DOWNTOWN RECOVERY STRATEGY (DRS)
REVITALIZING PLACES STREAM - ACTION PLAN

Since the pandemic's onset, Winnipeggers have turned to the outdoors to recharge and re-energize themselves during a strenuous time. The city's outdoor spaces have provided essential places for residents to safely reconnect with each other; re-establish connection with friends, family, and co-workers; and find refuge from the stress of living through a global pandemic.

We have been reminded anew that downtown's public parks, plazas and streetscapes are its greatest tangible assets that create space for exploring the benefits of economic development, cultural creativity, and personal potential. Downtown's public places spark tourists' interest in exploring downtown and create lasting memories; attract budding entrepreneurs and established companies to secure office spaces and fulfill their innovative visions; and create a vibrant and energized neighbourhood that makes people want to live downtown.

With fewer people regularly visiting and working downtown, the tired and neglected infrastructure of these places has never been more apparent. The disinvestment over past years poses a significant, but not insurmountable, challenge to economic recovery. For Winnipeg's downtown to prosper, increased long-term investment is required.

Outcomes

The *Revitalizing Places* stream of the Downtown Recovery Strategy (DRS) is not a construction stimulus plan – it is a community and economic stimulus initiative about people. It's about investing in places and spaces to attract and sustain more people downtown.

Collectively the proposed investments in the plan are designed to achieve the following:

- Improve accessibility and connectivity between districts.
- Increase tourism and local visitation downtown.
- Achieve greater social equity in the downtown.
- Enhance existing commercial clusters.
- Create and sustain downtown businesses.
- Grow the downtown residential population.
- Improve perceptions of downtown as clean and cared for.
- Increase the integration of public art downtown.
- Ensure Indigenous considerations and stories are prominent downtown.

Leveraging Investments – Support from the City of Winnipeg

This document outlines the proposed allocation of $10 million generously committed by the City of Winnipeg to the Downtown Recovery Strategy. It also shows how the *Revitalizing Places* stream will utilize this support, build on other core infrastructure investments, and leverage funds from other governments or the philanthropic sector to create a broader program of action.

Framework Action Areas

The following action areas were identified in the Downtown Recovery Framework – Revitalizing Places stream. They will be actioned through the projects outlined in this document.

- Prioritize tree planting, sidewalk repair, lighting, and eliminating accessibility barriers on key pedestrian corridors.
- Invest in high impact infrastructure projects to improve destination and better connect and sustain downtown's distinct districts, while encouraging surrounding economic investment.
- Design and implement a new accessible and inclusive wayfinding strategy for downtown.
- Host community clean-up events and develop a rapid-response public space cleanliness strategy or service.

Summary of Plan Investments

Projects	2022		2023		2024		City of Winnipeg DRS Funds	Other Leveraged Funds
	Q1/Q2	Q3/Q4	Q1/Q2	Q3/Q4	Q1/Q2	Q3/Q4		
Main Street Amenity Plan	Design/ Tender	Construct					$600,000	$1,374,289
Air Canada Window Park	Consult	Design	Tender	Construct			$2,500,000	$300,000
Broadway Renewal	Design/ Tender	Construct	Construct	Construct			$600,000	$9,157,000
Market Lands Public Realm	Tender	Construct	Construct	Construct	Construct		$2,500,000	$49,300,000
Sidewalk Enhancements	Consult	Design/ Tender	Construct	Design/ Tender	Construct		$2,000,000	$1,100,000
SHED Exchange Corridor	Consult	Design	Tender	Construct	Construct		$600,000	$2,200,000
Central Park Enhancements		Consult	Design/ Tender	Construct			$300,000	$300,000
Alexander Docks Area		Consult	Design	Design	Tender	Construct	$600,000	$2,200,000
Downtown Wayfinding			Consult	Design	Tender	Construct	$300,000	$1,000,000
TOTAL PLAN							**$10,000,000**	**$66,931,289**

Note: 'Other Leveraged Funds' includes funds already secured and yet to be raised. See individual project descriptions for detailed breakdown.

Administration of the Program

The Downtown Action Team, chaired by the CAO of the City has been tasked to steer the Downtown Recovery Strategy. It includes representation from CentreVenture, Tourism Winnipeg, Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, Exchange District BIZ, West End BIZ, End Homelessness Winnipeg, Downtown Community Safety Partnership, and the Winnipeg Arts Council.

The administration and procurement of projects in the plan will be overseen and coordinated by the City of Winnipeg Department of Planning, Property and Development, in consultation with and reporting through the Downtown Action Team. Phasing and scoping of the investment plan over the three-year period allows for flexibility and rescoping within the program and fundraising budget.

Map of Plan Investments



Note: Sidewalk Tree Planting and Downtown Wayfinding projects will occur strategically in various locations downtown, to be determined through further consultation and design.

MAIN STREET AMENITY PLAN

A broad-based coalition of organizations are developing an integrated plan to improve safety and public/community amenities in downtown's northernmost neighbourhood centred on Main Street from Disraeli to Higgins Avenue. The Downtown Recovery Strategy will augment and support this leadership work.

North Main Street and area is an important and heavily utilized part of the downtown. It is home to many of Winnipeg's housing shelters and other community support agencies. At its centre is the Circle of Life Thunderbird House, an Indigenous spiritual and community centre.

The area experiences inadequate public maintenance and lack of appropriate amenities to serve citizen's needs. The construction of a new public washroom at Henry Avenue is an important step toward better serving Winnipeggers in this area. Still, public health measures impacting the use of indoor spaces is necessitating a redesign and management plan for the outdoor public realm to support the community.

The landscape surrounding the new public washroom and Thunderbird House will be revitalized with financial support through the Downtown Recovery Strategy and from other community partners. People seeking respite outdoors will benefit from more accessible pedestrian circulation and a safe and dignified space to gather and to belong.

Meals and other necessities now distributed in disposable containers have increased the volume of litter in the area. Community organizations have increased cleanup efforts, collecting over 100 bags of litter in the area per week, yet this is still not meeting the needs. The Downtown Recovery Strategy will support the implementation of sustainable waste management strategy to serve the area.

Project Scope:

- Further community engagement and consultation
- Construction of new landscaping around public washroom and Thunderbird House
- Restoration of Thunderbird House
- Waste management strategy including infrastructure and operating plan
- Local procurement, employment, and stewardship.

Accomplished to Date:

- Public washroom construction (2022)
- Site development and community engagement ongoing
- Waste Management working group formed
- Main Street and Area Neighbourhood Action Group formed
- Facilities work by Cibinel Architecture for Thunderbird House

Completion: 2022

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$600,000
The Winnipeg Foundation (Secured Funds)	
Downtown BIZ (landscaping)	$230,000
Thunderbird House (restoration)	$130,000
North Point Douglas Women's Centre (location in Thunderbird House)	$50,000
MSP (waste management plan)	$90,000
	$500,000
Public Washroom (Secured Funds)	
Thunderbird House – Community Foundations of Canada	$241,202
Federation of Cdn Municipalities	$633,087
	$874,289
City of Winnipeg Operating Funds (Secured 2022/23)	

AIR CANADA WINDOW PARK

Air Canada Window Park is a prominent gathering place on Portage Avenue between Portage Place Mall and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). Constructed in 1981, the park is experiencing aging/failing infrastructure as well as design features that today create physical accessibility and community safety challenges.

The Park is home to significant public artworks created by Indigenous artists that assert an Indigenous presence in our city and provide for contemplation and learning about Indigenous experiences on this land. The artworks were installed in 2018 as part of a larger renewal plan that did not materialize because of lack of funding.

Over the last decade the park has also suffered an unfair reputation as a locus of crime. And while the recorded incidence of crime in the park is low, episodes of social conflict and disturbance among users of the park are present and contributing to that perception. The Downtown Community Safety Partnership (DCSP) reports a high demand for their staff and services in the park, providing addictions and housing resource connections. During the summers of the pandemic, the park also became a heavily utilized gathering place and encampment for people experiencing homelessness.

The Downtown Recovery Strategy will support the complete revitalization of Air Canada Window Park as a public space project, but also as a project to advance truth and reconciliation. It will be designed following comprehensive community engagement with all users of the park. Its core objective will be to embrace the park's important role as a gathering place, one that is safe and welcoming to everyone in the downtown community.

Project Scope:

- Comprehensive community engagement and consultation with neighbouring property owners.
- Redesign and reconstruction of the park.

Accomplished to Date:

A site Inventory has been completed by Scatliff Miller Murray and identifies physical characteristics and areas of CPTED/natural surveillance concern including pinch point spaces that create a sense of entrapment in the central plaza; poor accessibility through to the central plaza due to stairs and poor visibility; poor views towards NE corner.

Detailed incident reporting by Downtown Community Safety Partnership (DCSP).

2018 Indigenous Public Art Installation

Completion: 2023

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$2,500,000

Application to be made to:

Province of Manitoba *Building Sustainable Communities Program (2023)*	$300,000

MARKET LANDS PUBLIC REALM

The Market Lands Public Realm project is the final component in the initiative to create a new local and tourist destination in the heart of Winnipeg's Exchange District.

The new outdoor plazas and environment will reflect and support a new Creative Hub, Public Market and more than 350 new mixed-income and affordable housing units.

The Creative Hub will provide new permanent homes for long standing Manitoba arts organizations such as Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), Video Pool Media Arts Centre, and Creative Manitoba sector council. Its anchor will be a new prominent main floor space for Urban Shaman Aboriginal Contemporary Art Gallery.

The Public Market will be culinary innovation hub where food lovers and makers collide through:

- Public sessions – weekly onsite meetups, workshops, talks, tastings, labs that explore ideas, productivity, and innovation in culture, food and drink.
- Food services – test kitchens and market pods featuring food and culinary brands, providing fresh and pre-packaged food and beverage options.
- Social spaces – Organized mixers, happy hours, hangouts, and socials bring area workers and residents together.
- Brand pop-ups – Local food brands producing unique activations, installations, and pop-up experiences throughout retail and other building spaces.

The entire 2.4 acre Market Lands redevelopment project will create 700 person-years of employment through construction, while sustaining and generating new jobs in the creative and tourism sectors.

Project Scope:

The Downtown Recovery Strategy will support the final design and construction of integrated urban plazas, woonerf, sidewalks, trees, and urban furniture surrounding the buildings constructed at the Market Lands.

Accomplished to Date:

- Comprehensive community consultation on the entire development
- Formalized partnerships with community arts organizations
- Project feasibility and significant fundraising
- Class B Drawings and Budget

Construction Start: 2022

Completion: 2024

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$2,500,000
Federal Government (Secured)	$31,600,000
Other (Secured and in Process)	$17,700,00
Total Buildings & Public Realm	$51,800,000

BROADWAY ENHANCEMENTS

Broadway is a preeminent commercial street linking Manitoba's legislative precinct to the Forks National Historic Site. It provides a iconic and historically significant outdoor environment in the heart of downtown, with its large colonnade of trees, green boulevard, wide sidewalks, public art, and modern office architecture. It offers opportunities for lunchtime food trucks, community events, and relief from the working day.

The pandemic has had dramatic impact on office occupancy in the downtown and threatens to have a more sustained and long-term impact on the older Class B and C buildings in and around Broadway. A renewal of this key downtown asset will provide a welcome return for workers in the area, and it will encourage new companies to locate in vacant spaces along the avenue with its refreshed look and outdoor public environment.

The Downtown Recovery Strategy will fund pedestrian enhancements and amenities, augmenting the following core infrastructure projects already planned for Broadway:

- rehabilitation of the road and sidewalks
- tree planting on north and south sidewalks
- renewal of the median fountain including acknowledgment to Shoal Lake 40 First Nation

The goal is to create a comprehensive approach to revitalizing Broadway as signature public destination and important linkage in the downtown.

Project Scope:

- preliminary work to include a design workshop with property owners and area stakeholders toward a conceptual reimagining of the boulevard as a linear parkway with potential for new programming and diverse uses
- installation of pedestrian amenities and enhancements, including new street furniture, waste receptacles, and bike racks

Completion: 2023

Accomplished to Date:

- Detailed design of road and sidewalk renewal from Memorial Boulevard to Main Street (construction 2023)
- Class C drawings and budget for renewal of the median fountain
- Design and specifications for Broadway tree planting strategy
- A vision for 'Lights on Broadway' – 10 permanent light-based sculptures on the median. The first artwork was installed in 2016 at Edmonton St. The second will be installed in 2022 between Fort and Garry.

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$600,000
City of Winnipeg	
road/sidewalk renewal	$7,100,000
median fountain	$200,000
tree planting (40% match to NIF)	$1,200,000
Federal Government – applications made to:	
Natural Infrastructure Fund (NIF) for tree planting (60% of cost)	$1,800,000
Community Revitalization Fund for median fountain and pedestrian amenities and enhancement	$432,000

SHED / EXCHANGE COORIDOR

The boundary of Downtown Winnipeg is large and comprised of several distinct districts. The Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District (SHED) and the Exchange District are two districts that are characteristically unique and rich in tourism and entertainment assets. Yet while they are immediately adjacent to one another they lack quality pedestrian connections to reinforce their proximity. This deficiency lessens the visitor experience and reduces the impact/benefit of cross marketing between the districts.

The Downtown Recovery Strategy will identify and scope a series of pedestrian connection projects (capitalizing on existing landmarks and nodes). The series of interventions will improve the flow of people between the districts from Market Lands through True North Square and the Convention Centre. Implementation and construction of the projects will be based on the extent of fundraising efforts over the next two years.

Potential projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Create a new public plaza space for outdoor programming in front of Burton Cummings Theatre, as a phase one project.
- Create a shared street on Albert (similar to John Hirsch Way in the East Exchange) to improve accessibility and encourage quality adjacent active main floor uses.
- Improve the intersections/connections at Notre Dame Avenue to improve pedestrian experience to/from SHED and Exchange District.
- Construct better wayfinding signage between the districts.
- Encourage development of the large surface parking lot across from the Burton Cummings Theatre.

Project Scope:

- Consultation and conceptual design of pedestrian connection projects.
- Detailed design and construction of new public plaza in front of Burton Cummings Theatre.
- Other projects as fundraising permits.

Accomplished to date:

- Conceptual design of public space in front of Burton Cummings Theatre

Completion: 2024

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$600,000
City of Winnipeg	
Smith Street realignment	separate budget
Fundraising Goal (various sources)	$2,200,000

ALEXANDER DOCKS AREA

The Alexander Docks closed in 2015. The dock was fenced due to concerns over the integrity and safety of the structure. The remainder of the site includes a vacant gravel lot on the upper bank, an active transportation path, and an unmanicured green space sloping toward the docks. It is significant unimproved section of the linear park along Waterfront Drive between Point Douglas and The Forks.

Public consultation processes have been undertaken to determine future uses of the docks site, forming a consensus that the area should remain a public space with historic interpretation/commemoration elements and with limited/low scale commercial development to preserve views of the river.

Alexander Docks is the site of the tragic discovery of the body of 15-year-old Tina Fontaine in 2014, catalyzing the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Revitalization of the area must result in permanent commemoration and a place for healing and reconciliation.

In addition, the site is also an opportunity to commemorate the notable act of heroism by Sergeant Tommy Prince, who saved a drowning man at the Docks in 1955. As well, the site should incorporate interpretive elements that recognize the historic importance of the site in to both the Manitoba fishery and fur trade with connections to the Red River Settlement and the Metis Nation. Artworks by Indigenous artists could engage with these complexities in accessible and meaningful ways.

The Downtown Recovery Strategy will establish the final plan for revitalization of the Alexander Docks area and implement its construction and animation.

Project Scope:

- Consultation with Indigenous communities
- Plan and schematic design for revitalization of the area
- Replacement of upper bank gravel lot with park and public realm enhancements
- Rehabilitation or replacement of the docks
- Final design and construction of revitalization plan

Completion: 2024

Accomplished to Date:

- KGS Group Cost Estimates (2015)
- The Alexander Dock: Report on Public Consultations for Future Use of the Alexander Dock Site (2017)
- Exchange District Plan (2022)

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$600,000
Fundraising Goal (various sources)	$2,200,000

CENTRAL PARK ENHANCEMENTS

In 2012 Central Park underwent a $5.6 million transformation. It has become a vibrant and well used asset in the neighbourhood.

The Central Park Stewardship Committee is comprised of representatives from the City of Winnipeg (Community Services and Parks and Open Spaces) and local non-profits who serve the downtown community and support, maintain, and activate Central Park.

The committee has identified a number of potential infrastructure enhancements to the park to better serve the community:

- Enhanced shade and tree cover for the park which is experiencing a loss of elm trees
- Covered spaces to provide shelter from the weather and a space for picnics, events, or programming
- Retrofit the building in the splash pad area to provide a location for recreational equipment
- Drinking water stations.
- Retrofit existing three-season washroom to four seasons
- Additional seating options in the park
- Permanent volleyball court and hockey rink independent from pleasure rink.
- Redevelop existing play area to remove broken water features, create a natural play area, and include components suitable for younger years
- Improve garden beds with more greenery/flowers and incorporation of traditional medicines
- Enhanced pedestrian pathways and cycling connections
- Lighting improvements

The Downtown Recovery Strategy will support immediate priorities of the committee and will work to leverage other funding support.

Project Scope:

- Engagement with Central Park Stewardship Committee to establish priority park enhancements
- Application to the Province of Manitoba Building Sustainable Communities Program
- Commissioning and installation of park enhancements

Accomplished to Date:

- Preliminary inventory of potential park enhancements

Completion: 2023

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$300,000

Application to be made to:

Province of Manitoba *Building Sustainable Communities Program (2024)*	$300,000

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS AND ENHANCEMENTS

The City of Winnipeg currently budgets approximately $500,000 annually for sidewalk renewals throughout the downtown. These investment decisions are based on physical state of sidewalk and not evaluated based economic outcomes. They also do not include any pedestrian enhancements or new tree planting. So, often these projects are not leveraging or supporting new private investment to maximum impact.

The Downtown Action Team's Revitalizing Places Sub-Committee will work with the City of Winnipeg to prioritize annual sidewalk renewals to the greatest community and economic benefit. And where most impactful will augment the core infrastructure investment with pedestrian enhancements. An example of this proposed collaboration was achieved through the Exchange District Waterfront Neighbourhood Development Plan (EWNDP).

As well, the Recovery Strategy will identify and implement other pedestrian and sidewalk enhancement initiatives in strategic locations throughout the downtown to achieve the outcomes established for the Revitalizing Places Action Plan.

Project Scope:

- Engagement with Public Works and the Department of Planning, Property & Development
- Identification and implementation of sidewalk improvement and enhancement priorities

Accomplished to Date:

- Streetscape audit completed by the Department of Planning, Property & Development

Completion: 2023 and 2024

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$2,000,000
City of Winnipeg Sidewalk Renewal Budget (2023 and 2024)	$1,000,000
Fundraising Goal (various sources)	$100,000

DOWNTOWN WAYFINDING

Downtown Winnipeg is a diverse area with many distinct destinations connected through a somewhat complex grid pattern of streets and pathways. A consistent system of wayfinding is essential to effectively manage the movement and flow of people, but it also enhances the user experience and contributes to a sense of wellbeing and security.

Nearly two decades have passed since the implementation of the City's current downtown wayfinding system. Since then, the downtown has dramatically changed, and new accessible technologies have been introduced that allow for innovative approaches to wayfinding.

Building back the visitor experience in downtown Winnipeg is key to economic recovery and tourism development. The creation of a new wayfinding system will be an important short-term action toward that goal, providing a new framework for updating and replacing of the downtown's current system.

Project Scope:

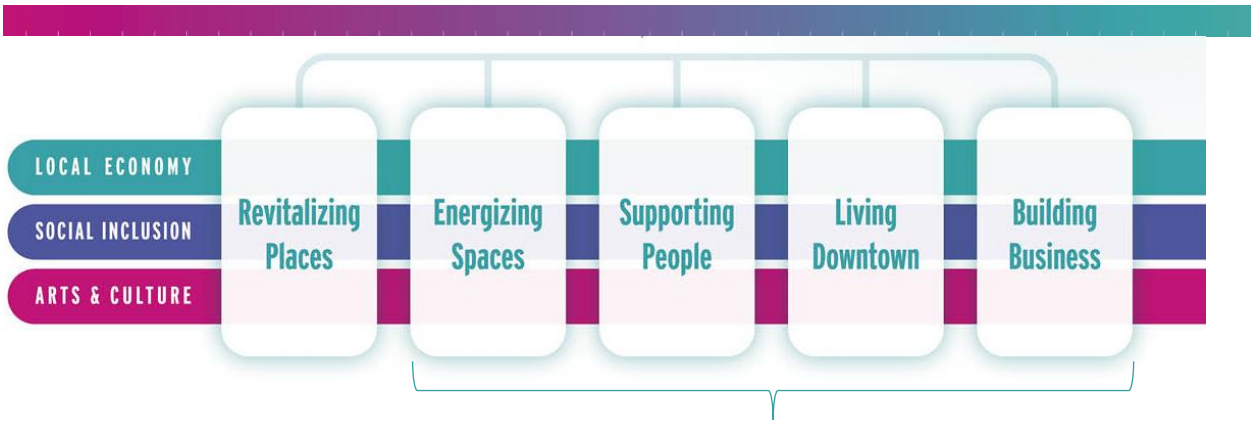
- To consult on and design a new wayfinding system for downtown Winnipeg, incorporating current best practices and technologies.
- To pilot physical components of the new wayfinding system at key gateways in the downtown to complement the downtown recovery strategy.
- To establishment a timeline and plan replacement of all existing downtown wayfinding physical components.

Completion: 2024

Financial:

Downtown Recovery Strategy	$300,000
Fundraising Goal (various sources)	$1,000,000

DOWNTOWN RECOVERY STRATEGY (DRS)
OTHER ACTION STREAMS - UPDATE



Subcommittees have been formed under all action streams of the Downtown Recovery Framework. The following is a summary of current activity under these four streams.

ENERGIZING SPACES

This Energizing Spaces stream is focused on supporting the return of in-person events, whether it be festivals, concerts, business events, sporting events, museums, performance arts, etc. The subcommittee is developing actions to achieve the following: attract and drive return visitation downtown; improve the promotion of downtown events and attractions; increase business revenue for businesses downtown; generate positive visitor experience downtown. Their key performance indicators include number of events, number of participants, and visitor satisfaction.

Areas of focus to date:

- Downtown marketing campaign focussed on the return of events. In addition, coordination and alignment among the multiple organizations that schedule and promote events in the downtown.
- Working with existing events such as Culture Days to expand its offering in the downtown.
- Evaluating the feasibility of creating a Downtown Events Fund to support established events and new opportunities to drive innovative concepts downtown.

The sub-committee is exploring various federal and provincial funding opportunities for its activities and has already submitted one grant application to further develop and execute on the focused areas.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE

The Supporting People stream is focusing on actions to create a more supportive downtown community, one committed to treating people with dignity and ensuring their needs are met and rights are respected.

Action areas identified to date:

- Expanding community outreach presence.
- Sustainable, low-barrier 24-hour safe spaces.
- Adopting a harm reduction approach and providing safe amenities such as additional public washrooms and drinking water locations,.

- Building connections between downtown businesses and community-based groups that serve Winnipeggers facing poverty to reduce stigma, deepen understanding, and enhance collaboration.
- A focus on building community and providing opportunities for downtown neighbours to re-connect.
- Greater emphasis on mobility, ensuring there are accessible and affordable options no matter how people choose to get around.
- New and enhanced green spaces.

It is important that the actions and solutions identified reflect the demographics and diversity of the downtown including Indigenous women, 2sLGBTQ+ and racialized community members, folks with lived experience, newcomers, people with disabilities and young adults. A group of individuals who live and/or spend most of their time downtown representing these demographics have come together to provide their ideas and input to the Supporting People stream.

LIVING DOWNTOWN

This stream and subcommittee will work over the next three years to maximize the effectiveness of the new City of Winnipeg 'Affordable Housing Now' program and other TIF programs in support of residential development on surface parking lots and in heritage buildings.

Action areas identified to date:

- Initiate 1,500 new mixed-income and affordable downtown housing units.
- Augment affordable housing initiatives to overcome hurdles to developing low-barrier, transitional, and social housing, such as the need for downtown land or building acquisition.
- Develop and align a marketing plan with downtown's educational institutions to match students with new downtown living options.
- Advocate for and support efforts to restart and increase international immigration to Winnipeg.

The Living Downtown stream will also work to leverage existing federal and provincial affordable housing and heritage funding support in support of projects downtown.

BUILDING BUSINESS

The Building Business stream has developed a program comprised of five areas that together will foster an inclusive recovery, support SMEs throughout and beyond recovery, and encourage upcoming entrepreneurs to locate downtown.

Action areas identified to date:

- Ground Floor Incubation Strategy and Program: Mentor and match emerging entrepreneurs with empty downtown storefront locations.
- Façade Improvement Program: A program for existing storefront businesses to redress dilapidated storefronts.
- Business Improvement Grant: A program to support new and existing businesses through space improvements and business development to support long term strategy and growth.
- Downtown Marketing Campaign
- Market Research

The sub-committee focused on this stream is exploring various federal and provincial funding opportunities to develop and execute these programs.