INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Waterfront Development Plan provides viable options for development of a significant parcel of waterfront property on the shores of Wabigoon Lake in Dryden. A diverse group of citizens contributed to the planning process through a community Charrette held in October 2007. The results of the Charrette provide a development framework that will help City Council and its partners to acquire, assemble and develop the waterfront in a fashion that is compatible with the community, in harmony with the character of the surrounding neighbourhood and support the principles of sustainability.

The planning process:

The following diagram describes the planning and design process as several typical steps and a constant feedback loop.

![Planning Process Diagram]

Charrette

Next Steps
Executive summary

The product of this planning exercise is a set of ideas based on an analysis of the site and context, and the definition of a development program. Next steps will include the selection of preferred ideas, refining their definition by way of business plans and feasibility studies and implementation. The evaluation of each stage and reporting on it will strengthen the ultimate product or project and provide important information to inform other projects in Dryden and in the region.

Engaging the Community and Defining Sustainability:

The City of Dryden chose to engage its citizens in the planning of this waterfront site using a Charrette process. A Charrette is a dynamic and creative workshop. Participants become familiar with the many aspects of the properties and their context and help determine the development potential & priorities. The Sustainable Waterfront Development Charrette was an intensive three-day commitment. It was designed to quickly yield creative & responsible development solutions for this important opportunity in Dryden.

The City of Dryden is seeking to create “Dryden’s Destination Place” and to define practices of sustainable community development that are appropriate for Dryden. The Charrette was designed to flesh out these goals by addressing a number of objectives as follows:

- To establish a set of values and principles to guide development
- To develop viable options for the waterfront site that are sensitive to the established values and guiding principles, support the principles of sustainability and further the City’s Strategic Plan.
- To engage community members in the planning process to foster community commitment to shared values and to foster civic pride.
- To bring together politicians, city administrators, community members and other stakeholders to engage in productive dialogue.
Executive summary

- To cooperate in an open ended & flexible process that has no predetermined outcome, other than working towards a shared vision and development concept.

Over 100 invitations were distributed to potential participants. A diverse community was canvassed including citizens, local business people, landowners and government representatives (Federal, Provincial and Municipal). A total of 33 participants signed on for the Charrette, the majority of whom attended all 3 days. The participant group provided a good cross section of interests and included the subject property owners or representatives.

CHARRETTE PROCESS

The Charrette process was designed to provide information by way of presentations and feedback by way of roundtable group working sessions with reporting. The Charrette began with words and images derived from group discussions and stimulated by introductory presentations. The design principles and values that result from this process provide ongoing guidance throughout the remaining process.

The second stage of the Charrette required creation of a development program that responded to the project objectives, and design principles. The third stage involved teams developing their ideas on the spatial organization of the program elements on site in increasing detail, starting with general zoning diagrams and moving to detailed layouts based on templates provided.

The following describes the findings of the three days;

Values and Guiding Principles:

Values:
- The lake as a cultural, recreational aesthetic & its potential as a public development asset.
- Respect the environment & environmental sustainability
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Economic diversity
Executive summary

- Regional connections: air, water, land and rail
- Small town ‘feel’ – big city amenities
- Nature in the backyard – “The Wilderness City”
- Maintaining the strength of the core
- Culture and heritage

Guiding Principles:
- Develop creative partnerships that can create investment – public/private
- Public facility for all and accessible for all (ages & cultures)
- Encourage year round use
- Promote and protect the lake
- Environmental / organic approach to all site development (responsive to nature)
- Attract tourists
- Site development be sustaining – social/economic/environment
- Maintain and enhance “Wilderness City”
- Strengthen connectivity
- Mixed use development (includes food & shelter)
- Incorporate cultural and heritage amenities
- Long term
- Realistic & achievable – Viable

Linkages

Participants were asked to explore the associations that the waterfront site has and potentially could have with Wabigoon Lake, the City of Dryden including the Central Business District and the entire region. They considered the existing circulation linkages and the potential relationships that this waterfront site could establish and support. Results included recommendations for both regional linkages and city linkages in the areas of:

- Vehicular transporation
- Active Transportation (Walking, Cycling, Canoe, Kayak etc.)
Executive summary

- Wabigoon Lake attractions both winter and summer
- Cultural Linkages with neighbouring First Nation communities

Development program

Participants were asked to select appropriate development elements for the site based on presentations of the experiences of other communities, the needs assessment findings and the City’s Strategic Plan. Participants utilized the previously established guiding principles along with their analysis of the site and context that resulted from assessing the linkages.

The following is the development program as distilled by the design team from the collection of group work:

- Establish a gateway on Van Horne as you enter the site to signify a distinct district – a sense of arrival.
- The waterfront must be publicly accessible. Develop a public promenade and walkway along the waterfront’s edge.
- Establish full marina services
- Develop a winter village concept: ice roads, fishing shacks, skating, hockey areas, ice sculpture. Attract snow mobile traffic by incorporating year round services.
- Protect Laura Howe Marsh and develop boardwalk system and lookout platforms and towers to better view the landscape.
- Yacht Club: Reroute Yacht Club access. Existing Yacht Club Road would become decommissioned and utilized as recreational trail. Expand Yacht Club facilities to include more parking slips and restaurant establishment.
- Plan for incremental growth and sustainable development
- Incorporate ‘Green building’ practices into new development
- Explore engineered wetlands as an alternative to costly piped wastewater services.
Executive summary

- Specific development types: festival area, water park, hotel / eco-lodge, food services, wellness centre, interpretive centre and accommodations (tourist orientated and residential).
- Interpretive themes: First Nations partnerships, the Wabigoon Chain of Lakes experiences, sustainability demonstrations and the Laura Howe Marsh.
- Adaptive reuse of existing MNR buildings.

Conceptual organization diagrams

Working with the Development Program previously established, the groups continued to refine their schematic land allocation decisions and create conceptual site plans. Spatial needs were evaluated while balancing priorities and benefits. In addition, a phasing sequence was contemplated to describe how their conceptual organization diagram would evolve.

The Sustainable Waterfront Development Plan is based upon these contributions from the Charrette participants.

The Framework Plan: illustrates a potential arrangement of land uses and circulation. It depicts one of many possibilities selected from the Charrette products and is one expression of the Guiding Principles and Program. This particular arrangement pays heed to ownership boundaries and could be implemented in phases. Other scenarios could assume a total land assembly and as such arrive at a quite different land use and circulation arrangement. This framework plan is thus a starting point for ongoing consideration of practical implementation activities. It is intended to inform decision makers on the ideas and directions that have garnered community support to date.
Area Plans: illustrate potential development scenarios for each of the individual property parcels. These diagrams depict the type of development that could be supported by the community within the various parcels. This collection of developments would contribute to the community’s ambitions for this area as a destination, as an engine of economic development and as a model of sustainability while respecting individual property rights. This planning is in response to specific Guiding Principles identified in the Charrette:

- Develop creative partnerships that can create investment – public/private
- Long term
- Realistic, achievable & viable

It is envisioned that each parcel of development would support the other, however, the phasing of implementation can vary significantly based on opportunity rather than necessity.

Sustainability Plans: illustrate how economic, social and environmental factors were considered in the planning process. The plan considers things like green buildings, green municipal services, integration of active transportation, and consideration of eco-tourism/sustainable tourism as well as awareness and appreciation of natural resources. The plan also addresses the social and cultural impacts of the proposals and the economic attributes,
NEXT STEPS

This plan is the first step in the development process. It illustrates the potential for the waterfront and provides a context to make decisions on development and implementation strategies. Implementation is likely to be a long-term process. It will involve significant additional work including constant feedback and consideration of underlying assumptions and decisions. Because this has been a community based process to date, the communication of these results to the community will always be important. Subsequent activities will include:

Workplan

1. **Adopt the plan as a framework document:**
   - A motion of Council to adopt the plan and authorize the administration to prepare plans, budgets and timelines for implementation. Council may choose to designate a project manager to direct and report on activities and progress.
   - The values, guiding principles and conceptual development program are the key elements to be adopted as a “vision statement” for the area. The vision statement may include language as follows:

   *The Van Horne waterfront area will be the four-season destination for citizens, visitors and tourists. It is our wilderness in the city and our jumping off point to access the wilderness of Wabigoon Lake and the surrounding boreal forest landscape. Development will celebrate the cultures, diversity, products and beauty of the boreal forest (The Great Canadian Experience). These values will be expressed in the design and construction of buildings, sites and infrastructure. Development will also incorporate the highest standards of sustainable design and will be a showcase for rural communities in Canada.*

2. **Negotiate with ORC for the acquisition of the MNR site:**
   - This may be a longer term process than can proceed independently of other activities. It will require consideration of replacing MNR’s operational needs at
Excutive summary

- a new building elsewhere in the community and agreement on a purchase arrangement. Consideration may be given to acquiring portions of the property that are currently surplus, as only a small portion is now used by MNR.
- The potential value of the property should be established by a formal appraisal for use by the City in negotiations and business planning.
- Significant development of other lands can proceed without this property

3. Develop a communication strategy and implement:
   - The charrette process is a first step in engaging the community in decisions about the values, principles and development focus that should apply to these properties.
   - Continued communication with stakeholders and citizens at large will ensure that the final development is responsive to community needs and will be widely supported.
   - Promoting the benefits of community consultation, comprehensive planning and sustainable development will position the City as a leader in Northern Ontario and rural Canada and can bring significant financial and marketing benefits. Accept ALL opportunities to speak about your vision and promote its benefits.

4. Prepare a sector plan or equivalent planning document to formalize the intentions for the site:
   - The existing official plan and zoning should be reviewed and compared to the existing development concepts and plans made for modifications if necessary.
   - City council may consider designating this area as a “Community Improvement Area” for the purpose of facilitating partnership opportunities.
   - Prepare a special designation regarding sustainable development criteria for the site. This may use a LEED standard for new buildings (ie; all buildings and related site development must achieve a LEED silver rating) or a standard developed specifically for Dryden using a process such as the “Natural Step” which has been used in a number of municipalities in Canada.
5. **Undertake engineering plans:**
   - Submit report to Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on study findings to date.
   - Investigative engineering study on the potential use of engineered wetlands to address the waste water treatment needs on this site. This concept may also be considered as an alternative solution to waste water treatment plant expansion and/or as a solution for other development areas. Waste-water reduction by means of water savings measures should also be considered.
   - Investigative engineering study on the potential use alternative energy solutions (ie; geothermal energy and/or biomass) as stand-alone facilities or as a public utility for all new development in the area.
   - Preliminary engineering and budget for new roadway design on site and abandonment of yacht club road causeway
   - Submit follow up funding applications to FCM for the work that came out of the initial study application.

6. **Undertake business plans and/or feasibility studies for specific opportunities:**
   - City of Dryden: Centennial Park, waterfront promenade and water park
   - City of Dryden: Preliminary design and budget for conversion of Van Horne to incorporate active transportation route and wayfinding.
   - City of Dryden: Adaptive reuse potential and business scenarios for existing MNR structures
   - City of Dryden and private sector: Marina development
   - Dryden Yacht Club: marina expansion, clubhouse and banquet facility development and rental eco-cabins.
7. **Develop partnership arrangements:**
   - Formalize partnership arrangements for projects as needed based on outcome of feasibility studies.

8. **Promote and nurture private sector investments:**
   - Promote private sector development on existing city lands and existing privately held lands in keeping with the development vision and subject to engineering study findings and cost/benefit analysis.

9. **Build, operate and maintain public infrastructure**

These tasks may apply to individual projects or to the site as a whole as opportunities and needs evolve. The adoption of a framework permits the city to make decisions on individual elements within the context of a complete development vision.

The implementation of this plan can also position Dryden as a leader in community based planning and sustainable development. This leadership role will position the City as a model for the north and can open doors for that would not otherwise be available. As well, creative sustainable planning and implementation may well attract development and can be marketed as a significant attraction for tourists and visitors.

The City of Dryden has started down a path that is unique in the north. Commitment to maintaining this course and enhancing this position can only benefit further plans and projects.