

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Community Development Coordinator Update – November 2022

**Prepared By:** Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator

**Department:** Economic Development

**Date:** November 29, 2022

**Report Number:** ED2022-10                      **File Number:** C11ED

**Attachments:** Hometown Christmas Market Ad,  
MZO Media Release

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### Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby accept Report Number ED2022-10 - Community Development Coordinator Update – November 2022, prepared by Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator, for information purposes.

### Report:

#### Background:

Brockton's Community Development Coordinator prepares quarterly reports for Council on activities related to economic and community development in the Municipality of Brockton. This report covers September to November 2022. We have been involved in the following initiatives over the past three months:

- Walkerton's Hometown Christmas Market
- Business Inquiries/Developments/New Businesses
- Media outreach – MZO approval, Christmas Market
- New Business Supports and Funding
- Market Garden Project
- Tourism Relief Funding
- Digital Main Street
- Saugeen Connects/SEDC initiatives

Bruce County regional marketing projects

## **Analysis:**

### **Walkerton Hometown Christmas Market**

The Christmas Market took place on November 18<sup>th</sup> and was viewed as a success overall, drawing hundreds of shoppers to downtown Walkerton despite cold and blustery weather. The event attracted 26 artisans and food vendors, including six student businesses from the Saugeen Students Start-up Program that Brockton co-sponsors. There were live performances from the Sing Show Chorus, Greg McLean, and award-winning Irish dancers, plus a licensed outdoor cocktail lounge, the “Reindeer Room,” run by the Walkerton Rotary Club in the Market Garden Park. The fenced in area also featured craft beer from Neustadt Brewery, and was decorated by several Walkerton business owners.

Durham Street was closed to traffic from 2 p.m. until about 10 p.m. and a warming station was provided for the public at the Colborne Street intersection, with local firefighters volunteering to oversee the fire pits from 5-9 p.m. The event was marketed through social media channels, plus radio and prints ads in the Walkerton Herald Times, the Hanover Post and Grey-Bruce This Week.

Council budgeted \$6,000 for this event, and staff expect to be slightly under budget.

Vendors were each charged a nominal fee of \$25 to attend the event, or \$50 if they rented a Brockton tent and table. Parks and Recreation staff were instrumental in setting up all the tents, tables, generators, fencing, portable toilets and more, and helping to clear and reopen the road later that evening. Main office staff assisted with bylaw enforcement, road clearing, assisting vendors with set-up, and photographing and marketing the event.

The Community Development Coordinator oversaw the event with a small working group of businesses, Mayor Peabody, and the Director of Parks and Recreation, communicating details with the broader business community through emails and hand-delivered posters and letters. Over a dozen downtown businesses assisted in the event, directly and indirectly, and their contribution was invaluable. It was very much a partnership between the Municipality, businesses, and service clubs. The event dovetailed with the launch of the annual Shop Walkerton & Win campaign by local businesses, and municipal staff are assisting with this as well.

The weather posed a challenge for vendors, who braved the elements from set-up time at 3 p.m. until they packed up at about 8 p.m. The Reindeer Room was not as busy as expected, but again, weather was a factor. Staff are surveying vendors and canvassing volunteers to get feedback on the event and suggestions for next year.

### **New Business Improvement Grants**

The Municipality has approved several business improvement grants since the revised Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was approved by Council in August. Funding has been granted for façade improvements, signage, accessibility measures and the revitalization of vacant or underused properties. The following businesses have received, or been approved for funding under the new program:

- Mullen’s Small Animal Clinic (signage and façade improvement)

- Rory Chappelle (Building conversion and accessibility, creating several new apartments and retail spaces at 206 Durham St.)
- For the Love of Ice (signage and façade improvement)
- Buddha Restaurant (signage)
- A&R Music (façade improvement)
- Littles & Co. (signage)
- Bruce County Bookstore and Café in Cargill (façade improvements)

One other application, for accessibility and façade improvements, is pending. All applications are approved by a panel appointed that includes the Community Development Coordinator, CAO and Council members. Work is to be done by local contractors.

### **New Businesses in Walkerton**

We are pleased to welcome two new businesses in downtown Walkerton: Buddha Restaurant, which opened in time for the Christmas Market on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, and Littles & Co., a children's store that has expanded rapidly over the past year and a half, and moved from another location on Yonge Street.

Each of these businesses are currently filling properties that had been vacant for years: Buddha is in the former K's Country Kitchen and Little's & Co. is leasing the former Lucky Mart. A local realtor brokered both of these deals involving out of town property owners. Staff also supported in discussions with the realtor and property owner. These are both good news stories for the community.

### **East Ridge Business Park Developments**

Our rapidly expanding business park – one of the few in Bruce County – was in the news this month with the approval of our Minister's Zoning Order permitting new residential development and the expansion of Walkerton's urban boundary to permit future industrial growth. The CDC assisted with promotion and media outreach. We continue to receive inquiries about available land in East Ridge (three in the past quarter), and arranged an onsite tour with one company last fall. We are planning to erect a new sign for the industrial park at County Road 19 and Creighton Road, and are also creating a promotional brochure specific to East Ridge.

### **Digital Main Street – Digital Transformation Grants**

Our Digital Service Squad member, Will LeGrand, has been busy reaching out to Brockton businesses to assist with a wide range of digital marketing needs, as well as a provincial grant program. Eight local businesses have been approved for a total of \$20,000 in funding for digital transformation grants. Others may still apply for the next intake in January. This is an extremely valuable program through Digital Main Street and the Ontario Business Improvement Association that we have taken advantage of for our businesses. In previous years, it was only available to downtown shops.

The program offers free training, plus funding for website development, social media assistance, videography, photography, hardware, and software to assist with e-commerce and marketing.

Partnerships

The CDC continues to work with the Bruce County Economic Development team, the Saugeen Economic Development Corp. (through Saugeen Connects and a separate regional group), the Nuclear Innovation Institute’s Clean Energy Frontier program, the NWMO project in South Bruce and the Grey-Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP). Through partnerships with the county, SEDC and GBLIP, new projects are being launched to assist local employers connect with job seekers. We are also working with the county on its new investment attraction campaign, and tourism promotion for 2023.

The CDC is also working with our Parks & Recreation department on development of the Market Garden Park and fulfilment of a Tourism Recovery Grant program involving new park signage, benches, and EV charger stations.

Strategic Action Plan Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?		
• Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision		Yes
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community		Yes
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life		N/A
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment		N/A
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development		Yes
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance		N/A

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?  
N/A

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

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Respectfully Submitted by:



Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator

Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer