

RE: Waterfront Development

Mayor Eisenberger & members of City Council:

My name is John Dolbec. As many of you know, I'm the CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. Chamber President Tyler Macleod sends his regards and regrets, as he is unable to join us this morning. With me, is Bruce Youngblud, Chair of our Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, which also doubled as the Stakeholders' Group, which was capably represented by Martin Lipp just a few minutes ago.

As you know, the Chamber currently has over 2,000 members, who represent almost 1,200 businesses of all sizes and sectors that collectively employ 75,000 Hamiltonians full-time in all parts of the City. We have been the recognized "Voice of Hamilton Business" since 1845, predating even the City itself. On behalf of our members, I would like to thank the Mayor and Council for giving me the opportunity to propose recommendations on the development of Hamilton's waterfront.

First let me say that we unconditionally support and completely endorse the presentation just made by Martin Lipp of the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club on behalf of the Waterfront Stakeholders Task Force, which was convened under the Chamber banner. However, rather than simply repeat Martin's comments, we thought that we would take this opportunity to reinforce our long standing championship of Waterfront Revitalization. We have long had the vision that Waterfront Development is a vital component of an effective community development strategy. Indeed, we know of no City which has such a unique attractive waterfront that does not incorporate it as a pillar to encouraging tourism and repeat visitations to their city, dramatically enhancing community image.

Indeed, it is to embrace this vision that the Chamber re-located its headquarters down to the waterfront two decades ago. At this point in time, with the Waterfront Banquet and Convention Centre, attracts an estimated average of over 6,000 people visits each month, year round. Many of these folks are from out of town, and their visits almost invariably provide them with a different image of Hamilton from preconceived images of the City.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce views a balanced fully Integrated Waterfront as being the most desirable option, within the broader context of still strongly supporting the initiatives clearly identified in Setting Sail.

We believe that the waterfront should be transformed into a vital region-wide urban cultural/recreational and retail year round attraction centrepiece. In doing so, areas of open space and green space should be balanced against plans and developments for the *Integrated Waterfront, including appropriate private sector opportunities*. As a result, our hope is that the West Harbour will become an attraction area, rather than merely a passive recreational area. It should be more than merely a park for the virtual exclusive use of north-end residences. It is an asset for the benefit of the entire city.

To ensure that the West Harbour functions as an attraction, it will be vitally important to implement year-round and day-long activities. However, if our goal is to increase use of the West Harbour, then we must improve connections to it, including, but not limited to, enhanced Public Transit between the Harbour and the Downtown area, plus, improved GO connections to the area to provide greater access. The parking and access needs of visitors' vehicles also have to be clearly identified and allowed for.

The plan for the West Harbour must be implementable and phase-able, consisting of high-intensity activity. But we simply cannot do this on the public purse alone, which is why it will be absolutely essential for us to aggressively pursue more private-sector opportunities and partnerships.

In connection to the waterfront, we must not overlook the need, in the long term (20 years), for improved access from the Burlington/Wellington/Victoria area to the York/King/Queen area, including options for direct access to Highway 403, largely for goods movement purposes. This is viewed by the Chamber as absolutely vital if we are to have a reasonable hope of revitalizing brown fields and other underutilized assets, including the Port of Hamilton for intermodal purposes in the North-east end for essential jobs and prosperity growth.

With regard to the Guiding Principles of the Hamilton Waterfront Trust's final West Harbour Waterfront Recreational Master (WHRM) Plan, while the Waterfront Trust's Plan may not be perfect (e.g. we feel it does not go far enough in terms of private sector opportunities, for example); in the Chamber's view, and in the unanimous view of existing stakeholders, it is a much better option than the Plan put forward by the City Consultant.

In addition the Waterfront Trust Principles, and what has been enunciated already, the Chamber's guidelines in assessing any Waterfront Development proposals will be, as follows:

- Integrating existing business/operations/facilities/investments to their full value
- Encouraging efficient use of tax money and private capital (tax dollars on large scale infrastructure projects)
- Ensure that all proposed operations (residential, marina, clubs, commercial) fall within a long term sustainable, competitively priced business model
- Ensure that boating organizations are provided with or will continue to have access to all necessary facilities, which make them viable including: buildings and parking, docks, shoreline, along with winter and summer on land storage (including dry sail).
- Any plan for the West Harbour must be carefully considered, to minimize adverse unacceptable impact on the neighbouring residential community
- We must also recognize and protect the investments made and the value created by the stakeholder's over the years. In addition, there should be an acknowledgement of the stakeholder's contributions to the ongoing improvements in the West Harbour
- West Harbour Development should support the revitalization of the Downtown. The Hamilton Waterfront Trust's Plan is an excellent opportunity to 'transform' the waterfront appropriately in that regard.

- There needs to be diversity as well as balance for the Waterfront. And while the plan needs to outline a vision and be long-term, it should also be sensitive to long established waterfront uses – therefore, feasible transitions must be developed
- Lastly, effective dialogue with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, the Hamilton Waterfront Trust, and all other stakeholders should be continued throughout the process.

Mayor Eisenberger and Council members, on behalf of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, I thank you for your time and wish you continued success in shaping Hamilton's economic prosperity in the future.