

Vittoria Town Hall Business Plan

Town Hall Committee
Vittoria & District Foundation Inc.
May 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	3
Committee Mission	3
Committee Objectives	3
Strategic Plan: Construction, Repair & Restoration	4
Milestones & Budget	5
Grants	5
Volunteers	5
Fundraising	5
Conclusion	6

Overview:

The Town Hall Committee, herein referred to as the Committee, was established by the Board of Directors of the Vittoria & District Foundation Inc. (V&DF) to further expand on the work of the former Vittoria Town Square Preservation Society. The Committee is comprised of both Directors and Members of the V&DF – all of whom have keen interest, professional insight and collective skillset to achieve the goals set out in this proposal.

The Committee fully understands the importance of the Town Hall located at 1538 Old Brock Street in Vittoria; it is without question the signature building of the village. Built in 1870 through public sponsorship on donated land, this historically designated structure represents a unique, viable, and integral part of the community. It sits in the historic square with its picturesque park, gifted to the citizens of Vittoria by the Lamport family. The Town Hall is flanked by the 180 year-old Anglican Church, the last of its kind in all of Canada, the 174 year-old former Baptist Church, and the 179 year-old United Church, among various notable residences. This microcosm of built heritage provides a truly rare and valuable legacy of the area's built and social history.

Along with this rich and important history, the Vittoria Town Hall has long provided numerous benefits to the community, including much needed and practical space for public gatherings, fostering community spirit. As recently as 2017, the Town Hall and adjacent Lamport Park was in frequent use for a variety of functions.

Committee Mission:

The Committee aims to partner with the Corporation of Norfolk County, to ensure the Vittoria Town Hall is preserved as an important and valued heritage structure and to reestablish the Vittoria Town Hall within the village square as a functional facility for community use.

Committee Objectives:

1. Partner with Norfolk County to address structural issues, restoring the Town Hall for occupancy.
2. Consult with Norfolk County staff, including the Norfolk County Heritage Committee, on specific Town Hall requirements, needs, and projected outcomes.
3. Act as the organizing body to secure funds through government, institutional and private donors in direct support of the Town Hall restoration project(s).
4. Manage all restoration and/or construction projects.

5. Promote awareness of the historical significance of the Town Hall and village square which includes Lamport Park.
6. Ensure the sustainability of the Town Hall as a viable public asset, providing a:
 - a. Location for courses, programs and workshops facilitated by both public and private area groups.
 - b. Meeting space for local service organizations such as the Vittoria Women’s Institute, the V&DF, etc.
 - c. Venue to support and showcase local musicians and artists.
 - d. Place to host recreational and social activities for youth, families, and seniors.

Strategic Plan: Construction, Repair & Restoration

A variety of issues – structural and cosmetic – have been highlighted in the municipal reports, including the official engineering study presented to the members of the Committee following a freedom of information request in 2023. The Committee has sought additional input and clarification and believes the following represents the next best steps for re-opening the Town Hall.

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| Phase 1: | Structural repairs to the front west corner of the building, including belfry support through the entrance hall and washroom ceiling. |
| Phase 2: | Window restoration and/or replacement |
| Phase 3: | Entrance accessibility ramp repairs and installation of the second washroom |
| Phase 4: | Restoration of the interior; based on the original 1870s concept (replicating the work that was completed in 2000 which fully restored the interior to its original appearance). |
| Phase 5: | Restoration of the belfry and bell |

Much consideration and consultation with external contractors and heritage consultants has resulted in what the Committee views to be the appropriate sequence, with phases 1-3 needed in order to have the Town Hall reopen as a functioning facility. The phases of work can be scheduled concurrently or consecutively depending on time requirements and funding availability.

Following consultation with local contractors and professionals in the heritage restoration sector, the Committee confidently believes the required work can be completed through hired contractors in combination with volunteer labour, including members of the Committee and the community at-large. Work estimates have been sourced for Phases 1 through 4 of the proposed

work schedule. As highlighted in Objective 2, the Committee will work with Norfolk County officials to acquire proper permits, meet all building codes, etc. As was seen with the Town Hall partnership between Norfolk County and the V&DF in 2000, regular communication and site meetings are key to an extremely successful working relationship.

Milestones and Budget:

Establishing a partnership between Norfolk County and the Committee presents many positive outcomes. Similar working relationships with a community group and a municipally owned asset have resulted in numerous benefits including maintained and/or increased service levels and a decreased burden on the tax levy. Models of this approach can be seen with Lynnwood Arts Centre, Waterford Skate Park, and the Walsingham Town Hall.

1. Grants: As a Committee of the V&DF, access to grants at various levels have been investigated and the Committee feels confident in its ability to secure funding through at least three grant streams. Donations, both private and public, would qualify for tax receipts through the V&DF.

2. Volunteers: Volunteerism has been at the heart of the V&DF since its inception; having been recognized nationally through the June Callwood Award for outstanding volunteer services to the community. Further, the Town Hall has prospered as a direct result of volunteers – 154 years' worth and counting.

Through continued discussion with other Vittoria community groups and the general public, the Committee can confidently say that volunteers will add over \$30,000 value to Phases 1 through 3 based on the standard model of \$35.00/hour. Phase 4 can be completed almost entirely by volunteers and donated contractor services representing a further \$25,000 commitment to the project.

3. Fundraising: The Committee, through a vigorous campaign, has set an initial capital goal of \$100,000 with the objective of completing this campaign by the end of 2024. This short timeframe will enable work to start on the Town Hall as soon as possible.

In return of this commitment, the \$300,000 which has previous approval by Norfolk County Council, would remain in the budget and used solely for the Town Hall project. A total of \$400,000 would therefore be committed as the base funding. The Committee further proposes that proceeds generated from the pending sale of municipally owned land on Oaks Boulevard in Vittoria, also be directed to the Town Hall project.

Milestone	Target completion date	Estimated budget
Phase 1: Structural repairs to the front west corner of the building, including belfry support through the entrance hall and washroom ceiling.	August through October 2024	-Material 100,000 -Labour 60,000 -Contingency 20,000 =\$180,000
Phase 2: Window restoration and/or replacement	August through September 2024	-Material 80,000 -Labour 40,000 -Contingency 20,000 =\$140,000
Phase 3: Entrance accessibility ramp repairs and installation of the second washroom	Scenario A: September 2024 Scenario B: March 2025	-Material 50,000 -Labour 10,000 -Contingency 10,000 =\$70,000
Phase 4: Restoration of the interior; based on the original 1870s concept (replicating the work that was completed in 2000 which fully restored the interior to its original appearance).	March through April 2025	-Material 15,000 -Labour 0 =\$15,000
Phase 5: Restoration of the belfry and bell	May through July 2025	-Material 20,000 -Labour 10,000 =\$30,000

Conclusion:

The Committee is dedicated to a fruitful partnership with Norfolk County to repair and restore the Vittoria Town Hall as a functional facility for community use, preserving this valued heritage structure for generations to come. We highlight five main drivers to undertake this work together:

1. Identity. “If you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are.”¹ The Town Hall is an entrenched part of Vittoria’s identity. It belongs to the village and has been supported by its citizens - through considerable funds and volunteerism - since day one. Generations have used and enjoyed this community building. Its doors have been open for entertainment, rallies,

¹ Wallace Stegner

dinners, and all of life's stages; joyous and sad. Its bell has tolled for the end of wars and in celebration of new beginnings. And, since Vittoria's 200th anniversary in 1996, it has stood as the official village landmark and constant reminder of "our heritage, a celebration of its achievements, and a lasting legacy for years to come."²

2. Place. A sense of place not only impacts a community but also directly impacts an individual's health and wellness. The Town Hall and square provides a direct connection to the community's sense of place. As outlined by the Urban Land Institute, "place is more than just a location or a spot on a map. A sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics – visual, cultural, natural, and social – that provide meaning to a location." Sense of place is what makes one location, like Vittoria, different from another, but "sense of place is also that which makes our physical environment valuable and worth caring about."³

3. Tourism. The value of place directly aligns with the all-important need to draw people to the community, therefore boosting economies and other positive outcomes. Tourism, whether local or regional, provides a resilient economy and is a driving force in growth and sustainability. The charm of the historic Town Hall and square provides a perfect catalyst for the many beneficial aspects of tourism and future growth.

4. Planning. "Change is inevitable, but the destruction of community character and identity is not."⁴ Municipal planning for the inevitable growth Norfolk County faces has been highlighted in both print and online documents through the Official Plan. The importance of maintaining natural heritage, green space, and current infrastructure is the foundation of nearly all the Norfolk County Official Plan components.

5. Preservation. Once it's gone, it's gone. According to The World Bank, heritage preservation discourages the waste of resources and energy expended by prior generations, as well as the total replacement by new, energy-consumptive materials which, in many regards, have limited quality and none-lasting components.⁵ Overlooking important heritage assets like the Town Hall is an unfortunate mistake made by ill-informed governments. Studies continually show the value and cost-savings of maintaining such structures; ultimately aiding in a community's growth and well-being.

² 200 Years of Memories: Vittoria Bicentennial (1996)

³ Main Spotlight: The Importance of Place by Ed McMahon, Urban Land Institute (2022)

⁴ Main Spotlight: The Importance of Place by Ed McMahon, Urban Land Institute (2022)

⁵ The World Bank: Cultural Heritage Preservation Project (2021)