



TOWN OF COBOURG

Council Midterm Report

Spring 2025



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What is a Midterm Report?



Welcome to the Council Midterm Report, a first of its kind for Cobourg.

When I came into this office, I promised improved communication and transparency. We have done this through open office hours, a mayor's newsletter, improved social media content and investing in our communications team.

However, in an environment challenged by the loss of local news media, it is increasingly important that we find new and creative ways to engage our constituents. That is why I felt this report and an increased focus on communications was so important.

Clear and consistent communication is essential for building and maintaining trust and transparency. As residents of Cobourg, it is critical to be kept abreast of the decisions that your Council is making on your behalf.

Thank you again for your continued engagement with this Council. I look forward to hearing your feedback so that we can continue to improve our communications efforts.

Message from the CAO



Over the last two years, this Council has faced many challenges and made bold decisions in support of the future prosperity of this community. During these times they have sought the advice of our senior leadership team and relied on the input from our community.

Clear and consistent communication can streamline operations, improve coordination, and lead to better outcomes. This Council prioritizes open and transparent government and encourages new opportunities to connect and engage with residents. Open channels of communication facilitate oversight, allows residents to monitor Council decisions and municipal processes. Our efforts in these areas have helped us foster trusting relationships with the residents we serve.

We hope you will find value in this Council Midterm Report and welcome you to follow up with staff should you have any questions about any of the activities and programs listed within.

Council Members Share Accomplishments and Hopes

Over the last two years, Council has addressed many challenges, hosted critical discussions and moved significant business forward. As they approach the final stretch of this term, we asked each member to share their highlights and priorities for the next two years.



Mayor Lucas Cleveland

What are you most proud of from the last two years?

As a new mayor, my priority has been creating efficiencies and a clear allocation of responsibilities. As Cobourg's representative at Northumberland County Council, I continue to advocate for significant changes, particularly in the areas of social services, so that Cobourg, as a community, is not unfairly bearing the brunt of a system that disadvantages us. Our By-law enforcement, the development of our Emergency Care Establishment program, and creation of new By-laws based on provincial fire, health and building codes have led, among other things, to the end of all encampments and safer streets and living conditions for our residents.

What are your priorities for the next two years?

I want to see issues surrounding parking resolved. I want to continue the process of looking at a "re-imagined" County of Northumberland that is more equitable to its largest municipality and funder: Cobourg. I want to see work at Victoria Hall continue around the finances and budgeting process in Cobourg. Through a review and analysis of our debt capacity and reserves, strengthening the work through policy to ensure Council and staff continue to take the long-term approach to Capital Forecasting, Financial Sustainability Planning, and Operational Budgeting/Forecasting.



Deputy Mayor Nicole Beatty

What are you most proud of from the last two years?

I believe we have made great efforts to advocate for Cobourg residents at the provincial and federal level. I am proud to represent Cobourg on the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities Executive Committee and appreciated the opportunity to pitch key infrastructure projects to provincial ministers at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference this past year. Staff have also done a tremendous job securing funding investments, including \$25M for housing and water infrastructure and \$5M for harbour and Monk's Cove improvements.

What are your priorities for the next two years?

Activating the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) to guide long-term growth now that the Sustainability Coordinator portfolio is active. Identifying and advocating for funding to support key community projects such as the development of the Tannery lands to advance housing goals. The implementation of the Parks Master Plan to enhance public green spaces and support for recreational projects and arts and culture initiatives to enrich Cobourg's social and economic fabric.



Councillor Adam Bureau

What are you most proud of from the last two years?

One of my greatest sources of pride has been engaging with the residents of Cobourg. Listening to their stories, understanding their challenges, and trying to assist where I can has been incredibly fulfilling. Their voices and experiences guide me in my role and continually remind me of the importance of community connection and responsiveness.

What are your priorities for the next two years?

Being appointed as the Chair of the Police Board was a monumental achievement. Over the next two years, I am dedicated to fostering openness and transparency within the Cobourg Police Service Board. I will continue to work diligently on Council, aiming to hear, understand, and address the needs and concerns of our residents.



Councillor Brian Darling

What are you most proud of from the last two years?

I am proud of the ingenuity of our Environmental Services team and the introduction of a Sequence Batch Reactor, an extremely rare asset for a municipality to own. The SBR is used to pre-treat liquid waste that would normally not meet the limits of the Town's Sewer Use By-Law. This unique ability has allowed the Town to operate the SBR as a business, charging for our treatment services. The revenue generated is used to run the plant operations, reducing the amount residents pay in their utility bills.

What are your priorities for the next two years?

The Town of Cobourg owns hundreds of millions of dollars of infrastructure assets. Effective planning and forecasting are critical to ensure we can maintain service levels and are not placing undue burden on our tax base when these assets approach end of life.



Councillor Aaron Burchat

What are you most proud of from the last two years?

I am proud of the enhancements made in By-law Enforcement and the introduction of the Administrative Monetary Penalty System. Cobourg is the first municipality in the County to take on this program which provides an accessible and flexible alternative to the lengthy and costly provincial court processes.

What are your priorities for the next two years?

Two of our strategic pillars are Sustainability and Thriving Town. I believe we can work towards both by focusing on enhancements to our parks and recreation programming. Programming that serves all our residents, from youth through retirement, makes Cobourg a place people want to live and ensures the social well-being of our residents.

Council Members Share Accomplishments and Hopes continued



Councillor Miriam Mutton
What are you most proud of from the last two years?
It has been most rewarding to connect with citizens in the sharing of ideas. These conversations can advance action on matters important to the community, both people and businesses, families and neighbours. I am honoured for the opportunity to be part of local government. The citizens of Cobourg care about our past, present and future.

What are your priorities for the next two years?
My priorities for the next two years are to continue to listen and to undertake research in making informed decisions. Decisions important to the community today but with a view towards a long term and resilient future. For example, to promote and enable quality principles in urban design to guide progress and growth which respects autonomy of the person. And to ensure the protection and preservation of public assets because doing so may help keep taxation in check.



Councillor Randy Barber
What are you most proud of from the last two years?
Following extensive research, I am proud to see the implementation of the innovative Customer Service Charter. While many organizations have made it more challenging to connect with a real person, I am thrilled to see the Town of Cobourg going against the grain after introducing additional opportunities for in-person connection and timely response to enquiries.

What are your priorities for the next two years?
I am proud of the progress made with the initiation of OMERS for members of Council. I hope to maintain momentum with regards to Councillors’ remuneration. Residents know that Councilor's work seven days a week attending myriad events and meetings. Holding a position on Council should not be for retired, wealthy individuals. Improved remuneration will make this job accessible to more people, allowing for greater representation of our community. Today, Councillor’s salaries meet Ontario’s minimum wage of \$17/hour.

Creating Greater Engagement with Council

Since the beginning of term, this Council has been focused on providing additional opportunities to hear from residents. Determined to improve transparency, they initiated the review of the Town’s governance by-laws and policies.

The goal was to streamline processes and improve the efficiency of the business of Town Council and its Committees and Boards. Additionally, Council has introduced improved opportunities for residents to speak to items listed on the agenda, or initiate important discussion with Council. Leading to greater community engagement.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE “COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE RECAP” NEWSLETTER



Cobourg.ca/Newsletter

Speaking to Council
If you wish to speak to Council regarding an item on a meeting agenda, you may attend the meeting in-person or electronically.
To speak in-person, fill out a Request to Speak form and provide it to Clerk’s staff at the meeting. You do not need to submit it in advance. If you prefer to attend electronically, submit a Request to Speak form to clerk@cobourg.ca by 12 p.m. the business day prior to the meeting and you will be registered as a virtual speaker.

Submit Correspondence to Council
If you cannot attend a meeting, you may submit written correspondence to clerk@cobourg.ca. Correspondence received by 12 p.m. the business day prior to the meeting will be circulated to Council prior to the meeting.

Speak to an Item Not Included on the Agenda
If you are interested in appearing in person at a Council, Committee or Board meeting to present information on a matter not included on the agenda, submit a Delegation Request Form to the Clerk's by 12 p.m., nine days prior to the meeting.

Listen to a Council Meeting
To listen to a Council Meeting, visit www.Cobourg.ca/escribe and click on the corresponding date. The livestream link will be available 30 minutes prior to the meeting.

Connect with Council
Visit Cobourg.ca/council for the Council directory and contact information.

Meet the Clerks



Brent Larmer
Municipal Clerk



Kristina Lepik
Deputy Clerk



Cassidy Sweet
Council & Committee
Coordinator

2025 Budget

2025 Capital Budget: \$111,482,784
2025 Operating Budget: \$25,128,070
Municipal Levy: \$32,688,195
NEW Infrastructure Levy: 1%
Net Increase over 2024: 5.23%

Pro-active Budgeting to Ensure Long-Term Sustainability

This Council is united in its approach to municipal budgeting. This year, Cobourg saw Council tackle the budget as a team, setting new standards for operational transparency and fiscal responsibility.

- NEW quarterly reporting means that municipal budgeting is now a continuous process.
- Approval of the 2025 budget in advance of Q1 ensured that staff can make the best use of budget dollars and take advantage of cost savings by being early to market on major capital projects.

“When dealing with millions of dollars of infrastructure, we must take a proactive approach to financial planning, so we are not creating undue burden on the tax base. The progress we are making through improved financial and asset management reporting has given us the foresight to set aside the appropriate funding to address key infrastructure requirements as they arise,” said Mayor Lucas Cleveland.

Improving Financial Sustainability Through Increased Reserve Spending

A key performance indicator identified in 2024 was to increase the Town of Cobourg’s reserves. Financial sustainability refers to the ability to provide and maintain service and infrastructure levels without resorting to unplanned increases in tax rates or reductions in service. New to the 2025 budget strategy is the introduction of a 1% infrastructure levy. Cobourg, like other communities across Ontario, faces the ongoing task of replacing aging infrastructure. The introduction of a 1% dedicated infrastructure levy will assist the Town of Cobourg build appropriate reserves to address these major budget items as they develop.

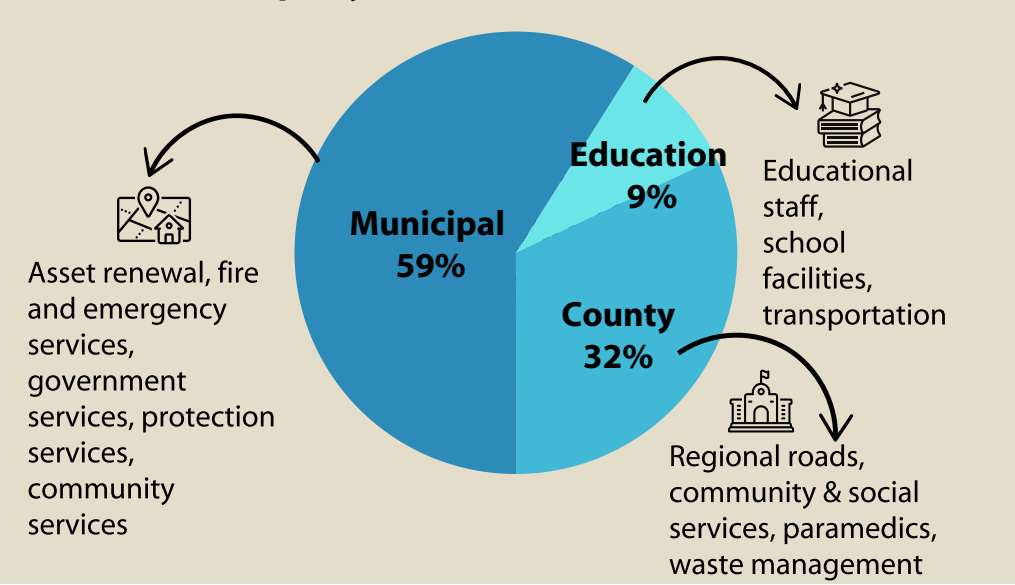
Increased Funding Through Community Grants

In 2024, Council advanced the Town’s capacity to seek funding for major capital projects through advocacy work, seeking meetings and making delegations to upper levels of government.

“In 2024 the Town of Cobourg received a record amount of funding through provincial and federal grants, including \$25 million in water infrastructure from the provincial governments Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund,” said Mayor Lucas Cleveland.

“As you will see with the 2025 budget, staff have made great effort to offset major capital costs through external funding, meaning Cobourg will be able to complete a remarkable amount of work this year, without additional strain on the tax base.”

Where Your Property Taxes Go



Council Budget Information Sessions

The 2025 Budget Engagement strategy saw the introduction of in-person budget information sessions. Residents took advantage of this opportunity to ask questions of Council and provide their insights on community priorities.



In 2024, the Town of Cobourg submitted 24 grant applications, receiving a total funding of \$30,164,859

Council Advocating for Cobourg With Meetings and Delegations to Upper Levels of Government

In January, Mayor Lucas Cleveland, Councillor Randy Barber and Town of Cobourg staff members attended the 2025 ROMA (Rural Ontario Municipal Association) Conference.

While at the Toronto event, Cobourg representatives met directly with three provincial Ministers. These discussions were invaluable in showcasing how Cobourg is leveraging provincial funding to advance local economic development.

ROMA 2025 Delegations

- Ministry of Economic Development and Job Creation
 - Ontario East Development Fund Application to support development of Lucas Point Industrial Park
- Ministry of Sport
 - Future of YMCA Northumberland on the CCC Campus
- Ministry of Health – Mental Health & Addictions
 - Involuntary care for individuals with severe mental health and addictions challenges



Expanded Advocacy and Outreach

The Town of Cobourg is a member of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and supports their advocacy work to see greater collaboration and support from upper levels of government.

Last adjusted in 2008, AMO believes that a review of provincial-municipal financial arrangement is long overdue.

- **Municipal revenues do not grow with the economy or inflation:** In 2022, annual average inflation rate was 6.8% – leaving municipalities to contend with increased wages, construction costs, and interest rates without corresponding growth in revenue.
- **Municipal property taxes subsidize the provincial treasury by almost \$4 billion a year:** Nearly a third of municipal spending in Ontario is for services in areas of provincial responsibility – such as social housing, long-term care, public health, childcare and social services. Provincial contributions offset these costs – but only in part.
- **Current fiscal arrangements undermine municipalities’ ability to invest in infrastructure:** The ambitious goal of 1.5 million new homes by 2031 depends on building essential municipal infrastructure and the public investment to support it. Bill 23 resulted in municipalities having \$1 billion less to fund growth.
- **Property taxpayers, including small business owners and seniors on fixed incomes, can’t afford to pay for provincial costs:** Increasingly, municipalities are being asked to take on complex health and social challenges. Ontario’s property taxes are already the second highest in the country. The property tax base was never meant to support income re-distribution.



Source: AMO Social and Economic Prosperity Review.
Visit amo.on.ca for more information.

Town of Cobourg AMO 2024 Delegations:

Council presented Cobourg’s largest delegations to date at the AMO 2024 conference. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario annual conference (AMO 2024) is the premier event for Ontario’s municipal sector. Deputy Mayor Beatty, along with Councillor Darling and Councillor Barber presented delegations focused on Cobourg’s current challenges, asset management planning and Council’s long-term goals for our community.



- **Infrastructure Ontario**
 - King Street West Reconstruction
 - King Street West Culvert Replacement & William Street Bridge Rehabilitation
 - Stormwater Management Infrastructure Subsidy
- **Ministry of Sport**
 - Centennial Pool
 - Pickleball Courts
 - Harbour Infrastructure Repairs
- **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**
 - Enhanced collaboration and communication with lower tier municipalities facing the impacts of homelessness



Election

The next Municipal and School Board election will be held on **Monday, October 26, 2026**. Information regarding the Election will be hosted on **CobourgVotes.ca**



Residents who are interested in running in this upcoming election, or anyone who has questions about the election process can contact the Municipal Clerks department at 905-372-4301 or clerk@cobourg.ca

Responding to U.S. Tariffs

In light of tariff increases, the municipality is proactively considering measures to mitigate financial impacts and ensure continued service delivery such as:

1. Reviewing municipal budgets to assess potential cost increases and identify areas most affected by tariffs.
2. Exploring alternative suppliers, bulk purchasing, and long-term contracts to secure stable pricing for goods and services.
3. Reviewing upcoming infrastructure projects to adjust timelines, sourcing, or scope based on projected cost increases.
4. Engaging with other municipalities, associations, and senior levels of government to advocate for support and share best practices.
5. Strengthening inventory management and securing local or alternative suppliers to minimize disruptions.
6. Working with international partners through the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to advocate against blanket tariffs.

The Town of Cobourg continues to work with our partners across Northumberland County to support local businesses.

Major Achievements : An Update on Council’s Strategic Plan



Thriving Community

A “thriving community” has the services and amenities that promote community well-being, employment opportunities and a wide array of housing options that create economic prosperity. A thriving community values the benefits that its heritage, culture and history provide for the current and future generations.

- ✓ Award of Excellence in Workforce Development - Economic Development and Venture13 Team recognized by the Developers Council of Ontario
- ✓ Three major policy documents completed in 12 month period:
 - Vehicle for Hire By-law
 - Short Term Rental Accommodation Licensing By-law
 - Emergency Care Establishment By-law
- ✓ Return of Experience Ambassadors
- ✓ Revenue Growth Series Podcast
- ✓ Cobourg’s first Disc Golf course to open summer 2025
- ✓ Cobourg Beach mobility mat extensions
- ✓ Aging Well at Home Program - Fire Prevention and Community Safety
- ✓ Wastewater Treatment Plant #1 expansion Environmental Assessment underway
- ✓ Watermain replacement and resurfacing of Westwood Drive



Partnership with YMCA Northumberland

A Memorandum of Understanding was approved by Council to explore a potential partnership to develop a recreation centre on the CCC campus to serve the recreational needs of Cobourg and Northumberland County.



Service Excellence

Service excellence is not just about delivering satisfactory service. Service excellence means letting our residents know that they are valued and understood. Our objective is to go beyond our residents’ basic needs and to exceed their expectations on a regular basis.



Outstanding Institutional Contribution Award

Town of Cobourg recognized for their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Through the FCM program Cobourg has partnered with international and Canadian municipalities in educational seminars on policy development to ensure a more inclusive and gender-responsive approach in local government.

- ✓ Governance Review and Procedural By-law update
- ✓ Office of the Mayor eNewsletter
- ✓ Council Standing Committee Recap eNewsletter
- ✓ Corporate website redevelopment
- ✓ Transition to Online Reservation System at the Victoria Park Campground
- ✓ Introduction of Administrative Monetary Penalty System
- ✓ Customer Service Charter and policy
- ✓ New Customer Service position in Victoria Hall
- ✓ Transit improvements - Limited Fixed Route Service Pilot Project one-year trial, in addition to the on-demand service
- ✓ Centennial Pool Open for 2024 and 2025 summer season
- ✓ Secured funding to move forward with long overdue infrastructure projects
- ✓ Modernized transactions including online billing and credit card payments



Sustainability

Sustainability means fulfilling the needs of our current generation without compromising the needs of future generations, while ensuring a balance between financial stability, environmental care and social well-being.

- ✓ Approval and implementation of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)
- ✓ Approval of Sustainable Neighbourhood Master Plan for the Tannery District
- ✓ Hired a Procurement Manager to create efficiencies and lower costs
- ✓ Hired a Sustainability Coordinator to champion ICSP
- ✓ Harbour Infrastructure Repairs - Partial funding obtained for shoreline preservation
- ✓ Asset Management Planning for non-core assets completed
- ✓ Stormwater Management Asset Management and Financial Plan completed
- ✓ Cobourg Building Department fleet electrification
- ✓ First electric truck procured for Environmental Services Department
- ✓ Cobourg Invited to Urban20 due to leadership in Sustainability policies



Cobourg Fire installed a Vehicle Exhaust Extraction System with support from the Province. The system will reduce exposure to exhaust and cancer causing toxins.

Upcoming Capital Projects

This Council is committed to moving ahead with long overdue capital projects. The following projects will be underway this spring and summer. Efforts have been made to reduce traffic congestion and overall impact on neighbouring residents. For questions, please contact the Public Works and Engineering Division at 905-372-9971.

**King Street West
Culvert
Replacement 75%
Funded by the
Province of Ontario**

William Street Bridge Rehabilitation

- Project commenced the week of March 8th and is estimated to take eight months to complete.
- Will be completed in sections to ensure minimal traffic disruptions.
- One lane remaining open in each direction throughout the construction duration.
- Sidewalk closures will occur dependent on phasing. Signage will be posted directing pedestrians.

Waterfront Boardwalk:

- The old boardwalk was determined to be at the end of its service life and Council approved its reconstruction in 2023.
- The new boardwalk will be constructed using pressure treated wood materials for the decking and recycled plastic/composite materials for the substructure.
- The new boardwalk will be constructed at-grade (non-elevated) and will be widened to 12 feet to meet the recommendations provided by the Town of Cobourg Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- To reduce costs, the boardwalk is being constructed by Town staff at the Public Works yard and will be installed in sections.

King Street West Culvert Replacement:

- Constructed in the 1970's and is currently in overall poor condition.
- Anticipated construction duration is 10 - 12 weeks with a start date of approximately June 2025.
- A minimum of one-lane of traffic will be maintained at all times during construction.
- The total project cost is \$1,800,000.
- Town received \$1,244,000 from the Province through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) program to help fund this project.



Record Breaking Infrastructure Funding

Through the Housing Enabling Water Systems Fund, the Town received a record \$25,000,000 contribution towards a \$35,000,000 expansion of sanitary sewer and watermain to service the development area in the northeast quadrant of Town.



Harbour Infrastructure Repairs

Cobourg Council is proud to announce progress on the long awaited restoration of the Cobourg Harbour and Monk's Cove area.

Mayor Cleveland and members of Council welcomed The Honourable Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, on March 4, 2025, to announce critical infrastructure funding for our waterfront.

The Monk's Cove sea wall and the harbour's breakwaters are currently compromised, leading to erosion and structural weaknesses. The federal government is investing \$5 million in this project through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF), while the Town of Cobourg is contributing \$14.5 million.

Cobourg's harbour is as important to our local sense of identity as it is to our economic strength. This critical infrastructure investment will be instrumental in safeguarding our local economy and ensuring the continued prosperity and safety of our community.



Stormwater Funding

Cobourg received \$576,000 from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks through the Improving Wastewater and Stormwater Discharges in Lake Ontario Program. This money offset the cost to cleanout the Chris Garrett and Read-Otto stormwater ponds in 2023, reducing the cost to the tax base.


Building a Culture Based on Exceptional Customer Service

From day one, Customer Service has been of prime importance to this Council. Each day, the Town of Cobourg delivers services that enhance our community, from fostering recreational programs and preserving our green spaces to supporting local businesses and providing vital emergency services.

As your Town Council, we are committed to continually improving how we serve our residents, businesses, and visitors. Our new Customer Service Charter sets a high standard for a welcoming, responsive, and dependable service experience, ensuring every interaction—whether in-person, online, or by phone—is positive, respectful, and efficient.

Council is fully committed to upholding these standards and supporting our staff in delivering on these promises. We know that excellent service is a partnership, and we invite you to be part of this journey. By sharing your feedback and engaging with us, you help shape services that reflect Cobourg’s values. Together, we are building a Cobourg where exceptional customer service strengthens our community today and into the future






A new Customer Service desk is located in the lobby of Victoria Hall.

To contact one of our Customer Service staff:

Email:
customerservice@cobourg.ca

Phone:
905-372-4301, Dial 0



The new Customer Service Charter aims to enhance the delivery of municipal services and aligns customer service practices with the priorities outlined in the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. It also defines five core commitments:



- Respect and Accountability
- Communication and Engagement
- Responsive
- Accessibility
- Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Renewed Focus on Communications

Cobourg, like communities across Canada, has suffered the loss of local news media. Council is placing greater emphasis on strengthening our municipal communications efforts to ensure residents have the information they need to be informed and remain engaged with their community.

- **Online News Centre:** Subscribe to receive the Town’s Public Notices and Press Releases directly to your inbox. Visit [Cobourg.ca/subscribe](https://cobourg.ca/subscribe).
- **Follow Us on Social Media:** Get real-time updates, event announcements, and town news by following @TownofCobourg on Facebook, Instagram, and X.
- **Alertable:** Stay informed during significant events by subscribing to the Alertable app for emergency management updates. Download the free app for iOS and Android devices from Google Play or the App Store.
- **Engage Cobourg:** Submit your feedback on major projects or important issues in our community through the Town’s public engagement platform. Visit EngageCobourg.ca.

Subscribe to Our eNewsletters

There are a variety of eNewsletters available, subscribe to each by visiting [Cobourg.ca/newsletter](https://cobourg.ca/newsletter):

- **Hello Cobourg!** – A digital newsletter published a few times a year.
- **Council Standing Committee Recap** – A monthly summary of Council activities.
- **Invest Cobourg** – Updates from the Economic Development department.
- **Mayor’s Office Newsletter** – Regular updates from Lucas Cleveland, Mayor of Cobourg & Northumberland County Councillor.

Coming Soon! New Municipal Website

The Town of Cobourg is launching a new [Cobourg.ca](https://cobourg.ca) website this spring! The new site will feature an intuitive navigation menu, user-friendly design, and improved accessibility across all devices.



Questions or Feedback?

Contact the Town of Cobourg Communications Department.

905-372-4301

communications@cobourg.ca

Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West
Cobourg, Ontario
K9A 2M2