born. Together, these two factors necessitated the first revitalization strategy, which intended to improve vehicular access to and within downtowns, via the construction of downtown highways, corridors, and parking (Abbott, 1996).

The next wave of revitalization took place in the 1960's (Gibson and Langstaff, 1982). This phase of revitalization featured large-scaled development projects that demolished neighbourhoods

and buildings. It is in this context that this period of revitalization has been described in terms such as 'bull dozer', 'slum clearance', and 'urban renewal'.

In the 1970's, the practice of large-scale urban renewal began to dwindle due to severe public backlash, and a gradual selective clearance approach began to take its place (Gibson and Langstaff, 1982). This period became more about community conservation, historic preservation and downtown housing accommodations (Abbott, 1996). By the late 70's, early 80's, public investment in cultural facilities, open spaces and parks began to appear in downtowns with the intent of improving the attractiveness of the city centre (Abbott, 1996).

Since the mid 1980's, revitalization strategies have transitioned from public to private investment. Private investment in downtown office development has become one of the key revitalization strategies to date. The emergence of the global economy compelled cities to create efficient business centres that could compete globally (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee, 1998). These business centres were typically located in larger city centres such as Toronto. The rise of the service economy has also influenced revitalization strategies by enabling downtowns to incorporate convention centres, entertainment facilities, and upscale marketplaces (ibid).

Over the last fifty years, downtown revitalization strategies have shifted from public to private ventures. Originally, they featured publicly funded large-scaled, urban renewal developments. Now they feature smaller-scaled, private sector-led projects as a result of the change in dynamics of the economic sector and conceptual political framework.

Historical evidence reveals that revitalization efforts have mainly focused on larger-scaled cities. Downtown revitalization efforts in smaller-scaled cities have received little attention. With roughly 80 percent of Canada's population residing in small and/or mid-sized cities (Statistics Canada, 2011), this research attempts to bridge the gap by investigating and analyzing revitalization strategies in smaller urban centres.

3.2. - THE CREATIVE CITY

In this section, I review the creative city approach. This approach has been widely employed by cities of all sizes throughout Ontario. As such, it is important to review the theory and discuss potential outcomes in order to determine if this approach is appropriate for smaller-scaled cities. Although the creative city approach is intended primarily for larger cities, I argue that smaller-scaled cities have an equal opportunity, if not more, in attracting creative individuals to the city centre as a result of cheaper real estate.

According to this theory, cities can expand and stimulate their economies by competing for talented, creative individuals. This assumption is premised on the statistical correlation between the number of people in the “creative class” and the growth of high-tech sectors. In this context, the creative class, refers to individuals who can, “create meaningful new forms” (Florida, 2002, 8), where creativity refers to, “the ability to generate new knowledge or to convert existing knowledge into economically successful applications” (Krätke, 2010, 835).

According to Florida and the creative city theory, a city’s potential for growth is premised on the three T’s of economic development: technology; talent; and tolerance. Technology is described as, “a function of both innovation and high technology concentrations in a region”. Talent is said to be, “those with a bachelor’s degree and above”, and tolerance, is defined as, “openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and walks of life” (Florida, 2005, 37).

Embedded within the creative class are those who form the super-creative core. According to Florida, the super-creative core consists of, “scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, and architects, as well as thought leadership of modern society: nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion-makers” (2005, 34). Other creative professionals include those, “who work in a wide

range of knowledge-intensive industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services, the legal and healthcare professions, and business management” (Florida, 2005, 34). These individuals are said to create more creative activities, which in turn, will revitalize an area more quickly. Thus, attracting these individuals will make a place more desirable. However, these individuals are said to be located in larger cities as opposed to smaller urban centres.

Florida’s creative class theory is based on the notion that creativity follows creativity, where creative people tend to follow and locate with other creative individuals and form creative clusters. Only certain places can attract the creative class, and act as powerful “idea generators” (Florida, 2005, 166). Large city downtowns for instance, are places that can attract the creative class, because of their social and physical attributes. These places tend to be diverse, and accepting places with minimal barriers for recent immigrants, gay and bohemian populations. These specific individuals have a higher tolerance level which is a crucial factor in attracting the creative class. According to this approach, smaller city centres have a more difficult time attracting these individuals, and should not try to do so.

Based on critical research, I would argue that smaller centres can attract creative individuals. The cheap real estate in smaller urban centres affords creative individuals the opportunity to build and expand upon their craft. Kitchener for instance, has one of the largest tech start-ups in Canada as a result of their cheap real estate and tech start-up grants. Similarly, Hamilton, is considered to be one of Canada’s art hubs, due to the cheap available real estate. According to Florida, these individuals would be classified under the super creative core. As such, I believe Richard Florida’s theory to be flawed.

Although the creative city model has been widely employed in cities on a global scale, many critique the theory for its flaws, inapplicability, gentrification and economic polarization tendencies (Donald and Lewis, 2010; Peck, 2005, 2007; Scott, 2006; Sands and Reese, 2008).

For example, Donald and Lewis (2010) claim that Florida's thesis is riddled with weak assumptions, and argue that "tolerance" and "creativity" are difficult concepts to measure. Comparatively, Sager (2011) suggests that the creative capital approach parallels neoliberalism, and takes urban entrepreneurialism for granted. Sager believes that the theory facilitates processes of gentrification by creating neoliberal policies geared towards attracting the creative class. Peck also critiques the creative class theory, arguing that,

"city leaders...are embracing creativity strategies not as alternatives to extend market-, consumption- and property-led development strategies, but as low-cost, feel-good complements to them. Creativity plans do not disrupt these established approaches to urban entrepreneurialism and consumption-oriented place promotion, the extend them" (Peck, 2005, 761).

Young et al., (2006) suggest that the creative city theory may not be plausible or appropriate for smaller cities as they do not have the same resources and services available as their larger counterparts do. Donald and Lewis (2010) believe that the creative capital approach is actually damaging to smaller Canadian cities and their image. Employing the creative city model in smaller scaled cities, specifically those between 50,000 and 500,000, tends to ignore underlying structural conditions by, "merely providing rhetoric to appease the local politicians" (Donald and Lewis, 2010, 32). In doing so, gentrification processes and social polarization are felt on a greater scale since smaller cities have, "limited resources, job opportunities, and redistributed power" (Donald and Lewis, 2010, 33).

These consequences are a direct result of the high-tech jobs and bohemian boutiques that transform places at rapid rates into high-cost environments, ultimately facilitating gentrification and exclusion of lower income residents. This is exemplified with Canadian cities such as Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto that have the highest placement in the creative capital ranking system and

also have the highest rates of socioeconomic disparity (Hyndman et al., 2006).

According to the creative city paradigm, the cities with the most creative industries are placed at the top of the urban hierarchy. In Canada, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are ranked among the top and are correspondingly the most populated Canadian cities (Hyndman et al., 2006). In this way, it becomes evident that the creative city paradigm, “implicitly favours the largest metropolitan areas in a region” (Donald and Lewis, 2010; Sands and Reese, 2008).

In response, Donald and Lewis (2010) suggest creating a new set of variables that follow closer to theories of “livability” and “sustainability” in order to quantify a city’s quality of life. These include: the commuting distance; ecological footprint; education; housing affordability; housing condition; public transit; walk- and bike-ability (Donald and Lewis, 2010).

Richard Florida and his creative city theory has reframed the value of arts and culture in a positive economic perspective. Through this analysis however, I believe the growth poles are the demise of Florida’s argument. I think the creative city theory can be extended and applied to smaller urban centres, in the sense that creative individuals can be attracted to smaller cities. Smaller centres afford opportunities that are missing from larger centres such as reasonable rent. A surplus of available affordable real estate in smaller cities makes this possible. This is visible in the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton.

Florida’s argument has reframed the value of arts and culture and has reshaped the traditional local economy. Arts and culture were viewed as a frill. It wasn’t an industry and cities weren’t leveraging it as an economic tool like it is now. Cities of all sizes are about growth, and contemporary planning values are encouraging people to return to the city. By investing in the arts and culture sector, the city becomes more attractive for the existing population, and visitors who may become future residents. In this project, I have used aspects of the creative city approach because I agree with the sentiment that cultural vitality in cities is important. I have emphasized this

perspective in my proposal (see Appendix C).

3.3 - MAIN STREET APPROACH

This section examines the main street approach as another method that facilitates downtown revitalization. Many smaller-scaled municipalities are opting to employ this approach as opposed to ones that parallel the creative city theory. As such, it is important to understand why cities are choosing to adopt this approach over others, in order to make conscious decisions about how I will be intervening as a future planner.

The main street approach is a recent method to downtown revitalization. In contrast to the creative city approach to urban revitalization, which focuses on the city holistically, the main street approach employs place specific strategies targeted at downtown revitalization (Clark, 2011). The main street approach is a smaller-scaled revitalization strategy that focuses primarily on improving the aesthetics of the 'Main Street' in hopes of attracting newcomers to the area.

Successful main streets feature aesthetically pleasing and well-designed streetscapes that favour pedestrianism and active modes of transportation in order to invite pedestrians and shoppers into the downtown core (Atkin, 2012). The main street approach has proliferated in North America since the 1980's and is now one of the most widely utilized revitalization strategy for smaller cities (Robertson, 2004).

Although, larger-scaled projects are still at the vanguard of downtown revitalization efforts, cities are opting to employ the Main Street approach in hopes of countering past planning trends and decisions. Recent revitalization efforts have focused on smaller spatial scales, and details including, "historic preservation, consumer marketing, pedestrian access, and the cleanliness and safety of streets" (Mitchell, 2001, 115).

Business Improvement Areas (BIA's) are often used in conjunction with the Main Street approach, and have proven to be invaluable tools in the successful remodeling of downtowns. BIA's

focus on a particular area in the downtown and attempt to improve the public's perception of that area by, "channel[ing] private-sector energy toward the solution of public problems" (MacDonald, 1996, 1). They receive funding from a percentage of taxes from the local government, and work to provide an alternative approach to municipal planning and development. Typically, local government bodies are uninvolved in strategizing, affording the BIA board freedom and flexibility to direct decisions pertaining to the downtown (Mitchell, 2001). In this way, BIA's can effectively and tactfully implement revitalization strategies in the places that need it most.

The main street approach to downtown revitalization is more appropriate for smaller cities because its more straightforward, and easier for a municipality to implement and control. Whereas the creative city approach requires a lot more attention to other dynamics such as the socio-economic realms, the main street approach focuses on one aspect of the city and evolves over time. It is visible, and makes a clear impact in a relatively short period of time. Moreover, the main street approach is an easier method to sell to existing residents, as they can see and experience the benefit of a new and improved, more animated main street. Selling locals on a concept that is intended to attract individuals in a certain "class" to the area is much harder for a municipality. Thus, this approach is better suited for smaller cities in comparison to the creative city theory.

I think that the main street approach is a more feasible option for downtown revitalization in comparison to the creative city approach. As such, I have adopted aspects from the main street approach in my proposal (see Appendix C). My proposal focuses on Barrie's main street, with the intent of enhancing the urban fabric for the local population, and to attract outsiders into the core.

3.4 - GENTRIFICATION

This section investigates gentrification as a result of revitalization. The potential for gentrification as a result of revitalization has been a reoccurring topic in the literature. As an emerging planner, I need to be aware of the potential side effects that may arise as a result of my interventions in order to make sound planning decisions with minimal negative impacts.

Processes of gentrification are often associated with downtown revitalization. Since the 60's, gentrification has been a movement that is indicative of private-market investment into downtowns (Zukin, 1987, 129). Gentrification is, "the conversion of socially marginal and working-class areas of the central city to middle-class residential use" (ibid). It "results in a geographical reshuffling, among neighborhoods and metropolitan areas, of professional, managerial, and technical employees who work in corporate, government, and business services" (ibid). Visual aspects of gentrification can be seen in retrofitted developments with new social amenities clustered in the urban core (ibid).

Many argue that gentrification and urban revitalization are synonymous (Maloutas, 2012; Slater, 2006; Smith and Timberlake, 2002). In this context, both seek to create places that will attract and cater towards more affluent users (Lim et., al, 2013). As a result, they both are argued to displace existing residents.

It is generally accepted that gentrification results in higher tax yields. However, increased property values as a result of gentrification are not always significantly higher than those in other neighborhoods; (DeGiovanni 1984). Nevertheless, increased real estate values as a result of gentrification extend to unimproved properties in the neighbourhood as well.

Gentrification can also lead to the removal of low-price rental housing from the city's core. As a result low-income residents are displaced farther from the downtown (Gale 1984, Marcuse 1986). To exacerbate the situation, the displaced will generally pay higher rent regardless of where they

move to in the city (Kain & Apgar 1985, LeGates & Hartman 1986).

Mid-sized municipalities tend to agree that gentrification and displacement are more of an issue in larger cities. Largely because there are not enough retailers to take over space and not enough customers to service the retailers in smaller downtowns (City of Hamilton Employees, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014). According to a Kitchener employee,

“...gentrification happens in a place like Queen West in Toronto, I don't think its happening here....I don't think we have the size of the markets that creates the kind of an usher that happened in Queen West...Even though we've got 5 developers that are doing a lot of work, they only own maybe half of the real estate. The other half of real estate is owned by people who arn't doing what the developers are doing, so there is going to be tons of options for people” (March 25, 2014).

Additionally, smaller city centres tend to have a more personal relationship with the developers and thus have more leverage and say in what the developer carries out. For instance, in Kitchener, if a tenant is being displaced due to redevelopment, the developer will find them a new place to set up (City of Kitchener Employee 1, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014).

The problem that smaller city centres have however, is with existing tenants paying below market value rent. Downtowns in smaller cities are still evolving, have mixed perceptions, and are not necessarily considered desirable place to live. In a sense, mid-sized city downtowns are still playing catch-up with the existing local populations. As a result, tenants in the downtown pay below market value for rent because the owner and/or landlord is content to have someone in the space rather than no one.

As such,

“the gentrification we’ll experience I think is tenants in those buildings that get picked up.... and have to move to a different space. But they might not get relocated fully out of the downtown, unless they’re one of the people who are paying next to nothing rent and they don’t

want to pay anything, good luck finding a space anywhere”

(City of Kitchener Employee 1, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014).

Contemporary planning values are encouraging people to return to the city. We are seeing this with provisions of housing, education, economic development and social services being provided in the city. As we become increasingly urban, there will be a demand for infill development. This is what planning encourages. Yet with that demand, there will likely be an element of gentrification. The reality is that when you attempt to revitalize, things gentrify. There are ways to offset these consequences that fall outside the scope of this paper such as subsidized housing, rent geared to income, and affordable housing policies. However, it is important to keep in mind that we operate in a free market and social issues need balance with respect to the economic structure.

Many argue that processes of gentrification are exacerbated in smaller centres and I see how this could be a concern. However, I do not necessarily agree with this. Regardless of whether or not improvements are done to a property, taxes in Ontario, tend to increase on an annual basis based on the cost of providing municipal services. Improvements to property as a result of gentrification may accelerate the increase in property values and hence taxes. However the impact of these increases can be minimized by the municipality implementing tax incremental financing. Although downtown revitalization has proven to spur gentrification, it is important to realize that gentrification may occur over time, regardless of any improvements to the area.

As contemporary planning values encourage revitalization processes, elements of gentrification are inevitable. Revitalization and gentrification ultimately facilitate change. Planners are geared to manage change and how the community experiences that change. Generally, people interpret change as a negative thing, but I think it can present positive opportunities and outcomes. For instance, a derelict warehouse that isn't generating revenue could be transformed to produce new jobs, and attract people into the city. In this scenario, if there was no change would the end result be better? I think the role of the planner is to devise a way to leverage change and develop the greatest community benefit for the neighbourhood. However, I think it may be more productive if we start to see change as an opportunity and not start from a baseline that change is a bad thing.

3.5 - LITERATURE CONCLUSION

Over the years, city builders and municipalities alike have attempted to address the issue of the declining downtown. There are a number of strategies that have been employed aimed at improving the quality of life, directing population growth, and encouraging economic activity within the downtown core. Many strategies have been successful at revitalizing the downtown, particularly in larger cities. Smaller-scaled cities however, have had minimal success when emulating larger city revitalization strategies. As such, smaller scaled cities are turning to alternative revitalization methods such as the main street approach.

As many acknowledge the returning rise of the downtown, there is minimal reference to the changing demographics that have facilitated this change. Scholarly articles and documents refer to this change but neglect to explain the reasoning behind it. The decline of city centres was a result of the baby boomer population aging (City of Kitchener Employee 1, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014). However, when this demographic was younger the downtowns were thriving (ibid). Now, we are witnessing a surge of interest in downtowns, yet again, as a result of the echo boomers leaving the nest, and heading for the downtown (ibid).

The City of Barrie has decided to adopt the main street approach to revitalize the downtown. This approach has proven to be successful in other comparable cities such as Kitchener with the King Street reconstruction. Council approved the redevelopment of Memorial Square last summer, and investigations into the feasibility of pedestrianizing Dunlop Street are underway. Plans for the reconfiguration of Dunlop Street includes the widening of sidewalks either by removing street parking, or by converting it into a one-way street. The reason why this approach is so successful in smaller urban centres such as Barrie and Kitchener, is because it offers the fiscally constrained municipality options as to how to redevelop the site. Whether it be phased out in incremental stages, or reconfigured as a single project, the main street approach affords municipalities with flexibility.

Nevertheless, many scholars, theorists, and practitioners believe that Canadian downtowns are returning to their original status as the most important district within their cities. As such, cities have employed various revitalization methods to bring the downtown back to life. Based on this literature review, it seems that any approach to revitalization tends to facilitate gentrification processes. However, by being conscious of the different theories pertaining to downtown revitalization, planners can make sound planning decisions and minimize negative impacts.

4.0 - REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND LESSONS OF BEST PRACTICE

4.1 - CONTEXT

In this section I have examined various revitalization strategies employed by cities of all sizes in order to determine their effectiveness in enhancing downtowns. This section is not intended to act as an in-depth review all revitalization strategies. Rather, the following examines recent and prominent strategies that I have seen in many Ontario cities: special activity generators; retail and economic development; streetscapes and the built environment; pedestrianization and design; 24 hour downtowns; festivals and marketplaces; arts and culture. Upon critical analysis, I make conclusions as to which strategy is best suited for smaller cities. I then summarize the findings in Table 1.

4.2 - ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

The following provides an overview of physical and economic revitalization strategies that cities have employed. This section analyzes and critiques a few of such strategies, and sets the stage for examining more effective place-making strategies in revitalization efforts, specifically for smaller-scaled cities.

4.2.1 - SPECIAL ACTIVITY GENERATORS

Special activity generators are large retail/entertainment centres, sport complexes, art facilities, and convention centres (Robertson, 1999). Typically, special activity generators are used to quickly address downtown issues. Large complexes that house movie theaters, big box stores, and coffee shops, are the typical special activity generators that can be found in downtowns (ibid).

Special activity generators as a revitalization strategy are used to encourage consumerism and pedestrianism in the downtown core. By removing old, derelict buildings and replacing them with new large infrastructure developments, people will be more inclined to explore and wander the

downtown (Kemp, 2000). This is a misconception, where more often than not, small vacant areas are typically the first to experience reinvestment as opposed to larger spaces (Moe & Wilkie, 1997).

Upon critical examination, it is concluded that special activity generators are not particularly successful for smaller cities. These development projects are expensive to construct and maintain, and typically do not fit with a downtown's sense of place (Robertson, 1999). They depend upon high levels of pedestrian traffic and repeat visits in order to be effective. Additionally, these projects warrant a high degree of investment and result in a low utilization rate (Robertson, 1999). However, small and mid-sized cities are not likely able to meet these requirements, due to the population size, and dispersed built forms (Peterson, 1998). Thus, these facilities have a low survival rate in small and mid-sized cities.

Mid-sized cities wishing to revitalize the downtown via this approach should not invest in large-scale sporting complexes, as they often do not fare well in large active downtowns let alone smaller city centers (Rosentraub, 1997). These large complexes typically encourage one time visits to a specific location and do not encourage the exploration of the entire city centre (Duany, Plater-Zybeck, and Speck, 2000).

Regardless, if a mid-sized municipality wishes to employ this type of revitalization strategy, there are certain special activity generators that are more successful than others. Large office developments typically have a higher success rate in mid-sized cities due to the changing economy and proliferating service sector. These dynamics have facilitated the necessity for office space in smaller city centres (Robertson, 1999).

4.2.2 - RETAIL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In attempt to revitalize the downtown economy, many cities try to compete with large suburban shopping malls by providing the same amenities and retailers in the downtown core. However, when adopting and employing this revitalization strategy in smaller cities, the unique retail character of traditional downtowns is then lost and destroyed (Duany, Plater-Zybeck, and Speck, 2000). Subsequently, the vibrancy of the downtown is lost because consumers head to the indoor suburban shopping malls that offer the same retailers, free parking, and a climate controlled environment.

This is not the best strategy for mid-sized cities attempting to revitalize their downtowns because they are not equipped to compete against the suburbs. Instead, downtowns should pursue niche strategies (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck, 2000; Milder, 1997). Niche marketing is a smaller-scaled revitalization strategy that affords mid-sized city centres the opportunity to differentiate the downtown from other shopping centres in the city. Small, niche stores, in comparison to large, big box department stores, are essential to downtown's survival because it creates a unique character, diversifies the economic sector, and supports local merchants. BIA's are often used to encourage and acquire niche retail and economic development in the downtown, and are often quite successful.

4.3 - PLACE MAKING REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

In comparison to economic development strategies, place making strategies are more appropriate for mid-sized cities attempting to revitalize the downtown. These strategies focus primarily on improving the quality of life in the downtown for the people of the city. By combining physical design provisions with social and cultural aspects of place, these strategies work collectively to create and enhance a sense of place in the downtown. This section examines several place making strategies that mid-sized municipalities can use to revitalize the downtown.

4.3.1 - STREETSCAPES AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Cities of all sizes should aspire to create a downtown that fosters social interaction. The modification of the built environment can accomplish this goal. Planners and city officials can facilitate synergies through the strategic placement of public open space. Providing public amenities and design elements such as benches, playgrounds, and unique tables with chess boards for example, can contribute to the quality of the downtown and provide a space that is accessible for all age groups.

Part of the physical modification of the built form also includes differentiating the downtown from the rest of the city. Planners and city builders should draw on the downtowns unique features to create a sense of place. Simultaneously however, cautionary measures should be taken so as not to design out the authenticity of the downtown.

Downtown buildings should have complementary architectural styles with small variations to facilitate diversity. Different patterned sidewalks, gates, fire hydrants, signs, manhole covers, and banners should be designed and incorporated in a creative manner that fits with the existing sense of place. Street designs should incorporate trees and plant material into the urban fabric, alongside continual building frontages to create a more enjoyable environment (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck, 2000). Collectively, these strategies work to revitalize the downtown by distinguishing it as a different and inviting place that fosters social interaction (Sucher, 1995).

The physical modification of the built environment can be a successful downtown revitalization strategy. However, it may be a costly solution that may not be a financially feasible option for smaller city centres. Additionally, there is the potential for the existing character to be designed out and undermine the initial intention of creating a sense of place.

4.3.2 - PEDESTRIANISM

Successful downtowns feature unpredictable, exciting, and lively spaces. Creating such an atmosphere requires a downtown that caters to pedestrians. Although mid-sized cities have more pedestrian scaled downtowns, many still struggle in attracting people into the core as a result of surrounding suburban developments (Robertson, 1999). As such, many strategies have been employed to create and achieve an active street life and lively atmosphere in the downtown.

Recently, there has been a trend to increase pedestrianism, and reduce vehicular traffic in the downtown in cities of all sizes. Sidewalks are steadily being widened, and feature public amenities such as benches that cater to pedestrians. The increased sidewalk widths are intended to provide for walking space, benches, public art, landscape architecture, performers, and vendors, all of which are said to contribute to a lively atmosphere (Sucher, 1995). Moreover, these provisions are intended to integrate a social dimension that will facilitate a sense of place in the downtown (McBee, 1992).

Creating an urban environment that incorporates pedestrianism is essential in creating a quality downtown, and will subsequently advance the socio-economic sector. However, since downtowns are diverse organisms, the built form should accommodate all forms of transportation, including vehicular traffic. The mix of transportation adds an additional unique component to the dynamic nature of the city centre (McBee, 1992). Since smaller urban centres typically have automobile-oriented downtowns, it is advisable for smaller urban centres to not rid vehicular traffic completely from the core. Instead, traffic calming techniques such as woonerfs, should be incorporated into the downtown to enhance the pedestrian environment and accommodate vehicles (Duany, Plater-Zybeck, and Speck, 2000).

Although, creating a pedestrian oriented environment is a great strategy for downtown revitalization, the construction costs associated with redevelopment of main streets can be costly

and may not be a financially feasible option for smaller city centres. Smaller cities have difficulty in convincing downtown merchants and shop owners to keep their stores open late, which could act as a deterrent for pedestrians entering the downtown. As such, this strategy proves to be more successful in larger cities because of the higher population sizes, and more available activities for passerbyers.

4.3.3 - A 24-HOUR DOWNTOWN

Creating a 24 hour downtown is yet another revitalization strategy. A 24-hour place typically generates a vibrant atmosphere and active street life, and thus has been a key revitalization strategy and has been attempted by cities of all sizes (Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck, 2000). However, a number of factors need to be considered in order to succeed.

Density and diversity are one such component that must be present to facilitate a 24-hour downtown. Diverse and densely populated communities provide opportunities for people to live, work and play as well as socialize, be entertained, and experience culture. All of these activities can occur at different hours of the day or night. Mixed-use zoning also helps achieve density and diversity in the downtown, and also generates more activities in the centre (McBee, 1992).

The use of public buildings and services can also work to create an active downtown that is used at various times. For instance, libraries, post offices, and courthouses can attract large numbers of people into the downtown (Mintz and Gratz, 1998). Making these public buildings multi-purposed by programming events or classes, can also maintain the level of activity at various times of the day. Other large buildings such as educational institutions also create and encourage vibrant, active street life via students (Mintz and Gratz, 1998).

Mixed entertainment facilities also help create a 24 hour downtown. Restaurants, bakeries, bars, and large bookstores are facilities that attract people into the downtown (Mintz and Gratz, 1998). These facilities work to attract individuals living outside of the city centre and into the core

after working hours. Generally, smaller city centres have underdeveloped and/or under utilized entertainment options in their downtowns (Robertson, 1999). Thus, expanding the entertainment options and extending the hours of diverse facilities can successfully attract people into the downtown.

Overall, there are many different factors that facilitate the creation of a 24-hour downtown, mainly providing a mixed-use environment. Large cities are more successful in creating a 24-hour downtown primarily due to higher population levels to fill the streets, and more entertainment facilities that have longer business hours. However, smaller city centres can still utilize this revitalization strategy by employing the aforementioned strategies to create a 24-hour downtown.

4.3.4 - FESTIVALS AND MARKETPLACES

Programming festivals is another revitalization strategy municipalities employ. If successfully implemented, they can provide a wide range of benefits. They can, among other things, provide entertainment, promote social interaction and increase the overall health of residents (Snyder, 1999).

Typically, there are two general types of festivals: large world-class spectacles; and local festivals (Ley, 1996). Smaller urban centres have difficulties in hosting world class festivals for several reasons. First, they do not have as many financial or spatial resources available to them as their larger counterparts do (City of Kitchener Employee 3, Personal Communication, March, 17, 2014). The tax base and source of revenue as well as the geographical footprint are smaller in scale in comparison to larger cities. Secondly, it is more difficult to acquire private sponsorship in smaller centers. Typically corporate dollars are allocated to bigger, more popular cities where they will get the most exposure, and bigger bang for their buck (ibid). As a result, smaller city centres tend to focus on smaller local festivals.

Mid-sized cities generally host outdoor concerts, performances, and parades as revitalization strategies. These events have proven to be successful in smaller cities because they increase

pedestrian traffic, encourage downtown consumerism, create a sense of place and foster civic pride (ibid). Downtown festivals can create a space for congregation and social interaction that may not be present in other parts of the city.

Marketplaces and/or farmers markets also harness the capacity to revitalize downtowns, especially for smaller urban centers. They offer a mixture of shopping, entertainment, arts, local products, and a place for social interaction amongst a diverse group of people (City of Kitchener 2, Personal Communication, March, 24, 2014). In doing so, they facilitate economic investment and consumerism in the downtown. Marketplaces are a useful revitalization tool because they can be established almost anywhere in the downtown with or without infrastructure. They can also promote and showcase local goods and talents, which enhances the unique character of the downtown.

Marketplaces and or festivals can be successful revitalization strategies for both large and smaller city centres. They enhance the street activity in the downtown, encourage downtown consumerism, and facilitate networking linkages. However, cities should be aware of one time visits that these events foster. City builders and planners should design the layout of the event in a manner that encourages meandering in the downtown while visitors are there.

4.3.5 - ARTS AND CULTURE

Lastly, arts and culture is a revitalization strategy that has gained more momentum in cities of all sizes. Over the last thirty years, the importance of arts and culture in cities and urban development has proliferated. Arts and culture are now seen as essential resources for creating economically and socially prosperous communities (Johnson, 2009). Broadly speaking, “culture” can be defined as, “the general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development; a particular way of life of a people, period, group or humanity; and also the works and practices of intellectuals, especially artists” (Williams, 1985, 90). In this context, culture is wide ranging, and can include, objects and events produced by artists (Johnson, 2009).

Comparatively, cultural capitals are places where, “the arts have activated individuals, rebuilt communities, enlivened the polity, guided the physical regeneration of derelict spaces and re-oriented economies” (Johnson, 2009, 3). However, changes must occur in the socio-economic realm and the physical landscape in order to transform a city into a cultural hub (Zukin, 1995; Landry and Bianchini, 1995). These definitions, assist city builders in quantifying and measuring the value of a place, and revitalization efforts via a cultural approach.

Successful and quality downtowns usually have a strong arts and culture component (Snyder, 1999). Arts and culture can add to the quality of life of the downtown and the city as a whole by attracting people in the downtown, and by providing activity and vibrancy into the core. Studies suggest that artistic and cultural productions attract more visitors than professional sporting events and have more economic spin-offs (Houstoun Jr, 2000, 44). In this context, grand, large-scaled art facilities are not necessarily required for this revitalization strategy to be successful. In fact, informal arts and culture can also be extremely effective as they create a sense of place, encourage civic pride, and enhance the aesthetics of the downtown. (Johnson, 2009).

Despite recent attempts to rebuild downtowns via the arts and culture sectors there are still many opponents of arts led regeneration strategies. Zukin for instance, argues that such practices facilitate gentrification processes and social polarization (1995). Others maintain their positions in that these approaches actually promote inclusivity and socio-economic sustainability if successfully applied (Johnson, 2009).

4.4 - SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Through a critical analysis of the prominent revitalization strategies, this research has concluded that place-making strategies, specifically arts and culture approaches, are the best suited for smaller scaled urban centres. By emphasizing place-making strategies, mid-sized cities can incrementally, and strategically increase the quality of life. They are they most financially affordable option for cities with a smaller tax base because they do not necessarily require the permanent modification of the landscape and/or built form. Arts and culture events for instance, can be achieved via in-kind donations such as road closures which is fairly inexpensive for a municipality.

Moreover, arts and culture productions do not necessarily require participation fees, nor do they require permanent modifications to the landscape and/or built form, which would increase property values. Rather, these approaches can provide an opportunity for people of all economic statuses to get involved, participate, and create a sense of community.

Mid-sized cities such as Kitchener, and Hamilton have successfully employed such strategies, which will be reviewed later. These cities have witnessed an increase in the quality of life via vernacular grassroots organizations and artists who have taken it upon themselves to create a sense of place in each locale. Table 1 provides a brief summary of the revitalization strategies and their applicability to smaller city centres.

TABLE 1.0 - SUMMARY OF REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

Revitalization Strategy	Small or Large City Applicability	Scale	Comments
Special Activity Generators	Large	Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive to construct and maintain • Facilities under utilized in small cities • Not enough pedestrian flow in smaller cities • Encourages one time visits to a specific place in the city
Retail & Economic Development	Large	Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller cities should offer niche stores so as not to compete with big box developments
Physical Streetscape & the Built Environment	Large & Small	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive for smaller cities • Creates quality atmosphere and encourages more pedestrian traffic and downtown consumerism
Pedestrianization & Design	Large & Small	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive for smaller cities • Creates quality atmosphere and encourages more pedestrian traffic and downtown consumerism
24 Hour Downtowns	Large	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More suitable for larger cities because of larger population size and extended store hours • Creates safer environments with more eyes on the street
Festivals & Marketplaces	Large & Small	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularly effective in smaller cities • Increase pedestrian traffic • Increases downtown consumerism • Encourages tourism
Arts & Culture	Large & Small	Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely successful in smaller cities • Adds uniqueness and sense of place • Facilitates community development • Inexpensive

5.0 - CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

5.1 - CONTEXT

Although it has been proven that place-making revitalization strategies work well in smaller urban centres, it is fundamental to understand why. The future role of downtowns and the differences between large and small city centres, impact the successful application of revitalization strategies and lend to a deeper understanding as to why certain strategies are better suited for smaller city centres. Visualizing what the future may hold for a particular city and its downtown can be a useful tool for determining which methods to use to achieve the desired goal. Moreover, noting the differences between smaller and large city downtowns is important because the successful application of a revitalization strategy hinges on the existing circumstances. This section reviews these factors in more depth to provide an explanation as to why certain strategies work better in smaller urban centres.

5.2 - SMALL AND LARGE CITY DOWNTOWN DIFFERENCES

There are differences between smaller cities and large cities, and these differences necessitate different revitalization strategies. The scale for starters, is one major difference. Smaller cities tend to be more pedestrian scaled, in terms of their geographic footprint and population size (Robertson, 2001). They are not as dense as their larger counterparts and typically can not support large-scaled economic revitalization strategies such as special activity generators which require continual flows of pedestrian traffic and reoccurring visits to be successful. Thus, the scale in smaller urban centres necessitates place-making revitalization strategies as opposed to economic approaches.

The built form is another major difference. Typically, large cities are multi-nodal in form and feature many different districts. In contrast, smaller city downtowns have fewer districts, and are more connected with surrounding neighbourhoods (Robertson, 2001). The relatively fewer districts

in smaller centres make the downtown more walkable, and better suited for pedestrian oriented revitalization strategies such as arts and culture productions.

The nightlife and level of activity also differs. Smaller urban centres have a relatively inactive nightlight in comparison to large downtowns (Robertson, 1999). Merchant retail shops typically shut down early in smaller downtowns, whereas large cities have a myriad of amenities available long after peak business hours. Place-making strategies, specifically arts and culture productions, can work to extend the level of activity during the evening in smaller urban centres. They can encourage business owners to stay open later, and can program other amenities such as cultural facilities, and entertainment options during the evening hours to attract people into the downtown.

It is evident that there are many differences between large city, and smaller city downtowns. Noting these differences is important because the successful application of a revitalization strategy hinges on the existing circumstances. Thus, a smaller city downtown cannot emulate and implement revitalization strategies that larger cities have employed, because the outcomes will not be the same. As such, it is important to be cognizant of the differences in order to apply and implement the most appropriate revitalization strategy.

5.3 - THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWNS

The future role of downtowns also impacts the successful application of a revitalization strategy. The successful application of a revitalization strategy is dependent upon existing circumstances as well as the goals and desired functions of an urban centre. Although cities continue to disperse in form and municipalities across North America continue to approve sprawling suburban developments (Kreiger, 2000), downtown areas are evolving and taking on new functions (Foundersmith, 1988). The resurgence of downtowns are taking on a new role, that of a “theme centre” (ibid). Downtowns are now catering towards special functions, and are providing spaces for activities that differentiate it from outlying areas.

There are certain trends that may affect cities. For instance, the changing demographics will inevitably have an effect on downtowns (Kreiger, 2000). As the baby-boomers age, their range of mobility will decrease and will choose to settle in dense areas with excellent “quality-of-life amenities” (Moe and Wilkie, 1997, 175). Downtowns, in their compact form, can afford this cohort with the housing and services they require. Thus, this trend is one that provides downtowns with a great opportunity.

Although downtowns are not likely to regain their former regional economic status, downtowns are expected to have a prosperous future. There is likely to be an increase in residential development, as well as entertainment, education, tourism and culture (Gad and Mathew, 2000; Levy, 2001). One key potential market for smaller city downtowns relates to small business development, where small businesses are projected to be a major source of economic growth (Mayer, 2000). The interconnected global economy facilitates the success of small businesses, and as such, downtowns should market themselves as a place for start-ups.

The future for downtowns will be a service centre for local core neighbourhoods, with a regional attractions in specific areas (Bunting et., al, 2000). Arts and culture, as well as entertainment, and cuisine will likely be the regional attractions in the downtown (Levy, 2001). The increased demand for arts entertainment provides planners and downtowns with the opportunity to expand or introduce necessary infrastructure.

The last potential role for downtowns in the future is the opportunity to be a high quality environment in which people can gather, socialize, and experience a sense of community. People are increasingly looking for a sense of community within their cities (Krieger, 2000), and downtowns have the potential to capitalize on this public need. The already established infrastructure, and civic space, make the downtown a great place for fostering civic pride and a feeling of community. Thus, planning for downtowns will require ensuring community space is available.

Downtowns are shifting away from being the government and economic hubs of the city, and are now acting as places for social congregation for the local community. Revitalization strategies should acknowledge these potential trends because they impact the future of the downtown. Exploring future trends enables planners to foresee new opportunities and possibilities. It affords opportunities for enhancement in the downtown and prevents the implementation of ill-fitting revitalization strategies.

6.0 - CASE STUDY ANALYSIS AND COMPARABLE PRECEDENTS

6.1 - CONTEXT

The following section provides a case study analysis of the City of Barrie and the challenges associated with downtown revitalization. It also examines the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton as places that have demonstrated methods of best practice. In order to understand the options available for the City of Barrie, I wanted to become familiar with approaches used by comparable precedents. Both municipalities have demonstrated a commitment to the arts and culture sector via the support of vernacular artistic productions. The lessons learned from both the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton have been considered in my recommendations for the City of Barrie.

6.2 - BACKGROUND

The City of Barrie is a mid-sized city that has faced challenges with revitalizing the downtown core. Rapid suburban growth has led to the demise of Barrie's downtown. Over the years, Barrie's downtown has developed a negative reputation due to a deserted core featuring vacant storefronts and inactive streets, and the manifestation of poverty and homelessness. Although efforts have been made to minimize the effects and challenges, Barrie is still struggling with the community perception encompassing the downtown.

These problems are not unique to Barrie. Rather, they are common amongst smaller urban centres throughout Ontario. The City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton for instance, are both mid-sized cities that have faced similar challenges in the downtown. Both cities experienced downtown decline, and negative community perceptions. However, they over came these barriers and transformed their downtowns into vibrant, accessible, and exciting places.

Kitchener and Hamilton transformed their downtowns via a variety of revitalization strategies. They have modified and pedestrianized the streetscapes as seen with the reconstruction of

Kitchener's King St. and Hamilton's Gore Park. Economic development revitalization strategies can also be seen, with examples of "starchitecture" in both downtowns. However, these were costly developments, and took years to come to fruition. As such, the examples borrowed from these municipalities feature place-making revitalization strategies, specifically arts and culture approaches. In each city, these methods have gained significant momentum over the past several years and have proven to be a successful, and cost effective way to immediately impact the city's core in a positive manner.

6.3 - THE CITY OF KITCHENER

The City of Kitchener is an excellent example of a city that has utilized a place-making approach to downtown revitalization. Located in Southern Ontario, The City of Kitchener covers about 136.79 square kilometers and has a total population of 219,153 (Statistics Canada, 2012b). Referred to as the “tri-cities”, the City of Cambridge and the City of Waterloo are adjacent to Kitchener, situated to the south, and the north respectively. These three cities make up the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, with Kitchener being the largest municipality.

Kitchener has grown exponentially, and will continue to do so in the near future. The City of Kitchener has built itself on manufacturing, industry, creativity and entrepreneurship (City of Kitchener Employee 1, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014). While the economy took a turn for the worse in the 1990’s, Kitchener shifted focus and seized the tech sector as its future (Cornies, 2014). Today, Kitchener has advanced the tech sector by nurturing start-ups, directing commercial clusters, encouraging collaboration, and becoming a “talent magnet” (ibid). By nurturing ingenuity and creativity, the City sees entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity as the cornerstones for the economic sector and the success of the downtown.

Kitchener has also extended entrepreneurship into the arts sector. From large-scaled infrastructure projects such as the



*“King St. Downtown Kitchener”
Sean Marshall. May 19, 2014.*



*“Bike Trail Photos Summer Lights Festival”
Nik Harron. June 21, 2014.*



*“Buskers, 2008”
Jon Eby*

Centre in the Square, to smaller scaled grants and support programs for local artists, the City of Kitchener has demonstrated its commitment to attracting and retaining talent (ibid).

The City of Kitchener is the arts and culture hub for the Waterloo Region and beyond. The arts and culture sector has grown more than 60 percent in the last 10 years, making it the highest in Canada outside of B.C and Toronto (The City of Kitchener, 2012). With over 115 live performance in the downtown, and 8 large-scaled festivals and events that attract roughly 468,900 people into the core, the City of Kitchener continues to demonstrate its commitment and support for the evolving arts and culture sector (ibid).

Recently, Alternatives Journal hosted a nuit blanche styled event called “Night Shift”, where the City of Kitchener supported the event through numerous in-kind donations. They provided, “things like garbage receptacles, road closures, [and] they wanted to do installations so how do you get an art installation on city property. All those types of logistics that we needed to sort out. So we really did what ever we could to clear they way in a red tape perspective, and we also included some programming to promote the event”

(City of Kitchener Employee 3, Personal Communication, March, 17, 2014).

By internally limiting red tape bureaucracy, the City of Kitchener was able to bypass council approval and assisted Alternatives Journal in carrying out the event.

Additionally, the BIA provided financial support for the event. The Kitchener BIA has a funding model that allows community groups and/or grassroots organizations to come forward 30 days prior to the event and pitch their idea and how it relates to economic development, or downtown revitalization (Kitchener BIA Employee, Personal Communication, March 24, 2014). If the event relates and fits with the BIA strategies, there is, “a pool of money that can be distributed and allocated, anywhere between \$500.00 and \$3000.00 depending on the size and scale of the event”

(City of Kitchener 2, Personal Communication, March, 24, 2014).

The City of Kitchener utilized an arts and culture revitalization strategy which has proven to be the most successful revitalization strategy for mid-sized cities. This type of revitalization strategy relies heavily on the community organizations to make the idea come to fruition. This was precisely the case with Alternatives Journal and Night Shift. Alternatives Journal had an idea, but needed assistance with the logistics of the event and municipal buy-in. Although the City of Kitchener provided as much in-kind support as necessary, the brunt of the work was carried out by the organization.

However, it is important to note that there are no negative connotations associated with the organization carrying out the event. For instance, Alternatives Journal wanted to take the responsibility of creating the event themselves. It provided them with self-promotion, “in terms of being able to create a package to give to people and sell people with, being able to create promotional materials around trying to get people on board and participate” (Alternatives Journal Employee, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014). It also expanded their network for potential contributors, partnerships, and subscribers (ibid). This is the case for many artistic productions and events.

Thus, arts and culture revitalization strategies in mid-sized cities tend to be a bottoms-up approach to downtown revitalization. In comparison to larger cities and their arts and culture events such as the Scotia Bank Nuit Blanche event in Toronto, mid-sized cities and their events tend to be built on community development and grassroots organizations. The difference is that there is no private corporate sponsorship which typically dictate the programming of the event, and download the labour and services onto the artists themselves. Rather, the events in mid-sized cities receive little to none corporate sponsorship, because corporate dollars are typically allocated to cities where they will receive the maximum exposure. Thus, the orchestration of these events in mid-sized cities

is left to the initial visionaries, allowing for freedom and flexibility.

Night Shift is an example of community development, and the City of Kitchener serves as an example of a community developer and a city which supports the arts and culture sector for revitalization. Community developers do not look for recognition. Rather, community developers want to allow the community to do what they please and be supported. The City of Kitchener in conjunction with the Kitchener BIA and the community were successful in supporting the arts and culture sector and revitalizing the downtown.

6.4 - THE CITY OF HAMILTON

The City of Hamilton also provides a great example of city which has employed a place-making strategy aimed at downtown revitalization. Situated on the West end of Lake Ontario, the City is made up of six former municipalities: Ancaster; Dundas; Flamborough; Glanbrook; Hamilton; and Stoney Creek (The City of Hamilton, 2009). Together, these municipalities make up the Hamilton-Wentworth Region and are now considered to be official Communities within the City of Hamilton. With the six amalgamated municipalities, the City of Hamilton now has a population of over 504,000 people, and covers a diverse geographical area that spans from rural Flamborough to the urban centre of the former municipality of Hamilton (ibid).

Within the City of Hamilton, Hamilton is the largest community representing 65% of the city's total population with 329,770 persons in 2006 (ibid). The downtown specifically, is a large area with a total population of approximately 50,000 residents (ibid). The downtown boundaries extend from the Niagara escarpment in the south to Barton Street in the north, and from Queen Street in the west and Sherman Avenue in the east (ibid). For simplicity, this catchment area will be referred in this research paper as "the downtown area".

Over the past few years, the City of Hamilton has also



"Gore Park Revitalized/Pedestrianised"
Neal Jennings, July 13, 2012.



"Super Crawl"
John Piercy, September 25, 2010.



"Street Art at Super Crawl"
John Piercy, September 25, 2010.

become a hub for arts and culture productions. The 2006 Statistics Canada report, 1,700 artists and 7,300 cultural workers reside in the City of Hamilton (Hill Strategies, 2011). These numbers alone account for 3.2% of all Hamilton workers (ibid). More recently, the 2011 Downtown Hamilton employment survey recorded a total increase of 330 jobs over the 2010 employment survey (ibid). The growth in the Creative Industries sector alone was 320 jobs and includes animation studios locating/expanding in the core (ibid). These numbers demonstrate that over the past 15 years, the number of artists in Hamilton has grown by 22 percent, which is faster than the overall labour force (ibid).

Similar to the City of Kitchener, the arts and culture scene in Hamilton developed largely as a result of the local artists and community. For instance, Art Crawl is an arts and culture event in downtown Hamilton that is organic in nature and evolved with no organizing committee (City of Hamilton Employee's, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014). Although there are several locals who took charge of the event - Bryce Kanberra, Dave Kuruc, Cynthia Hill, and Jim Chambers - the event started with an idea from a local shop owner and the community worked together to see the event through (Hamilton Artist, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014).

On the second Friday of each month between May and November, the galleries, and retail shops on James St. North open their doors during the evening hours from 7:00 PM - 11:00 PM for Art Crawl (ibid). For the past four years, the event has progressed and continues to increase due to its popularity. Art Crawl is now attended by thousands of people from within and outside of the City of Hamilton, and even led to the creation of Super Crawl, which happens annually in September (ibid).

There is no denying that Art Crawl and Super Crawl are successful community-led events. The City of Hamilton acknowledges that and realizes the benefits and spin-offs from these events. Thus, they have supported the event through in-kind street and road closures on James St. North between King William Street and Barton Street from 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM on the second Friday

of each month between May and November for Art Crawl (City of Hamilton Employees, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014).

However, the City of Hamilton's support for the arts does not stop there. In February 2012, the City of Hamilton relocated the Culture Division to the Planning and Economic Development Department as a way of recognizing the role arts and culture plays in advancing the economic sector (ibid). In doing so, culture and tourism are aligned, enabling policy makers and funding streams to work collectively and improve the working circumstances for Hamilton artists.

Subsequently, in June 2012, Council adopted a Cultural Policy and concluded that arts in the city is worth supporting. Additionally, the Downtown Hamilton BIA, on behalf of the King William Art Walk Steering Committee, hosted a competition and invited artists to submit designs for 3 benches to be installed on King William Street, where each artist was paid \$1,500.00 for their designs (ibid).

6.5 - ANALYSIS

The community led art events in Kitchener and Hamilton have proven to be very successful in revitalizing the downtown by creating lively atmospheres, attracting economic investments in the downtown core, and fostering civic pride. These approaches to downtown revitalization are well suited for smaller urban centres with a smaller tax base because of the freedom and flexibility allotted to the municipality in carrying out the productions. In the case of Kitchener and Hamilton, the events were programmed by local community members, but supported by the municipality via in-kind donations. In-kind donations are a useful option for municipalities, because they do not require any direct upfront financial contributions, just a deployment of existing resources, whether that be manpower or facilities, etc.

Additionally, place-making approaches that emphasize arts and culture are well suited for smaller urban centres because of cheap real estate prices involved in renting and buying in the downtown. The relatively affordable spaces, in comparison to larger city's such as Toronto,

allow artists to set up shop in the downtown, which is why these revitalization strategies are more appropriate for small and mid-sized cities.

The City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton offer a number of programs for property owners, developers, and tenants to ensure there is adequate affordable housing and/or to help offset costs of improvements in core areas. Kitchener also has a pool of funds available to tech start-ups to help offset costs and attract creative individuals into the city centre.

6.6 - THE CITY OF BARRIE

Over the years, Barrie has employed economic development revitalization strategies aimed at enhancing the downtown. MacLaren Art Centre acts as a special activity generator, and plans to redevelop Dunlop Street and Memorial Square parallel this approach. It is forecasted that over the next two to three years, Barrie's downtown will increase by 200,000 square feet of new commercial space (Barrie BIA, 2014). However, challenges and negative perceptions still persist. As growth and development pressures persevere, demands for infrastructure and services on the fiscally constrained municipality will continue. As such, the City of Barrie should look towards cost effective place-making approaches, similar to those found in Kitchener and Hamilton.

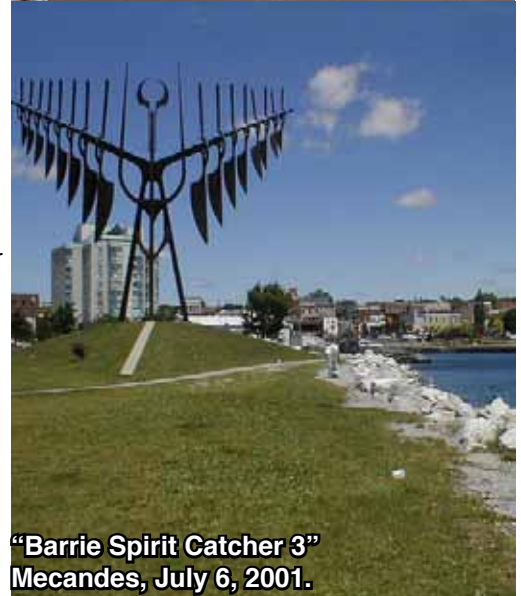
The potential for artist and community-led urban revitalization in Barrie is unprecedented. Over the past 10 years, Barrie has attracted more artists per capita than any other Canadian community (Created in Barrie, 2010). There are two performing arts venues in the city: the Mady Centre For The Performing Arts, and the Georgian Theatre. The Mady Centre For The Performing Arts is situated in the downtown at the infamous Five Points intersection and the Georgian Theatre is located at Georgian College in the north end of Barrie.



"Barrie Ontario"
Andy Nystorm, September 15, 2013.



"Barrie Waterfront Half Marathon"
Stephen Wepler, June 17, 2012.



"Barrie Spirit Catcher 3"
Mecandes, July 6, 2001.

Additionally, Barrie is home to a wide range of art galleries and studios, including the prominent and internationally recognized MacLaren Art Centre. There are also a number of independent studios that are all situated in the downtown including: Art In House; D.I.Y Arts Collective; Artist Studios of Aylan Couchie & Lisa Brunetta; Gallery 111; Jennifer Klementti Photography; The Edge Gallery; and the Unity Market. The majority of these galleries, independent studios, and boutiques are located in the downtown along the Lakeshore Mews. The Lakeshore Mews, also commonly referred to as Barrie's art district, is located directly behind Dunlop Street, the downtown's main strip.

Collectively, the Lakeshore Mews artists have already organized vernacular artistic events such as "Arts ce Soir" an all-night art event similar to that of Nuit Blanche, and "Who Knew!?" an art crawl event reminiscent of Hamilton's. The community ambition is there, however, event participation and attendance rates are low, and there seems to be a gap between the artists, the events, and municipal officials (Barrie Artist, Personal Communication, March, 5, 2014). Typically, these events have been orchestrated solely by the Lakeshore Mews artists and without municipal assistance (ibid). As a result, the events have raised little awareness of their existence, and have garnered limited public participation.

The difference between Barrie's arts and culture sector in comparison to that of Kitchener's and Hamilton's, is that the vernacular artistic productions and events in the that have been spearheaded by the community, have not been supported by the city. Hamilton and Kitchener have supported the community-based events, aiding in their success. Whether it be in-kind road closures and increases in security provisions, or simply just promoting the event via the web and by word of mouth, both Kitchener and Hamilton have acquired a balance in supporting community-led initiatives that enhance the downtown, while ensuring that the orchestration and planning is left to the initial visionaries.

The City of Barrie has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the arts and culture sector. In 2006, the City of Barrie commissioned a Culture Plan entitled *Building a Creative Future* (Department of Culture, 2014). In 2007, City Council acknowledge the importance of arts and culture to the economy, the downtown, and downtown revitalization by including arts and culture as an economic drive in its top ten strategic priorities (ibid). In 2009, the Department of Culture commissioned the research project entitled “Created in Barrie” to understand the market for arts and culture in Barrie (ibid). The following year, Barrie commissioned the Resource Management Group to create a plan titled “Creating Cultural Connections, a Strategic Marketing Plan” that acts as a framework for marketing arts and culture products (ibid). The City also offers grants to organizations however not to individual artists.

Collectively, these documents, policies and provisions provide input to the City’s upcoming strategic, business and marketing plans and present the market insight required for planning future cultural infrastructure projects. They also provide information pertaining to the level of arts participation, key participants, marketing opportunities, and arts behaviour of the local community and arts sector.

However, artists and city officials in Barrie seem to maintain a distant relationship with one another (Barrie Artist, Personal Communication, March, 5, 2014). Events organized by the BIA have municipal and private support which aid in their success, drawing approximately 325,000 visits per year (Barrie BIA, Personal Communication, April, 7, 2014). However, vernacular, grass-roots events organized by local artists are not particularly successful due to the lack of involvement from the city. With collaboration, support and backing from the City of Barrie, these events could have huge economic spin-offs and benefits for the entire city as well as the artists themselves. As such, the following section provides recommendations for the City of Barrie to assist in the implementation of arts and culture place-making revitalization approaches.

7.0 - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY OF BARRIE

7.1 - CONTEXT

This section provides a series of recommendations for the municipal government of the City of Barrie and other similar municipalities, to assist in downtown revitalization via the development of arts in the community. These recommendations and the subsequent proposal are the result of discussions with artists, businesses, and City officials from the City of Kitchener, the City of Hamilton, and the City of Barrie. For each recommendation, there is a set of guiding principles to guide and motivate plan makers (Hodge, 2008, 205). These principles embody the philosophy of the proposal and reflect basic planning values (ibid). To set the stage for future interventions, three strategic directions are provided: Investing in the Arts; Business and the Arts; and Public Engagement with the Arts. For each strategic direction, priorities for action are identified to act as a starting point for the implementation of the proposal.

This section provides recommendations for the City of Barrie and other municipalities that are facing similar challenges in downtown revitalization. Through the critical analysis of the various revitalization strategies, arts and culture revitalization strategies are deemed the most appropriate tool for mid-sized cities to employ. Providing minimal support to vernacular arts and culture productions will aid in the success of arts and culture productions, while ensuring the orchestration of the event remains in the hands of the original stakeholders. Employing these recommendations will also produce economic spin-offs for the city and the downtown, and subsequently facilitate connections between city officials, artists, downtown merchants and local community members.

Cities of all sizes are increasingly plagued with the downloading of services from upper levels of government. To make matters more complex, smaller city centres have a lower tax base to generate revenue. As a result, funds are typically allocated to traditional municipal services, and there is little room left in the budget for amenities. In recognizing the constraints of a smaller

municipality, the City of Barrie can find alternative methods for supporting and facilitating community engagement in the delivery of arts and culture programming. With an already established ambitious art scene, the City of Barrie can break down barriers to help the community and/or artist organizations orchestrate events on their own, which will in turn, revitalize the downtown.

7.2 - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The City of Barrie as a corporation should be a partner, and work with artists, and community based organizations to facilitate and advance successful collaborations.
2. The City of Barrie as a corporation should be a supporter, and invest in the arts and culture sector and/or events through monetary or in-kind contributions.
3. The City of Barrie as a corporation should act as an ambassador, in promoting the arts and culture sector. Municipal support of the arts provides a sense of validity and credibility of an event, and increases the awareness of an event.
4. The City of Barrie as a corporation should act as a facilitator, in encouraging linkages, connections, and coordination amongst community members, businesses, artists, and municipal officials to assist and plan for matters of mutual interest.
5. The City of Barrie as a corporation should act as a communicator, to provide a forum for information exchange, and marketing opportunities.

7.3 - STRATEGIC DIRECTION A: Investing in the Arts

Cities on a global scale are realizing that investment in the arts is an investment in a city's prosperity. Public investment in the arts and culture sector can increase the quality of life for both residents and visitors. Evidence and critical analysis suggests that the investment is returned several fold in economic and social benefits, as well as the overall vibrancy of the urban fabric.

Strategic public expenditures in conjunction with the private sector and the arts, can result in a host of benefits including an increase in the quality of life, a rise in population growth, a surge in downtown activity, and a boost in retail consumerism. Investment in the arts and culture sector can take a variety of avenues, such as larger-scaled financial contributions or smaller-scaled in-kind donations. Investing in the arts in any capacity is a feasible option for smaller urban centres attempting to revitalize the downtown. The following provides recommendations pertaining to investment in the arts for the City of Barrie as a corporation to implement.

7.3.1 - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- Invest in the arts and artistic productions via grants to individuals and small organizations.
For example, the City of Kitchener's BIA has a pool of money that is allocated to grass-roots organizations, and community-led events that relate to downtown economic development, and downtown revitalization. Since the City of Barrie already has a grant program in place, it could be extended to individual artists and a portion could be allocated to Barrie's BIA for instances such as this.
- Provide in-kind support such as road closures, increased security provisions, and promotional services for grass-roots organizations.
- Document the social and economic contribution made by community events.

- Break down barriers and limit red tape bureaucracy by limiting the amount of council approval that events or artists require. The Night Shift event in Kitchener bypassed council all together. This is a low cost alternative for a municipality that may not have substantial financial resources to contribute.
- Utilize existing public infrastructure. As with any city, many public buildings are not fully utilized. Thus, there is the potential to accommodate other uses, such as rehearsal space for local bands, or providing an arts incubation space in these buildings during off-peak hours (City of Kitchener Employee 3, Personal Communication, March, 17, 2014). Again, this is a low cost option for a small municipality who may not have substantial financial reserves, but reiterates a city's support of the arts and culture sector, as well as community members.
- Provide or invest in subsidized studio space. City officials and planners in conjunction with developers can provide designated, subsidized studio space for local artists with short leases. "An inexpensive studio space that offered week to week leases would be great, or even hourly rates" (Hamilton Artist, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014).

7.4 - STRATEGIC DIRECTION B: Business and the Arts

Interaction between the arts and business communities can facilitate knowledge exchange, networking opportunities, linkages and connections, as well as an increase in consumerism for both the artists and merchants. The synergies that develop foster civic pride, and simultaneously advance the economic and aesthetic components of downtowns. Synergies occur when businesses and the arts collaborate. Both Night/Shift in the City of Kitchener, and Art Crawl in the City of Hamilton, exhibited strong collaboration between business merchants and artists. For instance, Queen St. Yoga in Kitchener, opened their studio space during Night/Shift to host art displays, and offered free dj'd yoga classes (Alternatives Journal Employee, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014). In Hamilton, virtually all of the business owners including studios, cafes, and boutique clothing retailers, open their shops late every second Friday of the month from May until November (City of Hamilton Employees, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014).

For the business community, participation is more about collaboration than offering financial contributions. Both artists and merchants benefit from the increased exposure and profit opportunities. However, the City can advance collaborations by facilitating connections, increasing awareness, and encouraging linkages. The following provides recommendations pertaining to business and the arts for the City of Barrie as a corporation to implement.

7.4.1 - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- Facilitate the engagement of local artists in the design of public spaces. The City of Hamilton did this on King William Street by commissioning local artists to design public benches.
- Provide linkages and connections between artists and businesses to offer unique programming and facilitate mutual beneficial opportunities.
- Develop a strategy that enables and encourages the leveraging of public resources and amenities.

- Promote integration opportunities for businesses, artists, and non-profit organizations and act as liaison to encourage the intersection of art-business connections.
- Build on existing festivals and events. The City of Barrie is already home to numerous festivals and events. These established festivals and events could be extended and include different downtown venues to encourage guests to explore the downtown. These facilities could act as the foundation for all-night extravaganzas, and art crawls amongst others. Retail venues in the downtown core could also be utilized as venues for events and productions. Local independent retailers are more likely to participate in downtown events and festivals than big-box commercial retailers. Further research should include canvassing downtown retailers to gauge their interest in offering up their space for an event. This will connect linkages between consumers, merchants, artists, community members, civil servants, and visitors.

7.5 - STRATEGIC DIRECTION C: Public Engagement with the Arts

Engaging with the arts contributes to a quality of life and creates a sense of place. The arts are said to enhance the aesthetics of the physical environment and foster civic pride. They increase the flow of activity and pedestrianism in the downtown core which in turn enhances the economic sector in the city centre.

The City of Barrie does have a relatively active art scene. However, a major problem is raising awareness, getting the word out and increasing public participation (Barrie Artist, Personal Communication, March, 5, 2014). The City can support and encourage audience development and public participation in the arts through a variety of avenues.

New approaches aimed at raising public awareness of local art productions are being developed and employed by many cities on a global scale. Scandinavian communities are particularly successful at integrating art in municipal programs, and initiatives. Other approaches may include developing municipal programs that allow vacant storefronts to display artworks. The following provides recommendations pertaining to public engagement with the arts for the City of Barrie as a corporation to implement.

7.5.1 - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- The City should collaborate with key stakeholders in the community to raise awareness of community-led events through the existing municipal network and resources.
- The City should incorporate local artists in public urban design projects as was done in the City of Hamilton.
- The City should enhance the street art in the city centre. Over the past few years, the City of Barrie has come along way in enhancing the street art in the downtown and will continue to do so with the redevelopment of Memorial Square and Dunlop St. From the 'pop-up' summer sidewalks, to the artfully painted cement trucks that can be seen in the downtown at the various

construction sites, the City of Barrie is already trying to enhance the streets of the city centre. To advance this and facilitate more public awareness and involvement in the arts, the City should commission local artists to create strategic artistic interventions. Some examples could include yarn bombing, ORadio's, and/or a public xylophone bench. The City could also include artists when designing public amenities such as gates, fire hydrants, signs, manhole covers, and bike racks.

7.6 - SUMMARY

Collectively, these interventions work to revitalize the downtown, and demonstrate the City's commitment to supporting the arts and culture sector. There are a range of options that the City can adopt, and can be fairly inexpensive. Both the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton have employed some of these strategies successfully. Given their similarities and comparable experiences, these recommendations would transfer well to the City of Barrie.

8.0 - CONCLUSION

There is a vast amount of information available on downtown revitalization. Most of the literature is geared towards large urban centres. By focusing on downtown revitalization in smaller-scaled cities, this research has bridged the gap in available literature.

Through research and analysis, this paper concludes that smaller-scaled city centres should utilize place-making approaches, specifically arts and culture strategies, to revitalize the downtown. Place-making strategies that prioritize vernacular and community-led artistic productions encourage civic pride, ownership and garner more support and community buy in. They facilitate a sense of place, and enhance the aesthetics of the downtown attracting individuals into the core.

These strategies are the most financially feasible option for smaller scaled municipalities. City's of all sizes are increasingly plagued with fiscal constraints and the downloading of services from upper levels of government. This phenomenon is exaggerated in smaller communities, where the infrastructure and services required are the same as they are in large cities, but they have a smaller tax base.

By utilizing arts and culture based revitalization strategies, municipalities do not have to financially commit, and allocate substantial resources towards productions. Rather, there are a variety of methods in which a municipality may contribute, such as in-kind donations, the incorporation of local community members and artists in municipal projects, and/or financial grants, amongst others. This flexibility enables municipalities to transfer implementation responsibilities to the local community and artists, as seen in the City of Kitchener, and the City of Hamilton.

The transfer of such duties is not a bad thing, as it allows the initial visionaries the freedom and flexibility in terms of the programming of the event. Local artists want to give back to their community regardless of any compensation (Hamilton Artist, 2014; Alternatives Journal Employee, 2014; Barrie Artists, 2014). By participating and orchestrating these events, artists receive exposure

they otherwise may not have (ibid).

The lessons learned from both the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton have been instrumental in my recommendations for the City of Barrie (see Appendix C). Both municipalities have demonstrated a commitment to the arts and culture sector via the support of vernacular artistic productions. The downtowns in both cities are experiencing a myriad of beneficial spin offs as a result.

There is no cure-all solution to downtown revitalization. Successful downtowns feature a myriad of strategies and are constantly employing new approaches. This continual piecing together is what makes downtowns successful. Just as everything in nature is in a constant state of flux, as are cities and the process of downtown revitalization. With the baby boomers on their way out, it is important to create downtowns for future generations that will be using the downtown. Thus, planners should continue to plan for the needs of future generations and make compact, active downtowns. By utilizing place-making approaches, smaller scaled cities can improve their downtowns while simultaneously advance the socio-economic and ecological realms for the future.

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APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What revitalization strategies do you think work best for the city in which you reside?
2. Do you find place-making revitalization strategies effective in your locale?
3. Does your municipality support arts and culture?
4. How does arts and culture and/or place-making strategies benefit your city?
5. What is your goal when you orchestrate or participate in an arts and culture oriented events and revitalization strategies?
6. Why did you choose to support and/or program an arts and culture event and not a different place-making event such as a beer garden?
7. Who are these events intended for, and who do/did you see participating in these type of events?
8. Did you witness any groups or individuals unintentionally excluded from the event?
9. Did artists and artistic labourers act as ambassadors of the event?
10. How did you balance the interests of all involved parties? Did some interests take precedent over others? (for example, PPP's - Public-Private Partnerships)
11. Was your event successful? How did you evaluate your events successfulness? Based on what criteria?
12. What do you plan to do differently next time?
13. Did the municipality attract economic investment through the event?
14. What plans, policies or tools did you have to implement in order to orchestrate the event?
15. How can the built form hinder or enable these types of events?
16. What particular built forms and/or infrastructure would make this type of event even more successful?
17. What were some of the challenges you faced when trying to garner support for the event?
18. What were some of the policy challenges you faced when trying to plan for the event?
19. What are some opportunities to get more participation from the public?
20. How did you promote the event? What role did social media have?
21. How was the event funded?
22. How did you source sponsorship? What were the challenges? How did you promote the value to the sponsors? How could you engage more sponsors going forward?
23. What advice would you give to other municipal planners who are trying to orchestrate similar events?

APPENDIX B - PARTICIPANTS

Alternatives Journal Employee, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014.

Barrie Artist, Personal Communication, March, 5, 2014.

Barrie BIA, Personal Communication, April, 7, 2014.

City of Kitchener Employee 1, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014.

City of Kitchener Employee 2, Personal Communication, March, 24, 2014.

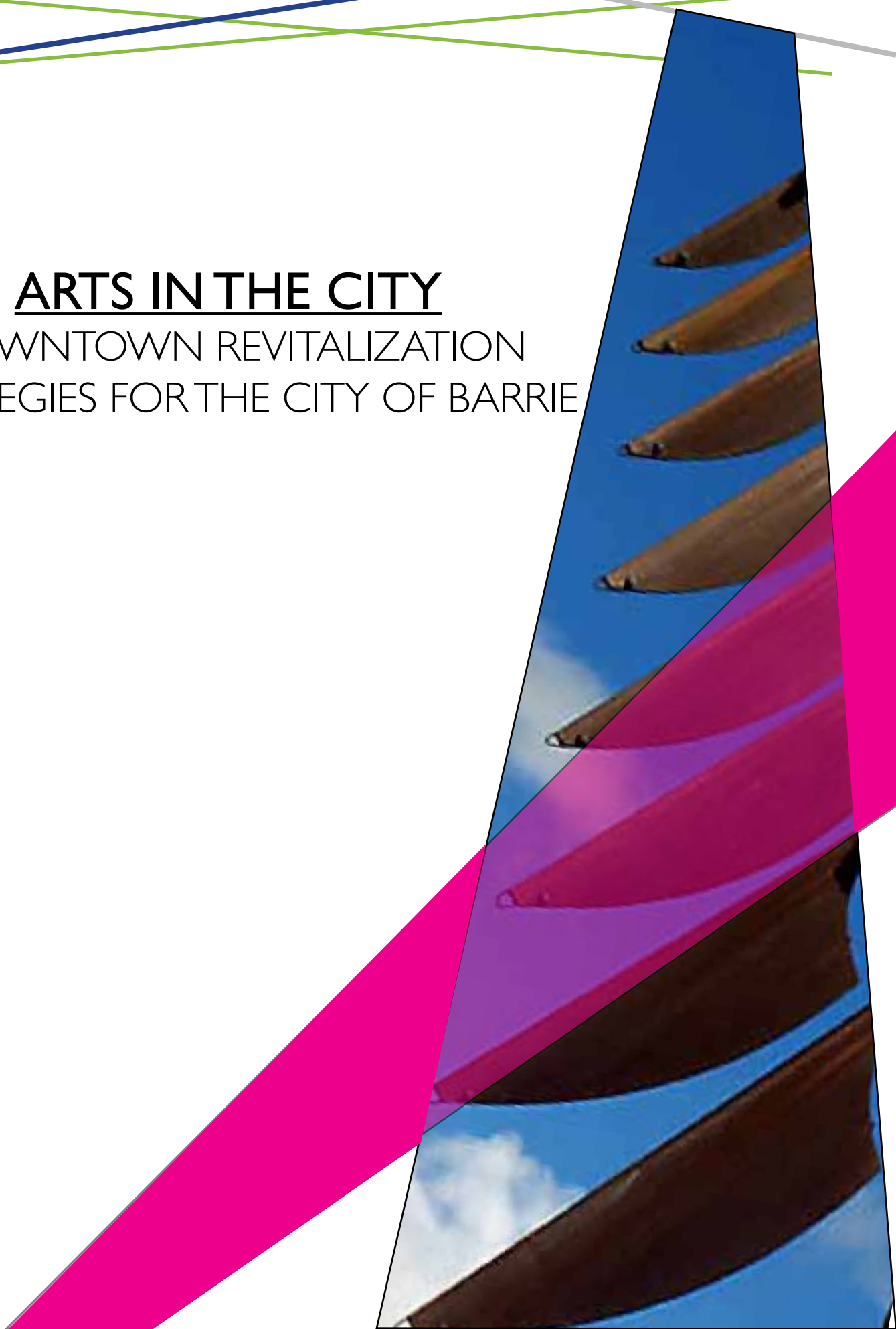
City of Kitchener Employee 3, Personal Communication, March, 17, 2014.

City of Hamilton Employees, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014.

Hamilton Artist, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014.

Kitchener BIA Employee, Personal Communication, March 24, 2014.

ARTS IN THE CITY
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION
STRATEGIES FOR THE CITY OF BARRIE



ARTS IN THE CITY
Downtown Revitalization Strategies for Barrie Ontario.

By

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This document was prepared by Allison Bradford in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Environmental Studies, Planning. (M.E.S. Pl.). It is intended for the City of Barrie, and the City of Barrie BIA to assist with downtown revitalization.

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ABSTRACT

This proposal is dedicated to assisting the City of Barrie and the City of Barrie BIA with its downtown revitalization efforts. It is an extension of a larger investigative paper that examines various downtown revitalization strategies. This proposal examines various revitalization strategies and determines which approaches are best suited for mid-sized cities. Through an intensive research inquiry, this proposal provides examples from the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton that could transfer well to the City of Barrie.

Although there is no cure-all remedy for revitalizing downtowns, it was determined that mid-sized cities should employ place-making strategies and support vernacular arts and culture productions to enhance the urban fabric. Based on comparable precedents, small scaled and strategic projects prove to be more economically feasible in comparison to costly large scaled projects. Place-making strategies result in greater economic spin-offs, facilitate community engagement, foster civic pride and advance the city's prosperity.

This document intends to improve the practice of revitalization in the City of Barrie. It provides a detailed analysis of the various revitalization strategies that cities have employed in the past. Subsequently, it offers recommendations for the City of Barrie to revitalize the downtown via place-specific place-making strategies.

I.0 - INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the City of Barrie has experienced unprecedented growth. Provincial and municipal forecasts predict a continuation of these trends into the future. According to the Growth Plan, the City of Barrie's population is anticipated to reach 210,000 by 2031.

Research suggests that such growth will occur in the downtown core. Aging baby-boomers will require mid- and high-rised developments in the downtown that are in close proximity to amenities and regional/local services. Subsequently, the Gen Y kids, will opt to live in the downtown due to the diversity of the socio-economic spheres.. As such, creating a high quality urban fabric is crucial in providing for existing and future generations.

However, the financial situation for mid-sized cities alike is precarious. The downloading of services from upper levels of government onto municipalities, places immense pressure on the public sector. Although city's of all sizes are faced with the same quandary, the pressures for mid-sized city's are exaggerated as a result of a smaller tax base. Thus, strategic investments aimed at improving the quality of life in the downtown are postponed, as traditional necessities such as roads, traffic lights, community housing etc. take precedence. Nevertheless, there are several financially feasible revitalization strategies available to mid-sized cities that experience greater economic spin-offs in comparison to traditional, large-scaled approaches.

2.0 - REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

Revitalization strategies can take an array of avenues, from large-scaled development projects, to small-scaled strategic interventions. Economic revitalization strategies are typically large in scale, and are used to encourage consumerism and pedestrianism in the downtown core (Kemp, 2000). Special activity generators such as sport complexes, art facilities, 'starchitecture' and convention centres are examples of economic revitalization strategies (Robertson, 1999). An example can be found in Barrie's downtown, with the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts.

Economic revitalization strategies are not particularly successful or appropriate for smaller urban centres. Typically, these development projects warrant a high degree of investment and result in a low utilization rate. They are expensive to construct and maintain and require high levels of pedestrian traffic and repeat visits (Robertson, 1999). Due to the population size and dispersed built forms, mid-sized cities are not likely to meet these requirements. Thus, these facilities have a low survival rate in small and mid-sized cities.

In comparison to economic revitalization strategies, place making strategies are more appropriate for mid-sized cities in revitalizing the downtown. These strategies focus primarily on improving the quality of life in the downtown for the people of the city. By combining physical design provisions with social and cultural aspects of place, these strategies work collectively to create and enhance a sense of place in the downtown.

2.1 - PLACE-MAKING STRATEGIES

Place-making strategies can take a variety of forms, including physical streetscape modification, festivals and marketplaces as well as provisions that facilitate a 24-hour downtown. Vernacular arts and culture approaches prove the most effective in revitalizing mid-sized city downtowns. Arts and culture can add to the quality of life of the downtown and the city as a whole by providing activities into the core, which in turn attracts people into the centre (Houstoun Jr, 2000). Artistic and cultural productions have greater economic spin-offs than economic revitalization strategies (Houstoun Jr, 2000, 44). They stimulate population growth, encourage downtown consumerism, and facilitate downtown residential development. Additionally, informal arts and culture can also be extremely effective as they create a sense of place, encourage civic pride, and enhance the aesthetics of the downtown. (Johnson, 2009). Collaboratively, these aspects work to increase the real estate market value of the downtown.

Place-making oriented strategies that emphasize arts and culture are the best revitalization strategy for mid-sized cities as minimal financial expenditures are required. In fact, these approaches afford the municipality flexibility when deciding how to allocate their resources. Municipal support can take the form of direct investment, including individual/organizational grants, or in-kind donations. Additionally, these strategies do not necessarily rely solely on the municipality. Rather, these approaches facilitate community development and interaction, where the orchestration and execution of such strategies may be accepted by local artists, community members, and/or small organizations. Thus, the flexible nature of place-making strategies, coupled with the host of benefits associated with these approaches, make vernacular arts and culture the best suited revitalization strategies for mid-sized cities.

TABLE 1.0 SUMMARY OF REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

Revitalization Strategy	Small or Large City Applicability	Scale	Comments
Special Activity Generators	Large	Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive to construct and maintain • Facilities under utilized in small cities • Not enough pedestrian flow in smaller cities • Encourages one time visits to a specific place in the city
Retail & Economic Development	Large	Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller cities should offer niche stores so as not to compete with big box developments
Physical Streetscape & the Built Environment	Large & Small	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive for smaller cities • Creates quality atmosphere and encourages more pedestrian traffic and downtown consumerism
Pedestrianization & Design	Large & Small	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive for smaller cities • Creates quality atmosphere and encourages more pedestrian traffic and downtown consumerism
24 Hour Downtowns	Large	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More suitable for larger cities because of larger population size and extended store hours • Creates safer environments with more eyes on the street
Festivals & Marketplaces	Large & Small	Can be both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularly effective in smaller cities • Increase pedestrian traffic • Increases downtown consumerism • Encourages tourism
Arts & Culture	Large & Small	Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely successful in smaller cities • Adds uniqueness and sense of place • Facilitates community development • Inexpensive

3.0 - COMPARABLE PRECEDENT: THE CITY OF KITCHENER

The City of Kitchener is an excellent example of a city that has utilized a place-making approach to downtown revitalization. Located in Southern Ontario, The City of Kitchener has a total population of 219,153 (Statistics Canada, 2012b). Referred to as the “tri-cities”, the City of Cambridge and the City of Waterloo are adjacent to Kitchener, situated to the south, and to the north respectively. These three cities make up the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, with Kitchener being the largest municipality.

The City of Kitchener is the arts and culture hub for the Waterloo Region and beyond. The arts and culture sector has grown more than 60 percent in the last 10 years, making it the highest in Canada outside of B.C and Toronto (The City of Kitchener, 2012). With over 115 live performance in the downtown, and 8 large-scaled festivals and events that attract roughly 468,900 people into the core, the City of Kitchener continues to demonstrate its commitment and support for the evolving arts and culture sector (ibid).

Recently, Alternatives Journal (AJ) hosted a nuit blanche styled event called “Night Shift”. The City of Kitchener supported the event through numerous in-kind donations. They provided,

“things like garbage receptacles, road closures, [and] they [AJ] wanted to do installations, so how do you get an art installation on city property. All those types of logistics that we needed to sort out. So we really did what ever we could to clear they way in a red tape perspective, and we also included some programming to promote the event”

(City of Kitchener Employee 3, Personal Communication, March, 17, 2014).

By internally limiting red tape bureaucracy, the City of Kitchener was able to bypass council approval and assisted Alternatives Journal in carrying out the event.

Additionally, the BIA provided financial support for the event. The BIA has a funding model that allows community groups and/or grassroots organizations to come forward 30 days prior to the event and pitch their idea and how it relates to economic development, or downtown revitalization (Kitchener BIA Employee, Personal Communication, March 24, 2014). If the event relates and fits with the BIA strategies, there is, “a pool of money that can be distributed and allocated, anywhere between \$500.00 and \$3000.00 depending on the size and scale of the event”. (City of Kitchener 2, Personal Communication, March, 24, 2014).

The City of Kitchener utilized an arts and culture revitalization strategy which has proven to be the most successful revitalization strategy for mid-sized cities. This type of revitalization strategy relies heavily on the community organizations to make the idea come to fruition. This was exactly the case with Alternatives Journal and Night Shift. Although the City of Kitchener provided as much in-kind support as necessary, the brunt of the work was carried out by the organization.

Night Shift is an example of community development. The City of Kitchener serves as an example of a city which supports the arts and culture sector for revitalization. The City of Kitchener in conjunction with the Kitchener BIA, and the community, were successful in supporting the arts and culture sector and revitalizing the downtown.

3.1 - COMPARABLE PRECEDENT: THE CITY OF HAMILTON

The City of Hamilton also provides a great example of city which has employed a place-making strategy aimed at downtown revitalization. Situated on the West end of Lake Ontario, the City is made up of six former municipalities: Ancaster; Dundas; Flamborough; Glanbrook; Hamilton; and Stoney Creek (The City of Hamilton, 2009). Together, these municipalities make up the Hamilton-Wentworth Region. With the six amalgamated municipalities, the City of Hamilton now has a population of over 504,000 people (ibid). The largest community is Hamilton, representing 65% of the city's total population with 329,770 persons in 2006 (ibid). The downtown specifically, is a large area with a total population of approximately 50,000 residents (ibid).

Over the past few years, the City of Hamilton has also become a hub for arts and culture productions. The 2006 Statistics Canada report, 1,700 artists and 7,3000 cultural workers reside in the City of Hamilton (Hill Strategies, 2011). These numbers alone account for 3.2% or all Hamilton workers (ibid). More recently, the 2011 Downtown Hamilton employment survey recorded a total increase of 330 jobs over the 2010 employment survey (ibid). The growth in the Creative Industries sector alone was 320 jobs and includes animation studios locating/expanding in the core (ibid). These numbers demonstrate that over the past 15 years, the number of artists in Hamilton has grown by 22 percent, which is faster than the overall labour force (ibid).

Similar to the City of Kitchener, the arts and culture scene in Hamilton developed largely as a result of the local artists and community. For instance, Art Crawl is an arts and culture event in downtown Hamilton that is organic in nature and evolved with no organizing committee (City of Hamilton Employee's, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014). Although there are several locals who took charge of the event, the event started with an idea from a local shop owner and the community worked together to see the event come to fruition (Hamilton Artist, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014).

On the second Friday of each month between May and November, the galleries, and retail shops on James St. North open their doors during the evening hours from 7:00 PM - 11:00 PM for Art Crawl (ibid). For the past four years, the event has progressed and continues to increase in popularity. Art Crawl is now attended by thousands of people from within and outside of the City of Hamilton, and even led to the creation of Super Crawl, which happens annually in September (ibid).

Art Crawl and Super Crawl are successful community-led events. The City of Hamilton acknowledges that and realizes the benefits and spin-offs from these events. Thus, they have supported the event through in-kind street and road closures on James St. North between King William Street and Barton Street from 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM on the second Friday of each month between May and November for Art Crawl (City of Hamilton Employees, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014). Subsequently, the Downtown Hamilton BIA, on behalf of the King William Art Walk Steering Committee, hosted a competition and invited artists to submit designs for 3 benches to be installed on King William Street, where each artist was paid \$1,500.00 for their designs (ibid).

3.2 - ANALYSIS

The community led art events in Kitchener and Hamilton have proven to be very successful in creating a lively atmosphere, attracting economic investments in the downtown core, and fostering civic pride. These events are successful as a result of collaboration and municipal support. In the case of Kitchener and Hamilton, municipal support is reflected in the cheap real estate prices involved in renting and buying in the downtown centres. The relatively affordable spaces, in comparison to larger cities such as Toronto, allow artists to set up shop in the downtown. Thus, these revitalization strategies are more appropriate for small and mid-sized cities. The City of Barrie has the same potential for artist and community-led urban revitalization.

In comparison to larger cities and their arts and culture events such as the Scotia Bank Nuit Blanche event in Toronto, mid-sized cities and their events tend to be built on community development and grassroots organizations. The difference is that there is minimal private corporate sponsorship. When there is large corporate involvement, the programming is typically dictated by the corporation, and the labour and services are downloaded onto the artists themselves. In comparison, the events in mid-sized cities receive little corporate sponsorship, because corporate dollars are typically allocated to cities where they will receive the maximum exposure. Thus, the orchestration of these events in mid-sized cities is left to the initial visionaries, allowing for freedom and flexibility.

There are no negative connotations associated with the organization carrying out the event. For instance, Alternatives Journal in Kitchener wanted to take the responsibility of creating the event themselves. It provided them with self-promotion, "in terms of being able to create a package to give to people and sell people with, and being able to create promotional materials around trying to get people on board and participate" (Alternatives Journal Employee, Personal Communication, March, 25, 2014). It also expanded their network for potential contributors, partnerships, and subscribers (ibid). This is the case for many artistic productions and events.

4.0 - OVERVIEW OF BARRIE'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

Barrie is experiencing a surge in the arts and community development. There is already a wide range of art galleries and studios, all of which situated in the downtown including: Art In House; D.I.Y Arts Collective; Artist Studios of Aylan Couchie & Lisa Brunetta; Gallery 111; Jennifer Klementti Photography; The Edge Gallery; and the Unity Market. The majority of these galleries, independent studios, and boutiques are located in the downtown along the Lakeshore Mews.

The potential for community and artist-led revitalization in Barrie as seen in Kitchener and Hamilton is unprecedented. Over the past 10 years, Barrie has attracted more artists per capita than any other Canadian community (Created in Barrie, 2010). Collectively, the Lakeshore Mews artists have already organized vernacular artistic events such as "Arts ce Soir" an all-night art event similar to that of Nuit Blanche, and "Who Knew!?" an art crawl event reminiscent of Hamilton's. The community ambition is there, however, event participation and attendance rates are low, as there is a gap between the artists, the events, and municipal officials (Barrie Artist, Personal Communication, March, 5, 2014). Typically, these events have been orchestrated solely by the Lakeshore Mews artists and without municipal assistance (ibid). As a result, the events have raised little awareness of their existence, and have garnered limited public participation.

The difference between Barrie's arts and culture sector in comparison to that of Kitchener's and Hamilton's, is that the vernacular artistic productions and events that have been spearheaded by the community in the latter two municipalities, have also been supported by the city. Whether it be in-kind road closures and increases in security provisions, or simply just promoting the event via the web and by word of mouth, Hamilton and Kitchener have supported the community-based events, aiding in their success.

Although the City of Barrie has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the arts and culture sector by commissioning and developing various plans, policies and initiatives, artists and city officials seem to maintain a distant relationship with one another (Barrie Artist, Personal Communication, March, 5, 2014). Events organized by the BIA have municipal and private support which aid in their success, drawing approximately 325,000 visits per year (Barrie BIA, Personal Communication, April, 7, 2014). However, vernacular, grass-roots events organized by local artists have not been particularly successful due to the lack of municipal involvement. As such, the following section provides recommendations for the corporation of the City of Barrie. These recommendations should be incorporated into various initiatives as a way to advance place-making revitalization strategies that emphasize arts and culture and facilitate downtown revitalization.

5.0 - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY OF BARRIE

This section provides an series of recommendations for the municipal government of the City of Barrie to assist in downtown revitalization via the development of arts in the community. These recommendations and the subsequent proposal are the result of discussions with artists, businesses, and City officials from the City of Kitchener, the City of Hamilton, and the City of Barrie. For each recommendation, there is a set of guiding principles to guide and motivate plan makers (Hodge, 2008, 205). These principles embody the philosophy of the proposal and reflect basic planning values (ibid). To set the stage for future interventions, three strategic directions are provided: Investing in the Arts; Business and the Arts; and Public Engagement with the Arts. For each strategic direction, priorities for action are identified to act as a starting point for the implementation of the proposal.

Based on critical analysis of comparable precedents and various revitalization strategies, arts and culture revitalization strategies are deemed the most appropriate tool for mid-sized cities to employ. In recognizing the fiscal constraints of a smaller municipality, the City of Barrie can employ cost-effective, place-making strategies to revitalize the downtown. With an already established ambitious art scene, the City of Barrie can break down barriers and provide minimal support to assist the community and/or artist organizations orchestrate productions. In turn, this will produce economic spin-offs for the city as a whole, and work to revitalize the downtown.

5.1 - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The City of Barrie as a corporation should be a partner; and work with artists, and community based organizations to facilitate and advance successful collaborations.
2. The City of Barrie as a corporation should be a supporter; and invest in the arts and culture sector and/or events through monetary or in-kind contributions.
3. The City of Barrie as a corporation should act as an ambassador; in promoting the arts and culture sector. Municipal support of the arts provides a sense of validity and credibility of an event, and increases the awareness of an event.
4. The City of Barrie as a corporation should act as a facilitator; in encouraging linkages, connections, and coordination amongst community members, businesses, artists, and municipal officials to assist and plan for matters of mutual interest.
5. The City of Barrie as a corporation should act as a communicator; to provide a forum for information exchange, and marketing opportunities.

5.2 - STRATEGIC DIRECTION A: Investing in the Arts

Cities on a global scale are realizing that investment in the arts is an investment in a city's prosperity. Public investment in the arts and culture sector can increase the quality of life for both residents and visitors. Evidence and critical analysis suggests that the investment is returned several fold in economic and social benefits, as well as the overall vibrancy of the urban fabric.

Strategic public expenditures in conjunction with the private sector and the arts, can result in a host of benefits including an increase in the quality of life, a rise in population growth, a surge in downtown activity, and a boost in retail consumerism. Investment in the arts and culture sector can take a variety of avenues, such as larger-scaled financial contributions or smaller-scaled in-kind donations. Investing in the arts in any capacity is a feasible option for smaller urban centres attempting to revitalize the downtown. The following provides recommendations pertaining to investment in the arts for the City of Barrie as a corporation to implement.

5.2.1 - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

1. Invest in the arts and artistic productions via grants to individuals and small organizations. For example, the City of Kitchener's BIA has a pool of money that is allocated to grass-roots organizations, and community-led events that relate to downtown economic development, and downtown revitalization. Since the City of Barrie already has a grant program in place, it could be extended to individual artists and a portion could be allocated to Barrie's BIA for instances such as this.
2. Provide in-kind support such as road closures, increased security provisions, and promotional services for grass-roots organizations.
3. Document the social and economic contribution made by community events.
4. Break down barriers and limit red tape bureaucracy by limiting the amount of council approval that events or artists require. The Night Shift event in Kitchener by-passed council all together. This is a low cost alternative for a municipality that may not have substantial financial resources to contribute.
5. Utilize existing public infrastructure. As with any city, many public buildings are not fully utilized. Thus, there is the potential to accommodate other uses, such as rehearsal space for local bands, or providing an arts incubation space in these buildings during off-peak hours (City of Kitchener Employee 3, Personal Communication, March, 17, 2014). Again, this is a low cost option for a small municipality who may not have substantial financial reserves, but reiterates a city's support of the arts and culture sector, as well as community members.
6. Provide or invest in subsidized studio space. City officials and planners in conjunction with developers can provide designated, subsidized studio space for local artists with short leases. "An inexpensive studio space that offered week to week leases would be great, or even hourly rates" (Hamilton Artist, Personal Communication, April, 2, 2014).

5.3 - STRATEGIC DIRECTION B: Business and the Arts

Interaction between the arts and business communities can facilitate knowledge exchange, networking opportunities, linkages and connections, as well as an increase in consumerism for both the artists and merchants. The synergies that develop foster civic pride, and simultaneously advance the economic and aesthetic components of downtowns. Both Night/Shift in the City of Kitchener, and Art Crawl in the City of Hamilton, demonstrate the beneficial outcomes associated with strong collaboration between business merchants and artists. A municipality can advance collaborations by facilitating connections, increasing awareness, and encouraging linkages. The following provides recommendations pertaining to business and the arts for the City of Barrie as a corporation to implement.

5.3.1 - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

1. Facilitate the engagement of local artists in the design of public spaces. The City of Hamilton did this on King William Street by commissioning local artists to design public benches.
2. Provide linkages and connections between artists and businesses to offer unique programming and facilitate mutual beneficial opportunities.
3. Develop a strategy that enables and encourages the leveraging of public resources and amenities.
4. Promote integration opportunities for businesses, artists, and non-profit organizations and act as liaison to encourage the intersection of art-business connections.
5. Build on existing festivals and events. The City of Barrie is already home to numerous festivals and events. These established festivals and events could be extended and include different downtown venues to encourage guests to explore the downtown. These facilities could act as the foundation for all-night extravaganzas, and art crawls amongst others. Retail venues in the downtown core could also be utilized as venues for events and productions. Local independent retailers are more likely to participate in downtown events and festivals than big-box commercial retailers. Further research should include canvassing downtown retailers to gauge their interest in offering up their space for an event. This will connect linkages between consumers, merchants, artists, community members, civil servants, and visitors.

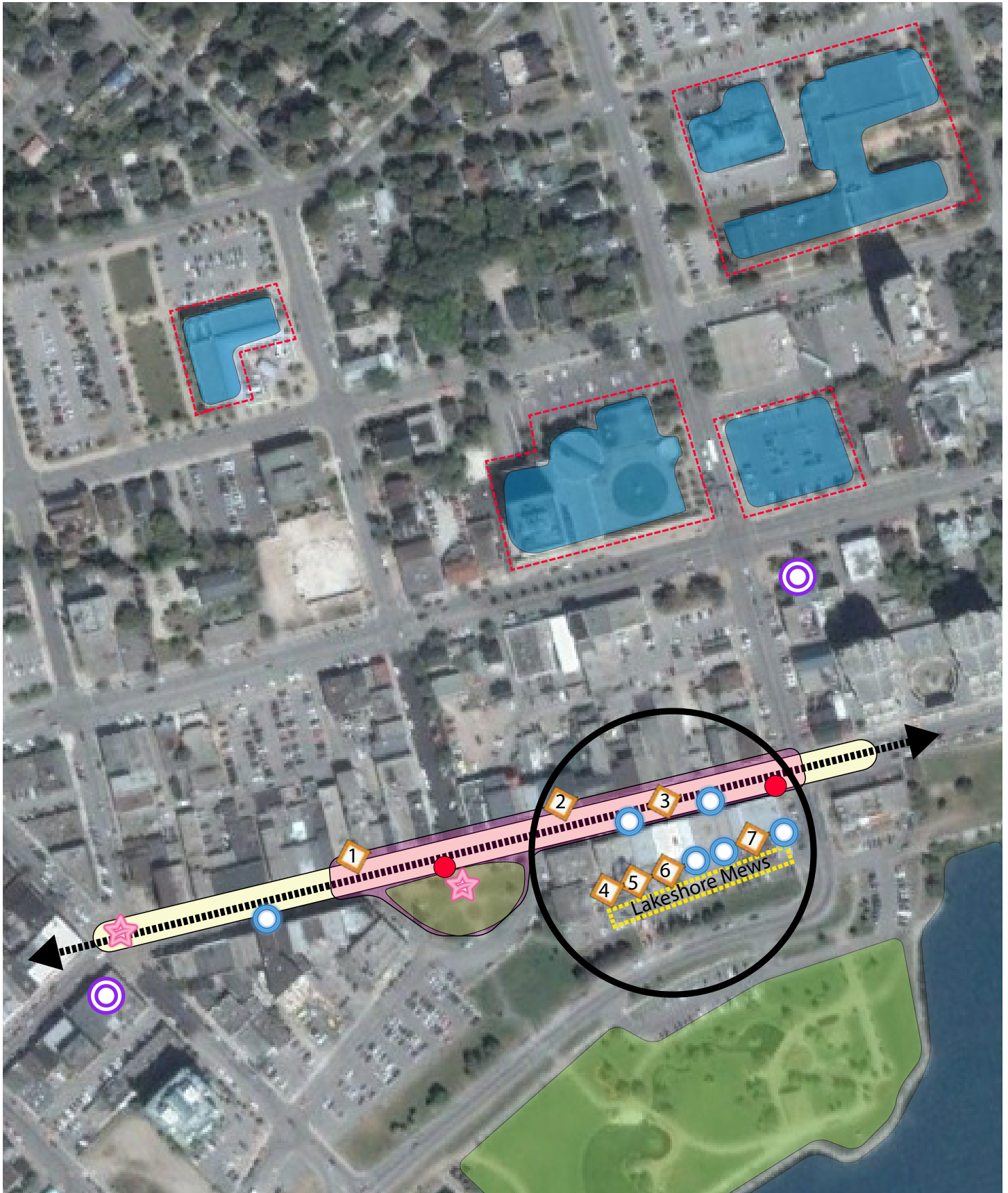
5.4 - STRATEGIC DIRECTION C: Public Engagement with the Arts

Engaging with the arts contributes to a quality of life and creates a sense of place. The arts are said to enhance the aesthetics of the physical environment and foster civic pride. They increase the flow of activity and pedestrianism in the downtown core which in turn enhances the economic sector in the city centre. The City of Barrie has an active art scene. However, a major problem is raising awareness, and increasing public participation (Barrie Artist, Personal Communication, March, 5, 2014). The City can support and encourage audience development and public participation in the arts through a variety of avenues.

5.4.1 - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

1. The City of Barrie as a corporation coupled with applicable municipal departments should collaborate with key stakeholders in the community to raise awareness of community-led events through the existing municipal network and resources.
2. The City of Barrie as a corporation should incorporate local artists in public urban design projects as was done in the City of Hamilton with the designing of public benches on King William St.
3. The City of Barrie as a corporation should develop municipal programs that allow vacant storefronts to display artworks.
4. The City of Barrie as a corporation and applicable municipal departments should enhance the street art in the city centre. Over the past few years, the City of Barrie has come along way in enhancing the street art in the downtown and will continue to do so with the redevelopment of Memorial Square and Dunlop St. From the 'pop-up' summer sidewalks, to the artfully painted cement trucks that can be seen in the downtown at the various construction sites, the City of Barrie is already trying to enhance the streets of the city centre. To advance this and facilitate more public awareness and involvement in the arts, the City should commission local artists to create strategic artistic interventions. Some examples could include yarn bombing, ORadio's, and/or a public xylophone bench. The City could also include artists when designing public amenities such as gates, fire hydrants, signs, manhole covers, and bike racks.

6.0 - CITY OF BARRIE: MAP OF OPPORTUNITIES





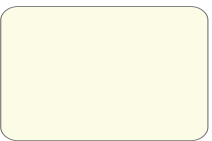

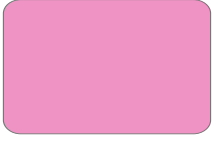







6.1 - AREA OVERVIEW

Barrie's downtown offers a typical nineteenth century commercial street. The downtown area is characterized by a mix of commercial and residential buildings, mostly constructed in the nineteenth century. It features mid-rise street oriented built forms, and represents the most significant concentration of heritage structures in the City. There are numerous public buildings situated in the downtown core. The historic downtown core and the former village of Allandale form two focal points at either end of Kempenfelt Bay around which the downtown area has developed.

Dunlop Street is the main commercial street of the downtown core. City Hall and MacLaren Art Centre act as the anchors to the Old Market Square area. The downtown offers a mix of businesses, including arts and culture, services, culinary, retail, law and financial services, bars and pubs, and salons and spas (Barrie BIA, 2014). It is forecasted that over the next two to three years, Barrie's downtown will increase by 200,000 square feet of new commercial space (Barrie BIA, 2014). The Lakeshore Mews, situated behind Dunlop St., is referred to as Barrie's art district, and is home to several independent art studios and niche stores. For the purpose of this document, the majority of opportunities for place-making revitalization strategies that emphasize vernacular arts and culture will be situated within the five minute walking radius along Dunlop St., and the Lakeshore Mews.

MAP LEGEND

	Institution		Landmark
	Public Green Space		Independent Art Studio
	Downtown Node		Niche Store
	Planned Public Realm Improvements/Construction		Art Gallery
	Potential Public Venue Space		Bus Stop/Public Transit
			5 Minute Walk Radius
			Multi-Modal Road

6.2 - EXISTING CONDITIONS SUPPORTING FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- Community retail along Dunlop St.
- Artist studios along the Lakeshore Mews
- Pedestrian corridors between Dunlop St. and the Lakeshore Mews
- Public buildings/infrastructure provide community/artist amenity space
- Planned Public Realm Improvements/Redevelopment (Dunlop St. and Memorial Square)

6.3 - SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Facilitate networking and collaboration between independent businesses and artists by canvassing downtown retailers. Fostering connections between artists and independent merchants leads to creative collaborations that significantly enhance the downtown's sense of place, and facilitate unique programming. A list of potential independent merchants that are deemed to be more willing to collaborate are detailed in the map, and are as follows:
 1. Rawlicious
 2. Trek
 3. Bohemia
 4. Flying Monkey
 5. Anne Green
 6. Local Food Mart
 7. Le Petite Chapeau
- Explore opportunities for subsidized studio/rehearsal/incubation space in existing and developing public infrastructure during off-peak hours.
- Improve access into the downtown via additional public transportation stops to increase the flow of pedestrian traffic in the core and attract individuals into the downtown. In doing so, the potential to show case artistic pieces in business windows increases.
- Incorporate local artists in the redesign of public spaces and amenities. Both Dunlop St. and Memorial Square are scheduled to be redesigned. Commission local artists to design public benches, sewer grates, fire hydrants, signs, manhole covers, and/or bike racks. This will work to create a distinct sense of place, demonstrate municipal support of the arts and culture sector, and also increase pedestrianism and activities in the downtown core.
- There are 5 studios and 6 niche stores within a 3 minute walk radius. Thus, there is the opportunity to enhance this catchment area to create a strong sense of place, and improve the pedestrian realm. Enhancing pedestrian connections could provide stronger linkages between commercial shops, artists, and community members. It will also make for a better environment in which to host vernacular arts and culture productions. Additionally, it will demonstrate municipal support of the arts and culture sector by establishing and designating the artistic and lakeshore mews corridors as distinct special areas.

7.0 - CONCLUSION

Cities of all sizes are increasingly plagued with fiscal constraints and the downloading of services from upper levels of government. However, this phenomenon is exaggerated in smaller communities because of a smaller tax base. As such, downtown revitalization efforts can be too costly for a municipality.

Although there is no cure-all solution to downtown revitalization, this research paper has concluded that place-making approaches are the most cost-effective and best suited revitalization strategy for smaller urban centres. This is the most feasible option for smaller scaled municipalities because they do not necessarily have to allocate substantial resources towards productions. Rather, there are a variety of methods that a municipality may contribute, such as in-kind donations, the incorporation of local community members and artists in municipal projects, and/or financial grants, amongst others.

Collectively, these interventions work to revitalize the downtown, and demonstrate the City's commitment to supporting the arts and culture sector. There are a range of options that the City can adopt, and can be fairly inexpensive. Both the City of Kitchener and the City of Hamilton have employed some of these strategies successfully. Given their similarities and comparable experiences, these recommendations would transfer well to the City of Barrie. By utilizing place-making approaches, the City of Barrie as a corporation can improve the downtowns while simultaneously advance the socio-economic and ecological realms for the future.

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