

CITY OF ORILLIA

TO: Special Council – December 1, 2017
FROM: Waterfront Working Group
DATE: November 28, 2017
REPORT NO: WWG-17-03
SUBJECT: **Waterfront Development Analysis**

Recommended Motion

Option 1 – Recommended Option

THAT Report Number WWG-17-03 dated November 28, 2017, be received as information;

AND THAT Council support in principle the Preferred Development Scenario identified in the Waterfront Development Analysis Report prepared by Leith Moore of Waverley Projects Inc. This support shall extend to general design principles such as low to medium density mixed use development, building height which is in keeping with the heights and density proposed in the Downtown Tomorrow Plan, live/work and/or commercial units along Mississauga Street East and potentially Centennial Drive, and waterfront facing residential development along Centennial Drive;

AND THAT Council direct staff to bring forward the additional information required to proceed with the next steps for the Preferred Development Scenario as outlined in Confidential Report WWG-17-04.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Council for discussion and consideration, the Waterfront Development Analysis, which provides a vision for future development of 70 Front Street North and surrounding lands.

Background & Key Facts

- In September 2012, the Downtown Tomorrow: Linking Orillia's Core to the Water study (or Downtown Tomorrow Plan as it's commonly referred to) was received by Council.
- The Downtown Tomorrow Plan recommended 33 Strategic Initiatives, and 20 Priority Action Items to better connect the downtown core and waterfront areas.
- Within these goals, the Plan identified opportunities to extend several City streets to the waterfront (viewscales), redesign and extend Centennial Drive and extend the retail experience to the waterfront.

- On January 22, 2016, the City acquired the property located at 70 Front Street North (subject lands).
- One key factor in the City acquiring the property was to facilitate the extension of Coldwater Street through this property to connect with Centennial Drive.
- Since this acquisition, the City has established a Waterfront Working Group (WWG), consisting of four members of Council and supported by staff from a number of City departments.
- In February of 2017, the WWG presented a report to Council outlining opportunities to reprioritize infrastructure improvements in the waterfront area, to better position lands for development.
- In March of 2017, Council received a report regarding 70 Front Street North which outlined the scope of the Development Analysis and identified the preferred consultant for the project.
- Leith Moore, of Waverley Projects Inc. was retained as the project consultant.
- Since this time, the WWG has been working closely with Mr. Moore on a development concept for 70 Front Street North and surrounding municipal lands.
- Within the approved Capital Budget allocation for the project, the WWG also retained the advisory services of George Dark, of Urban Strategies Inc., to provide input and context from a Downtown Tomorrow Plan perspective.
- The intent of this analysis is to assist Council and City staff in understanding the development potential of the subject lands in order to determine how best to market the site and adjacent municipally-owned lands in a manner that may best facilitate the redevelopment of the area.
- Several components of the final development analysis contain confidential information including details related to tenant matters and land matters. Additional details related to future land assembly options, potential leads and financial prospects may also impact future negotiations and therefore must also remain confidential.

Options & Analysis

Option 1 – Recommended Option

THAT Report Number WWG-17-03 dated November 28, 2017, be received as information;

AND THAT Council support in principle the Preferred Development Scenario identified in the Waterfront Development Analysis Report prepared by Leith Moore of Waverley Projects Inc. This support shall extend to general design principles such as low to medium density mixed use development, building height which is in keeping with the heights and density proposed in the Downtown Tomorrow Plan, live/work and/or commercial units along Mississauga Street East and potentially Centennial Drive, and waterfront facing residential development along Centennial Drive;

AND THAT Council direct staff to bring forward the additional information required to proceed with the next steps for the Preferred Development Scenario as outlined in Confidential Report WWG-17-04.

The 70 Front Street North Confidential Development Analysis (hereon referred to as the Waterfront Development Analysis) was developed through close consultation with the Waterfront Working Group (WWG).

The City chose to retain the services of Leith Moore, of Waverley Projects Inc. due to his extensive experience in both planning and development fields. Mr. Moore has participated on a range of projects including infill and mid-rise development in the Greater Toronto Area, and has worked in many capacities including roles as a developer, builder, project manager and acquisition advisor. Mr. Moore's experience in the private sector has been instrumental in understanding the practicality of the proposed development concept, and his candidness through our ongoing discussions has allowed members of the WWG to ask sensitive questions and gain honest feedback.

The WWG understands that Council has confidence in the Downtown Tomorrow Plan and believe it is critical that the Preferred Development Scenario uphold the values and principles of this visionary document. As such, the City retained George Dark, of Urban Strategies (and author of the Downtown Tomorrow Plan) to ensure that the Preferred Development Scenario complements this vision of connecting the downtown and waterfront areas.

The project scope included a core development analysis which encompassed a market sounding (discussions with market experts/developers), review of potential partners and land assembly options, concept sketches, phasing options and a pro-forma for the preferred development (cost analysis).

Mr. Moore was tasked with bringing forward a concept that could be developed in the near term instead of a long-term vision for the site. Initially Mr. Moore provided three draft concepts for review by the WWG. These three scenarios were similar in size and density but site layout varied. The WWG chose to proceed with the option which is now being presented as the Preferred Development Scenario (attached as Schedule "A" to this report).

Should Council choose the recommended option within this report, staff would be directed to report back to Council on considerations for implementation in early 2018 in order to gain Council feedback and direction. At that time, detailed information including timelines and financial impacts will be brought forward.

Option 2

THAT Council provide direction in regards to the Preferred Development Concept.

This option is not recommended. Should Council approve this option, the WWG would seek feedback from Council on amendments to the Preferred Development Concept.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with the recommended option.

Should Council support the Preferred Development Scenario, staff would bring forward further reports which would consider the respective financial impacts.

Consultation

A number of studies in the downtown and waterfront area were completed ahead of the Waterfront Development Analysis. Extensive public consultation has been sought through development of the Orillia Port Area Public Realm Plan, the Downtown Tomorrow Community Improvement Plan and most importantly, the Downtown Tomorrow Plan. The Downtown Tomorrow Implementation Plan captured this feedback through 33 strategic initiatives. The Waterfront Development Proposal directly implements four of these strategic initiatives.

Economic Development Impact

The Economic Development Department looks to the Downtown Tomorrow Plan as a vision for what the waterfront area can aspire to be in the future. The Preferred Development Scenario upholds this vision by setting out a master plan which includes the extension of Coldwater Street to Centennial Drive, extending the existing retail environment to the waterfront and increasing the capacity for people to live and work in the downtown core.

Currently, 70 Front Street North is underutilized and accommodates only 4 commercial entities and overflow parking. The plaza is currently oriented in such a way that visitors approaching the City by water, and/or visitors to the adjacent park, are greeted with a rear-facing façade that is not representative of the City's vibrant downtown.

The Preferred Development Scenario would include approximately 12 live/work units, 55 townhomes, 17 cottages, over 54,000 square feet of residential condominiums. This development would have the capacity to add hundreds of new residents to the downtown core, while accommodating over 12 new commercial businesses.

This increase in population would ensure year-round activity in the City's core, provide a new market for existing restaurants, stores and services in the downtown core, and would improve the aesthetics in the waterfront area to the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

Communications Plan

In conjunction with the Waterfront Working Group, the Manager of Communications will implement a comprehensive communications plan to educate residents and businesses regarding the development and to promote the vision selected by Council. Communication methods may include, but are not limited to: information on the City's website, City bulletin board ads, news release, social media posts, municipal monthly column, public open house, etc. Communication methods will be evaluated throughout the project and adjusted as required.

Relation to Formal Plans, City of Orillia Policy Manual and/or Guiding Legislation

The recommendation included in this report supports the following project/goals identified in Council's Corporate Plan:

- Enabling Economic Development
 - Facilitate waterfront development through the Port of Orillia Area Public Realm Project.

The recommendation included in this report also supports several initiatives within the Downtown Tomorrow Plan:

- Initiative #1: Facilitate Waterfront Development
- Initiative #17: Extend the retail experience to the waterfront
- Initiative #21: Build new streets to the waterfront
- Initiative #28: Develop small gathering spaces and neighbourhood parks

Conclusion

The Waterfront Development Analysis prepared by Leith Moore in consultation with George Dark has set out a vision for the waterfront lands which is ambitious yet realistic and founded upon the lessons learned through similar developments throughout Ontario. The Waterfront Working Group is confident that the addition of over 100 residential units, 12 commercial spaces and approximately 54,000 square feet of residential condominium space will better connect the downtown to the waterfront and add vibrancy to the City's core. The Preferred Development Scenario is compatible in scale and function with surrounding uses, and will substantially increase the amount of people living and working in Downtown Orillia. The Waterfront Working Group recommends that Council adopt the Preferred Development Scenario in principle. Based on this support, staff would proceed to develop more comprehensive reports to outline the next steps of the process needed to fully implement the proposed redevelopment. Staff would aim to bring these reports to Council Committee by February 2018.

Schedules

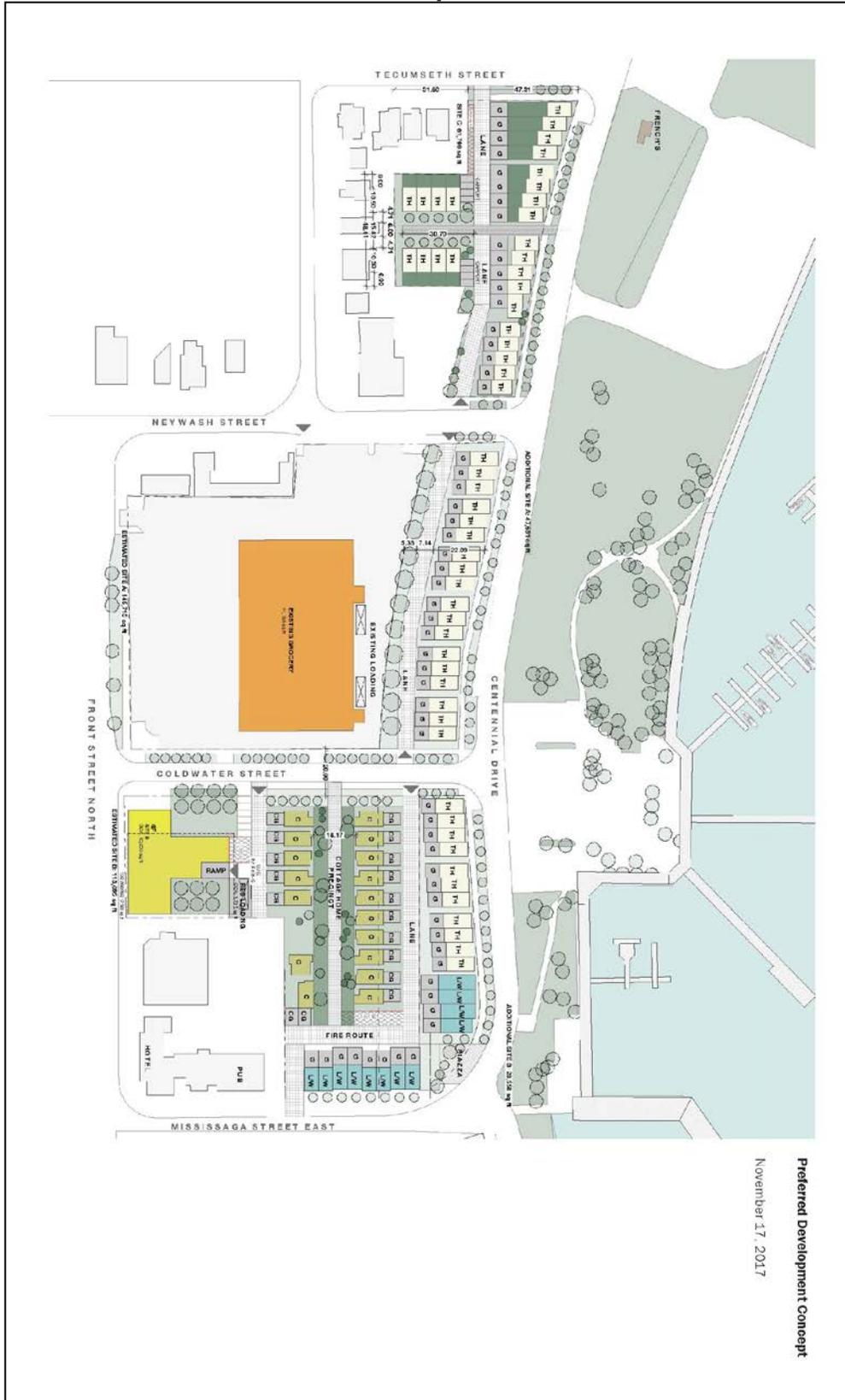
- Schedule "A" – Preferred Development Scenario
- Schedule "B" – Letter of Support from George Dark

Prepared by: Laura Thompson, Ec.D., CEcD.
 Manager of Real Estate & Commercial Development

On behalf of the Waterfront Working Group Committee:

Mayor Steve Clarke
Councillor Ralph Cipolla
Councillor Ted Emond
Councillor Tim Lauer

Schedule "A" Preferred Development Scenario



Preferred Development Concept
November 17, 2017

Ms. Laura Thompson, Ec.D., CEcD
Manager of Real Estate & Commercial Development
City of Orillia
Orillia City Hall

November 23 2017

Re : Waverly Projects Orillia Waterfront

Dear Ms Thompson

Earlier this year the City of Orillia contacted Urban Strategies to provide council to Waverly projects and engage in discussions with staff and Waterfront Working Group Members on the creation of concepts for the city owned lands along the waterfront downtown. This work was undertaken over the summer and fall of this year.

Going forward to your City Council we would offer the following for consideration.

Orillia Council adopted, in principle, a study entitled "Downtown Tomorrow, Linking Orillia's Core to the Water" in June of 2013. The Plan, prepared by Urban Strategies Inc., had the revitalization of the City's Downtown and its adjacent waterfront as a primary objective and was completed as a comprehensive community based planning study .

More specifically, the long-term vision and concept for Orillia's Downtown is supported by seven overarching goals to ensure the success of the plan. To improve Downtown Orillia, the proposed Front Street development concept developed by Waverley aligns with and reinforces three of the following goals;

1. Increase the residential population Downtown
2. Improve connectivity and streetscapes Downtown
3. Enhance the shopping and dining experience Downtown

The initiatives that comprise the proposed development concept are consistent with the vision for Downtown and will indeed be pivotal to successfully connect Downtown to the lake. Connecting to the lake will occur not only by extending the City's built fabric to the re-aligned Centennial Drive, but more importantly through the provision of residential development that supports an increased Downtown population.

The proposed concept also coordinates with the extension of Coldwater to the newly enhanced and evolving Port Area, opening up this space for greater public enjoyment by foot, bicycle and automobile. Additionally, the concept is well positioned to extend the distinct and attractive main street character of Mississaga street to the waterfront with live/work units enhancing the Downtown shopping experience.

As the development becomes implemented, the opportunity arises to coordinate public realm and streetscape enhancements along Coldwater, Mississaga and Centennial that stitch the development with its surroundings.

We feel that Waverley's review of development options for City owned lands has been undertaken with this plan as the guiding framework with primary focus on increasing residential population, improving connectivity and streetscapes, and enhancing the shopping and dining experience Downtown.

We will be in attendance at the upcoming council meeting and happy to answer any questions arising

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Dark', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right and a vertical line extending downwards.

George F Dark
FASLA FCCLA OALAp
Managing Partner
URBAN STRATEGIES Inc .