

# City selling downtown property

BY BOB BRUTON

The city is calling all interested developers to Barrie's downtown.

Four of its centrally located properties have been targeted for sale and redevelopment by the downtown commercial master plan.

What city hall calls "expressions of interest" are being requested by July 21 for two properties along Collier Street, one on each of Bayfield and Mulcaster streets (see pullout).

This is the next step in revitalizing Barrie's downtown through its commercial master plan, designed by Patty Xenos.

"The plan is to guide and inspire," said Robert Brindley, chairman of Barrie's downtown implementation committee.

"There's already considerable interest (in the properties), but we are trying to be fair to everybody. The best deal for Barrie is the one we want."

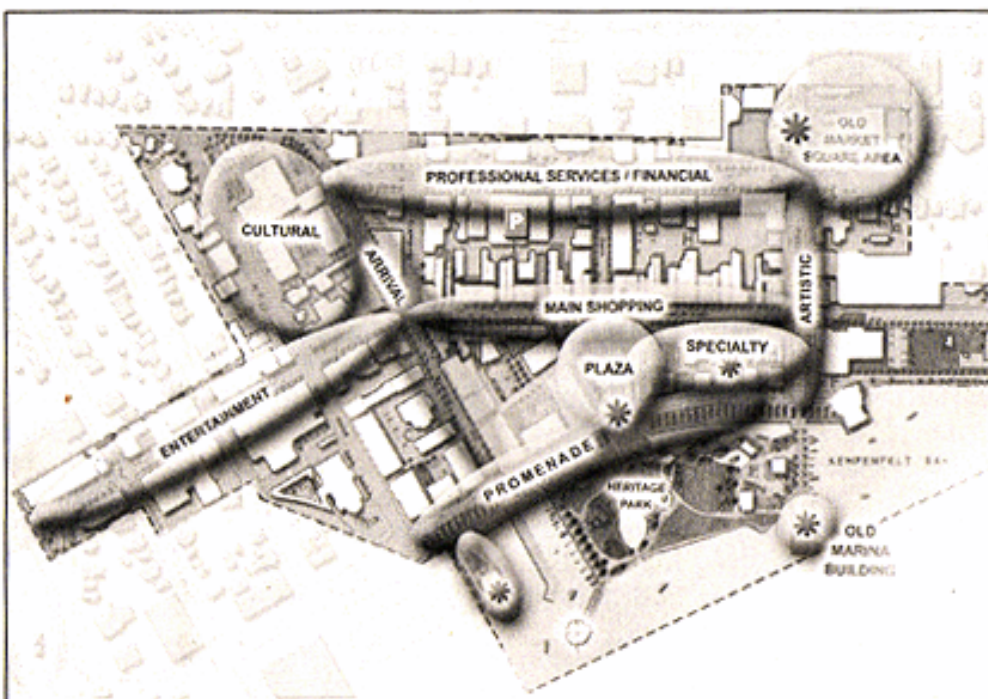
These sites are suitable for a wide range of opportunities including a hotel/conference centre, offices and commercial development.

The most concrete plans involve 1 Bayfield St., where the city has already conducted a market feasibility study.

It's based on a branded hotel with 165 guestrooms, a 100-seat restaurant, a 25-seat lounge, 12,000 square feet of meeting space and 205 parking spots.

Assuming land costs of \$2 million, this project carries a \$26.3-million price tag.

Brindley, who's also the city's economic development director, said this



hasn't scared potential investors away.

"Probably about 20 companies have indicated strong interest in that property, and they have a lot of pedigree," he said.

Brindley said this isn't the only potential downtown site for a hotel/conference centre or both, but it's probably the best one.

"We'd love to see a hotel downtown," he said.

Included in the city's guiding principles for this plan is that all of the project financing will come from private development, and that heritage features must be incorporated where appropriate.

Any down parking spots lost by developments on these properties will

be replaced by the Collier Street parking garage and commercial development.

It will mean 300 public parking spaces and 30,000 square feet of commercial office space. Construction could begin as early as this fall, with anticipated occupancy in late 2007.

Since these four downtown properties are city-owned, there will be timelines for developers that buy the property, in terms of starting and finishing construction.

Those timelines will depend on the size and scope of the development.

"We're looking for interest from those who want to move ahead on the downtown commercial master plan," Kathy Gray, the city's real estate manager, said.

## Primed for Development

### 1 Bayfield St.

Now: parking lot, empty building (to be demolished), open space

Proposed: hotel, office, commercial, residential complex

### 10-14 Collier St.

Now: parking lot

Proposed: professional services building

### 90 Collier St./55 Mulcaster St.

Now: parking lot, IGA food store

Proposed: Old Market Square Area – food store, permanent indoor/outdoor market, underground parking

### 36 Mulcaster St.

Now: heritage building, parking lot, open space

Proposed: commercial use, heritage building

"It's an opportunity for private investment to make the plan a reality."

The city also has a \$175,000 budget to promote, market and facilitate the development and sale of properties in the downtown. About \$125,00 of that money will be used to hire a consultant to drive this plan.

The master plan is designed to transform the city core, and the waterfront, into a place that acts as a catalyst for economic development. It tells potential investors who their neighbours will be, by showing what goes where. Its goal is to promote excellence for both private and public sector buildings.

For more information, visit [www.barrie.on.ca](http://www.barrie.on.ca), then go to Share the Vision for Downtown Barrie.