

**HAMILTON PORT AUTHORITY LAND USE PLAN**

**VISIONING WORKSHOP**

**SUMMARY**

NOVEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2001

Urban Strategies Inc.  
David Bellefontaine

## INTRODUCTION

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On Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Board and management of the Hamilton Port Authority met for a daylong workshop to think broadly about the future of the Port.

The objective of the day was to elicit the perspectives and insights of each participant by considering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a roundtable format. The intent was to move towards the goal of defining the potential near and long-term possibilities for Port development as a key component to setting the direction for the Land Use Plan.

Facilitated by Urban Strategies and David Bellefontaine, the session was part of the first phase of a public consultation process that also included interviews with a wide range of stakeholders.

The following report summarizes the ideas presented at the workshop, and outlines the Next Steps for the Hamilton Port Authority Land Use Planning Process.

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

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Urban Strategies Inc. kicked off the day with a PowerPoint presentation designed to highlight the context of the Port. David Bellefontaine added insights pertaining to fostering the Business of the Port. Following are some general key themes.

### *The Seaway*

- The HPA is one of the top Ports in the St. Lawrence Seaway in terms of annual tonnages.
- As a result of NAFTA, there has been a shift in trade connections to a North/South axis, and a six-fold increase in trade with the US.
- The Hamilton Port Authority is recognized among its peers as a well-managed Port with excellent capacities.

### *The Region*

- The planning paradigm for the Golden horseshoe stretches from Barrie to Buffalo.
- HPA is located at the crux of the mid-peninsula route to the border, yet there is a lack of transportation infrastructure to connect the QEW and the LINK.
- The QEW continues to become more congested with truck traffic heading to the border; as trade increases, this pressure will continue to grow.

### *Patterns of Use*

- HPA is in a unique position because of its immediate context is heavily industrial, yet it is centrally located within the recreational waterfront and immediately adjacent to urban residential neighbours. Therefore land use planning will constantly demand negotiations between recreational, residential and industrial uses.
- In both the Seaway and an international context, thriving Ports are mixed use Ports. This bodes well for the HPA.

### *Connections to Downtown*

- Key access points are James St., Bay St., and Ferguson, yet there is a disconnect between the Port and the City.
- Ferguson is a crucial link because it connects the escarpment to the waterfront.
- Relationships and synergies need to be generated between the Port and the Downtown, which will help promote a thriving Port in a thriving city.

### *Relationships and Connections*

- The public desire to extend the Harbourfront trail meets difficultly across the central and most intense industrial uses of the Port.
- Between Pier 8, 9 and 10 is a transition zone that needs to be clearly defined.

- Other transition zones exist near the residential enclave north of Burlington St. and near the South Gateway/ Windermere Basin.
- Sherman Inlet presents an opportunity for preserving the last surviving “natural state” feature of the Port, despite significant environmental contamination.

#### *Port Occupancy*

- Piers 11, 12, 14, 25 and 26 have stable long-term uses.
- Pier 10 is more of a transition pier; given current uses (and vacant areas), lease lengths, and levels of capital investment. Uses on Pier 10 need to be consolidated to make this a clear and defensible long-term western boundary for the Port.
- In general, uses that demand water access ought to be near the water. This appears to be the case in most instances, but not all.

#### *Fostering the Business of the Port*

- The Port has excellent resources in terms of available land.
- It has deep water and good rail and road services.
- Opportunities exist to consolidate uses and engage new tenants.
- **Target Marketing:** the Port could do the research for specific bulk and break bulk cargo companies and then seek to recruit them.
- **Agriculture industries** provide strong opportunities.
- Eastport has a great seawall and good access to rail: inter-modal possibilities exist. Montreal could be an export nodal point.
- **Strategic Alliances** would allow the port to share ideas and resources with another port. Halifax Port Authority has sister agreements with several other international ports. Ports that share similar features are good candidates for alliances.
- **Container shipping** would require transferring goods from a mother vessel to a good-sized feeder vessel that could access the Seaway. However, it is unlikely that this will ever be a very substantial component of the business of the Port because truck and rail are more efficient, and given the winter shutdown period.
- Current land base is sufficient for an extensive **inter-modal facility**. Road to rail businesses ought to be explored.
- **New powers** may become available to the Port when the Marine Act is reviewed.
- Opportunities related to **Complementary Uses, New Technologies, New Cargo Flows,** and **Outbound Marine Traffic** were also discussed.

### The Port's Existing *Strengths*

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#### Infrastructure

- Excellent facility conditions
- Room to grow: land base has expansion room
- Good dock facilities – have invested well in the past
- Infrastructure enables shipping growth
- Good roads and rail
- Physical containment of the Port; allows for hands-on management and control
- Full-service harbour- dry dock; winter functions could grow

#### Tenants

- Solid long-term client base
- Diverse industries with solid futures
- Steel industry provides solid, reliable base; that will exist for long-time

#### Operations

- Good financial position - historical and present
- Strong organisation- young team
- Current relationships with and within the City of Hamilton (opportunity to develop this)
- Partnerships have grown: Discovery Centre signals this
- Good relationship with 3 levels of government
- Marine Act- similar operational framework to other Ports; this has advantages
- Ability to keep proceeds from land sales: land is a capital asset
- Good time to plan: the economic slow down presents a good time to explore new options

#### Environment

- Strong location
- Protected water- easily accessible by/for all users
- Safe harbour allows for operational efficiency
- Interesting landscape: the escarpment, bay, and factories creates unique ambience
- Environmental gains: regeneration, RAP, return of fish and birds, considered a leader in the Great Lakes on environmental issues
- Improved water quality

## The Port's Existing *Weaknesses*

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### Partnerships

- Need more partnerships with both the city and the province
- There have been mutual concerns regarding partnering with the City on Pier 8
- City's economic development program must be more proactive and entrepreneurial (HPA can contribute also)
- Weak downtown: it may be difficult to complete linkages, this detracts from the creation of harbour destinations
- Communications with the surrounding communities need to be improved
- Randle Reef: need a leader to advocate for a solution - this will benefit the Port.

### Industry Constraints

- The existence of the International Longshoremen Association means that industries cannot control their own labour negotiations; this is comparable to a tax on growth.
- Lack of outbound shipping activity
- Heavy reliance on steel
- restricted freedom to act under the Canadian Marine Act
- Risks related to the future of Stelco
- Warehousing is old technology, needs renewal

### Operational Context

- Missing road links result in the loss of efficiency. Travel to west of the Port is compromised. Is the perimeter road likely to be built?
- Road links by-pass Hamilton; government indirectly subsidizes truck traffic
- Airport must be better utilized; surrounding land must be serviced
- Free-trade zone at the airport and at the Port?
- Taxation (property tax, federal stipend, occupancy costs) hampers competitiveness with U.S. ports where taxes are lower, explicitly subsidized
- Land ownership: leasing may impede private enterprise because companies cannot own their land. This a disincentive for capital improvements by tenants.
- Lift bridge: operational restrictions, strikes, repairs, winter down-time
- History: negative views of Hamilton will be hard to overcome
- Not an ocean port, with only 9-month operations

### Operations

- Focus of the Port has been too narrow, only on Great Lakes. There is a need to think broader and internationally.
- The HPA has not fully utilized/explored strength of their assets.
- Organization lacks a plan and a direction.

- Port's business/revenues have been stagnant; the Port has not kept pace with growth in regional economy.
- The Port has not diversified sufficiently.

## *Opportunities* for the Port which can Guide its Future

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### Context Supports a Vibrant Port

- Capitalize on tremendous population growth in the Golden horseshoe
- Think in terms of the “new economy” for Port growth
- New technologies support new port activities

### Generate City and Port Synergies

- Create a vision for Hamilton that ties the future of the city and Port together
- Add recreational components to the industrial base
- Celebrate the steel mills
- Partner with the City of Hamilton's Economic Development Department for marketing opportunities
- Grow the waterfront to the downtown rather than vice versa
- Create exciting uses here that spin back to downtown
- Pier 8 to Bayfront Park: help the city to create a critical mass of uses that will activate the park, support new destinations
- Develop relationships with city, province and federal governments; build on HPA's financial strength and capacity to be a financial partner

### Community Partnerships

- Public outreach and education will inspire better understanding of the Port's functions and value
- A “school by the water” (possibility in conjunction with the Discovery Centre) would bring young people to the waterfront

### Industrial Possibilities to be Considered

- Strategic alliances with rail and trucking companies
- “E” business: extend services to tenants
- Capacity exists to facilitate growth of tenant businesses (dockwall and land)
- Pier 15 could be developed as an industrial jewel; maximize dockwall use, back land potential. Needs a distinct vision
- Find new uses for under-utilized land that move beyond shipping
- Seek out partnerships
- Host a “Great Lakes Conference” on a topic that is pertinent to the HPA
- Ensure that HPA tenants are given time/opportunities to speak and share ideas
- Promotional events for the HPA
- Consider opportunities to increase land base

- East part is a clean slate: consider state of the art general cargo terminal

#### New Directions

- Diverse and dynamic environment at the Port
- New high quality residential, retail and arts areas at Pier 8
- Feature shipping functions at Pier 8, including a possible cruise terminal
- Emphasize the ease of connection to the airport

Several themes emerged throughout the workshop:

*Exceptional Assets*

The Hamilton Port Authority enjoys exceptional assets that provide broad organizational opportunities. The Port has well maintained dockwall, good depth, and ample land to expand in a variety of directions. The viability of options suggested in the context of this workshop, however, now need detailed consideration.

*Transition Zones*

The transitions between recreational and industrial uses need to be clearly defined. The most significant transition zone is between Pier 8 and Pier 10, and the planned uses for Pier 10 should serve to protect the core industrial land for industrial uses.

*Organization Direction*

The corporate planning process that the HPA is currently engaged in is an important step towards establishing a shared vision for the Port that can focus decision-making and inspired approaches to future development.

*Marketing*

As the Port affirms its direction for growth and desired land uses, it will become possible to formulate an intentional and strategic approach to recruitment of tenants. This will need to include broader marketing of the Port to raise its profile within the St. Lawrence Seaway System, but it will also need to involve “target marketing” of specific tenants.

*The Success of the Port is Tied to that of the City of Hamilton, and Vice Versa*

When discussing opportunities for the Port, workshop participants repeatedly returned to the City of Hamilton and its future development as potentially presenting a supportive context for Port vibrancy.

*Fisherman’s Pier*

The workshop participants affirmed the planning principles presented for Fisherman’s Pier, which included:

- creating a holistic relationship between key public amenity destinations, with attention to ecological and microclimatic improvements;
- developing a clear public realm, with continuation of the beach trail circuit;
- developing towards the waters edge and skyway while creating key gateway nodes at the lift bridge and Beach Blvd;
- celebrating the heritage of the canal, lift bridge, the lighthouse and the keepers cottage.

## NEXT STEPS

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Urban Strategies is currently preparing a Background Report that will serve to inform the Community Workshop they will be facilitating on December 11<sup>th</sup>. A diverse group of stakeholders, most of whom have already been interviewed by the consultant team, will assist in developing preliminary visions for the Port and its context. In order to set the context for this session, Urban Strategies will present:

- A General Overview of the Port and its Context,
- A Summary of the Stakeholder Interviews, and
- The Lessons Learned from other Ports.

Based on the discussion and input received from the workshop participants, the consultant team will prepare options for the Land Use Plan. This will involve exploring the concepts in a greater level of specificity and preparing a preferred option which is consistent with the vision of the HPA as articulated in the Visioning Workshop.

The preferred option will be presented to the public at an Open House early in the new year. A draft of the Land Use Plan will also be presented at an Open House prior to its final release.