

Meeting: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: July 8, 2025

Subject: Temporary Patio Program Improvements

Submitted By: Amanda St. John, Manager, Business Attraction & Investment

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the implementation of a Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot from July 28 to October 3, 2025, inclusive;

That Council exempt the Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot from Business Licensing By-law 2022-041, Schedule I – Temporary Patios, Section 7.12 Adjacent Property Consent, for the period of July 28 to October 3, 2025 at specified locations; and

That staff be directed to prepare a future report detailing outcomes of the Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot and recommendations to amend the Business Licensing By-law 2022-041 to improve Caledon's Temporary Patio Program.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2021, Caledon Council adopted the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Plan to improve Bolton's historic downtown for business owners, residents, and visitors.
- To advance this priority and support business resiliency, the Town launched a Temporary Patio Program in partnership with the Region of Peel.
- Since its launch, the Temporary Patio Program has had limited business participation.
- A Patio Program Review was completed in 2024 to identify program and process improvements.
- A Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot is proposed to increase participation in the Town's patio program, creating enhanced pedestrian-friendly space using public parking on Queen Street from July 28 to October 3, 2025.
- Further improvements to the Town's Temporary Patio Program will be initiated in advance of the 2026 patio season and will include recommended amendments to the Business Licensing By-law 2022-041.

DISCUSSION

Background

In 2021, Caledon Council adopted the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Plan, a key initiative within the Town's Economic Development Strategy. The Revitalization Plan guides Council and staff actions and investments to improve Bolton's historic downtown for business owners, residents, and visitors. Key goals include streetscape improvements, enhanced pedestrian spaces, support for local businesses, and the activation of Queen Street through seasonal programming and placemaking initiatives.

To advance these priorities and support business recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic, Caledon launched a Temporary Patio Program in partnership with the Region of Peel. This program established a licensing framework and guidelines for patios on private property across the Town and on sidewalks in Downtown Bolton through the creation of a pedestrian walkway using public parking spaces in the Downtown core. With businesses facing continued cost pressures resulting from inflation and the changing international trade environment, the Town's patio program remains an important support for Caledon-owned small businesses.

To incentivize participation in the patio program, the Downtown Bolton Community Improvement Plan includes 50% matching grants up to a maximum of \$5,000 for business owners to invest in the installation or improvement of permanent sidewalk patios or outdoor cafés within the Bolton Core. This includes and is not limited to eligibility for permanent structural elements, decorative fencing or barriers, awnings, and outdoor heaters.

Temporary Patios in Caledon

Since launching in 2021, participation in the Town's temporary patio program has been limited. To date, a total of seven businesses have participated in the program utilizing private parking areas. No businesses have been successful in establishing a sidewalk patio in Downtown Bolton to date.

Patio Program Review

To increase participation in the program, support commercial vibrancy, and further advance the objectives of the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Plan, Business Attraction & Investment and Municipal Law Enforcement staff undertook a review of the Town's temporary patio program in 2024. The review aimed at evaluating resident and business support for patios and identifying barriers to participation.

Resident & Business Engagement

Resident and business engagement was conducted from July to November 2024 using online surveys and in-person interviews. In-person engagement included a staffed booth at Midnight Madness in Downtown Bolton and visits to Bolton businesses on Queen Street. Public engagement was promoted through paid and organic tactics using Town, Economic Development, and partner channels, including the Caledon Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to identifying program improvements, the public engagement initiative assessed public support for the implementation of a Town-led Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot, utilizing public parking along Queen Street for the creation of a pedestrian-friendly, placemaking initiative in the commercial core, as detailed in *Schedule A: Have Your Say - It's patio season in Caledon!*

A total of 207 online survey responses were received, with 136 residents and 71 businesses providing feedback. An additional 35 individual and business interview responses were obtained through in-person engagement.

Key findings:

- Caledon residents are highly supportive of the Town's temporary patio program with 70.6% indicating interest in an increase in outdoor cafés and patios in Caledon.

- 57% of residents and 64% of businesses indicated support for the proposed Bolton Patio Pilot
- Respondents identified the importance of enhancing community gathering spaces, supporting local businesses, and increasing the vibrancy of the commercial core.
- Key concerns included accessibility, pedestrian flow, parking space management, and traffic safety.
- Barriers to participation in the Town's temporary patio program include: permit process complexity, lack of program awareness, cost concerns, and neighbouring property owner consent requirements.

Municipal Benchmarking

In addition to community engagement, the patio program review included web research and interviews with municipal program administrators in Brampton, Guelph, Milton, Mississauga, Oakville, Ottawa, and Waterloo.

Municipal benchmarking identified the following opportunities to enhance Caledon's temporary patio program:

1. Placemaking improvements:
 - a. Permit live music with noise control guidelines
 - b. Use public parking spaces to expand the public realm with on-street patios or pedestrian walkways
 - c. Enhance patio design standards to include greenery, lighting, and quality seating
2. Enhanced communications:
 - a. Create guides and videos to make it easier for businesses to participate
 - b. Launch promotional campaigns to grow awareness of the program and the available financial incentives
 - c. Establish a dedicated intake window for patio program application for consistency and predictability
3. Administrative barriers:
 - a. Simplify the permit process
 - b. Remove neighbouring property owner consent requirements
 - c. Extend the patio season from May to October

Recommendations

To further advance the priorities of the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Plan and increase participation in the Town's Temporary Patio Program, staff recommend the following:

- Implement the proposed Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot from July 28 to October 3, 2025, inclusive.
- Undertake improvements to the Town's Business Licensing By-Law 2022-041 and Temporary Patio Program administration in advance of the 2026 patio season.

Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot

Staff propose the implementation of the Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot for the period from July 28 to October 3, 2025, inclusive. The late July start will allow sufficient time to notify and support Downtown Bolton businesses with participation in the program.

The pilot will include the installation of a pedestrian walkway, required traffic control barricades and signage, on the east-side of Queen Street in Downtown Bolton, as detailed in *Schedule B: Proposed Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot Location*. The installation of the pedestrian walkway will include the temporary closure of 8 public parking spaces, with two spaces retained on the north-side of the walkway to support business access through the duration of the pilot.

The Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot will be coordinated in partnership with the Region of Peel to ensure safety, traffic, and accessibility requirements are met. This includes Regional approval of a Traffic Management Plan and compliance with the Ontario Traffic Council's Restaurant Patio Guidelines within the Right of Way, 2022 and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Installation of the pedestrian walkway, barricades, and signage will occur during off-hours and within the parking lane. Road or lane closures are not required to support the installation.

The proposed pilot will be in-effect to activate the commercial core and create enhancements to the public realm during the August Civic Holiday and September Labour Day long weekends.

Consent Exemption

As this is a Town-led initiative, an exemption from the Town of Caledon Business Licensing By-law No. 2022-041, Schedule I – Temporary Patios, Section 7.12, Adjacent Property Consent, is required from July 28 to October 3, 2025, inclusive to support the implementation of the pilot for participating businesses:

7.12) Every operator of a restaurant business shall receive written consent from adjacent business owners and provide such written proof of consent to the License Issuer, and any other documentation required by the License Issuer acting reasonably, to support the proposed pedestrian by-pass being constructed within any on-street parking.

Town staff will provide written notification to all impacted businesses and property owners in Downtown Bolton, pending Council approval of the pilot.

Business Participation

The pilot is intended to create opportunities for business participation beyond restaurant operators. The pilot will include the opportunity for café and bistro tables, public seating, and displays.

Engagement and promotion to support the launch of the pilot will include:

- Direct outreach to Downtown Bolton businesses and property owners;
- A dedicated webpage providing information on the patio program timelines and available financial supports through the Community Improvement Plan; and

- Paid and organic communications tactics to inform Caledon residents, businesses, and visitors.

Metrics & Reporting

Staff will work closely with Downtown Bolton businesses to monitor and report on impacts associated with the proposed pilot to inform future initiatives.

Following the pilot completion, an online survey will be distributed to Caledon residents and businesses to evaluate public support, identify opportunities for improvement, and determine next steps, including the potential for expansion of the program beyond the Bolton Core.

Temporary Patio Program Improvements

To address barriers to participation identified through community engagement and municipal benchmarking, the following improvements to Caledon's existing Temporary Patio Program will be initiated:

- Business Licensing By-law amendment to remove barriers to participation and ensure Caledon's patio program aligns with municipal best practice.
- Process improvements in advance of the 2026 patio season, including a user-friendly webpage, patio guide, and streamlined application process.
- Applications to external funding programs to support patio infrastructure requirements, such as pedestrian walkways, barricades, and signage.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated total cost to implement the 2025 Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot is \$22,000. This includes Region of Peel Traffic Management Plan requirements and pedestrian walkway installation, removal, and rental. Pilot costs will be recovered through the Business Attraction & Investment 2025 operating budget and will not result in unanticipated budgetary impacts.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Strategic Plan 2023-2035

This report is directly related to the following priority in Caledon's 2023-2035 Strategic Plan:

Community Vitality and Livability

Details about Caledon's 2023-2035 Strategic Plan can be found at caledon.ca/strategicplan.

ATTACHMENTS

- Schedule A: Have Your Say – It's patio season in Caledon!
- Schedule B: Proposed Downtown Bolton Patio Pilot Location