

Local Solutions to Global Challenges

HopeTowns is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the revitalization of small-town economies through the expansion of local regenerative agriculture, the restoration of historic main streets, and the facilitation of a harmonious connection between the two.

We are beginning our mission in Port Hope.

Our focus will be concentrated in three pillars:

- 1) Conservation through the conversion of ecologically sensitive agricultural lands to regenerative practices*
- 2) Restoration of important main street and agricultural heritage assets
- 3) Animation of agricultural/culinary, social, cultural, and educational programming

Background

HopeTowns was incorporated in January of 2020. Our founding Executive consists of:

Gillian Kerr, Board Chair
Jake Deacon, Executive Director
Albert Schultz, Strategic Planning and Fundraising
Rod Stewart, Project Manager, Opera House Restoration

In February, with the support of the *Michael Young Family Foundation*, HopeTowns began working with the *Nature Conservancy of Canada* on a pilot project to convert agricultural lands in Northumberland County and the Kawartha Region to regenerative practices

In March, we answered a call for submissions from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario for the Port Hope Opera House**. At this time we put together a Local Opera House Advisory, that includes Olga Cwiek, Young Mee Kim, Blake Holton, Jenny Munro, Rod Stewart and Dave Watson.

In April, we made a presentation of our Opera House plans to the ACO's Opera House Committee.

In May, we planted our first 46 acres of permanent mixed grasses on fields that had been industrially farmed for decades.

On July 2 we presented to the ACO Port Hope Executive, and in September we signed a purchase agreement for the Opera House with the ACO.

In October, we purchased 16-18 John Street, a building contiguous with the Opera House, which offers a necessary second opportunity for egress.

In November, HopeTowns opened its office at 16 John Street in Port Hope.

In 2021, HopeTowns will undertake an extensive Community Consultation to determine specific local interest in, and potential uses for the Opera House, which is targeted to re-open in the spring of 2024. This process will be led by an outside firm with significant experience in this area.

For more information, please contact Jake at: hopetownsinfo@gmail.com

*Regenerative Agriculture

A new way of farming is taking hold in all corners of the globe. This new way is as old as nature itself and represents the best hope we have of returning our planet to a state of health.

This type of farming rejects crop monocultures and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). It minimizes tillage and chemical interventions. It puts animals back on the land where they can live and do as nature intended. As a result, the fields sequester carbon, capture and filter fresh water, rebuild pollinator populations, and create tremendous bio-diversity. By relying less on heavy machinery and chemical inputs, and more on human management of natural processes, regenerative agriculture brings jobs back to farmlands. Regenerative Agriculture is good for the planet, good for our bodies, and good for communities.

In partnership with the Michael Young Family Foundation and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and working with local landowners, HopeTowns has a target of 15,000 acres of regenerative conversion in Northumberland County and the Kawartha region. We currently have recruited over 3000 acres.

**The Port Hope Opera House

For over five decades ACO Port Hope has worked to conserve our community's heritage buildings. Recently they stepped up to acquire the Opera House from RBC when no other party could succeed, and have invested in its upkeep. In the spring of this year, the ACO created an open and formal application process, to which we made a submission. Having come to an agreement, HopeTowns can now build on the visionary work of the ACO, first by purchasing the Opera House, then by developing the capital to restore it, and finally by bringing together the expertise to manage it for the benefit of the community.