



# Riverside Hub

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## An Infrastructure Project Serving Brantford/Brant and Surrounding Areas

The Riverside Hub Project is a partnership of twelve (12) mental health, social service, wellness, and social recreation organizations working together to construct a 54,000 square-foot community hub at 54 Brant Avenue in Brantford's downtown core. We passionately believe this Hub will make Brantford a better place by providing a welcoming, purpose-designed facility that improves service access and integration while fostering relationships, belonging, and wellbeing.

The need for this Hub is critical. Brantford has faced rising levels of distress in recent years, with mental health, homelessness, the addictions crisis, and gender-based violence placing unprecedented pressure on local services. Every not-for-profit service organization in the city now has a waitlist. The demand for support has outgrown the capacity of existing spaces, which are outdated, costly, and unable to meet program, accessibility, or safety requirements. A purpose-designed facility will provide the space and resources necessary to address this community's urgent needs while harnessing cost-efficiencies and improving service access to everyone in the community..

After five years of exploration, including nearly a dozen potential sites, our resources as non-profits are stretched to their limit. We are moving forward with plans to build at 54 Brant Avenue, a property owned by Willowbridge, because we know this project is critical to the health and wellbeing of our community. This is our final opportunity to see this vision realized. As we enter the pre-consultation process to confirm the project's feasibility, we remain determined to bring this essential Hub to life. We believe this is not just a project—it's a necessary step toward building a stronger, healthier future for Brantford. We invite you to learn more about our plans to build a stronger community together.

# The Partners

Coming Together to Build a Stronger Community



Counselling, Mental Health & Developmental Services



Supportive LGBTQ2+ Advocacy Community



Mental Health & Autism Supports for Children



Health, Health Promotion & Food Security Services



Brantford Hospital – Outpatient Mental Health Services



Mental Health and Crisis Supports, Safe Beds



Addictions, Mental Health, Housing and Employment Services



Housing & Employment Supports



Social Recreation and Inclusion programs for individuals with disabilities



Peer Support, Social Recreation, and Employment



Child Welfare Services



Front Door to Child and Youth Services

## Who We Serve

Together, our Hub partners serve approximately 27,000 community members each year. Our programs support individuals from all walks of life as they connect, seek services, and heal.

## Who We Employ

Together, our partners employ roughly 800 community members working in health, social services, developmental services, social recreation, and more. Around 500 of these staff will be on-site daily.



## Types of Services



Counselling & Mental Health Services



Children's Services



Healthcare Services



Autism & Developmental Services



Addictions Supports



Crisis Services



Programs for Intimate Partner Violence



2SLGBTQIA+ Services and Advocacy



Housing Supports



Employment Supports



Food Security Programs



Social Recreation

# Background

## Making the Case for Riverside Hub



In 2019, Willowbridge Community Services began exploring options for resolving the critical issues presented by their facility on 54 Brant Avenue. Gathering input from the community, Willowbridge was gearing up for a major renovation or a move.

However, extensive community consultations soon revealed that many service providers in the city were also struggling with similar issues. As themes began to emerge from community focus groups, surveys, and feedback forms, Brantford's core service providers came together and formed a committee to help address shared concerns.



## Community & Partner Feedback

The Brantford community identified major concerns with health and social service facilities:

### ▶ ACCESSIBILITY

Many facilities are hard to reach by transit, are not fully wheelchair accessible, have poor lighting and poor ventilation.

### ▶ PRIVACY & SAFETY

Facilities have serious issues with security for staff and clients, and layout/design do not allow for privacy during sessions.

### ▶ RESOURCES

Not-for-profits in Brantford typically compete for the same funding and remain siloed.

### ▶ INTEGRATION

Services are not coordinated or integrated, which results in clients having to repeat their stories at a high emotional cost. Lack of integration also creates further difficulties in connecting clients to the service they need.

### ▶ AFFORDABILITY

Facilities have extremely high overhead costs and lease payments (over \$1,000,000 / year) for outdated spaces with no partner input.

### ▶ CAPACITY

Demand for services is at an all-time high, but facilities are cramped and offer no room for growth.

### ▶ SUITABILITY

Programming spaces do not suit the needs of the community or programming and lack critical infrastructure.

### ▶ DIVERSITY

Facilities are not welcoming or inclusive of diverse communities and in some cases present as unsafe.

# Responding to the Community

## Our vision for a new Community Hub in Brantford

In response to the community's feedback, our partners determined that our communities would be better served if we worked together. Our committee created a vision for a Community Hub and pulled in a broad range of experts to help us co-locate our services in a new, central, purpose-designed facility. Our partnership envisions a Brantford where no one is left behind, where everyone has the opportunity find support in their moment of need in a space that says, "you truly matter to us".

### Vision & Benefits

A facility that is purpose designed and shows the community that they matter



Improved sense of community inclusion and belonging

A coordinated, integrated access point for streamlined mental health services that creates a positive participant experience



Increased access to coordinated services for the community

Exploration of shared elements for seamless participant experiences and economies of scale with shared reception, operating and facility costs, communications, IT, and other back office supports



Reduction in overhead costs through shared resources, lower monthly lease costs, elimination of duplicated services, and reduced operating costs

The facility will be fully sustainable, with a net zero carbon footprint



Positive environmental impact & reduced overhead costs for heating



# Public Amenities

The Riverside Hub has, through the design process, highlighted key public amenities that will be open to, or bookable by, the community. These include:



## Creative Spaces

Bookable art, play, music, prayer, gym, exercise, and meditation rooms.



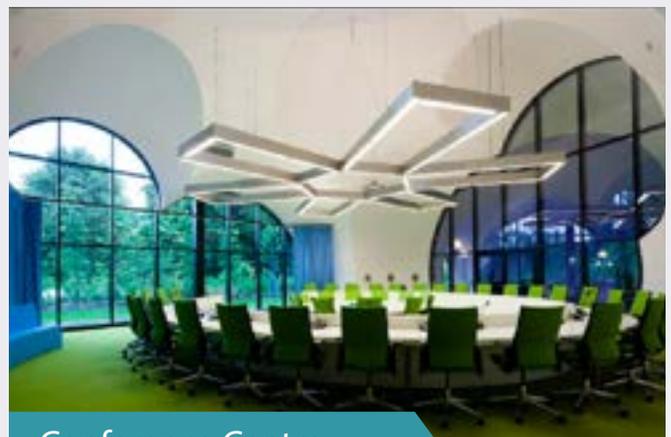
## Outdoor Spaces

Community gardens, rooftop patio, playgrounds, bike-share and repair, greenspace.



## Walk-in Spaces

A centre to provide walk-in counselling, medical treatment, addictions support, housing resources, and developmental services to anyone in the community.



## Conference Centre

Bookable banquet, conference, meeting, office, and work-share spaces.



# Progress & Timelines

## Mapping Out Riverside Hub



After forming a committee in 2019, the hub partners have met biweekly for over 5 years with the goal of submitting an infrastructure grant proposal.

Our timelines are as follows:

- Complete
- Ready to Launch
- In Progress
- Upcoming

2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Needs Analysis – Complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Hub Development Community Formed – Complete</li> </ul>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Site Search Begins (includes renderings and feasibility for 5 different sites)</li> </ul>	
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Space Needs Analysis – Complete</li> <li> 1st Ontario Trillium Grant – Complete</li> <li> Fundraising Plan – Ready to Launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Governance Model – Ready to Launch</li> <li> Site Search Continues – Complete</li> </ul>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Name, Brand, and Website – Ready to Launch</li> <li> 2nd Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant – Complete</li> <li> Business Plan – Ready to Launch</li> <li> Incorporate as a New Organization – Ready to Launch</li> <li> Complete By-Laws – Ready to Launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Apply for Charitable Status – Ready to Launch</li> <li> Site Identified at City-Owned 79 Icomm Drive – Complete</li> </ul>
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> City Council Moves to Support Feasibility Study at 79 Icomm Drive – Complete</li> <li> Site Planning &amp; Renderings for 79 Icomm Drive – Complete</li> <li> Site Studies for 79 Icomm Drive – Complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Feasibility Study Terminated Due to City Zoning Policy – Complete</li> <li> Site Search Continues – Complete</li> </ul>
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Final Site Identified at 54 Brant Avenue – Complete</li> <li> Initial Site Studies – Complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Initial Site Plan &amp; Schemata for 54 Brant Ave – Complete</li> <li> Official Site Pre-Consultation with the City – Upcoming</li> </ul>
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Apply for Federal/Provincial Infrastructure Funding – Upcoming</li> <li> Respond to City Requests for Site Studies &amp; Development Planning – Upcoming</li> <li> Continue Community Engagement Work – Upcoming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Hold Indigenous Talking Circles – Upcoming</li> <li> Finalize Partner Affiliate Agreements – Upcoming</li> <li> Further Community and E.D.I Engagement – Upcoming</li> </ul>
2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Acquire Necessary Building Permits &amp; Plans – Upcoming</li> </ul>	
2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Begin Construction</li> </ul>	
2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Open our Doors</li> </ul>	

# Our Team

Together for a Stronger Community



The Riverside Hub has been helped along by numerous community consultants, organizations and volunteers.



## Consultants

MTE Consulting – Engineering

+VG Architects Gravity Inc. – Communications

Two Row Architect – Architectural Design

Landwise – Site Planning

Meridian Edge – Governance

Waterous Holden Amey Hitchon – Legal

KCI Philanthropy – Fundraising

KPMG – Business Plan

Vink Consulting – Community Engagement

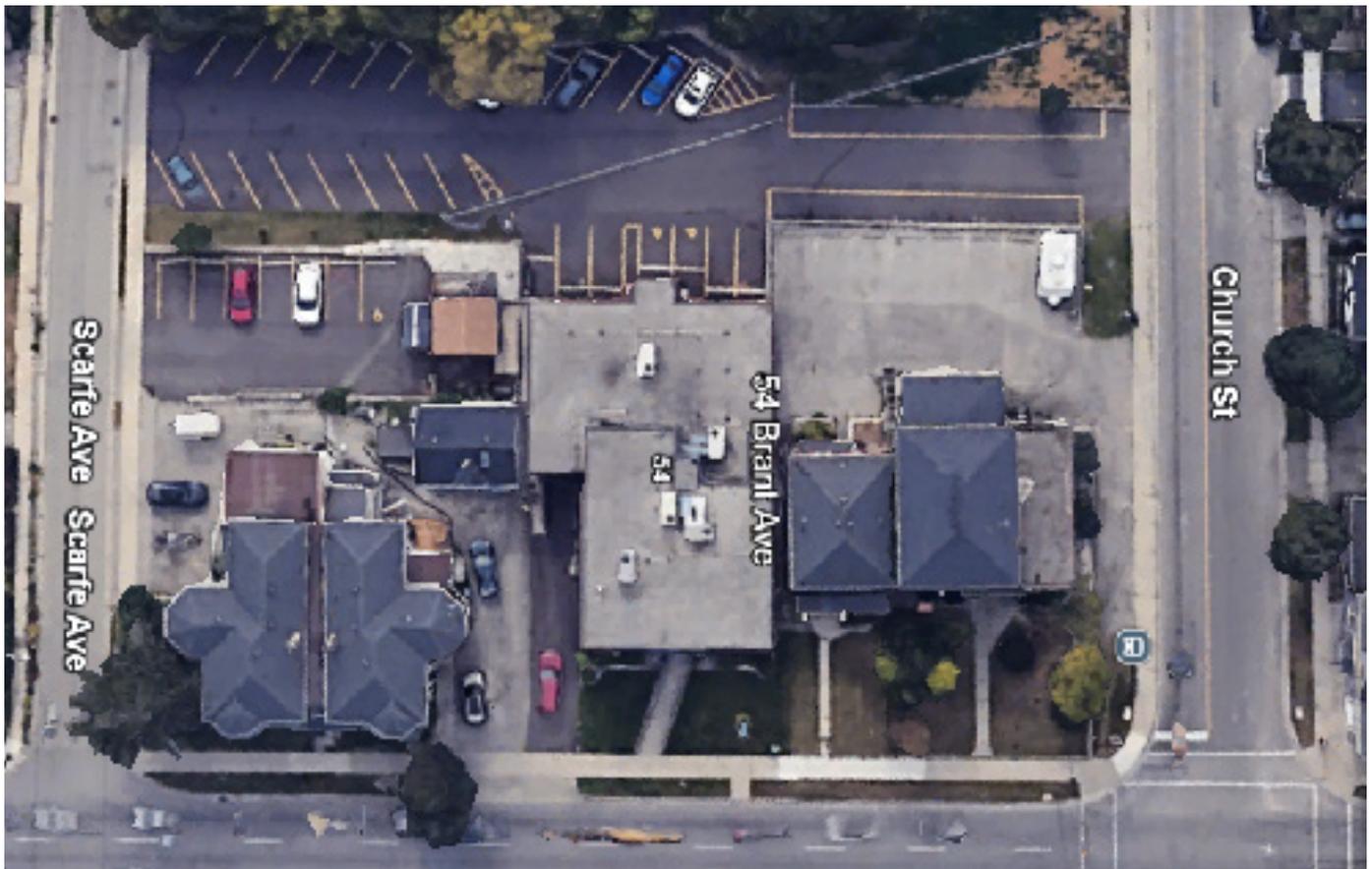
Sierra Planning & Management – Economic Impact Study

# The Site

Connecting in Downtown Brantford



The Riverside Hub is currently exploring the 54 Brant Avenue site that currently houses Willowbridge Community Services to determine the site's feasibility as a potential hub location. The site, with a lovely view of the Grand River, is well-located within walking distance of the downtown core and bus terminal.





# The Site

Rejuvenating Brantford's Downtown Core



Brant Ave. View

# The Site

Rejuvenating Brantford's Downtown Core



Brant Ave. View



Scarfe Ave. View

# The Site

Rejuvenating Brantford's Downtown Core



Church St. View



River View