

# PORT STANLEY FEASIBILITY STUDY & BUSINESS PLAN



Thank you!

Thanks to those who attended the Port Stanley Feasibility Study & Business Plan Community Workshop on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Strong attendance, along with your ideas and input continue to be invaluable to this process.

We have compiled all of the input received through our workshop session and through the comment forms that you submitted, up to and including June 23<sup>rd</sup>. This publication presents a summary of the results of the workshop, and will help to form the basis of a recommended development option, to be presented at an open community meeting scheduled for **July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009**. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you still have a comment form and would like to submit it to the team, please mail or drop it off to:

*Municipality of Central Elgin  
450 Sunset Drive  
Elgin County Administration Building  
St. Thomas, Ontario, N5R 5V1*

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## RESULTS FROM THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP – JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup> 2009 DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY

- A strong majority of attendees believed that development on the divested lands should be comprised of more than just green space. Many felt that the features of Concept 1 were a great start in creating a new community gathering place, and would be far better than the land's current condition. However, general consensus was that the Concept was too simple and may not serve as a community draw, especially during winter months.
- It was noted by many that the features presented in Concepts 2 and 3 held the greatest potential for improving the quality of life in Port Stanley, not to mention the potential to create a development that is financially self sustaining.
- Many attendees indicated that they would welcome increased development density on the lands. It seemed that most preferred to see the lands in a use that would keep it active, especially during winter months.

- The added commercial space shown in Concept 3 was viewed by most participants as a positive. It was indicated by most that the chosen development concept should create positive economic spinoff for Port Stanley.
- Many participants felt that it would be important to extend Main Street, along with its character and activity, down to the water's edge. The idea of creating an anchor for Main Street (in various forms, i.e. a pier, pavilion, amphitheatre, community hall) was very popular.
- A significant amount of support was shown for developing the Port so that it could be developed in phases. Many liked the idea of starting with the features in Concept 1 or 2, and perhaps moving towards a design along the lines of Concept 3 based on market demand and success.
- In terms of dredging, it was expressed that dredging should occur to maintain depths for residential boating at a minimum. Many participants felt that the character of Port Stanley as a working harbour is valuable, especially citing the importance of the commercial fishery.
- Several participants indicated that further development to divested land on the west side of the harbour could be beneficial. Ideas about widening the western pier to create a promenade, building a formal municipal boat launch, or splitting up a potential marina to both sides of the Creek mouth were presented. Participants saw this as an opportunity to connect waterfront activities on the east and west sides of Kettle Creek.
- It was agreed by most participants that the use of dredged material to create a new landform on the west side of the Creek mouth could be a logical and beneficial way to manage the dredge material, building on waterfront improvements and opportunities for activity on the western side of the Creek mouth.
- It was also noted that dredging helps to mitigate flooding at the time of ice break-up, and should be continued to protect existing built form along the Creek.
- It was made clear that the community has a strong desire to create a space which is usable in all 4 seasons, rather than just the summer. Concept 1 seems to only appeal to summer activities, while some aspects of Concept 2 and 3 contain the opportunity for facilities, commercial aspects and programming that could take place in shoulder seasons as well as the winter.
- While it was not shown on the consulting team's concept drawings, several participants (those favouring intensive development concepts) indicated that a new 'Muskoka-style' hotel/motel may be viable on the divested lands. It was rationalized as a potential catalyst for economic spinoffs in place of residential development in the more intensive, Concept 3.

## MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE

- A very significant, and overarching concern presented by almost all participants was the issue of an increased tax burden on the residents of Port Stanley, or of Central Elgin. Residents are not in favour of any development on divested lands if the local municipality's tax base is relied upon as the source of funding. It was also noted that the operation of any new facility, not funded by federal divestiture funds, must have a strong, low risk business case and operate as a self sustained element.
- It was mentioned in the presentation prior to the workshop session that the cross-lake ferry is not being considered as part of this study. The team has is not precluded the possibility of a ferry operation, however the magnitude of study that would be necessary is beyond the scope of the Port Stanley Feasibility Study and Business Plan.

- Some participants expressed concern regarding the governance of facilities within the various Concepts. Municipal management is not generally viewed as the preferred option.
- Several suggestions for the management of new facilities arose from the workshop. Some suggested a 'Harbour Commission' be formed by the public and/or private sector to organize the leasing of commercial space or the operation of a marina. Others suggested that new infrastructure be built and sold to private interests, or that land lease agreements take place between the Municipality and private sector.
- Traffic and parking congestion was identified as a major concern to local residents. Any new development concept must provide ample parking for its facilities and be cognisant of traffic circulation.
- Environmental sustainability was identified by some as a priority in a development concept for divested lands. A recommended development plan should employ strategies to efficiently mitigate existing site contamination, and when possible, use energy saving features in new construction to lower operating costs in the long term.

## MARINA

- A majority of workshop participants indicated their support for a new marina on the divested land.
- Many identified that there is a serious lake surge that often travels up from the Creek mouth. Several participants indicated that in order to create a safe marina, a reconfiguration or addition to breakwaters would be necessary to mitigate surge from Lake Erie. Others cited that a reconfiguration of marine infrastructure may help to mitigate sedimentation.
- There was significant support for developing a small scale marina as shown in Concept 2, and insuring that it has the capacity and appropriate infrastructure to expand if demand exists. Several participants noted that a small scale transient oriented marina may currently be feasible as larger vessels have difficulty traveling up Kettle Creek presently. A marina oriented towards large transient boats may also create spinoff economic benefits for local businesses.
- Some residents expressed again that ample parking would be necessary in the development of a marina, especially at a scale of 300 to 400 boat slips. As part of a full scale marina operation, most participants seemed comfortable with the inclusion of marine gas facilities. However, several groups noted that a new marina should not go so far as including space for winter boat storage.

## PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH

- It is understood that while there is a local boat launch located at Stan's Marina, it is not a public facility. The public launch is located at the foot of an easement through McAsphalt's property on the western side of the Creek. The current public launch, while free, was described as dangerous to use.
- There seemed to be strong support for the development of a new public boat launch, provided that it is operated efficiently (perhaps with an automated system), generates revenue for the municipality, and that ample parking for vehicles and trailers is provided on divested land.

## PIER & BREAKWALLS

- Unanimous support was expressed in the potential for re-opening the western breakwater/lighthouse promenade. It was identified that some work would likely need to be undertaken in order to ensure public safety and avoid liability issues.

- The prospect of an additional pier extending south from Main Street on the east site of the Port was also well reviewed.
- Several participants felt that additional breakwalls, or reconfiguration to existing breakwalls may be necessary in order to buffer lake surge and create a suitable space for a marina to locate there.

#### PARK & PARK FEATURES

- There was a strong consensus that adding park space would be preferred on the divested lands.
- Several components were identified by workshop participants as keys to a successful park space on this site, they were: restrooms; boardwalk/pathways; a gazebo or covered pavilion; picnic area; and, gardens. Several participants also noted that recreational space would be welcome, this could be in the form of an outdoor skating rink, tennis, basketball, or lawn bowling facilities.
- A combined parking/ public market space was identified as an attractive option. Parking was identified several times as an important component to any development plan.
- The boardwalk shown on all concept plans was well received by a great majority; some noted that to create more opportunities for recreation, a smooth paving surface may be preferable to allow for rollerblades or bikes.
- Connectivity was identified as an important design consideration for the Port Stanley waterfront. Some participants expressed a desire to have a boardwalk connecting a new waterfront path to the neighbourhood and beach on the west side of Kettle Creek by way of a footbridge.

#### AMPHITHEATRE, PAVILION & STORK CLUB

- From the workshop discussions, there seemed to be mixed support for a community hall. However, it was viewed as having potential as an opportunity to bolster four season activity.
- It is apparent that in the case of a four season community hall (large enclosed building) a rigorous and well managed programming schedule would be needed to support the facility and ensuring it not become dormant. While many community groups expressed some interest in using a Stork Club-type facility, it remains uncertain (and risky) to determine that there is enough demand for a facility of such scale.
- An artist's retreat/studio was also suggested as possible programming for a stork club type facility
- The prospect of an open air, public pavilion and amphitheatre was generally well received by workshop participants. It was noted that Port Stanley has a healthy arts community, and a public pavilion or amphitheatre could likely function successfully (with organized programming).
- The amphitheatre should be oriented to direct the sound away from residential areas.

#### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Participant views were mixed regarding residential development, shown in Concept 3. Some residents felt that the addition of residential uses on the site would take away from important park space, and from what could be a valuable community asset. However, other workshop participants viewed the added residential space as a positive for the community due to the added tax assessment base, as well as the value of having 'eyes on the street,' additional prospective business for Main Street, and creating a four season place.

- Some expressed concern with losing public land ownership on part of the divested land to a residential developer, options such as a land lease agreements with prospective developers were proposed.
- Views on the type and scale of housing varied, some suggested two to three storey condominium townhomes, or single detached homes. Another suggestion was to develop housing in mixed use buildings along the extension of Main Street; these buildings would contain commercial at grade, with residential apartments in upper floors. The latter option would provide the benefits of residential development, and still maintain a large public space to the east.

## COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL PORT ACTIVITY

- It was noted that new commercial space as part of an extension of Main Street would be beneficial for the community and could act as a further draw for transient boaters. Possible commercial uses included restaurants (with patios), boat/ bike rental office, a bank, convenience store, or café.
- Participants identified a need for additional parking in the downtown currently; added commercial activity would need to be accompanied by adequate vehicle parking space.
- The commercial fishery was identified by many residents as an important part of the community, both as a viable business and draw for tourists.
- Several participants commented that they would like to see removal or relocation of heavy industry on west side of Port in conjunction with this development opportunity.
- The majority of workshop participants commented that the overall outcome should feel – and hopefully function – like a working waterfront.

## DESIGN

- Workshop participants insisted that a new development be attractive; Central Elgin would likely have to look at implementing good architectural control for any residential or commercial development on the site.
- Architecture should be reflective of Port Stanley's heritage, keeping with nautical themes and the older homes in the area – i.e. Cape Cod style architecture.