

Summary of Hotel Feasibility Study
Rural Economic Development Funding Application

March 31, 2017

The purpose of this project is to facilitate a hotel feasibility study and urban boundary adjustment study for the Village of Blyth.

The Village of Blyth has a population of 1005 people and is situated in the Township of North Huron in the County of Huron. The Village is currently experiencing unprecedented economic growth as a result of the following three projects:

1. Renovations to Blyth Memorial Hall (home of the Blyth Festival)
2. The development of Cowbell Brewing Co., Canada's first destination brewery
3. The Canadian Centre for Rural Creativity

Blyth is situated in North Huron, but borders Central Huron immediately outside of the Village core. Therefore, the aforementioned projects will have a significant economic impact for both North Huron and Central Huron. All projects will directly result in increased visitors to the area every year. Renovations to Memorial Hall will allow for an enhanced visitor experience to the Blyth Festival as well as the possibility of an extended theatre season. Cowbell Brewing Co. is a 26,000 square foot destination brewery that will open in August 2017. The fully accessible state-of-the-art brewery will have seating for hundreds, featuring closed-loop brewing technology, a retail store, restaurant and 111 acres of special event grounds. The brewery will host major on-site attractions including concerts, music festivals and major sporting events. The Canadian Centre for Rural Creativity is a multi-disciplinary arts and culture hub that will offer several courses including but not limited to fashion design, documentary filmmaking, photography and GIS mapping. Students and visitors from across Canada will visit the Centre for Rural Creativity.

These three key projects will result in several more visitors to Blyth throughout the year. The drastic increase in visitor traffic will require that the Village have ample overnight accommodations available to guests. In an effort to encourage and attract hotel development in Blyth, North Huron has deemed it necessary to conduct a hotel feasibility study for potential investors. In addition to a feasibility study, it has also been identified that an urban boundary adjustment study should be facilitated to explore the possibility of expanding the Village outside of the current urban boundary to allow for continued development and growth. North Huron would like to ensure the Village is prepared for key development opportunities that are anticipated in the near future.

North Huron and Central Huron participated in the OMAFRA led Huron County-wide economic development strategic planning exercise via the Train the Trainer process. Every municipality in the County of Huron developed their own economic development strategic plan. Key themes from municipal strategic plans were then incorporated into the County Economic Development Strategic Plan.

North Huron's Economic Development Strategic Plan identifies "Business Attraction and Retention" as a key goal. Conducting a hotel feasibility study along with an urban boundary adjustment study will have a direct impact on North Huron's ability to attract and accommodate new development in the municipality.

Central Huron's Economic Development Strategic Plan also identifies "Business Retention and Expansion" as a key goal. Investment attraction efforts are identified as a key priority within that goal. The facilitation of a hotel feasibility study and of an urban boundary adjustment study to allow for future development will greatly increase the likelihood of attracting potential investors.