

## - October 2014 Newsletter -

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# Downtown News to 'Feel Good' About



### NEWS: Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Initiative Meeting Set Goals and Gaining Momentum

The Town of Cobourg's Downtown Vitalization Initiative is achieving set goals and gaining momentum. To keep the public up-to-date on the progress being made, the Downtown Vitalization Action Team has introduced new communications tools to keep citizens informed.

Cobourg's Downtown Vitalization Action Team was established in order to revitalize the central downtown business district for the Town of Cobourg. The team works in partnership with the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA) and the Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce. The Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Initiative has undergone

a series of strategic planning sessions from which 12 major projects were fashioned to build a successful downtown including the refurbishment of downtown heritage properties, second and third floor living space and enhanced tourism assets to support downtown retail.

The Downtown Vitalization Action Team has introduced a monthly eNewsletter, 'Downtown News to Feel Good About'. The eNewsletter was developed as a tool to keep the Town of Cobourg's citizens and stakeholders informed on project milestones, updates and next steps. Interested citizens can sign up to receive the monthly eNewsletter by e-mailing [communications@cobourg.ca](mailto:communications@cobourg.ca). The Downtown Vitalization Action Team has also launched a series of radio advertisements on local stations Star 93.3 FM and 107.9 The Breeze. The goal of these radio advertisements is to keep the public informed and involved in recent activities.

"I firmly believe that the single most important initiative undertaken by your Council in this term is the Downtown Vitalization Project. Our downtown with its heritage buildings and 19th Century streetscape is without doubt a major element in defining the character and culture of our town. We simply must preserve it for future generations," says Cobourg Deputy Mayor, Stan Frost. "We are now in the implementation phase of this project and it is most important that we continue to engage, communicate and interact with our citizens on whom we rely for success. Expect to see and hear from your Action Team as we move ahead."

The next communications project scheduled for the Downtown Vitalization Initiative is the installation of a project billboard within Cobourg's Downtown. This billboard will provide Cobourg citizens with a visual timeline for each of the Downtown Vitalization Initiative projects.

In addition to the Marketing Communications initiatives, the Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Initiative includes the following 11 projects:

**Street Light Enhancement** - To increase illumination of the downtown through the replacement of current pole top light fixtures giving the downtown a warmer feeling at night.

Project Start Date: May 2014

Status: Six new 100 Watt LED street lights installed July 2014

**Closed Circuit Security Cameras** - Installation of three CCTV Cameras along King Street and monitored by the Cobourg Police Services.

Project Start Date: Summer 2013

Status: This project is complete

**Vehicle Way Finding Signs** - Install vehicle way finding signs every 0.5 kilometers along William and Division Streets directing vehicular traffic to the downtown core.

Project Start Date: May 2014

Status: Draft designs of the way finding signs are being brought back to Cobourg Town Council at the September 15, 2014 Regular Council Meeting for final approval. Once council approves the signs, tenders will be issued for the work to create the signs and a separate tender to install the concrete base of the signs.

Completion Deadline: To be determined

**Gateway and Parking Signs** - Gateway arches will be installed at the East and West entrances to Downtown in order to provide definition to entering the downtown core. New parking lot signs will also be installed.

Project Start Date: Spring 2015

Status: Project renderings were drafted along with the vehicle way finding signs as the two projects will have a similar design.

Completion Deadline: Fall 2016

**Henley Arcade** - This project will include the reconditioning of Henley Arcade to improve lighting, signage, landscaping, walkway design and include a mural on the east wall. This will result in a safe and well defined connection between King Street and the Covert Street parking lot.

Project Start Date: May 2014

Phase I Completion Deadline: July 2015

Phase II Completion Deadline: September 2015

Status: Henley arcade plans have been approved by Cobourg Town Council. Ads have been posted for submissions for Henley Arcade artwork. This project will need to be completed in two phases, as installation of artwork will dictate lighting and other wall finishes.

#### **Cobourg's Community Improvement Venture Initiative -**

Timeline: Phase I, Legal: Completed, Phase II, Business Plan - Completion Deadline: November 2014

Summary: This initiative, working in collaboration with Economic Development, the DBIA, the Chamber of Commerce and others, will promote an, "open for business, investment ready" portfolio that includes various financial-building improvement tools for prospective building owners to leverage. This project will also consist of marketing materials, a new website and a planned web based 3D Virtual Tour of Downtown and an inventory of heritage building assets. Armed with funds from the Town of Cobourg as well as financing from other sources, the goal is to see heritage buildings improved, encourage new upscale retail businesses and the renovation and reclamation of residential units on upper floors.

Highlights:

- Phase I, Legal – Legal assessment has been sought and rendered by Town of Cobourg's legal counsel. This information has been provided to the team developing the business plan.
- Phase II, Business Plan – Local Cobourg consulting firm, Location Strategies Limited who will be working with Blue Krystal Technologies & Business Insights, have undertaken the development of a business case reviewing the protocol for loans as well as the long-term sustainability of this project. Further, the consultation will provide opinions on the best avenue with which to provide funding – through existing town departments or through the establishment of a separate corporation. Cobourg Council will be provided with an in-depth report in order to make a sound decision on this important project.

**Cobourg Youth Entrepreneurship Pilot Project (YEP)** - In partnership with the Town of Cobourg, Business Advisory Centre Northumberland, Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation, Friends of Downtown Cobourg, Downtown Business Improvement Area and Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce. The goal of the YEP program was to provide youth of all skill levels, between the ages of 18 and 29 with an educational entrepreneurship experience. Through mentorship and support the entrepreneurs were given opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge in order to successfully operate a new and/or expand an existing business in Downtown Cobourg from May to August 2014 or longer for those wishing to stay in business.

Project Start Date: March 2014

Completion Deadline: September 2014

Status: The Downtown Vitalization Action Team is proud to announce the success of the two youth entrepreneurs chosen for the pilot project, Ryan Barrett and Ellee Hellier. Ryan ran a technology business 'Tech-Tonics' on Cobourg's main street downtown and will continue to run this as a home based business going forward. Ellee operated a beach business called Under the Sun Beach Treasures, selling beach toys, sunscreen, sunglasses, Cobourg souvenirs and T-shirts. Both youth

entrepreneurs were able to make a profit and learn some great transferrable skills. When asked if they would consider entrepreneurship in the future the answer was an enthusiastic "yes". Through exit interviews with both youth we discovered that Ryan plans to continue with his business year round (as a home based business over the short term) and Ellee is excited about the prospect of running her own business in the future.

**Building Asset Study** - The goal of this project is to assist building owners in the assessment of their downtown heritage buildings. The project will provide an opportunity to review current assets and plan for future development and conservation of buildings on King Street from Spring Street to McGill Street. The study may include an assessment of the age and condition of a building's infrastructure and structure, and an inventory of such attributes as exterior construction material, type of roof, type of windows, heating and electrical systems, total building size, commercial space vs. residential units, etc. Once complete, this information may be added to the 3D Model and then converted to a web-based virtual tour for marketing downtown properties to potential commercial business recruits, developers and new residents.

Project Start Date: July 2014

Completion Deadline: March 2015

Status: A letter has been mailed to commercial building owners. The letters explain how owners may take advantage of a Town of Cobourg Downtown Vitalization initiative to partially fund a study of their property.

Next steps: Meetings will be set up with interested building owners.

**Heritage Master Plan** - The development of a Heritage Master Plan for the Town of Cobourg will provide the tools to identify, protect and celebrate Cobourg's rich and diverse heritage. It will provide comprehensive guidance for the management of heritage resources, including Heritage Conservation Districts, individually designated heritage properties and non-designated properties that are included on the Municipal Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value and Interest. The Heritage Master Plan will create policies and guidelines that leverage the unique and distinct character of Downtown Cobourg to support businesses, economic development and the goals of the Downtown Vitalization Initiative.

Program Start Date: October 2014

Completion Deadline: Spring 2016

#### **Tourism Asset Feasibility Study -**

Timeline:

Phase 1 Completion Deadline: September 30, 2014

Phase 2 Completion Deadline: TBD

Summary:

As a component of the Downtown Master Plan, the Tourism Asset Feasibility Study will concentrate on the value and potential uses of town-owned lands and buildings that may be developed to create a four-season destination in downtown Cobourg and the positive impact of such a destination on overnight visitation and spending.

The objective is to identify high-potential, tourism-investment-ready properties. Preliminary project concepts will be developed based upon examining those properties deemed to yield the highest potential in terms of positive impact on Downtown Cobourg. It is expected this strategy will unlock the sometimes hidden value of natural, cultural and heritage assets, creating enhanced social and economic opportunities. Preliminary reports will recommend the processes and costs for taking these offers to "the market" as well as examining the return on investment.

**Cobourg Tourism Asset Feasibility Study Highlights** - This project is underway and will be undertaken in two phases:

- Phase I Completion Deadline: September 30, 2014

- Identify and score the investment readiness (high, medium, low) of the defined land and buildings within the study area.

- Target "highest scoring" properties with a detailed assessment including opportunities for tourism attraction, economic impact analysis, preliminary project development concepts and challenges as well as associated costs in realizing potential investment.

Phase II Completion Deadline: TBD

- With approval of Town Council, a marketing/sales document will be produced to attract investors and identify funding sources in order to facilitate investment of selected properties.

For additional information on the Downtown Vitalization Initiative and project updates please see the Cobourg Downtown Vitalization website at <http://cobourg.ca/our-progress.html>.

*For more information on the Marketing & Communication plan contact Ashley Purdy, Communications Officer at The Town of Cobourg by emailing [apurdy@cobourg.ca](mailto:apurdy@cobourg.ca).*



## Project Update: Way Finding Signs Reviewed by Council

At the Regular Council meeting held on Monday, September 29 Cobourg Council reviewed mock ups of the Vehicle Way Finding signs presented by Teresa Behan, Manager of Engineering at The Town of Cobourg.

Council Approved an "Action" to authorize the Engineering Department to tender for the supply of the Vehicle Way Finding signs including the concrete base as outlined in the staff report.

*For more information on the Vehicle Way Finding signs contact Teresa Behan, Manager of Engineering at The Town of Cobourg by calling 905-372-4555 or emailing [tbehan@cobourg.ca](mailto:tbehan@cobourg.ca).*



## Project Update: Contract Awarded to Cobourg Firm “Location Strategies” for Venture Initiative Business Plan

Cobourg firm *Location Strategies* has been awarded the contract to develop a business plan for the Downtown Vitalization Community Improvement Venture Initiative.

The Venture Initiative is a key component to the Downtown Vitalization project. The concept for this Venture Initiative is to provide low cost loans to downtown property owners to facilitate improvements to heritage properties along King St. The emphasis for these improvements is on development of second and third storey living spaces in what is now undeveloped or neglected space as well as improvements to the retail spaces on the ground floor.

Location Strategies will develop a business plan for this proposed Venture Initiative detailing the long term plans for this entity as well as a recommendation as to whether

this Venture Initiative should be town managed or managed by a separate corporation reporting to Council.

*For more information on the Venture Initiative Business Plan contact Wendy Gibson, Economic Development Officer at The Town of Cobourg by calling 905-372-5481 or emailing [wqibson@cobourg.ca](mailto:wqibson@cobourg.ca).*



## Project: Tourism Asset Feasibility Study Presents Draft Report

The draft report for the Tourism Asset Feasibility Study has been presented with the findings currently under review. The report will be made public and presented by mid-October.

*For more information on the Tourism Asset Feasibility Study contact Erin Wakely, Tourism Coordinator at The Town of Cobourg by calling 905-372-5481 or emailing [ewakely@cobourg.ca](mailto:ewakely@cobourg.ca).*



## Interview: Ellee Breaks Down her YEP Experience for Us!

We chat with Youth Entrepreneurship program candidate Ellee Hellier on her experience running her beach side business 'Under the Sun' on the Cobourg Beach this past summer.

**Q. With the Youth Entrepreneurship Program now complete for the summer tell us some of your most memorable experiences.**

A: After such a thrilling summer, the memories that stick with me the most are the interactions I had with Cobourg residents. The local outreach of support and enthusiasm towards my business venture from start to finish has been greatly appreciated and will not be forgotten.

**Q. Did you have to make any changes to your business due to customer feedback?**

A: Minor changes were made due to customer feedback. For example, changes in merchandise prices (either lower or higher), and selection of merchandise based on popularity, practicality, and demand.

**Q. Did you feel that your business was a success? Why or why not?**

A: I feel my business was absolutely a success. Not only was it profitable, but more importantly I was able to gain invaluable first-hand knowledge on how to start and run a business. Time management, problem solving, organization, networking, negotiation, and initiation were just some of the skills that were utilized and enhanced as a result of my business experience.

**Q. Would you do anything differently if you were to open again next summer?**

A: If the opportunity presented itself for me to reopen next summer, I would absolutely do things differently. Various adjustments I found make a huge difference. For example, order size and shipping/pickup methods, product selection, bookkeeping, and balancing techniques, just to list a few. The opportunity to apply what I have learned

from this summer into next would truly help me understand how to run a business successfully.

**Q. What can you tell us about being an entrepreneur and will you consider entrepreneurship in your future?**

A: Being an entrepreneur, as most things, it has had its ups and downs. However, overall it has been a positive experience and something I plan to pursue in the future. The ability to plan your business on paper and watch it come to life, developing further each day has been one of my favourite aspects of being an entrepreneur. The effort put in matches your success, which challenges you to make the next day better than the last. At the end of the day everything falls on you, learning to do everything from scratch and having to find solutions to sometimes critical problems (i.e. finding suppliers) on your own can be very stressful. Entrepreneurship challenges you to think outside the box, something that can be an uncomfortable experience at first, but once you grasp it things begin to open up and fall into place.

**Q. Would you recommend others apply to the YEP program?**

A: I would recommend the YEP to others, it is definitely a challenge and a major commitment however, it is a great learning experience and very rewarding. If you want to succeed, are willing to learn, and put the effort into your business, the results will speak for themselves.

*For more information on the Youth Entrepreneurship Program contact Wendy Gibson, Economic Development Officer at The Town of Cobourg by emailing [wgibson@cobourg.ca](mailto:wgibson@cobourg.ca) or calling 905-372-5481.*



**You Asked, We Answered!**

*Each month we'll ask you for questions and provide you with answers in our next eNewsletter issue.*

**Question #1:** Hello Communications staff,  
I've tried to follow all of the news about what's being planned for downtown Cobourg, and I applaud your ongoing efforts.

Today's eNewsletter #4 talks about both business retention and (new business) attraction, which are lofty goals. Is your "Downtown

Building Owner" partnership plan intended to encourage owners of vacant or unused properties to stir their stumps and not simply sit and watch their investments grow (or languish)? I'd really like to believe that town council is formulating plans on how to re-populate and beautify our downtown.

Your task can't be a simple one, but I'm sure you have the backing of most of Cobourg's active businesses and of all residents of Northumberland. In closing, I'd also like to add that I hope something creative can be done to "decorate" the long, blank north-facing exterior wall of Northumberland Mall. Even when Zeller's was there, the expanse of ugly brick wall space did nothing to attract people to the area. It's a billboard waiting to be put to good/better use. - *Tom Groot*

**Answer:** Dear Mr. Groot,

The Downtown Vitalization plan is about creating an environment where businesses thrive and people congregate for shopping, dining, cultural and community events.

Part of our plan calls for the creation of a Venture Initiative and funds to which property owners can apply to renovate their properties. Some of the older properties Downtown require a substantial amount of work to bring them to a place where new residential space can be created and retail space can be enhanced. Cobourg's commitment to its Downtown is evidenced by the Town's decision to develop this funding entity. Currently the business case and business plan for the Venture Initiative is being drafted.

Your concern with Downtown buildings that are not reaching their potential will be addressed by this fund. The premise is that by encouraging major renovation of Downtown buildings we will foster an environment that attracts more people to live, work and visit. Where people live, retail follows: the more people, the more retailers the more valuable buildings become. As these buildings become more valuable, the more demand there is for these properties, and the forces of the

free-market come into play as owners who might not otherwise consider selling or renovating face the realization that their properties are worth more and the timing is conducive to selling or improving. - *Kevin Narraway, Business Development Officer for The Town of Cobourg.*

**Question #2:** We were told about this [eNewsletter] yesterday and would like to keep up with what is happening and what you are hoping to do to help improve our downtown area, etc. We are in our 80's, have lived here for 10 years and notice a big change here with our favourite stores and restaurants closing. Hoping by next spring things will be better. If someone would open a ladies store in petites, they would do great as there is only one place that has a few...mostly for the working girl (a little too high priced for most of us retirees)! Thank you for all you do. - *Art & Shirley Reynolds*

**Answer:** Dear Art and Shirley,

Thanks for your letter. It's great to have residents like you who have an active interest in the ongoing vitalization of Downtown Cobourg. Unfortunately, with many overlapping economic factors, businesses are inclined to come and go. However, we are pleased to say that at least 10 businesses have opened their doors in the Downtown core since the New Year. Hopefully, we've all taken the opportunity to discover them; some are off the beaten path and are fabulous finds. As for the business you have identified, perhaps one day an entrepreneur will recognize a need for it. Until then, encourage everyone you know to reach out to others who might consider opening their own business in our incredible community. The Northumberland County Business Advisory Centre and the Town of Cobourg Economic Development Department would love to help the right person live their entrepreneurial dream! - *Andrew Hall, DBIA*

#### **Have a Question?**

Please send your question(s) to [communications@cobourg.ca](mailto:communications@cobourg.ca).

## **Downtown Vitalization News Coverage**

### **Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Initiative Meeting Set Goals and Gaining Momentum**

- NorthumberlandView.ca (September 12, 2014)

### **Downtown billboard approved**

- Northumberland Today (September 16, 2014)

### **Cobourg billboard sign approved**

Northumberland News (September 18, 2014)

Have you heard our radio campaign on STAR 93.3 FM and 107.9 FM The Breeze?

*This section will keep you up-to-date on any Downtown Vitalization media coverage.*



## **Submit Your Best Downtown Memory & Win Cobourg Memorabilia!**

The Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Committee has introduced a contest to invite people from the community to submit News from the Street.

We are looking for your favourite memories or stories about events you took part in Downtown Cobourg this summer, activities you like to do downtown, or simply why you love downtown Cobourg. The three (3) winning stories will be posted in the Downtown Vitalization monthly eNewsletter 'Downtown News to Feel Good About' along with a photo of the author.

**Prizes!**

Winners will also receive great Town of Cobourg memorabilia including:

- Tote bag
- Long sleeve t-shirt
- I Love Cobourg' t-shirt
- Baseball hat
- Frisbee

The Downtown Vitalization Committee will also post your story on the Downtown Vitalization website and share a link to your story on the Municipal Facebook page.

**Submission Guidelines:** Send your story to [communications@cobourg.ca](mailto:communications@cobourg.ca) or message us on Facebook by October 24. Three (3) stories will be selected as our winners. Good luck!