



City of Orillia

# Sunshine Scroll

Business Development Quarterly Newsletter

## The Business Development Beat

### The Future is Bright

Summer is a time for optimism; the sun is shining, flowers are in full bloom, and Orillia's streets and parks are bustling with visitors and residents alike. As we see the community flock outdoors to reconnect with friends and family, the City's Business Development, Culture and Tourism Department is in full swing, marketing the City-wide [See You on the Patio program](#) preparing for a line-up of events at the [Stephen Leacock Museum](#) and the [Orillia Opera House](#), and continuing to tour investors through the city. We're also assisting a number of new businesses as they prepare to open their doors for the first time this summer.



Beyond the summer season, the Business Development Office has good reason to be optimistic. The City of Orillia [My Main Street Local Business Accelerator Program](#) was recently ranked in first place across Ontario for the number of business expansion plans submitted for the Downtown Orillia Business Improvement Area. This program supports entrepreneurs and businesses in our city's core to access customized market research reports, which can be used to provide insights into potential new customers, emerging trends, and opportunities for growth specific to their individual businesses. To date, Orillia's Main Street Ambassador, Amber Elliott, has helped sixteen Orillia businesses access customized market research reports, and more than a dozen businesses are now developing business expansion plans. In addition to this, five Orillia businesses have been approved for \$10,000 non-refundable contributions through the My Main Street Local Business Accelerator program to implement their business expansion plans, for a total influx of \$50,000 in funding to date. We've included the story of one such business within the Business Spotlight section of this newsletter, and will continue to share success stories through our [My Main Street webpage](#). This is not only great news for our economy, but also for our community. Downtown Orillia is a major visitor draw, and as visitors shop and explore our city, we also gain new investors, residents, and employers to the Orillia area.

The City's Business Development team also recently took part in the [Franchise Expo](#), a national trade show that took place in Toronto, which allowed City staff to engage with a dedicated audience of business owners, franchisors and investors. Through attending this show, the City was able to promote the City of Orillia and secure more than 170 leads interested in learning about investment opportunities in our community. Staff are in the process of following up on each and every lead to provide additional information, facilitate tours of the city, and showcase the opportunities Orillia has to offer. Further, the City partnered with the [Orillia Area CDC](#) to highlight local businesses for sale through the [BizLink program](#). This program allows us to connect retiring business owners with new entrepreneurs looking to acquire an established business. This partnership has been extremely valuable with more than 70% of leads also expressing interest in learning about acquiring Orillia businesses.

Finally, we're optimistic about the growth opportunities shared through the City's [Downtown Tomorrow Community Improvement Plan \(CIP\) Grant Program](#). This program continues to support the growth of businesses in the broader downtown area by incentivizing projects that revitalize the core and add much-needed jobs and housing. Council has approved a two-year window for the new Tier 3 grant programs (Development Charge Grant, Tax Increment Grant and Brownfields Tax Assistance Grant), which are designed to incentivize and accelerate large redevelopment projects that have the potential to add a significant number of jobs and housing. Staff are in the process of reaching out to the property owners of

large and under-utilized properties to explain how the Downtown Tomorrow CIP Grant Program could be leveraged to redevelop their sites. So far, these property owners have indicated that they will accelerate their plans in order to take part in the program. As a result, the City is seeing movement on properties that have long been vacant and/or underutilized.

Overall, we're seeing indications of economic recovery within our community since the height of the pandemic, and we look forward to continuing to work with our local business owners, entrepreneurs, and property owners as they work to grow and add vibrancy to our community.

For more information about the City of Orillia Business Development Office, please visit [businessinorillia.ca](https://businessinorillia.ca) or call 705-325-4900.

Laura Thompson, Senior Manager of Business Development

[Visit Our Website](#)



The Business Development Division has engaged with more than 280 investor contacts to date in 2022.

(January - June)



Sixteen custom Market Research Reports were prepared and presented to business owners through the My Main Street Program

(March - June)



The Orillia Farmers' Market has more than 35 vendors partaking in the summer market season.

(July - September)

## What's Happening

### City Welcomes New Waterfront Dining Experience to the Stephen Leacock Museum

In September 2020, Council was presented with a new Master Plan for the Stephen Leacock Museum (SLM) with a vision to improve operations without compromising the site's collection or heritage assets. Grounded in research into current industry trends, the unique features of the property, municipal interests and community desires, the Master Plan outlines a series of strategic recommendations related to operations, infrastructure improvements, food service, financial growth, programming, and partnerships that would transform the site into a vibrant year-round destination for residents and visitors alike.



One of the compelling features of the property is its frontage on Old Brewery Bay. With that in mind, along with the unique backdrop of the Museum house and heritage gardens, the Master Plan recommended the City look to attract a food service operator who could transform Swanmore Hall into a destination restaurant.

[Learn More](#)

## Business Spotlight

### Eclectic Café Growing Once Again

As part of the City of Orillia's participation in the [My Main Street Local Business Accelerator Program](#), we will be highlighting businesses in the downtown area that have achieved success through new and innovative business practices and partnerships. My Main Street is supported by a \$23.5-million Government of Canada investment through the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#) (FedDev Ontario).

The popular downtown Orillia eatery, [Eclectic Café](#), will once again be expanding. Currently located at 39 Mississauga St. W., Eclectic Café is known for its delicious lunch menu and exceptional catering service. The business has recently expanded to take over approximately 1,000 sq. ft. of retail space next door at 37 Mississauga St. W. to allow them to increase their catering production as well as offer a dedicated retail space to showcase in-house products along with other local Ontario produced products that complement the Café's culinary selection.

"Our retail presence allows us to offer those products six-to-seven days a week and offer good quality, locally sourced, delicious, savory and sweet food options to our growing community," said Eclectic Café owner and head chef, Melanie Robinson.



[Read More](#)

## Upcoming Events



### [See You on the Patio](#) [Downtown Road Closures](#)

**Shop, dine and connect on the main streets of Downtown Orillia during the See You on the Patio road closure. Every Friday evening from July 1 to September 2, the streets will be closed to traffic, allowing restaurants and retailers to expand their patios onto the streets.**

**Tip:** These nights are always very busy for restaurants, but retailers have an opportunity to leverage the increased foot traffic to increase awareness and draw customers into the store. Hosting an event during these nights provides visitors with something to do before or after dinner and by expanding onto the street retailers can use the opportunity to share their products and services with potential new clientele.

**Friday Nights**  
July 1 to  
September 2



## Summer Block Party

July 23

**The downtown Summer Block Party features a fusion of art, live music, delicious food, kid zones, and sidewalk sales.**

*Tip:* This is a great opportunity to expand out of the premises of your building into the street. Having a strong window or sidewalk display can also help entice consumers to come into your store and view all of the other amazing products you offer. Offering new products or services in addition to selling off old stock ensures that customers have an opportunity to see how the business continues to evolve and offer new and relevant products.



## Waterfront Festival

August 5-7

**The Orillia Waterfront Festival features entertainment, food, a vendor market, and new and used boat sales along Couchiching Park.**

*Tip:* The Waterfront Festival attracts boaters and cottagers from across the province, making it a great time for business owners to partner together and encourage these individuals to make their way from the Port of Orillia up Mississauga Street.

Events like the Waterfront Festival are a wonderful opportunity to establish spin-off activities or audience-directed partnerships based on themes such as boating, concerts and holidays.



## 22nd Annual Classic Car Show

August 13

**After a two-year hiatus, the largest car show in the region is back! Enjoy live music and various activities while viewing more than 400 classic cars lining the downtown streets.**

*Tip:* This event attracts car lovers from all over. Similar to the Waterfront Festival, this is a great day to create car-themed products, displays, and specials to attract these consumers into your business and celebrate the event! Display these special products and/or discounts in your window display or on a sandwich board to help pull consumers off the street and into your business.

For more upcoming events, visit the [City's event calendar](#).

## Featured Partner

**This column is dedicated to highlighting the great work our community partners are doing to support businesses and the community.**

**Small Business Centre  
Strengthening Partnership in Orillia**

The Small Business Centre of Barrie Simcoe County and Orillia encourages and supports entrepreneurship within our region by being a one-stop source for all your small business needs. The Small Business Centre is supported by the Province of Ontario and the City of Barrie. It is a part of Small Business Centres Ontario and one of the 54 small business enterprise centres across Ontario. Our team helps clients make the right decisions during their business start-up and assists them in developing their business as it grows.



[Read More](#)



## Business Resources

- [Orillia Area Community Development Corporation](#)
- [Downtown Orillia Management Board](#)
- [Employment Ontario](#)
- [Orillia District Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [City of Orillia Downtown Tomorrow Community Improvement Program](#)
- [My Main Street Local Business Accelerator Program](#)

