

Hamilton Chamber Of Commerce

West Harbour Waterfront

Issue:

Stakeholders of the West Harbour Waterfront, including the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, have a number of concerns regarding the City Consultant's report; lead by ENVision, for the redevelopment of the waterfront and feels it is lacking crucial key elements in its study. Before an actual public policy is developed by the City, the Chamber and the West Harbour Waterfront Task Force is putting forth the following recommendations to address these issues within the framework already set out in the Hamilton Waterfront Trust report and Setting Sail. It should be noted that Hamilton Chamber of Commerce has already stated our full support for the principals of Setting Sail, and has expressed a general preference for plans outlined in the Waterfront Trust's report over the recommendations made by ENVision. What follows is meant to clarify residual matters of concern, and should **not in any way be construed as a lack of support** for either the principals of Setting Sail or our general preference for the Waterfront Trust's proposals over those of ENVision.

Indeed, the Chamber still fundamentally and strongly supports balanced Waterfront Development which opens up Hamilton's West Harbour for improved enhanced public access and more private sector opportunities that are appropriate under the scope and broader vision of "Setting Sail".

Background:

Members of the Sub Committee:

Bruce Youngblud, Chair, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

Martin Lipp, Royal Hamilton Yacht Club

Laurel Thompson, Royal Hamilton Yacht Club

Herman Turkstra, North End Neighbourhood

Dave Bailey, Macassa Bay Yacht Club

Bill Mitchell, Macassa Bay Yacht Club

Charles Mitchell, Macassa Bay Yacht Club

Sandy Macdonald, Macdonald Marine

Alice Macdonald, Macdonald Marine

Jim Hudson, BARC

Werner Plessl, Hamilton Waterfront Trust

Chris Firth-Eagland, Hamilton Waterfront Trust

George Gage, Leander Boat Club

Kevin Soldaat, Hamilton Bay Sailing Club

Ray Langer, Hamilton Bay Sailing Club

Alice Willems, Marine Discovery Center

Bill Fitzgerald, Hamilton Port Authority

Jeff Papiez, Hamilton Port Authority

Bill Green, Friends of HMCS HAIDA

The Chamber and the waterfront stakeholders, with whom it has been working, are concerned that the normal City process of releasing a staff report on a Friday before the Committee meets does not provide an adequate opportunity for stakeholders to review the final staff recommendations nor adequate time to prepare a submission on the final recommendations.

We strongly urge the Committee to consider at least releasing the final staff report to provide the Chamber and other stakeholders within at least a two week period to review the final recommendations and prepare submissions to the Committee before any presentations on the final staff report is heard by the Committee. This will encourage improved community consultation and input to the Committee's deliberations.

Prudent Financial Management of City Assets:

As the voice of Hamilton's business community, the Chamber, as well as the stakeholders with whom we have consulted, express a concern that while there are clearly works to be carried out in the West Harbour, in these times of economic stress and threatened City budget deficits, the reported spending of \$600,000 on consulting fees for the process, and the concept that as much as \$85 million might be considered to be spent from public funds, are clearly steps that should be taken only when a solid business case has been made for that investment in terms of its return to the citizens of Hamilton.

Compliance with Setting Sail:

The City, working with a wide range of stakeholders, recently completed a three year planning program for the area including the West Harbour. The outcome of that process was approved by Council. A review of the City/consultants plan shows that there is significant divergence from that plan and Setting Sail. As stated in the approved Setting Sail secondary plan,

"The planning process for Setting Sail was guided by eight core principles that emerged from extensive public consultation in the initial phase of the study, and which balance the aspirations of the City and the local community for West Harbour. The principles reflect and build upon many of the City's Vision 2020 goals for creating a healthy and sustainable city. They are the foundation for this Secondary Plan and the West Harbour Transportation Master Plan. As such, they provide important criteria against which future initiatives and proposals for the area will be evaluated to help ensure the broad public objectives for West Harbour are realized."

The Chamber and its neighbours strongly recommend that the principles of Setting Sail be followed and that the City/Consultants' report be referred back to staff to integrate the plan with the principles of Setting Sail.

Integration with the local Community:

City Council, in adopting Setting Sail, determined that the planning process for this area has to integrate with the local neighbourhoods. Council said, in Setting Sail, that future planning must *"Ensure new development respects and enhances the character of the neighbourhoods"*. While we fundamentally, agree; this should not, however, be a sole *"over riding"* factor. **The West Harbour Development is for the good of the whole community and should not be limited only to the needs of residents around the Harbour. Nevertheless, we do strongly feel that adequate balance can be achieved.**

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, but to illustrate, West Harbour Development plans should demonstrate and effectively plan for the increase in traffic that is anticipated for the West Harbour, as a Community attraction location and the manner in which that traffic can effectively access, park and then leave the West Harbour expeditiously, with minimal neighbourhood disruption.

The stakeholders were not able to see that these principles had been adequately incorporated in the City's Consultant plan. We urge that Council ensure that these principles are indeed implemented effectively balancing the needs of both Development and the neighbourhood.

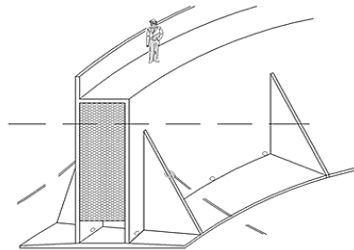
The case for a proper wave break in the West Harbour:

- 1) That the current wave break does not work is evident whenever strong North-East or North-West winds cause damage to docks, boats, and shoreline.
- 2) Before substantial capital is invested in new docks, a new wave break should be built. Otherwise these new assets will require extensive ongoing maintenance and likely will not last long enough to justify long-term financing.
- 3) A new, more substantial wave break – designed to carry pedestrian traffic and located in approximately the same location – would not only address this issue but give the City a unique opportunity to build a true landmark.
- 4) Such a fixture would truly provide public access into the heart of the Harbour. A peninsula-type pier (fixed or floating) right out into the most attractive part of the Harbour, this .5km addition to the Waterfront Trail would not only become a walkway and fishing area, but could also serve as a spectator area for regattas, fireworks, etc.
- 5) The wave break/landmark would also help focus attention on the Discovery Center and new ice rink, helping these great facilities to achieve their potential.

The case against straightening the shoreline:

The current irregular shoreline offers numerous advantages in terms of fish habitat, length of Trail, opportunity to reach lookouts/fishing points and sheltered coves.

WEST HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Breakwater – A Viable Waterfront



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As members of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Waterfront Task Force, the HWT has been assigned the task of summarizing the issues regarding the “shoreline dynamics” component of the study.

Based on the recent meetings with City and Conservation Staff and in the absence of the minutes, the following is a summary of the major points:

1. The design flood elevation for master planning along the west Harbour area is 76.5m excluding the shorelines of Pier4 and Bayfront Parks. This elevation includes instantaneous flood levels and an allowance for wave up rush. Protection to this level could be achieved in a number of ways including two levels of protection (primary and secondary maybe consisting of walls) with a second level further inland. Any accessible points below 76.5 m must meet MNR standards for depth and velocity of water both for parking and pedestrian use. This criterion is for new works and existing works could remain if the use of the facility remains unchanged. **Note:** The elevation is a sum of two numbers, the water height (theoretical maximum 100 year level), and the theoretically calculated wave height caused by winds –generally from the northeast. The wave adds approximately 4 feet. The problem of course with lake water elevation is that Lake Ontario is now dammed so historical projections due to natural fluctuations are no longer as relevant. The original numbers chosen by the City's Consultant required the removal of the RHYC and Macassa and Leander buildings and rebuilding at higher elevations. This has been challenged primarily by the Hamilton Waterfront Trust on two bases:
 - The first was the practical reality; plus,
 - The second was that on that basis much of the local land and structures are below that level –including the Discovery Center.It was also challenged by RHYC on the basis that there should not be 4-foot waves inside the inner basin if the wave breaks are working, and if they are not then they should be fixed, as above.

2. Normally a setback is required for future erosion potential, but this could be reduced for an “engineered shoreline” and the shoreline works are under the control of the City of Hamilton.
3. With respect to a 6 metre access allowance, the MNR policy permits a reduced setback where it is demonstrated that opportunity exists to permit alternative equipment access through barges, etc. in a harbour area such as Hamilton, to facilitate the completion of shore wall repairs or replacement should they be needed in the future.
4. The replacement of the existing floating breakwater is the highest priority to protect the existing marina basin as well as any shoreline infrastructure and buildings present today or proposed in the future.

Hamilton Waterfront Trust: Harbour West Master Plan

Key Objectives Achieved by this Concept Plan, which has been endorsed by the Chamber as the preferred option presented thus far, are, as follows:

1. Significantly increase public access to the waterfront.
2. Positive environmental approach, especially with respect to shoreline and habitat.
3. A harbour front precinct designed as a destination for all Hamiltonians.
4. Financial Viability (including enhanced options for appropriate private sector investment).
5. Innovative and sustainable adaptive reuse of existing elements.
6. Recognition of historical and cultural waterfront institutions.
7. Positive integration with the community in a local context.

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce supports and endorses all of these principals.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce urges the City of Hamilton to:

Within the broader context of still strongly supporting Waterfront Development in general, and the “Setting Sail” Plan in particular; but:

1. Reject outright any forced consolidation or amalgamation of existing waterfront users or their facilities; and
2. When implementing any detailed Waterfront Development plans:
 - Rather than being reliant primarily on Public Funding, maximize opportunities for private sector investments, including but not limited to, existing users, that enable appropriate and sustainable economic activity to enhance employment opportunities and assessment growth in the Community;

- Negotiate “renewable” leases with waterfront users, particularly existing users, to periods which permits investment write-off - generally a minimum of 20 years terms to make facilities economically viable;
- Support design flood elevation for master planning along the West Harbour Area at 76.5 m;
- Build an excellent wave break, as outlined above;
- The existing shoreline should not be straightened rather it should retain its current profile as recommended by the Hamilton Conservation Authority; and
- Otherwise, fully integrate with the City’s “Setting Sail” policy paper, as above.