



City of Hamilton

BUSINESSIMPROVEMENT AREA SUB-COMMITTEE ADDENDUM

Meeting #: 25-002

Date: February 18, 2025

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: Room 264, 2nd Floor, City Hall (hybrid) (RM)
71 Main Street West

Tamara Bates, Legislative Coordinator (905) 546-2424 ext. 4102

Pages

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

*7.3 Common House Cafe (PED24210) (City Wide)

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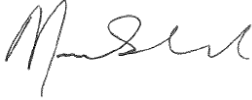
(Referred from Council, November 13, 2024)

Recommendation: Be received

Deferred from December 10, 2024



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Open for Business Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Common House Cafe (PED24210) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Kristin Huigenbos (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4110
SUBMITTED BY:	Norm Schleeahn Director, Economic Development Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

Background

The Hamilton Business Centre, under the management of the City of Hamilton Economic Development Division and Ministry of Economic Development, Jobs Creation and Trade, continues to provide comprehensive assistance and resources to small businesses throughout Hamilton. Common House Café is the newest program for the Hamilton Business Centre, creating a launchpad for turning culinary passion into a thriving business.

Observations and Issues

The City of Hamilton continues to see a growing demand for information, resources, and incentives to support small businesses. Through collaboration and partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development, Jobs Creation and Trade, the Hamilton Business Centre continues to provide essential small business support to assist businesses as they start, grow, and navigate operations in Hamilton. With purposeful work in the

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heavily impacted culinary sector, supporting post-pandemic recovery, the Hamilton Business Centre developed the Food Forge to facilitate new culinary business start-ups and support those currently within the sector to thrive. Common House Café is the next evolution of this program, providing a collaborative, inclusive launchpad for turning culinary passion into thriving businesses.

Following March 2020 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City Hall commercial café was vacant due to an expired lease. Led by Corporate Facilities and Corporate Real Estate, an extensive search ensued to secure a new tenant to no avail. Limitations on hours of operation and no cooking on-site, posed challenges for the extensive list of vendors touring the location. Paralleling the Economic Development Action Plan, to foster and grow small business initiatives the Hamilton Business Centre worked with Corporate Facilities and Corporate Real Estate to put forth a winning program model, Common House Café.

In the spring of 2024, Corporate Facilities put forth two options to fill the vacant commercial space on the first floor of City Hall to the Senior Leadership Team. One option was an external tenant, the other was the Hamilton Business Centre Common House Café Program. With both applications providing similar investment, the Hamilton Business Centre Common House Café was unanimously selected as the preferred model by Senior Leadership. Capital investment was comparable; however, the Hamilton Business Centre program leveraged a unique opportunity through a partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade to expand programming within the food sector, expand community partnerships and achieve Economic Development action plan goals. This innovative space will provide a vibrant, inclusive, and community-focused program, while advancing economic development needs and support for Hamilton small businesses. Partnerships with local not-for-profit agencies will also see this model providing valuable hands-on training experience for those seeking employment.

Common House Café is a launchpad, turning culinary passion into thriving businesses in Hamilton. The Café features training sessions focussed on essential skills for both new and seasoned entrepreneurs. The program supports Hamilton's new and expanding food businesses with dynamic programming, mentorship, food sales, and commercialization opportunities. Common House Café provides licensed food entrepreneurs a space to start up and grow an existing business, while also providing Monday-to-Friday food service to City Hall and surrounding buildings to support financial stability. Upon graduation from the program, participants will receive wrap-around services to support site selection needs.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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Outcome

The opening of the Common House Café in Hamilton represents a significant economic opportunity for food sector businesses across the community. Operating as a vibrant community launchpad, supporting culinary passion, this winning model will support countless entrepreneurs in accessing a solid and sustainable start-up platform for business success. Overall, the Common House Café serves as a catalyst for growth, enhancing the entrepreneurial landscape in Hamilton.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.

HAMILTON
BUSINESS
CENTRE.



A *launchpad* FOR TURNING CULINARY PASSION INTO A THRIVING BUSINESS

Food incubator. Retail shop. Creative space.

[HAMILTONBUSINESSCENTRE.CA](https://hamiltonbusinesscentre.ca)

COMMON HOUSE CAFÉ

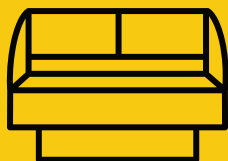
A Local Food Business Program

Starting a food business is hard, especially if your goal is to get your product into retailers. Shelf space is limited, premium listing fees apply, your product must compete against larger national brands and their advertising resources, and commercial kitchen space is hard to come by. At the Hamilton Business Centre, we understand the obstacles when starting a food business and believe everyone deserves the chance to showcase their delicious goods to the world.

Common House Café is an exciting new initiative that invites licensed food businesses in the startup or expansion phase to join a collaborative and inclusive artisan food incubator, retail shop, and creative space designed to be the perfect backdrop a business's growth. **Here, local foodpreneurs can access essential kitchen equipment, showcase their products, receive training and mentorship, and network with fellow foodpreneurs.**



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



Provide product showcase opportunities to promote business growth and awareness



Business and food specific training and mentorship



Networking and collaboration



Provide resources and opportunities for business expansion



Transition to Brick-and-Mortar or similar



Provide essential kitchen equipment required for success



Create employment opportunities



Provide coffee and food services for City Hall staff, visitors, and surrounding residents

VENDOR SUPPORTS



Essential Kitchen Appliances:

64" Refrigerated Deli Cooler, 3 Bay Hot Food Well, 28" Refrigerated Sandwich Prep Station, 2 Commercial Coffee Makers, Pop Fridge, 2 Soup Kettles, Commercial Conveyor Toaster, 96" Stainless Steel Prep Tables, Infrared Thermometers, Hot Water Tower and More!



Prime Location:

Located on the 1st floor of City Hall, Common House Café is a freshly updated, licensed and inspected facility with a large open concept design and seating for 40+ guests. Operating between the hours of 8 am to 4 pm.

VENDOR SUPPORTS



Marketing Support:

In-house marketing support from Hamilton Business Centre consultants, community partners, internal partners, and a managed café website and social media accounts to promote vendor success.



Training & Mentorship:

In-person and virtual training in business operations, finance, pricing, hiring, bringing commercial packaged goods to market, and 1-1 mentorship and consultation with legal and industry experts.



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Primary Vendor

The primary vendor is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the café and can access any of the essential kitchen appliances provided.

The primary vendor must:

- Be in the start-up or expansion phase of their business
- Have a valid licensed and inspected food business in Hamilton
- Have the ability to operate Mon-Fri from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Commit to a minimum lease term agreement of 10 months
- Be able to provide basic breakfast, lunch, and coffee services
- Have the ability to provide catering services
- Participate in HBC training and mentorship for 6 months to support business success

Note: Only 1 primary vendor is permitted each lease term (currently waitlisted).





PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Secondary Vendor

Secondary vendors provide prepacked food items that are displayed and sold in the café daily. Food items can include: baked goods, hot sauces, mustards, and more!

Secondary vendors must:

- Be in the start-up or expansion phase of business
- Have a valid licensed and inspected food business in Hamilton
- Be able to provide food item(s) prepackaged
- Commit to providing food item(s) for a minimum of 3–6-months on consistent basis as needed
- Participate in HBC training and mentorship for duration of food item being sold

Note: A maximum of 3-5 secondary vendors is permitted in the café at any given time.

TRAINING & MENTORSHIP



Virtual & In-Person Training:

Food specific: Introduction to The Food and Beverage Industry, Packaging and Labelling Your Food Product, Making Your Food Product More Attractive to Retailers, How to Approach and Secure Retailers, Supporting In-store Sales, Scaling Your Food Business.

Business specific: Sales, Record Keeping, Market Research, Business Model Canvas, Key Business Practices, Time Management, Building Teams and Organizational Culture, Contracts and Leases, Hiring Employees vs Self Employed Contractors, Understanding Financial Statements, Intellectual Property, Business Planning, Cashflow, Marketing Messaging, Marketing Analytics.

Mentorship:

1-1 mentorship and consultation includes meeting with: legal experts, food product expert experts, business operations experts, and ongoing support and mentorship from the Hamilton Business Centre.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Step #1

Call-to-action:

Social media campaigns (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) were launched, both organic and paid, inviting eligible businesses to apply.

Step #2

Prescreening:

Applications were screened based on the questionnaire. Businesses without a valid municipal license or those not meeting basic eligibility were disqualified. Further screening evaluated their ability to provide essential food services and the need of an overhead hood range.



PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Step #3

Interview:

Selected applicants were invited to tour the facility, learn program specifics, discuss their business model, service offering, ability to provide the required services consistently, and the rules and expectation of operating a business within a municipal facility.

Step #4

Selection:

Applicants were selected based on a developed rubric with a focus on commitment, readiness and delivery, business stage and compliance, comprehension of the program and it's objectives, enthusiasm, and ability and willingness to participate in all required training and mentorship.

The Café





