

## Small Business & Main Streets Working Group Update

Challenge/Opportunity	Proposed Solution	Lead (partners)	Responsibility	Timing	Progress
Provide vital economic support to address financial peril and mitigate financial instability to increase likelihood of business survival	Create 'Hardship Grant/ Micro Business Relief Fund' - Also utilize, promote and expand to NFPs or social enterprises granting program through Hamilton Business Centre.	Hamilton Business Centre		Possible Quick Win	
Provide enhanced support for small businesses and NFPs.	Provide enhanced support for small business 1) maximize participation in the provincial and federal programs, 2) tech assistance by helping less tech savvy business owners quickly scale solutions, 3) utilize existing programs and education forums to encourage business growth, 4) guidance and support to pivot businesses with modified operations, service models and create new business models, 5) build digital capacity to introduce or increase e-Commerce options, 6) counselling for cash flow management, business concept review, revenue stream analysis, and marketing support, 7) create a toolkit for business, 8) tax relief strategies	City Staff/Hamilton Business Centre		Possible Quick Win	
Waive fees, fines, interest and penalties	Waive fees for new businesses being set up; review all fines, fees, interest and penalties; cap business license fees for five years; work with businesses on solutions not just a hard 'no'; Lower or eliminate fees for patios (cost isnt worth the result);	City Staff/Council		Possible Quick Win	
Track and evaluate the Main Street and NFPs throughout Hamilton who are vulnerable to not surviving the pandemic.	Industry comparisons of business closures, vacancies, agency and agency program closures city wide to track vulnerable areas	Hamilton Economic Development/NFP Sector/Municipal or community support		<6 months to long term	
Many landlords are not taking advantage of the Rent Relief program to the detriment of many businesses	Institute a Moratorium on commercial tenant evictions - would apply to businesses with a license to operate; also initiate some Property tax breaks to help relive some rent. Also allow program for NFP	Council/Advocacy through BIAs, Chambers of Commerce		Possible Quick Win	
City have more of an open mind about creative solutions to extend the seasonal use for outdoor spaces and ensure opportunities for future years.	City have more of an open mind about creative solutions (outdoor space); Help create attractive and safe walkable streets ;Invest in the streetscapes; Continue outdoor dining program in future years so patios are less expensive and easier to set up. AGCO/road closure guidelines, permitting/ Increase in sustainable transportation; Simplify street closure applications	City Staff		<6 months to long term	

Increase focus on local tourism.	Focus on local tourism. Reorient portion of tourism budget to support local BIAs across city to localize tourism; Ensure local tourism branches/ visitors center are in all local areas to bring people all the areas of the city; Utilize tourism funds for beautification efforts on main streets and BIAs	Tourism Hamilton/RTO3		<6 months to long term	
Improve parking and vehicle flow.	Parking and vehicles flow. Food delivery and courier services - increase opportunities for flexible parking strategies to accommodate curbside pickup and food delivery services. Implement free parking strategies.	City Staff		Possible Quick Win	
Irrecoverable loss of income for main streets and NFPs in spring 2020. NFPs especially due to loss of fundraising, membership dues, and social enterprise. Slow and partial recovery of revenues (events cancelled, social enterprise limited, dues in decline, etc.). Margins/net revenue unlikely to recover any time soon. PPE and cleaning requirements are a new and substantial cost. Cash flow is at risk	Ensure supports (money, loans, expertise, technology) are in place to allow organizations the time to adjust and plan for the future	All levels of government - including advocacy to federal and provincial	All levels of government - including advocacy to federal and provincial	<6 months to long term	
	A City-led push on social procurement. Hamilton already has this program in place and it could be an important part of the recovery for both the nfp/social service sector, as well as job seekers who might be otherwise left behind.	Municipal	Municipal	<6 months to long term	
The NFP sector is often left out of policy and funding programs/mechanisms which focus on business but as part of the social safety net, tend to be a low-cost solution provider that could be much better leveraged. Further, the sector has been and will continue to be on the frontlines through the recovery, including serving the most vulnerable.	Ensure government and private sector leaders view NFPs, charities, and social enterprises as equal partners in creating a future that is prosperous, equitable, and has a strong social fabric by ensuring seats at decision making tables	All levels of government		<6 months to long term	
While technology has reduced some barriers (enabling service to those without ready transportation, for instance), it has created other barriers. Businesses and NFPs have the cost of technology now required for virtual service, training, and learning curves (such as how to pivot to ecommerce). Individuals are also seriously affected. Some families have three children trying to share one computer for school work. Many people don't have the means of purchasing technology. Bandwidth and wifi is a barrier in many cases.	Undertake collective purchasing of technology to reduce costs that would otherwise be higher for individuals or organizations.	Municipal		<6 months	
	Provide more public space wifi (libraries, Career Centres).	Municipal and community		<6 months to long term	
	Build on existing community supports. Hamilton Business Centre's Digital Mainstreet initiative; Green Venture/Green Byte refurbishment of computers for community needs; tech savvy organizations teach and support others who are learning (such as about ecommerce).	Municipal and community		<6 months to long term	
	Build on the City's Intelligent Community Plan	Municipal and community		>1 year to long term	
COVID has exacerbated mental health and	Mental health and addictions support (training for employers; supports for individuals)	All levels of government	All levels of government	<6 months to long term	

addictions needs	Training for NFP staff (and businesses) about serving people with mental health and addictions	Hamilton Business Centre/Community Organizations			
Desirable real estate will likely be acquired (as prices drop) for residential or commercial development, potentially reducing access to community space.	Municipalities can further help community organizations access land. Use their zoning tools, as well as municipal loan guarantees, to help community organizations maintain access to real estate (such as for community hubs or affordable housing) and perhaps even purchase assets that will be distressed. (Westmount in Montreal has created a zoning designation for church buildings that ensures they stay in community hands).	Municipal		<1 year to long term	
The availability of food has been critical during COVID and the need will continue through the recovery	Ensure a sustainable food system, which is vulnerable at the moment (reliant on funds and food, which are not always predictable/in place).	All levels of government and community		<6 months to long term	
For NFPs that operate 24/7 (including residential and shelter facilities) staffing is a concern. For instance, the risk of exposure can increase where social distancing cannot be maintained (such as with personal care needs and client risk behaviours). In addition, Emergency Measures (such as the requirement for PSWs to work at one employer only) and CERB have resulted in many part time staff reducing their hours or not working at all, significantly impacting staffing levels.	Consider providing incentives for staff to get to work (such as reduced transit, recreational passes, etc.) Offer short-term training and certification opportunities in areas including mental health first aid, suicide prevention, CPR, first aid, NVCI, back care, hoier lift training, etc. to improve job seekers' chances of being hired in these settings if they don't have post-secondary education. Offer employers additional incentives to hire full time vs. part time.	Municipal (as for transit) and all levels of government for other incentives		<6 months <1 year	
There will be more job seekers than jobs (higher unemployment) and greater inequality. The most vulnerable, who have already suffered the most during the pandemic, risk being shut out of the job market. (Employers' financial constraints have and will lead to layoffs; hiring freezes; wage reductions or freezes; automation; which will disproportionately affect the lowest skilled individuals; and among other things). The higher unemployment rate will see employers gravitate to the most job ready candidates, over those who may need support and development, exacerbating the issue above.	Ensure the direct connection is made to the health and wellbeing of the community AND the economy. One part of this would be ensuring that people with disabilities, from racialized communities, living below the poverty line, women, newcomers, youth, etc. having employment helps employers and the overall economy	All levels of government and community		<6 months to long term	
	Invest in construction/infrastructure spending to help get people back to work and expand skilled trades opportunities. Move timelines up of projects already approved	Municipal with federal, provincial and private sector partners		<1 year to long term	

Given the increased automation, technology, and reduced revenues/margins, there will be a mismatch of job seeker skills versus the skills employers will be seeking.	Increase investments in skill development, micro training, micro credentialing, employment supports, employment readiness, education, retraining, placements, and employer incentives are policy and funding tools to support job seekers (including those with barriers who risk being left further behind) and the employment that will be key to economic recovery.	All levels of government, education and training institutions, NFPs and community		<6 months to long term	
	Identify the "jobs of the future" and the skills required. Service providers can then prepare training, retraining, and employment supports for those skills.	All levels of government, education and training institutions, NFPs and community		long term	
A lack of child care is a huge barrier to economic recovery. Women's participation in the workforce has declined precipitously. Child care providers are not able to afford to reopen given the reduced numbers of children allowed.	Increase safe access to childcare in a way that enables providers to operate. The federal government was contemplating a subsidy for providers but that subsidy has not yet materialized	All levels of government	All levels of government, including advocacy to federal and provincial	<6 months	
	Encourage flexible work arrangements (continued work from home, or flexible hours, with technology support provided), especially for parents	Community	Community	<6 months to long term	
Transportation has reduced peoples' ability to get to jobs (with reduced routes and limits on capacity).	Use schedule, route, and fare tools to enable more access to transportation. Municipal (with government partnerships) - asap - Transportation infrastructure, schedules, routes, fares, etc.	Municipal		<6 months	
	Invest in transportation as part of construction/infrastructure spending (above).	Municipal with federal, provincial and private sector partners		<1 year to long term	
Ensure solutions are inclusive of people with disabilities (access, policies, streetscapes, public realm infrastructure).	A genuinely inclusive, barrier-free planning for people with disabilities and universal design needs to include funding and enforcement to ensure it will be delivered.	Municipal		<6 months to long term	