



Arnprior Downtown Revitalization

Ontario East Municipal Conference 2019

Presented by:

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Wayfinders

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Photo Credit

- Several photos provided by Frank Dugal, former Town of Arnprior and City of Cumberland Councillor

Evolution of the Project

- 2010 New Council, led by Mayor David Reid, ran on a platform of business attraction and retention
- 2011 Town retained a consultant to prepare concepts and a preferred predesign option for a downtown revitalization
- Town followed Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process
- Extensive local consultation – broad overall support for the project
- The problem: How to fund the project?
- In 2012 the Town was not in a good financial position to embark on a \$10M to \$12M project. **Debt was high and reserves were low**

Evolution of the Project

- 2012 the Town hired a new CAO and Treasurer
- CAO and Treasurer proposed a path to financial recovery, which included adopting the Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) financial model
- Council embraced the new financial strategies and put their full support behind the strategies
- Revisited the Development Charges (DC) By-law – Increased from 50% to full DC recoveries and allocated 30% of the project to DCs
- No new “long-term” debt (borrowing for 10 years or less - only as a last resort)
- Updated fees to be cost recovery based wherever possible

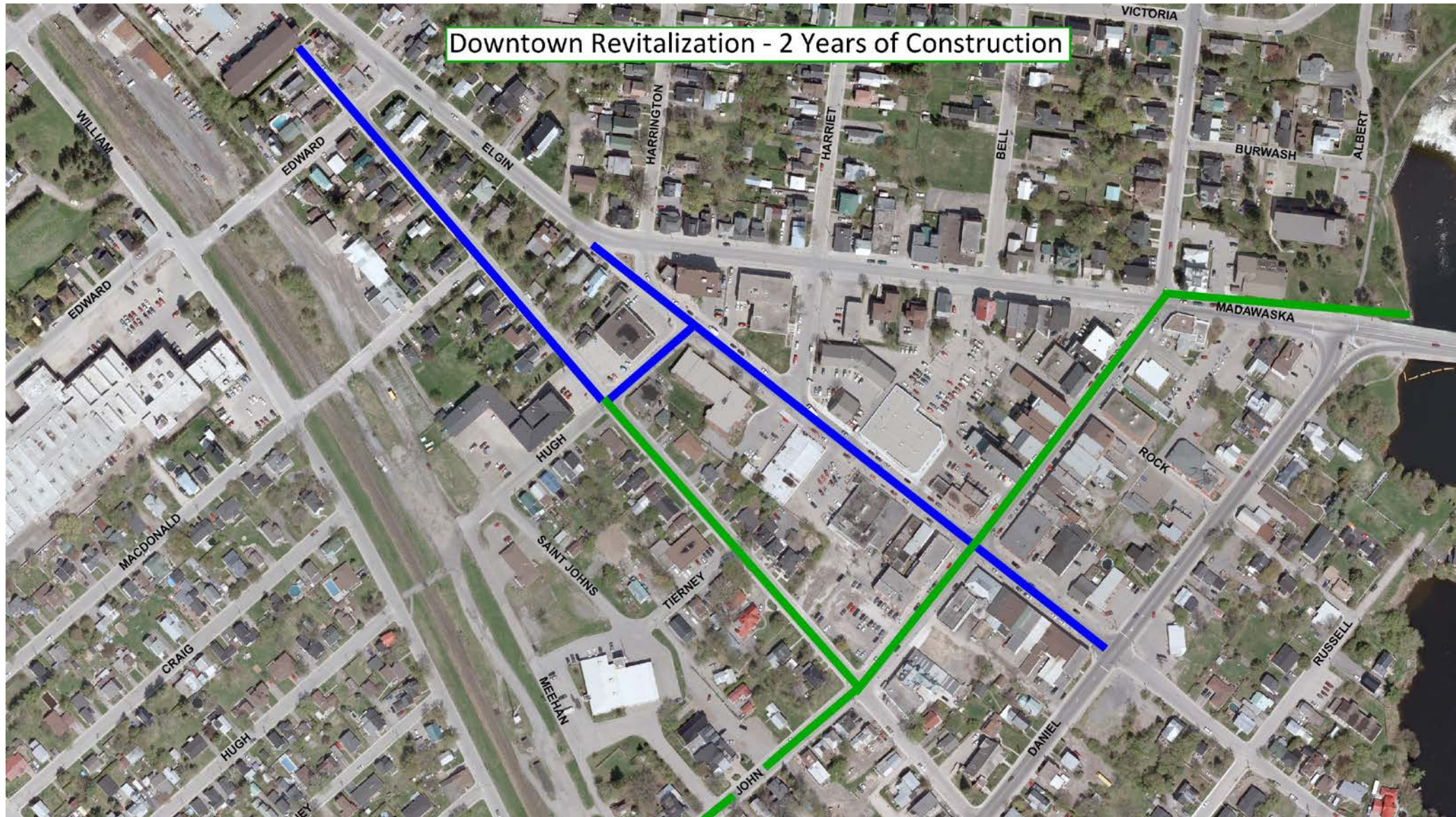
Evolution of the Project

- Several other financial strategies put in place
- Financial recovery took effect quickly – Town began topping up reserves in anticipation of the project
- Key objective - preserve and enhance the John St. vista to display the hallmark DA Gillies heritage building (Museum) prominently
- DA Gillies building is considered the center piece of the downtown and is an integral element of the Town's logo
- 2014 Town proceeded to full design of four (4) downtown streets, including two (2) main streets, one (1) collector road and one (1) connecting road

Preservation of the DA Gillies Heritage Building Vistas

Town's Museum
Former Post Office





Consultation – Tearing the Band-Aid Off

- In keeping with PAYG model staff proposed a five-year staged construction program involving no debt (funded by reserves exclusively)
- Council was concerned about the impact of an extended duration on businesses
- Mayor Reid asked businesses if they wanted to “tear the band-aid off” quickly over two years or slowly over five years – answer was a resounding “quickly”
- Mayor Reid requested staff to produce a strategy for a two-year project timeline
- Staff developed a strategy involving \$4.8M funded from Town reserves and \$6M from short term bridge financing (5 year)
- Strategy included a full financial recovery within 5 years (full debt repayment and reserve recovery)

Tearing the Band-Aid Off Quickly



Big Investment Equals Big Opportunities

Given the high financial investment, the Town leveraged all available tools and opportunities to generate return on its investment. Primary goals included:

- Infrastructure renewal
- Environment
- Business attraction and retention
- Place-making
- Public and private realm reinvestment
- Tourism
- Accessibility

The objective was to be much more than just a construction project.

More than a Construction Project: Rehabilitation of Aged Infrastructure

- Rehabilitation of roads, sidewalks, watermains, sewers including sewer separation, new primary treatment of storm sewage, new LED streetlights, traffic signals, pedestrian crossings
- Underground infrastructure was 80 to 100 years old – many operating and maintenance issues
- Streetlights were so old – replacement parts were not available
- Sidewalks were crumbling, cracking, heaving

More than a
Construction Project:

Rehab. Roads,
watermains, sewers,
sidewalks, etc.

John St. Before Construction





More than a Construction Project:

Rehab. Roads, watermains, sewers, sidewalks, etc.

John St. During Construction



Replacing 80 to 100-year-old
underground infrastructure

More than a Construction Project:
Rehab. Roads, watermains, sewers, sidewalks, etc.



John St. During Construction Sewer Separation

More than a Construction Project:
Rehab. Roads, watermains, sewers, sidewalks, etc.



John St. Post Construction
Decorative LED Streetlights
with banners and Museum
Vista

More than a Construction Project:
Rehab. Roads, watermains, sewers, sidewalks, etc.



John St. During Construction
Paving

More than a Construction Project:
Rehab. Roads, watermains, sewers, sidewalks, etc.



More than a
Construction Project:
Rehab. Roads, watermains,
sewers, sidewalks, etc.

John St.
Sidewalk Rehab and Street Furniture
Pre and Post Construction

More than a Construction Project

Place-making – Enhancing the Public Realm

- Town shifted focus to pedestrians by making sidewalks wider, introducing shorter road crossings using bump-outs and new pedestrian crossings
- Enhanced sidewalk lighting
- Streetlight banners and in winter Christmas decorations
- New tree canopy and enhanced greenery – automated irrigation system included
- Street furniture – benches, bicycle racks, garbage/recycling containers
- CIP façade grants & accessibility grants
- Introduced a seasonal Patio Permitting Program for restaurants
- Sunday Market and collateral programs



John St.

Trees, greenery, street furniture, bump-out, streetlight banners, etc.

More than a Construction Project:
Place-making – Enhancing the Public Realm

More than a Construction Project:
Place-making – Enhancing the Public Realm

John St.
Restaurant Patio



More than a Construction Project

Environment

- Town replaced combined sewers with fully separated sewers to the outlet, disconnected roof drains, strategically installed inlet control devices
- 2008 – 52 sewage by-passes and 42 beach closures
- 2019 – 5 minor by-passes and 1 beach closure (includes plant upgrades)
- Storm water treatment: installed a large Stormsceptor Treatment chamber at the outlet to the river to reduce release of suspended solids, oil and other pollutants

More than a Construction Project Environment

- LED streetlights – Significant reduction in energy and maintenance costs (approximately 75% savings)
- Enhanced tree canopy and greenery
- Brown field clean up of old derelict property / former gas station and conversion to municipal parking lot
- Leveraged FCM Green Municipal Fund Brownfield Grant for the completion of a Phase 2 ESA (\$40,000)



More than a Construction Project: Environment

John St.
Tree canopy and greenery



John St. at McGonigal St.
Brown Field Project
Pre-construction

More than a Construction Project: Environment



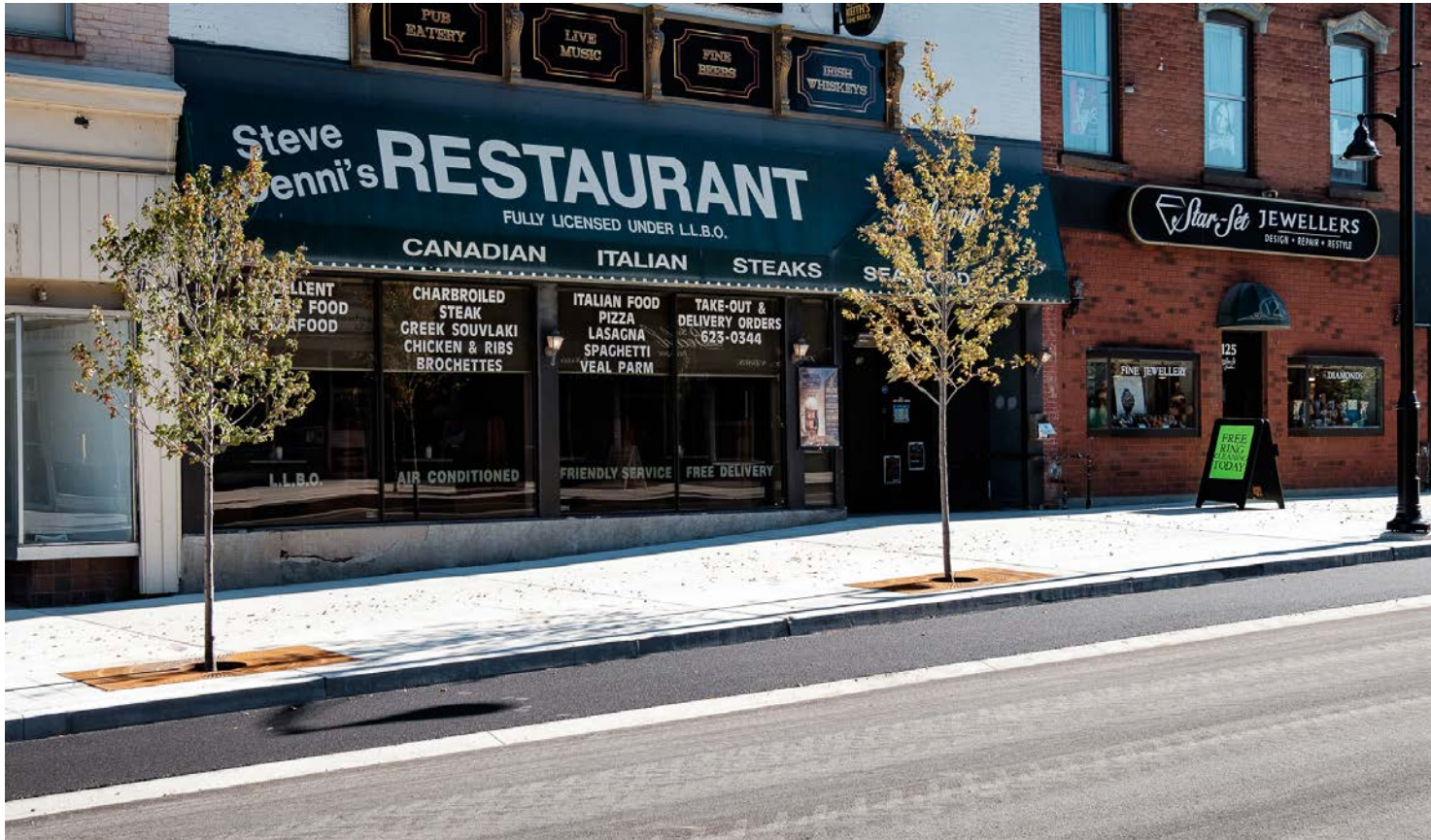
More than a Construction Project: Environment

John St. at McGonigal St.
Ken Scissons
Municipal Parking Lot
Brown Field Project
Post-construction

More than a Construction Project

Accessibility

- Reprofiled sidewalks to eliminate or reduce number of steps into businesses
- 35 of 90 entry steps were eliminated and approximately 30 more reduced the number of steps
- Extra wide sidewalks, Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI), bump-outs, more pedestrian crossings, audible crossings
- New Accessibility Incentive Grant – funded up to 50% cost of accessibility ramps and automated doors up to a maximum of \$1250 each
- Town received David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility as a result of the Accessibility Incentive Grant and other accessibility initiatives



Reprofiled sidewalks
to eliminate steps

More than a Construction Project: Accessibility

More than a Construction Project: Accessibility

Accessibility Incentive Grant
Theater ramp and door
Pedestrian Crossing





Accessibility Incentive Grant
Pharmacy ramp and door

More than a Construction Project:
Accessibility

More than a Construction Project: Accessibility

David C. Onley Award for
Leadership in Accessibility



More than a Construction Project

Tourism and Collateral Programs

- Town introduced a highly successful Sunday Market (May to September)
- Historically downtown stores were closed on Sundays
- Town approached stores to open on Sundays to leverage the increased foot traffic from the market – stores noted increases in sales
- Sunday Market collateral events include Museum programming - drop off the kids while you shop or dine
- Concerts in the Park followed the market closing to help keep visitors in Town

More than a Construction Project

Tourism and Collateral Programs

- Town coordinated the introduction a Shop Local Reward Card System
- Town introduced a Mayor's Local Business Tour Day to help promote local businesses using the Town's Social Media
- Town introduced an online Business Directory
- Town developed the Arnprior App



More than a Construction Project: Place-making, Tourism and Programs

Sunday Market

More than a Construction Project

Economic Development

- Town adopted a Community Improvement Plan Grant program and set aside annual funding (streamlined grant approval process)
- Over 6-7 years, CIP grant funding of \$85,200 has resulted in \$1.016M of reinvestment into private building enhancements
- By-law Enforcement, CBO and Fire Officials worked to get a few poorly maintained properties into compliance with property standards, building code and fire regulations
- This education and enforcement program was widely supported by businesses and community



More than a Construction Project:
Economic Development

Community Improvement Plan
Façade Improvements



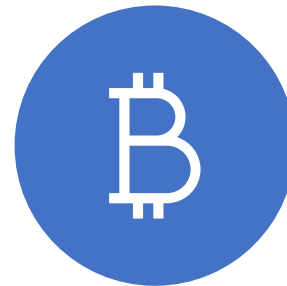
Coordinating with businesses
– strategies to mitigate disruption



Unavoidable surprises – rock excavation – geotechnical investigations are not perfect
– plan for contingencies



Utilities – eleventh hour requests or changes – utilities aren't concerned about your goals or timelines



Combined sewer separation
– reduced annual overflows and extended the life of the sewage plant substantially, saving/deferring millions of \$ in upgrades

Challenges and Lessons Learned



It is **a lot of work** – but it pays off



Sunday Market requires a significant level of effort – required additional summer student help to coordinate



Businesses reported increased sales / vacancy rate declined



Museum attendance increased enabling it to offer more programming and extend hours

Challenges and Lessons Learned



Town is embarking on a Waterfront
Master Plan



Strategy is to leverage success of the
downtown, better connect the downtown
to the waterfront and revitalize the
waterfront

Next Steps



Town of Arnprior Council Ribbon Cutting



Questions



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