



**ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE
DEVELOPMENT
MEMORANDUM**

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File: ECDM7-22
Pending #:
TMP-29068

TO: DEPUTY MAYOR, B. WARD AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

**FROM: S. YOUNG, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, SMALL BUSINESS CENTRE OF BARRIE,
SIMCOE COUNTY AND ORILLIA. X5453**

**NOTED: D. HYDE, MANAGER, SMALL BUSINESS CENTRE OF BARRIE, SIMCOE COUNTY
AND ORILLIA**

S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

**B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, RPP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE
AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

RE: UPDATE ON THE DIGITAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM

DATE: MAY 9, 2022

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide members of Council with information regarding the completion of Digital Main Street 3.0 and launch of Digital Main Street 4.0 Programs.

About Digital Main Street

Digital Main Street helps businesses achieve digital transformation through online learning platforms, structured training programs, and a Digital Service Squad (DSS). The grant allows the Small Business Centre to support a DSS of four people, whose role is to provide digital training and expertise to local business owners. These trained specialists meet with small businesses, at no cost, for up to 10-hours of service to provide digital support in areas like social media, graphic design, web development and photography.

Digital Main Street 3.0

In year 2021, the Small Business Centre received a \$35,000 grant from Digital Main Street's Ontario Grants Program (OGP) to support a DSS to help Barrie-area small businesses improve their online presence. This builds on the grant funding of \$90,000 previously received under earlier iterations of the program to the Small Business Centre.

The Digital Main Street 3.0 program expanded eligibility to remove the requirement for small business to be part of a zoned main street area. As such, the program applies to all small businesses that have a brick-and-mortar location, among other criteria.

Per the agreement with the Province of Ontario, the Small Business Centre Service area includes the City of Barrie, City of Orillia, and thirteen municipalities in the County of Simcoe.

The Barrie DSS assisted 56 businesses on a one-on-one basis and an additional 159 clients through a workshop series.

Digital Main Street 4.0

For 2022, the Government of Ontario has further expanded the Digital Main Street Ontario Grants program through a \$40 million dollar investment over two years – the longest program length since the creation of the program in 2019.

The Small Business Centre is preparing to apply for new funding that will apply for years 2022 through to March 31st, 2024. Pending approval, Digital Main Street 4.0 would launch tentatively set for June 1, 2022.



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Based on participant feedback, history of success and suggestions from the Digital Service Squad, service delivery is being adjusted to provide more efficient solution provision to business owners. In order to maximize impact to participants, the Digital Service Squad will introduce focus groups, which will see all four DSS members present a cohesive strategy to the client at once.

Weekly mastermind sessions will also be introduced and one-day digital transformation bootcamps will be introduced on a semi-annual basis. Each squad member will lead a 45-minute session with an interactive component following, where clients can apply their newfound knowledge. This will also be a chance to have eligible business owners apply for the Digital Transformation Grant, a \$2,500 grant aimed at assisting business owners with the adoption of new digital strategies.

For more information about services or programs, the Small Business Centre can be contacted at smallbusiness@barrie.ca or 705 720 2445.