



The
CHAMBER.
Creating opportunities for business.



CHAMBERHOODS

REPORT

Submitted:

November 2019

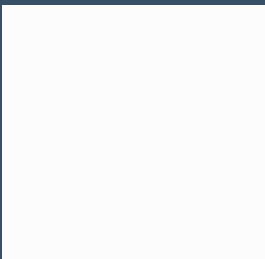
In October 2019, the Chamber launched a new series entitled Chamberhoods. The purpose of these meetings was to encourage our business community to recall the days of neighbourly interactions and the support that comes from knowing what resources they have in their area.



The series sectioned the community into eight unique neighbourhoods where neighbouring businesses came together, networked, and spent time learning of each other's needs. Chamber President Val Venneri and Chamber First Vice-president Melanie Verreault were accompanied by Mayor George Pirie and Deputy Mayor Noella Rinaldo to engage in candid conversations on how the Chamber and the City of Timmins can better help business succeed.



The series saw 65 businesses participate which equates to approximately ten per cent of the Chamber's membership. While each Chamberhood had a unique concern, there were overarching themes that blended together.



1 TRAFFIC AUDITS AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Announcements for Connecting Link upgrades and road work were top of mind for the majority of businesses. Strong concerns about how businesses will be affected by construction, road closures and detours weighed heavily in discussion. It is imperative that the City continues to consult with businesses who will be affected leading up to shovels in the ground. Greater collaboration between the City and the business community can aid in identifying creative solutions to mitigate how this important work will impact their business.

Additionally, an audit with respect to traffic lights was requested, asking for a review of "stop times" at Walmart to increase traffic flow and reduce delays. Specifically, a review of the flashing lights downtown will eliminate confusion with regards to the change between four-way stoplights and normal-functioning traffic lights.

2 PUBLIC SAFETY AND INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE

Concerns centred around public safety, vandalism, and graffiti were also shared, deterring customers and hindering the continued success of their business. Calls for increased police presence, specifically in highly-concentrated business areas would prove a deterrent. The Chamber understands that deployment is heavily dependent on calls reported to the Timmins Police Service by members of the community, however, businesses struggle with repeating this process as it weighs heavily on their time.

3 CITY PERMITTING AND NAVIGATING POLICIES

To ensure that it is providing the best possible environment in which to do business, the City of Timmins should continue to work with local businesses to regularly conduct analyses of its public-facing processes. These results, in conjunction with business feedback and municipal best practices, should form the basis of an ongoing effort to provide the best possible customer service to the business community. The municipality should continue to focus on developing low-cost, high-reward incentive programs that promote development in a way that attracts new investments and promotes expansion opportunities for existing firms.

4 WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

Growing a highly-skilled workforce is everyone's responsibility. This theme acknowledges that success will require partnership, communication and collaboration among all parties as they deal with existing realities and anticipate future needs of the workforce. The Chamber recognizes the Employer Council as an important forum for discussion and as such, encourage greater information sharing and communication on the work undertaken by the council. The dissemination of information will assist in underlining the unique needs of local employers with a focused effort on understanding best practices for attraction and retention.



The Chamber wishes to extend our gratitude to Mayor George Pirie and Councillor Noella Rinaldo for their partnership during these sessions. Our members found great value in the ability to share their concerns directly with the City.

CONTACT

Email: policy@timminschamber.on.ca
705.360.1900
76 McIntyre Road
Timmins, ON
PO Box 985 | P4N 7H6



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WWW.TIMMINSCHAMBER.ON.CA