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Report 2025-132

Report Title: 310 Division Street Business Pulse Survey

Committee Name: Social Services

Committee Meeting Date: June 4, 2025

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Community and Social Services

Reviewed by: Glenn Dees
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Community and Social Services

Approved by: Jennifer Moore, CAO

Council Meeting Date: June 18, 2025

Strategic Plan Priorities: ☐ Innovate for Service Excellence
☐ Ignite Economic Opportunity
☒ Foster a Thriving Community
☐ Propel Sustainable Growth
☐ Champion a Vibrant Future

Information Report

“That the Social Services Committee receive Report 2025-132 ‘310 Division Street Business Pulse Survey’ for information; and

Further That the Committee recommend that County Council receive this report for information.”

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with requested data from the first month of the Business Pulse Survey seeking feedback from the business community on the impacts of 310 Division Street.

Background

The Business Pulse Survey was opened for data collection on May 5, 2025 and closed on May 11, 2025. A total of 47 surveys were initiated during the collection window. Of these 47 responses, 13 were incomplete (i.e., surveys that were started but not finished or submitted by the end of the data collection window) and 34 were complete. The 34 complete responses included duplicate entries from two businesses. As per the declarations endorsed by respondents before beginning the survey (see Appendix A), only the most recent submission was retained. This resulted in 32 complete, unique responses. One response was from a non-business entity (County staff plan to contact this respondent to follow-up about their concerns and identify appropriate communication channels that may be utilized in the future), and another response was from a business located outside of the 500 metre radius surrounding 310 Division Street. Both of these responses were not included in data analysis. The final dataset contained responses from 30 unique businesses.

Results of the survey are included in the attached report, which presents data visualizations, a descriptive narrative, and limitations of the data.

Consultations

Consultations were conducted with the Chief Administrative Officer, Communications and Community & Social Services departments. In addition, the survey questions were shared with the 310 Division Street Community Liaison Committee and staff are working to engage their feedback for the second monthly survey.

Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations

All privacy legislation has been adhered to in the collection of this data.

In future monthly surveys, the consent language will be updated to allow for the sharing of direct comments from survey respondents to provide further qualitative data to Council.

Discussion / Options

The community was made aware of the survey through a media release which was also shared with the Cobourg Downtown Business Improvement Association (DBIA), it was also shared by the Cobourg Chamber of Commerce. Moving forward, a postcard will be sent to all businesses through Canada Post at the end of May, as a broader and direct reminder of the available monthly survey. This was sent via pre-existing mail routes to over 500 businesses, predominately within the 500 metre radius of 310 Division Street. In addition, survey respondents are able to indicate if they want to receive monthly reminders for the business survey to be completed on the Join in Northumberland webpage.

One key consideration when interpreting the data is the small sample size. Only data from 30 unique businesses was included in analysis, and this represents a small percentage of the businesses eligible to complete the survey. For example, the 500 metre radius surrounding 310 Division Street includes nearly all of the Cobourg DBIA, which itself contains over 250 businesses. There are also many other businesses not associated with the DBIA. Using a very conservative estimate of just the DBIA businesses, the survey data represents only 12% of eligible businesses.

Further, it is difficult to determine if the concerns reported by businesses are due to 310 Division Street clients, individuals experiencing homelessness in general, or even individuals who are

housed. Ultimately it is a judgment or assumption made by the business reporting these experiences as to the source of the concern in most cases. Additionally, 310 Division Street is not the only shelter in downtown Cobourg, nor is it the only social service provider. It is possible that other establishments may also have an impact on the same types of experiences reported in the survey.

In addition, issues identified by businesses may also be outside the jurisdiction of the County, and will require response from other agencies, including the Cobourg Police Services and/or the Town of Cobourg Municipal Law Enforcement Office.

Businesses are also provided with the opportunity for a follow-up conversation with the County, it is planned that all businesses which requested a follow up will receive one prior to the launching of June's monthly survey. In addition, any completed survey by an ineligible entity (i.e. not business or outside of 500m area) will receive a follow up conversation if they provided consent for this contact.

Financial Impact

There is minimal financial impact associated with this report. The County purchased an additional license for Survey Monkey at a cost of approximately \$610. The creation, printing and mailout of the survey reminder being distributed at the end of May was approximately \$750.

Member Municipality Impacts

N/A

Conclusion / Outcomes

It is recommended that Committee / County Council receive this report for information.

Attachments

- 1) Report 2025-132 ATTACH 1 'Attachment: May 2025 Business Pulse Survey Results'