

A \$1.8-million face-lift for Capreol

By Keith Dempsey, For The Sudbury Star
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Lee Ann Ducharme relaxes during her lunch hour in a small park next to the beach area in Capreol on Monday August 28, 2017. Capreol has received \$1.8 million to beautify the town. Gino Donato/Sudbury Star/Postmedia Network

The late Dave Kilgour's vision for a community improvement plan for town centres within Greater Sudbury is starting to come to fruition.

"This whole thing started in 2012 by Dave Kilgour," Ward 7 Coun. Mike Jakubo said Monday. "It was his original idea. He was the chair of the planning committee (at the time)."

"Planning wanted to get some community improvement plans going. There was already a town centre community improvement in place, but nothing specific by a town-for-town basis, so Dave thought it'd be a great idea. He wanted to make sure that Capreol could be the first, an example to all of the other communities."

As a result, Greater Sudbury's railway town - Capreol -- is getting a facelift in time for its 100th birthday.

Kilgour, a former Capreol mayor, town councillor and city councillor, died earlier this year.

City council has approved a \$1.8-million plan "to ensure that downtown Capreol is a well planned and thoughtfully designed community that v provide accessible recreation for current and future residents, attract investment, support economic development and eco-tourism, strengthen community identity and encourage year round outdoor activities to celebrate the town's centennial in 2018."

The plan is the result of four years public engagement with the people of Capreol to identify key improvements they would like to see made in their community.

Phase One of the Capreol 2018 Community Improvement Plan calls for creating an accessible passive and active outdoor recreation destination at the downtown waterfront that all residents of Capreol can enjoy. This phase puts a high priority on the city's Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan, which calls for ensuring beach access routes meet the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and for undertaking public engagement to determine possible areas for improvement to beach areas.

Key components of Phase One includes the construction of an approximate one-km long, lit, active transportation path along the waterfront, with accessible seating and picnic areas, the creation of a public space at King and Lakeshore streets, the creation of a barrier free access to the beach, design elements that celebrate Capreol's railway heritage, and sustainable landscaping and public art to improve the waterfront and connect the river with the downtown core, as well as sewer and road repairs on King and Lakeshore streets.

"The process started in 2012 and had a number of community consultations, which I have to say were extremely well attended, like over hundred people," Jakubo said. "In a town of about 3,000 or 3,500, to consistently have that level of turnout and representation from across all different groups in the community, really showed a unity of the town and uniting behind an idea to beautify it for its 100th anniversary."

The purpose of the Town Centre CIP Initiative, according to the Greater Sudbury website, is to enhance pedestrian friendly commercial areas to attract people and new business, address commercial and residential vacancy issues by improving the building stock, rehabilitate older, mixed used (and preferably multi-storey) building stock and to promote the creation of additional residential dwelling units.

The Town Centre CIP applies to parts of Capreol, Chelmsford, Levack, the Flour Mill Business Improvement Area (BIA), Lively, Copper Cliff and Kathleen Street.

Property owners located within the identified Town Centre CIP areas are eligible to participate.

"You see a lot of times where the city approves a project but doesn't approve the funding to go along with it," Jakubo said. "It kind of sits there hoping that the federal government or the provincial government might come along and say, 'oh, we're looking to fund X project' and ultimately never gets done."

"I saw the real importance in this, not just for Capreol, but for each of the towns that are on the list."

The next city on the CIP list is Chelmsford, Jakubo said.

"It will be going on a yearly or a two-year basis where a new CIP will be started in the outlining areas," Jakubo said. "Let's get this funded, show the people that it's not just basically coffee and Timbits at a brainstorming session. It's something that will actually see shovels in the ground and produce a great benefit to the community that people can see as tangible and can be a catalyst to tourism in the area, business in the area, and really show an investment."

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