

REPORT TO: "New" City of Hamilton

FROM: Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
From Recommendations made by the Chamber's Business
Development Committee in consultation with the Transportation
Committee
Based on a Draft prepared by Jeffrey Brookfield
Chair, *Setting Sail* Task Force (see below)

DATE: June 26, 2003

1. Background

At the request of the Business Development Committee, Jeff Brookfield (Hamilton Port Authority) Chaired a short-term task force, of 12 members drawn mostly from our Business Development & Transportation Committee, to provide comments to the City of Hamilton on its draft *Setting Sail* proposals.

Setting Sail is an integrated transportation, environmental and planning review of the West Harbour area of the City.

Members of the Task Force include: -

Brian O'Donnell	Bob Innes	Robert Monte
Pauline Mitchell	Ed Fothergill	Bill Curran
John Nolan	Nahanni Nagle	Ollie Thomson
Leon Sauers	Peter Ipema	Jeffrey Brookfield

John Dolbec participated as a resource as did Paul Moore, Lorrissa Skrypniak and Harold Groen from the City of Hamilton Planning and Public Works Departments.

A meeting of the Task Force was held on Thursday, May 29, 2003. Further communications regarding the Plan and Task Force comments were completed via e-mail.

The Task Force found the study to be comprehensive, well founded and generally of long-term vision.

***Setting Sail* Study**

The main objective of the *Setting Sail* Study is to create a series of integrated plans that will guide investment and development in the area. The *Setting Sail* Study is broad and includes consideration of land use, transportation, infrastructure and urban design. The Study is being completed under the Environmental Assessment Act Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process for integrated master plans.

The Task Force agreed that it would focus on the following areas in the Plan:

- ?? Planning Principles
- ?? the three geographic areas of change [being the Waterfront, Barton-Tiffany area and the Ferguson-Wellington Corridor]
- ?? Corridors of Gradual Change [being York Blvd., Cannon Street, James Street North and Barton, east of James]
- ?? Perimeter Road

2. Planning Principles

The proposed principles of the Plan are based on the common themes that emerged from public consultation during Phase 1 of the study, which included extensive interviews with key stakeholders, a visioning workshop and open house in October 2002, and a community open house in January 2003.

The eight [8] principles set out in the Plan are: -

1. Promote a healthy harbour
2. Strengthen existing neighbourhoods
3. Provide continuous public access to the water's edge
4. Create a diverse, balanced and animated Waterfront
5. Enhance physical and visual connections
6. Improve access
7. Celebrate the city's heritage
8. Promote excellence in design

It was generally agreed that the Waterfront was key to the development of downtown. This is an excellent opportunity to "transform" the waterfront.

There should be improved connections between the harbour and the downtown area.

The West Harbour should be an attraction area rather than merely a passive recreational area. It is vital that there is year-round/day-long activity in the area. It is also vital that we examine the needs of the community as a whole and determine what we want this waterfront to be in the long-term.

The task force believes that there needs to be diversity as well as balance for the Waterfront.

While the plan needs to be visionary and long-term in its planning horizon, the plan should be sensitive to long-established waterfront uses.

3. Geographic Areas

The most significant opportunity areas of major change include the **Waterfront**, **Barton-Tiffany** and the **Ferguson-Wellington Corridor**.

Most discussion revolved around the **Waterfront** and **Barton-Tiffany** areas [particularly with respect to the stadium].

The three land use options for the **Waterfront** seek to balance this focus with a mix of residential, commercial and cultural/educational uses. The intent is to broaden the range of attractions on the Waterfront, animate it year-round, boost the city's tourism industry and support a healthy, active harbour.

Each of the three land use options addresses the critical themes of public access, connectivity, diversity and balance in a distinct way. While all emphasizing strong and diverse systems of open space, the options vary in the intensity of residential development and tourist attractions proposed. None of the options treads lightly, recognizing the opportunity to build on the success of recent parkland and trail initiatives, to create a remarkable, multifaceted waterfront for all Hamiltonians.

In terms of the **Waterfront** area, there general consensus for *Plan 1C – the Integrated Waterfront* -- as it was more balanced and had a greater level of intensity and commercial development.

The Task Force supports a healthy mix of both residential and commercial uses, but developed a number of its own "principles" for the area. The plan should be: -

- ?? flexible
- ?? implementable
- ?? high intensity
- ?? 24/7/365 activity
- ?? not reliant on government investment or "white-knight" projects
- ?? phasable
- ?? more urban, commercial than green and institutional
- ?? the developments should be "different"
- ?? Need a landmark/"Signature Piece" such as a revolving restaurant, amphitheater, or something on the larger side (perhaps, potentially a stadium, although there was not strong consensus on that point) to distinguish our harbour and make it a memorable destination location.

The opportunities in this area were compared to Granville Island and also Barcelona.

In terms of scale of development, it was suggested that, for the most part, low to medium rise buildings would be appropriate with commercial uses on the lower floors and residential above. The "Signature Piece" or building may be of considered on a larger scale as requested to enhance the prominence of the feature. Cafes and restaurants and local shops would be exceptionally good for the area.

With respect to **Barton-Tiffany**,

The challenges associated with redevelopment of the Barton-Tiffany area are significant. Although industrial employment uses remain, many have abandoned the area, and there is no longer a strong rationale for preserving land in this part of the city for industrial uses. In time, the area should be redeveloped with uses that are compatible with the neighbourhoods to the south and east and the waterfront to the north. Residential uses are the most appropriate for this area, and therefore two of the land use options are based on logical extensions of neighbourhood fabric. Before residential development can occur, the issues of site contamination and proximity to the rail yard must be addressed.

Acknowledging these barriers, the third option includes a stadium that could be built in time for use during the Commonwealth Games in 2010, should Hamilton's bid be successful. The assumption behind this option is that such a significant project would justify the relocation of existing industrial uses and the clean up of contaminated sites in the area. To help minimize the vehicular traffic impacts from a stadium on adjacent neighbourhoods, a minimal amount of parking would be provided on the stadium site. The intent would be to capitalize on the proximity of transit service and to rely on downtown parking facilities to supply most of the required parking. After the Commonwealth Games, the lands around the stadium would be redeveloped, mostly with medium-density housing.

The Task Force believes that a stadium could be a significant attribute to the area – it could be a major impetus for future development of that area of the city. The Task Force feels that it has great potential and that it would have great access from all directions and could potentially function as the referenced “Signature Piece” building.

It should not be designed as a single use facility.

(Significant discussion occurred around access and transportation issues with respect to the stadium.) While it was suggested that the stadium would be within easy walking distance of the many parking facilities in the downtown and that it is proposed to have a shuttle to transport people from the downtown area to the stadium, the task force still had concerns. Should the stadium be advanced for this area, the task force recommends that additional studies be undertaken to examine opportunities for on-site or nearby parking.

Consideration should be given to potential opportunities with respect to this area of the City to the GO line.

A discussion in the Plan regarding required investment, financial feasibility and economic and social spin-offs would better assist in judging alternatives for the areas.

4. Corridors of Gradual Change

The Plan suggests that,

Land use and streetscapes along the main transportation corridors in the study area York Boulevard, Cannon Street, James Street and Barton Street (east of James) also have the opportunity to change, but more gradually. Hence, they have been identified as **Corridors of Gradual Change**. The intent of new land use policies along these corridors will be to strengthen existing uses and encourage redevelopment that complements adjacent neighbourhoods and enhances the character of the street.

The Task Force supports the Areas of Gradual change and has no further comments to offer.

5. Perimeter Road

One of the critical elements of *Setting Sail* is the completion of a Needs Assessment for a previously proposed **Perimeter Road**. The concept of the **Perimeter Road** has been studied extensively. It has been discussed since the 1960s and, after all of the studies, the original design and alignment of this Road leading directly to Highway #403 may no longer be the best alternative. Notwithstanding this, **the Chamber remains convinced that to preserve and indeed enhance the economic viability of the old industrial East end of the City and strengthen brown field re-development potential, other alternatives should still be actively pursued to provide for enhanced East-West Connections in the north end of Hamilton.**

Before the Needs Assessment is completed under *Setting Sail*, other factors will be considered. The study does suggest however, that:-

The population and employment growth in Hamilton over the next 20 years is projected to be concentrated in developing areas of the City, while growth in established lower city areas, by comparison, will be moderate in terms of employment and less significant in terms of population. Employment in the Bayfront area has declined substantially over the past 20 to 30 years, and future growth will simply return employment levels in the lower City to something approaching past levels.

Transportation modeling based on current travel and transit trends indicates that the existing road network in 2021 will be adequate to handle demand. Current levels of service are very good, and traffic growth to 2021 is not expected to use up all of the spare capacity in the system, even in the most constrained areas that are west of the downtown. When the Red Hill Creek Expressway is added to the network, the comfort margin becomes even greater. Significant additional road capacity in the downtown and west to Hwy 403 is simply not warranted.

Traffic generated by some combinations of land use options in the study area may result in some roadways in the study area becoming quite busy. If there are deficiencies identified that require improvements, those improvements could take many forms, including intersection improvements, traffic calming, improved transit, and even selected widening on some road links. The analysis to date does not conclude that a Perimeter Road is required to support any of the options or combination of options.

The Needs Assessment for the Hamilton Perimeter Road will be completed in conjunction with the other elements of the study.

Issues around the construction of the **Perimeter Road** include: -

- ?? high cost – estimated at \$350 million
- ?? connections to Highway 403 may be impossible [MTO issues]
- ?? demand does not currently exist nor will it appear to exist in the future
- ?? it may actually "dump" new traffic onto West Harbour local streets
- ?? traffic flow actually moves very well within the City, however the bigger issue is the inaction by the Province to continually upgrade and widen the 400 series highways

We need to keep our roadways open and accessible and continue with the grid pattern as this gives our city terrific access. It was noted how easy it is to get around the city; if one street is getting backed up you can always go over to the next one and keep moving while not going out of your way to get to where you are going. It is not a gridlock.

The Task Force recommends that provisions be made in the long-term [beyond 20 years] for improved access from the Burlington/Wellington/Victoria area to the York/King/Queen area. It is particularly important that the City recognize the need to have good access to Highway 403 westbound from the Port and West Harbour area.

6. Recommendations

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce:

- I. Commends the City on a well-prepared planning document.
- II. The Chamber supports the Integrated Waterfront Option (i.e. "1C") as the most desirable.
- III. Encourages that policies should be put in place to transform the waterfront into a vital region-wide urban cultural centrepiece. Areas of open space/green space should be balanced against plans and developments for the *Integrated Waterfront*. The area should be planned and developed as a destination waterfront rather than merely a recreation area. It is vital that there are year-round/day-long activities.
- IV. Recommends improved connections between the harbour and the downtown area.
- V. Recommends that the plan must be implementable, phasable, and of high intensity activity.
- VI. Recommends that private-sector partnerships should be aggressively pursued.
- VII. Suggests that a major, signature piece, such as possibly, a stadium could be quite significant to the Barton-Tiffany area but should be examined in detail with respect to parking, access, egress, and considering other potential more viable locations in the City for the stadium in particular, and most importantly financial viability and sustainability.
- VIII. Strongly supports the exploration of enhanced GO connections to provide greater access into the area.
- IX. Provisions must be made in the long-term [beyond 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.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce (including our Ancaster & Dundas Division Chairs) under unanimous vote.

Ed Fothergill
President (and Chair of the Board).

CC: All members of the Board as well as both the Business Development & Transportation Committees.

Jeffrey Brookfield, Chair Setting Sail Task Force
Presidents of the Stoney Creek & Flamborough Chambers of Commerce