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## Looking back on 2007

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When looking back on 2007, Mayor Doug Craig calls it a year of great beginnings.

"The city hall has been the big thing this year," said Craig during a year-end interview. "It's being completed on time and on budget."

City staff will be moving into the new civic administration building starting Jan. 7 and the move will be completed over the weekend of Feb. 11.

"Past councils have been reluctant to make a decision on the city hall, but this council made the decision," he said. "It's been a big project and a difficult time for me personally, but I'm convinced we made the right decision."

Craig is hoping that after the new building opens, people from all parts of the city will come to see it.

"Then they can judge for themselves whether we've done a good job or not," he said. "I think people will be pleased by what they find."

Even as the dust settles on the controversial \$30 million civic administration building project, Craig is ready to forge ahead with the next phase of the civic square redevelopment.

"The next thing we're doing is the link and the redevelopment of the historic city hall. It's my goal to see work on the entire area done by the end of this term," he said.

At the last council meeting of 2007, council awarded a \$1.8 million contract to have a new glass link installed between the new administration building and old city hall as part of the first phase of rejuvenating the 1857 building. The work will be completed according to a multi-phased heritage preservation plan approved by the Ontario Heritage Trust.

"I think when it's all done, the new civic square will pull together the Cambridge Farmers' Market, the Durward Centre, Cambridge Centre for the Arts and the fire museum.

As part of redevelopment efforts, Craig wants to take another look at the Old Galt Fire Hall, which is home to the Fire Hall Museum and Education Centre.

"It's a gorgeous old building, which some people are telling me is the most important building on the block," he said. "I think the fire hall needs greater attention."

Also in need of greater attention is Queen's Square. Craig said that early in the New Year a second public meeting will be held to consider the landmark's future. Waterloo Region already has plans in place to overhaul the square and the Main Street bridge this summer. Craig believes those plans may need to be further tweaked in light of new developments - an expansion of the University of Waterloo's School of Architecture and a potential announcement concerning the Venice Biennale, a world class architectural exhibition that may be coming to Cambridge.

"If we get that, it will be huge," said Craig.

Meanwhile, negotiations are continuing with Drayton Entertainment to bring professional theatre back to Cambridge.

"It's not a matter of whether they'll come, it's where they'll go," Craig said. "They've looked at a number of sites and a report will be coming back to council in February or March."

Work also began in 2007 on the city's new heritage master plan, which will take a holistic approach to guiding future development across Cambridge.

The plan, which will soon be brought back to council, will make recommendations to protect the city's unique heritage and culture and suggest ways in which new development can better fit in.

A series of announcements are also bringing new life to the Galt core. On Water Street, preliminary work is underway to redevelop the Old Post Office, while construction continues on the Tiger Lofts and the redevelopment of the former CMC building.

Planning is ongoing on Waterscape on the Grand River condominiums. Work on the Heartwood Place affordable apartments, on Ainslie Street, is slated to begin early this year, while construction will soon be entering its final stages on the Grand House Student Co-op, at the top of the same street.

In Preston, the city has gone to bat to get Waterloo Region to fix ongoing traffic concerns at the corner of King and Fountain streets, where a \$55 million hotel/convention centre has been proposed where the Kressview hotel once stood.

"Regional staff got the message when they came to council that we need to get this fixed sooner rather than later," Craig said. "We're also still pushing to get the region to take another look at the scheduling of work on the Franklin Boulevard and the new South Boundary Road."

In Hespeler, the big news in 2007 was the expansion and redevelopment of the Tannery Street library. Not only is it drawing local library patrons, but members of the architectural community to see its novel blending of old and new.

This year, Craig said all eyes will be on the former American Standard industrial complex, which dates back to the 1850s and was built by town founder Jacob Hespeler. Waterloo developer Shawky Fahel plans to transform the complex into condominiums and commercial space which could breathe new life into the city's plan for both the Hespeler core and river activation redevelopment.

"It's interesting how things are coming together," he said. "There's something happening in every part of the city. We have to exploit these opportunities."

For Craig it's "all about bringing a balance to the city."

"There are a lot of good things happening, but there are also a lot of other things we have to address as well - poverty reduction, drug addiction and social issues. We have struck a new advisory committee which will strive to develop a strategy that will work."

Although the delivery of social services is the responsibility of upper levels of government, the City of Cambridge may be ready to step in as it did in helping pay for the new Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion.

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