

**The Corporation of the Township of Cramahe
Development of a Working Strategic Plan and Actions
For Retail Revitalization**

Phase One Report

Overview

The purpose of the retail revitalization plan for Cramahe and area is to examine the realistic possibilities which could take place for the community. Over the years and in spite of the fact that Cramahe engaged an Economic Development position, it is hard to cite any significant progress made during this time period. The project therefore had the challenge of assessing why progress had not been made, and what challenges could be overcome to advance the agenda for retail revitalization to the next level.

Over a six-week period, almost every merchant in the Colborne area were visited on an informal basis; allowing for a healthy exchange of ideas and opinions on how the business community should proceed to attract visitors and perhaps more importantly, attract residents to various services in the “downtown” core. After discussions, there were a number of themes which emerged from the retail sector, which included feedback from most owners/operators within the Cramahe area.

While everyone appreciated the notion of retail development and attracting business over the long term, most existing businesses are simply too busy to be involved with the organizational details because they have their own business to run. However, upon further discussion, what was really lacking was an organizational structure which would give business an active voice and the tools necessary to facilitate retail revitalization.

Moving Ahead

Business in Cramahe is poised to become involved in the active development of the area. As part of this, a great deal of expertise and retail developmental knowledge exists within many of the operators. As long-time residents and business persons, they understand that for expansion and development to take place, there must be a plan, municipal co-operation and a structure which give them the tools to implement these ideas over time.

On the perimeter of these discussions, there are other organizations that also have a contribution to make to the improvement to the area and quality of life. These include the cultural community, the historical and heritage community and the horticultural organizations; all of whom have a role to play.

As the research phase progressed, it was becoming evident that the size of the Cramahe community impedes its ability to truly capitalize on its location. Add this to the fact that Brighton is a mere 15-20 minutes away and the logic would appear to indicate that perhaps it is better for the two communities to start working more closely together on developing economic development opportunities, instead of looking like they are competing against each other.

For this reason, the second part of the project looked at what kind of organizational structure could be put into place to support business's expectations and municipal participation. Included with this approach, was the need to rekindle a real economic partnership with Brighton and District by working actively with their chamber of commerce. The two communities gain far more than they lose by working together; sharing resources and co-marketing the area as one economic corridor. From a consumer

and visitor perspective, the name of the towns is secondary to the types of services and products they offer. It allows for better co-ordination of events and festivals and gives the “region” a bigger feel for what each community can offer to residents and visitors.

Phase One: June-September 2013

Relocation of Tourist Kiosk

The previous location of the kiosk in a commuter parking lot did not provide any service. As a tourist vehicle it should be moved to where tourists travel. For this reason, The Big Apple was approached with a gradual partnership proposal to re-locate the Kiosk to their location in a prime spot. This would allow for potentially 3-8,000 visitors each weekend to have access to tourism information for the Cramahe and Brighton area.

For 2013, it is recommended as per the attached proposed working agreement between Cramahe and Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce, to have the Chamber operate the booth with a combination of paid staff and volunteers, including volunteers from Cramahe. With the 2013 tourism season already underway, this is the best use of existing resources to have the booth become an eventual destination for tourists to access for information, and to be informed about festivals and events for the season. The booth can also be used to promote other events as the partnership between Brighton and Cramahe evolves.

Partnership with The Big Apple

The Big Apple’s location is in essence a gateway to the Cramahe and Brighton area. In fact, GPS directions direct traffic through the Highway 2 corridor on their way to Presqu’ile Provincial Park. It is a pivotal location for attracting tourism, and also raising awareness for various activities in Brighton and Cramahe.

In 2013, an informal arrangement was struck between Cramahe and The Big Apple to develop a gradual relationship which takes advantage of The Big Apple’s location and Cramahe’s resources. For example, in exchange for the re-location of the booth, Cramahe is providing some additional road signage to direct traffic to The Big Apple which obviously helps drive customers to the tourist kiosk.

Over the next few months, we are discussing methods to promote conferences, festivals and other attractions which may take place in the region by utilizing their electronic highway billboard, which faces approximately 50,000 vehicles travelling on the 401 each day.

With anywhere from 3-16 coaches visiting The Big Apple on a given day, there are also opportunities to work directly with coach companies, by offering various incentive programs to attract tourists to selected events and festivals in the Cramahe-Brighton corridor.

Business Improvement Area

Within the business community, business requires a structure to assess the potential for overall development of the retail sector. The development of a BIA allows for a proper organizational structure to be evolved over time, and also promotes a healthy relationship between business and the municipality. A BIA is also a legislated entity which means that by virtue of its structure, it has built in mechanisms which keep it active through annual contributions from local members.

A BIA motivates the owners as well as the operators in the district. In Cramahe, there are some absentee landlords who only care about revenues flowing from their building, instead of how future development can shape the town. A BIA's membership is based on the owners of the building taking a vested interest in the future of downtown development. As mentioned, there are other organizations who can make a positive contribution to the face of retail in Cramahe and area. These include the historical and horticultural societies along with the cultural community.

Phase One calls for the initial research and contact with the Ministry Municipal Advisor Municipal Services Office – East Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Of Rural Affairs, who can assist in the process to form a BIA. Meetings will be held in June with a scheduled 4 month process (subject to council approval) to take place commencing September.

Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce and Cramahe Township.

Meetings have been held with Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce over the past two months, to explore how the two towns can amortize resources and maximize opportunities for both communities. The response from Brighton has been extremely positive and involves a wide range of opportunities where both communities can grow over time-together. The gradual realization that Brighton and Cramahe can be one economic corridor will provide increased marketing opportunities, better co-ordination between the two areas and shared expenses on selected projects which have long term benefits for both populations. (See attached proposal)

Phase Two September 2013-January 2014

This phase would commence in September with the gradual formation of the BIA for Cramahe and area. The basic process for the BIA is laid out below; however there are several variations depending on the specific needs and nature of the community.

Additionally, a BIA should also reflect the development opportunities in the area and a long-term outlook as recommended by the business and related community. A sample of the process is provided below

Step 1- Establish a steering committee

Local businesses and commercial/industrial property owners must lead the BIA formation initiative. A steering committee of local stakeholders is required to define the geographic area of the BIA and ensure inclusiveness by consulting with all local business tenants and property owners. The municipality will provide assistance with the public consultation process.

Step 2 - Determine community interest

Prior to a formal public meeting the steering committee will be responsible for holding information sessions with area stakeholders to confirm the area boundaries, clarify issues and confirm the level of interest in proceeding to step three.

Step 3 - Hold a public meeting

The steering committee, in association with the Municipality, is required to hold a formal public meeting to determine if there is sufficient interest in submitting a formal request to the Municipality to form a new BIA. If the meeting determines that sufficient area businesses and property owners support the formation of a BIA, a formal request is sent outlining the steps that were taken to inform the members and the rationale for the proposed BIA boundary.

The municipality will then mail an official "Notice of Intention to designate" a new BIA to all commercial and industrial property owners within the proposed boundary

If the total number of objections received within 60 days exceed one third of those entitled to be notified who also account for at least one third of the area's property tax, the municipality will not proceed with the formation of the BIA.

As mentioned there are several variations as to the criteria for the formation of the BIA, and this will become apparent as the process unfolds in September

Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce and Cramahe Township.

The relationship between Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce has been divided into shared and delegated activities for 2013; and a shared marketing plan and project driven relationship for 2014. As the attached proposal recommends, this should be a renewed relationship, which reflects the common challenges facing both communities. By working towards a shared responsibility and with the added authority of a BIA, Cramahe will have the resources to proceed on a number of initiatives by working with a partner who has the same goals in mind.

Rezoning Opportunities for Cramahe to assist in Downtown Development

In the past, there have been a number of businesses who have wanted to expand or add features to their established service or business. Because of the current zoning bylaws which were established in 1998 under the **Township of Cramahe Comprehensive Zoning By-law (By-law No. 08-18)**, these businesses would have to apply for an amendment to the existing zoning by-law. This would take considerable time and the costs would be prohibitive. In essence, the business would be discouraged from expanding or redeveloping because of existing zoning by-laws.

Concurrent with the process to form a BIA, it is recommended that a comprehensive rezoning process be undertaken to accommodate the development vision for Cramahe's downtown. Based on industrial, commercial, institutional and residential criteria, the entire area would be looked at in terms of what rezoning structuring is required to meet the development needs of the area.

This process would be undertaken to facilitate expansion of a business without undue restrictions. However, within these criteria, such elements as heritage buildings, and the historical significance of a location, or the look of a façade will all have an important role to play. The purpose of zoning is to provide a development discipline and also the freedom for businesses to have the incentive to make a positive developmental contribution to the Cramahe community. Re-zoning should also take into account the "character" of the town, so that any development which takes place stays true to preserving this "character" In short, Cramahe would be creating their own "official plan" to support and provide the tools necessary to develop the downtown core.

Recommendation for Contract Extension

The original contract for the Retail Revitalization Project was based on a four month timeline. However, the nature of the project changed when it became apparent that the transformation of the Cramahe and Area downtown could benefit from partnership arrangements and professional development. The scope of this work became the focus of the project, which required a longer term outlook beyond the original four month period. For this reason, the project was divided into two phases. During the course of this project, council, the mayor and the CAO of Cramahe Township have been kept apprised as to the enhanced direction.

The recommendation to council is to allow for the completion of the Phase Two portion of this project by the consultant, commencing September- December 31st 2014.

Tourism & Business Partnership

Between

**Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce and
the Municipality of Cramahe**

May 2013

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Background & Key Priorities

Both Brighton and area and Cramahe face common economic challenges in the region, however both have unique assets which can be translated into strong attractions for both communities. With the planned formation of a BIA for the Colborne and surrounding area; a more formal structure among Cramahe business will allow better planning with neighbouring communities to advance opportunities. While each of the communities have their own distinct identity, the finite resources which exist in each town would achieve much greater results if both Brighton and Cramahe worked together and pooled their knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise.

The goal of both communities is to grow their local economies for residents and for visitors. By looking at the corridor between Colborne and area and Brighton and area as one economic corridor, both municipalities can capitalize on the whole area offering a much better consumer and tourism experience.

Cramahe understands that Brighton has expended resources to define itself and promote its own events and activities, along with the promotion of its downtown retail sector. While Brighton has a more established business representation, the potential for joint marketing activities and event promotion has a much greater chance of attracting visitors and generating interest for residents; if resources are shared.

Cramahe Township also understands that there has to be financial as well as a human contribution to marketing the region as “one” corridor. The purpose of this partnership is to understand that the competition is not between Brighton and Cramahe, and that by working together we collectively achieve results.

While there may be some skeptics in both communities, it is proposed that a one year arrangement take place working towards a co-marketing plan for 2014. The plan would be based on a co-operative relationship between the two municipalities and chambers of commerce.

For 2013

Staffing the Tourism Kiosk at The Big Apple location:

The Tourism Kiosk would be a joint venture between Brighton and Cramahe which will be staffed during the high-traffic season. Staff will be hosting, providing information and helping to direct people to selected events in the area. Additional duties will include organizing and update tourism literature, and tracking communications. Using the high traffic hours as a reference, the (Big Apple Kiosk would be staffed from 4-8pm Thursday and Friday evening as well as Saturday and Sunday from 10-3 during the busy tourism season for 15 weeks from May to September. The costs in this proposal reflect those hours and can be reduced with volunteers.

Promotions:

The cost of promoting tourism in Cramahe through the events calendar on Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce website as well as maintaining a Cramahe presence on social media sites can be achieved immediately with only staffing costs associated to them. Developing further promotional collateral will require collaboration with the local tourism providers.

Partnership Maintenance:

The Chamber will commit to actively participating in meetings with Kawarthas Northumberland. We will also participate in other associated tourism meetings from time to time as necessary to maintain partnerships. An example of the cost for staff and mileage are reflected in the “Cost Breakdown” that follows. (**NOTE:** This item may not be required)

Strengthening the Relationship between Brighton and Cramahe:

The Chamber and Cramahe intend to enter into this process to develop mutually beneficial projects that lead to long term economic growth for the region. Cramahe is an important part of that growth. One of the ways to ensure that the municipality of Cramahe is informed is to have a schedule of bi-monthly reports to Cramahe council to keep councillors and the mayor apprised of activities and recommendations.

The renewed relationship between Cramahe and Brighton will hopefully lead to the two areas being discussed as one “marketing area” with economic development and tourism opportunities being embraced as “one” activity instead of two separate exercises.

Using a progressive approach with some activities in 2013 and then planning and further activities for 2014 will allow for a gradual relationship to be built that gives people in both communities time to see this venture grow in incremental steps.

For 2013, The following services would be provided for the Township of Cramahe serving as a starting point.

**Services
for Brighton & District and the Township of Cramahe**

- 1) ***Staffing the Cramahe Tourism Kiosk at The Big Apple including:***
 - a) Efficiently staff the tourism kiosk from May- September.
 - b) Provide courteous, knowledgeable and timely information to all inquiries.
 - c) Gather and track key data from all visitor inquiries.
 - d) Maintain an adequate stock of promotional materials for Cramahe attractions.
 - e) Provide materials for distribution including personalized visitor kits as requested.
 - f) Maintain a database of tourism related contacts.
 - g) Maintain a system of tracking the distribution of materials.

- 2) ***Promoting Cramahe and Brighton corridor as a Tourism Destination***
 - a) Manage an online presence for Cramahe Tourism including an event calendar on our website
 - b) Communicate event schedules to the media.
 - c) Collaborate with local tourism operators on common goals.

- 3) ***Maintaining Relationships for Cramahe with Neighbouring Tourism & Business Partners:***
 - a) Participate actively with Kawarthas-Northumberland Tourism committee.
 - b) Participate actively in the Business Success Program with the Business Advisory Centre.
 - c) Participate with Northumberland Economic Development committee

Future Plans September –December 2013

The Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce, while focused on immediate needs, has a vision for working toward the future of tourism and economic development with Cramahe. Working together with local partners is the key. The Brighton and District Chamber sees a need to continue to strengthen relationships where we share common goals. Building relationships with business and government partners is essential. We believe we have the knowledge and connections to help facilitate this process.

Cramahe has a need to expand its promotional efforts. The potential as a tourism destination and as a resident destination has not been realized. It is important that a strong branding message be developed with the input of key players

In the past, there has been no formal agreement between the Chamber and the Township of Cramahe. A more formal agreement will help to provide focus and ensure benefits to both communities. There is a benefit to sharing resources as both areas work toward developing a corridor of economic and tourism connections. As a partner with the Municipality, this is the overriding goal.

For 2013/ 2014

4) *Strengthening the Relationship between Cramahe and the Chamber of Commerce*

- a) Promote chamber services to increase membership among Cramahe businesses.
- b) Create a joint business retention and expansion working group to promote business in the region (Brighton/ Cramahe) for external marketing attraction. This group would work with Northumberland Economic Development to ensure clean communication
- c) Joint hosting of a working group which includes representatives of tourism, Brighton Arts Council and Economic development to co-ordinate events and activities for maximum results for 2014
- d) Undertake a branding exercise to reflect the inclusion of Cramahe in the Chamber name.
- e) Utilize the working group to create a joint marketing plan based on the above schedule .
- f) Reserve an appropriate number of seats on the Chamber Board of Directors for Cramahe.
- g) Alternate Chamber meetings in Cramahe and Brighton
- h) By February 2014, a budget contribution from Cramahe is recommended based on defined activities for 2014 and projected results/goals.

Operational Cost Breakdown for 2013

Kiosk Staffing Expense (based on 18 hrs/wk for 16 wks at minimum wage)	\$3,375
Promoting Cramahe Expense (2hrs/wk- update events calendar, develop & maintain social media sites)	\$1,219
Partnership Maintenance Expense \$3725	
Attendance at Kawarthas-Northumberland Meetings	\$375
Attendance at Business Success Program Meetings	\$375
Attendance at Northumberland Economic Development Meetings (Includes mileage to attend an average of 3 meetings/month)	\$375
Senior Staff (100 hours-average 2 hrs/wk) (this will also include follow up activities to meetings)	\$ 2600
Total Expense \$8,319	