



Update from the Downtown Coalition Advisory Committee

Carol McCann, Chair
31 October 2016

Purpose of Downtown Coalition Advisory Committee

- To oversee and ensure the timely execution of the 2013 Town of Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Action Plan
- To focus the efforts and the coordination of all stakeholders that are working to promote and vitalize the Downtown.

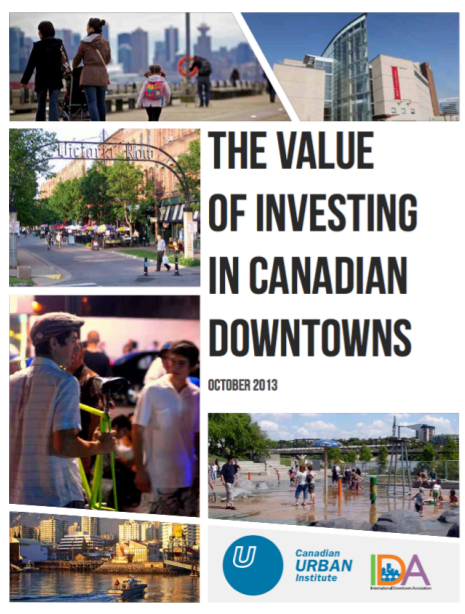
(Terms of Reference, Approved Feb 2015)

DCAC Members

- Mayor Brocanier
- Vacant (Downtown Business Improvement Area)
- Kevin Ward (Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce)
- Ken Bagshaw (Cobourg Heritage Committee)*
- Suzanne Seguin (Economic Development Advisory Committee)*
- Gina Brouwer (Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee)
- Warren McCarthy (Planning and Sustainability Advisory Committee)*
- Carol McCann (Friends of Downtown Cobourg)
- Stephen Peacock (CAO)
- Wendy Gibson (Staff – Economic Development)
- Glenn McGlashon (Staff – Planning)
- Alison Torrie-Lapaire (Staff – Heritage Planner)
- Jodi Ware-Simpson (Secretary)

* New member in last 4 months

Canadian Urban Institute Study (2013)



- Canadian downtowns are enjoying a period of renaissance
 - Residential growth is transforming downtowns across Canada
 - Downtowns are maintaining a strong commercial position
-
- Public investment on a range of scales creates the foundation for future private investment
 - Partnership and long term commitment are crucial for revitalization
 - Institutions (e.g., post-secondary) have brought many inspiring additions to Canada's downtowns
 - Measuring the performance of a downtown empowers decision makers to understand its value

Principles for a Successful Downtown*

Principle	Description
Visibility	Does the downtown have an integral and central role in the life of the wider city/town?
Strategy	Is the city/town investing strategically in its future?
Visionary	Does the downtown benefit from strong, bold leaders who collaborate to achieve and sustain a shared vision?
Prosperity	Does the downtown have a robust and innovative economy?
Liveability	Is the downtown vibrant, liveable and connected?

* From Canadian Urban Institute, 2013

Measuring a Successful Downtown

“Measuring the performance of a downtown empowers decision makers to understand its value”

Need to measure two aspects:

1. The progress of Vitalization projects:
 - i.e., projects derived from Action Plan objectives that are expected to have a positive impact on the Downtown
2. The actual vitality of Downtown:
 - measures directly indicated by principles such as Prosperity and Liveability

TOWN OF COBOURG



Downtown Vitalization **ACTION PLAN**



Cobourg's Downtown Vitalization Project is a partnership of Town of Cobourg, Downtown Cobourg Business Improvement Area (DBIA), Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with funding by the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC), Canada's Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

NOVEMBER 11, 2013



Downtown Vision Statement:

Downtown Cobourg is Ontario's foremost cultural and recreational small town destination forged from a beautifully preserved historic community on the waterfront. As the economic hub of Northumberland County, it will deliver accessible experiences and opportunities generated from local agriculture, environmental consciousness and active, health-centered living.

Downtown Study Area



Action Plan Objectives

Strategic Element	Objectives
1. Engage public & stakeholders	1.1 Implement DBIA list, new lighting
	1.2 Create communication strategy, including between partners
2. Establish cornerstone business(es)	2.1 Shift commercial categories to promote Vision & economic strategy (target desired businesses, business certification)
	2.2 Create climate for business retention & expansion (client referral, Coalition, business relations)
3. Establish position/ brand statement	3.1 Market Cobourg to residents & visitors
	3.2 Cultivate Town image as a place for business (Venture Initiative)
	3.3 Educate public & businesses on value of hospitality
4. Resources	4.1 Offset marketing (REDF application)
	4.2 Offset action plan costs
5. Establish new commercial categories	5.1 Provide variety of Downtown shopping experiences
	5.2 Shift to business categories that support the Vision

Action Plan Objectives

Strategic Element	Objectives
6. Create strategies for educated workforce	6.1 Expedite the locating of an post-secondary campus in Downtown
	6.2 Position Cobourg as a great place to open a business
7. Facilitate physical improvement of Downtown	7.1 Included Downtown Master Plan, adoption of parking study, re-develop of King St property, complete Victoria Square
	7.2 Included improved wayfinding, improve Downtown properties, improve accessibility, garbage collection
8. Establish performance indicators	8.1 Annual public report card
	8.2 Evaluate outcomes and adjust
9. Enhance cultural significance of Downtown	9.1 Increase business & services in the creative economy, included Cultural Master Plan
	9.2 Identify current and propose new cultural assets

DCAC Projects



Pri	Project	Principle addressed	Objectives
1	Create a Downtown Coalition	Visionary	1.2a, 2.2a,b, 8.1, 8.2
1	Downtown Master Plan	Strategy/Visionary	7.1a
1	Report on Town Tourism Assets	Visionary/Prosperity/Strategy	7.1d, 9.2a
1	Report on Venture Initiative (CIVIC)	Visionary/Strategy	3.2
1	Downtown Marketing Partnership	Prosperity	2.1a, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2, 9.1
1	Signage and Property Enhancements	Liveability	7.2a
2	Post Secondary Institution to the DT	Liveability/Visibility	6.1
3	Municipal Business Certification	Prosperity	2.1b
3	Town Redevelopment of a DT Building	Strategy/Vision	7.1c
3	Victoria Hall Square	Strategy/Vision	7.1d
3	Municipal Culture Plan	Strategy/Vision/Liveability	9.1b

Measuring a Successful Downtown:

1. Progress of Vitalization Projects

Downtown Master Plan & Community Improvement Plan

- Downtown Master Plan (DMP) development contracted to Dillon Consulting & RCI Consulting (Apr 2015)
- DMP accepted by Council (Mar 2016)
- DMP was coordinated with the Heritage Master Plan, developed concurrently
- DMP provides a comprehensive guide to Downtown development for the next 20 years
- A key addition to DMP was the Community Improvement Plan (CIP), with Council acceptance (Mar 2016)
- \$50K already allocated to CIP; more on case-by-case in 2016
- Need to determine criteria for evaluation of CIP candidate projects in 2017 and beyond
- Need to evaluate effectiveness of CIP for vitalization

Town Tourism Assets

- Tourism Asset Feasibility Study (Economic Planning Group of Canada) identified Downtown sites with potential for tourism development, including sites on the waterfront
- Council accepted report for information purposes (Aug 2015)
- Results will be incorporated into waterfront study, led by Director, Parks, Recreation & Culture, which will consider the needs of all waterfront users

Venture Initiative (CIVIC)

- Location Strategies & Blue Krystal Technologies had been contracted to prepare Community Improvement Venture Initiative Preliminary Review Business Case
- Stakeholder Meeting re CIVIC (Feb 2015)
- Business Case presented to Council (Jul 2015) and approved in principle
- Initial Business Plan presented to Council (Mar 2016)
- DCAC recommended public input, which was held (May 2016)
- In Sep 2016, Council deferred decision on CIVIC to 2017 pending outcome of effectiveness of CIP incentives

Downtown Marketing Partnership

- DCAC developed and recommended Terms of Reference for new Marketing Partnership formed to attract business and customers to the Downtown
- DCAC provided comments on DT Cobourg Marketing Plan (Mar 2016)
- Council approved but requested more information prior to approval of marketing budget (Apr 2016)
- Report was provided (Jul 2016) but program was declined
- Further information is to be provided
- Youth Entrepreneur Partnership created (2014) with 2 Downtown businesses chosen for each summer

Signage and Property Enhancements

- Signage
 - DCAC assisted in vehicular wayfinding signage (completed 2015)
 - Additional signage budget for parking and pedestrian wayfinding limited to \$20K for 2016
 - DCAC will assist in developing concepts for parking and pedestrian signage
- Public Property
 - Assisted in completion of Henley Arcade refurbishing and mural selection (completed Oct 2015)

Post Secondary Relations

- Fleming is losing interest in situating full time courses in Cobourg
- Durham College Architectural Technician Program
 - Students develop & present redesigns for Downtown heritage buildings
 - Relationship is now in third year (2014, 2015, 2016)

Municipal Business Certification Program

- Concept developed and proposed to potential partners including DBIA and Business Advisory Centre Northumberland
- No uptake

Victoria Hall Square

- DCAC recommended this project as a Canada 150 signature project
- Ad-hoc Committee formed (May 2016)
 - Kevin Ward is DCAC representative
- Public meeting (Sep 2016)
- Intent to complete by Aug 2017

Municipal Culture Plan

- Will be addressed in 2017 under leadership of Director Parks, Recreation & Culture

Partner Projects

- Win This Feel Good Space competition
 - Spearheaded by DBIA with CFDC, BACN & Town
 - Skye's Clothing Boutique winner (Jun 2015)
- Tasty Tuesdays
 - DBIA project (summers 2014 & 2015)
- Prosper in Northumberland
 - County-funded initiative that engaged NCCC
 - Resulted in Buy Local Campaign

Measuring a Successful Downtown:

2. Downtown Vitality

Principles for Successful Downtowns: Example Measures

Principle	Example Measures
Visibility	Downtown proportion of jobs Downtown proportion of tax revenue
Strategy	Number of projects with municipal investment \$\$ of municipal tax incentives
Visionary	Vision shared by all stakeholders Approved Downtown Master Plan exists
Prosperity	Vacancy rates in commercial spaces \$\$ of commercial tax revenue Business diversity
Liveability	Number of dwellings Pedestrian traffic Number of cultural facilities

Downtown Cobourg Visionary & Strategy Measures

Visionary & Strategy Measures	2013	2014	2015	2016
Vision statement shared by stakeholders	✓			
Establishment of Downtown Coalition			✓	
Approved Downtown Master Plan				✓
Funding allocated for Downtown enhancements			\$\$	\$\$
Heritage incentives paid		\$35,704	\$9,305	
CIP incentives paid				TBD
Vacancy tax rebates		\$46,049	\$55,632	

Downtown Cobourg Prosperity Measures

Prosperity Measures	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of businesses in Downtown	249	254	243	249
Number of business openings		26	30	19
Number of business closings		24	37	16
Number closed on King St		15	26	8
Vacancy rate in commercial units				TBD
Commercial construction permits		\$154,500	\$871,801	
Business property tax revenue			\$1,932,063	
Parking meter revenues			\$260,555*	

* 11 months

Downtown Cobourg Liveability Measures

Liveability Measures	2011	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of residential properties (RTEP)				571	
Number of residential condo units				378	
Residential construction permits			\$91,000	\$1,255,500	
Residential property tax revenue				\$2,388,828	
Number of residents	1,555				TBD
Median age of residents	61				TBD
Pedestrian counts at King & Division					TDB

What other Measures?

- More work needed here
- DCAC welcomes other suggestions
- Measures must be reliable, accurate, repeated, sensitive and have accessible data

Some Issues in Vitalization Progress

- Better communication of progress needed
 - Newsletter dropped
- How to address buildings or storefronts that are consistently vacant

Future Steps

- Monitor CIP; if CIP is unsuccessful in accelerating building vitalization
 - Revisit CIVIC proposal and/or
 - Consider purchase of Downtown building for redevelopment
- Press forward with business & customer attraction through marketing
- Complete signage plan
- Revisit Action Plan objectives to pick up any missing items
- Further implementation of Downtown Master Plan recommendations
- Engage with Culture Master Plan process
- Implement additional measures and data collection (e.g., CIP, pedestrian counts)