

SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction and Study Area

The Draft Sarnia Waterfront Master Plan (2005) is intended to provide overall guidance for the development of the Sarnia waterfront lands. The Plan has been provided by the City of Sarnia Staff Waterfront Committee and the Waterfront Access Committee to Council for consideration.

Following a period of time reserved for public review and consultation, it is intended that Council further consider the Plan for approval.

For study purposes, Sarnia's waterfront was divided into six Sections described as follows:

Section 1 - Devine Street to Ferry Dock Hill (Former CN Lands) West of Front Street.

Section 2 - Ferry Dock Hill to George Street (Downtown Waterfront) West of Front Street.

Section 3 - George Street to Exmouth Street (Bayshore/Centennial Park Area)

Section 4 - West of Harbour Road (Point Lands/Harbour)

Section 5 - Canatara Park

Section 6 - Christina Street to Mandaumin Road (Lake Huron Waterfront)

1.2 Waterfront Ownership

The City of Sarnia is in a unique position of having ownership of all of the downtown waterfront land adjacent to the St. Clair River, extending from Devine Street in the south to the lands at the west end of Seaway Road (the Point Lands) in the north. The vision of past and present Councils was to attempt to obtain ownership of waterfront land whenever it became available. This has ensured that the City can now control the future use and possible development of selected areas of the downtown waterfront lands. The City also owns a considerable amount of waterfront land along the Lake Huron shoreline, in the form of former road rights-of-way and parkland such as Canatara Park, Kenwick Park and Mike Weir Park. In order to ensure an orderly and planned approach into the future, a current Master Plan is imperative.

1.3 The Principle Objectives of the Waterfront Master Plan:

- i) To enhance the opportunity for public enjoyment of the waterfront having consideration for persons with special needs;
- ii) To preserve and tell the rich history of Sarnia to the community, visitors and tourists;
- iii) To preserve and enhance the natural environment of the waterfront;

- iv) To create conditions on the waterfront in the Downtown waterfront section that will increase pedestrian traffic and which may assist the core businesses;
- v) To create a continuing source of community pride and progress;
- vi) To maximize the potential for economic development opportunities, and ensure that new development is of a character and scale that is in keeping with the surrounding area and respectful of sound environmental principles;
- vii) To promote the waterfront as an integrated destination for major tourism initiatives, development, celebrations and events;
- viii) To create or strengthen linkages between the waterfront and other areas in proximity to the waterfront;
- ix) To continue with the creation of a continuous linear walkway in proximity to the river's edge and maximize public access to the water's edge and to water based events and activities; and
- x) To recognize existing and future business uses as an integral part of the diversity of the waterfront landscape and function.
- xi) To improve existing public accesses to Lake Huron and to acquire additional land for public use based on the recommendations contained in Section 14 along with the detailed property acquisition report.

1.4 Future of the Waterfront

There are two basic directions for the future of the waterfront:

- three distinct sites are being recommended for development while still ensuring public access to the waterfront in some acceptable form.
- all of the remaining waterfront lands will continue as green space thus ensuring extensive waterfront access by the public.

1.5 Sites Recommended for Development

1. Point Lands
2. George Street Lot
3. Former CN Lands

In connection with the possible development of these sites, the City's Waterfront Master Plan recommends that development be encouraged to be undertaken by private entrepreneurs having regard for the Master Plans of the City and the St. Clair Parks Commission, where appropriate, or through public/private partnerships.

(i) Point Lands

The Point Lands, which are situated to the west of the Sarnia Bay Marina are at the extreme northwest end of the St. Clair River waterfront area and were designated for development in the City's 1982 Waterfront Study. The 1982 Plan indicated that the Point Lands would be appropriate for a major tourist-related attraction which was a children's amusement area. The Plan also identified that fishing docks, picnic area, a restaurant and facilities for guided ship tours also be developed on the Point Lands.

The Section entitled Waterfront Infrastructure provides details on the availability of on-road municipal services. Consultants were hired to prepare specialized reports for all three of the sites considered for development. Each of the consultant's reports addressed the Point Lands and specific references and details can be found in their reports which are included in the Appendices booklet.

The development of the Point Lands with an arts and culture facility, architecturally significant building, or similar major tourism related facility, would create a northern anchor for the waterfront.

(ii) George Street Lot

At the west end of George Street the City owns a parcel of land that comprises approximately 0.36 hectares (1 acre) with 60 metres (197 feet) of frontage on the west side of Front Street and 61 metres (200 feet) on the north side of George Street. The lot is currently used as a parking lot. The portion of the lot adjacent to George Street is designated as one of the major connecting links between the waterfront and downtown. It is recommended that this linkage be developed as soon as funding permits. The linkage should be located at the south side of this lot as well as on a portion of the George Street right-of-way. Access from George Street to the existing parking lot to the south and access across the George Street lot to the office building to the north must be maintained. The remainder of the lot should be retained and maintained for continued use as a parking lot until such time as a development proposal is brought forward for consideration by Council.

Any development of this lot should incorporate the pedestrian linkage to the waterfront and it should preserve as much of the view to the river from Front Street as possible. Each of the consultant's reports addressed the George Street Lot and specific references and details can be found in their reports which are included in the Appendices booklet.

(iii) Former CN Lands

The Former CN lands are located at the extreme south end of the downtown waterfront area. The purchase of this 6.5 hectare (16 acre) site was completed in the early 1990's except for a strip of land which was finalized by the City in 2004. The acquisition of this property by the City ensures public access to a significant section of the waterfront extending from Devine Street north to Ferry Dock Hill.

At the present time, the south portion of this site is leased to a company that operates a concrete plant. The former CN Ferry dock and abutting land is also leased from time to time to provide land locked industry the opportunity to transport goods via the St. Clair River as well as winter berthage for Great Lakes vessels. These uses are viewed as short-term interim uses, however, it is anticipated that such uses will continue until major redevelopment plans for this Section of the waterfront are ready to proceed.

The Former CN Lands are viewed in this Master Plan as being the south anchor to the waterfront. These lands provide the opportunity for a mixture of green space combined with the development of various commercial enterprises featuring site improvements that will encourage access to and use of the waterfront in this area by the public. Examples of possible commercial uses include restaurants, general office buildings, professional buildings, retail and service outlets, recreational facilities, etc.

The plan envisions a continuous roadway and walkway extending from Devine Street northward along the waterfront to Ferry Dock Hill. This access corridor will include a roadway and walkway, spaces for temporary parking to enjoy scenic vistas of the river, together with such uses and activities as seating areas, green spaces, picnic areas, children's play areas with appropriate equipment, fishing locations and points of interest such as the former CN ferry structure.

One of the primary uses proposed for this site is a permanently moored, large display ship at the former CN Ferry dock. Examples of uses that could be accommodated within this ship include a restaurant, movie theatre, bed and breakfast facilities, interpretive centre, recreational facilities or a night club. The ship itself would be a major "anchor" attraction to this site and enhance the overall tourism draw to Sarnia's Downtown waterfront district. Due to a multitude of variables including availability, size and design, condition, mooring details, ongoing maintenance costs, procurement process and the magnitude of retrofitting of a display ship, it has been determined that the information required to consider a display ship, including feasibility, marketing and business plans is beyond the scope of this Master Plan. It is recommended that a committee be created consisting of staff, community representatives and individuals knowledgeable in the shipping industry to develop a report specifically related to the feasibility of a display ship concept.

1.6 Specialized Reports

In order to enhance the development potential of selected sites on the waterfront, specialized preliminary reports that would be required prior to any type of development on the three development sites identified in the Master Plan have been prepared. These reports are included as Appendices to this Plan and provide background information that would be required by both developers and the City for the purpose of evaluating a particular site prior to creating detailed project proposals.

The reports are as follows:

- 1) Archeological Assessment - Stage 1 (2004)
- 2) Environmental Site Assessment - Phase 1 (2004)
- 3) Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation (2004)
- 4) Sarnia Waterfront Shoreline review (2005)
- 5) Bright's Grove Waterfront Feasibility Study (1991)

It is anticipated that additional or supplementary reports and studies may be required to deal with specific development proposals or issues related to waterfront development.

1.7 Remainder of the Downtown Waterfront

With the exception of the three sites recognized for possible development, it is the intention of this Master Plan to retain and protect the current level of public open space that characterizes the Sarnia waterfront. Upgrades will take place through the years but it is intended that all improvements be designed to enhance the public use and enjoyment of the green space and the view of the St. Clair River.

1.8 Lake Huron Waterfront

During 2004, the Planning Advisory Committee was temporarily reconstituted as the Waterfront Access Committee and their report on matters relating to the Lake Huron waterfront is included as Section 14 in this Plan.

In general terms, City owned properties that front onto Lake Huron are planned to continue as green space and to be improved with people friendly amenities as financial resources may permit. The Lake Huron Waterfront Access section of the Plan recommends that the City continue to explore the opportunity to acquire additional public accesses to the Lake using a detailed and prioritized list of properties provided by the Committee.

1.9 General Recommendations

The following recommendations are general in nature, and additional specific recommendations will be found in each Section of the Plan. It is recommended:

- i) that the contents of this Master Plan form the basis for future decisions on the waterfront.
- ii) that the St. Clair Parks Commission be requested to provide input with regard to the lands where the Commission has entered into a long term lease with the City.
- iii) that the three development sites specifically listed be promoted for development opportunities.
- iv) that potential major developments be required to submit detailed feasibility, marketing and business plans for review and approval by the City.
- v) that all developments on the waterfront maximize public access to the river.

- vi) that all proposed developments along the waterfront recognize the need to take into account environmental issues and concerns and to that end complete an environmental impact assessment for review and approval by the City.
- vii) that future City Operating Budgets include sufficient funds to accommodate daily maintenance work as well as major repairs when required. All future waterfront improvements which have a maintenance cost impact on the Corporation are to be clearly stated in advance of project approval.
- viii) that a financial reserve be created with sufficient funds to provide for the eventual replacement of the capital improvements located along the waterfront at the end of their useful life cycle.
- ix) that the St. Clair Parks Commission be requested to explore the recommendations included in the recent study of the Sarnia Bay Marina.
- x) that the St. Clair Parks Commission be requested to establish a reserve to ensure that sufficient funds will be available to replace capital improvements constructed and managed by the Commission at the end of their useful life cycle.
- xi) that the waterfront be accessible to the extent practicable for persons with disabilities as well as persons with special needs.
- xii) that Council continue to evaluate the feasibility of obtaining ownership or use of the Government Dock buildings and lands for composite, seasonal uses that would enhance the overall attractiveness and appeal of the waterfront.
- xiii) that Council review all leases on waterfront lands when they expire to determine if the use is to continue and for what period of time. The Master Plan also recommends that the renewal and terms of leases be based on the progress of waterfront improvements.
- xiv) that the waterfront be recognized as an inappropriate location for memorials of any type except for the dedication of existing benches or new benches of a similar style.
- xv) that Council consider selecting a new name for the property commonly referred to throughout this report as the former CN Lands.
- xvi) that the display ship option be pursued as recommended in this Plan.



SECTION 2 - COMMENTS REGARDING DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Basis for Development

Sarnia must be able to compete against a number of strong competitors to attract tourists. Developments should be based on Sarnia's distinctive characteristics. Projects themed on the Great Lakes, shipping, history, geography, arts and culture, the First Nations, industry or the environment stand the best chance for success.

2.2 Sustainable Development

Sustainability is a primary consideration for all waterfront projects and feasibility, marketing and business plans should be an integral part of all development proposals. In addition, future projects should be considered based on the development recommendations contained in this Plan.



SECTION 3 - OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Principle Objectives of the Waterfront Master Plan are as Follows:

- i) To enhance the opportunity for public enjoyment of the waterfront having consideration for persons with special needs;
- ii) To preserve and tell the rich history of Sarnia to the community, visitors and tourists;
- iii) To preserve and enhance the natural environment of the waterfront;
- iv) To create conditions on the waterfront in the Downtown waterfront section that will increase pedestrian traffic to assist core businesses;
- v) To create a continuing source of community pride and progress;
- vi) To maximize the potential for economic development opportunities, and ensure that new development is of a character and scale that is in keeping with the surrounding area and respectful of sound environmental principles;

- vii) To promote the waterfront as an integrated destination for major tourism initiatives, development, celebrations and events;
- viii) To create and strengthen linkages between the waterfront and other areas in proximity to the waterfront;
- ix) To continue with the creation of a continuous linear walkway in proximity to the river's edge in order to maximize public access to the water's edge and to water based events and activities; and
- x) To recognize existing and future business uses as an integral part of the diversity of the waterfront landscape and function.
- xi) To improve existing public accesses to Lake Huron and to acquire additional land for public use based on the recommendations contained in Section 14 along with the detailed property acquisition report.

3.2 Key Planning Strategies:

i) To strengthen the economic and social image and identity of Sarnia's waterfront

There are many economic and social benefits associated with development on the waterfront. New development can mean an increased or expanded tax base, as well as increased employment opportunities. Improving the waterfront can also provide an excellent opportunity to diversify and enhance the social well-being of the community. Improved places for public use and enjoyment can be provided which contribute to build civic pride, an improved community image and enhanced economic advantages.

There are portions of the Sarnia waterfront that are presently either vacant or under-used, such as the former CN lands section and the Point Lands section. New development in these areas can be the catalyst to spark economic change in the entire area, including the adjacent Downtown district. The waterfront also has considerable potential to support new development directed at the tourist market, which can in turn expand the economic base of the community. A waterfront with uses which are patronized by local residents also has greater potential to attract visitors and tourists.

Together with an improved image for the urban area as a whole, waterfront development can address broader community goals. A growth in community spirit and a renewed sense of identity can be promoted by providing more space and facilities for increased personal contacts and promoting the City's rich history and for special events.

A related social benefit concerns public safety, which can be achieved through waterfront improvement. At the most basic level, waterfront development means more people on the waterfront. People will feel more comfortable and be more attracted to places which have been successfully developed to attract human beings. Safety from traffic and hazards such as a deteriorated shoreline and dark isolated places can be achieved through improved safety initiated as a result of new development.

ii) To accommodate future development anchors and encourage new waterfront focal points on the St. Clair River waterfront

The same strategy of locating anchor stores in shopping centres can also be applied to waterfront areas. Anchor uses, such as theme parks, arts and culture, restaurants, marinas and display ships, are essential for attracting users and drawing them to the waterfront. If the waterfront is structured with a combination of uses of equal intensity, no one destination will be distinguished from another and the ability to lend identity to the waterfront will be constrained. It is important that the City work to attract development “anchors” along the waterfront to act as focal points, destination points and places of interest for residents, visitors and tourists.

iii) To develop connections along the waterfront

The Master Plan recognizes the importance of creating effective connections between various areas and components along the St. Clair River waterfront area, the Village of Point Edward and Canatara Park.

The St. Clair River waterfront should also be well connected from Devine Street to the Point lands via a continuous waterfront walkway. This walkway should allow the waterfront users to experience the waterfront from different perspectives and provide a variety of views.

Walkway connections should be considered as features of the waterfront as well as extensions of the pedestrian system. The existing character of the walkways can be maintained by continuing with the existing design elements (furniture, surface material, railings and lighting).

It is also important that the St. Clair River waterfront be well connected with waterfront improvements similar to those in the Village of Point Edward that are being created by that municipality and the Bluewater Bridge Authority. In this regard, access from the north end of the St. Clair River waterfront to Venetian Boulevard has been strengthened by the recent extension of the pedestrian walkway through Centennial Park to Exmouth Street. Access through the Village along Venetian Boulevard and the Point Edward waterfront provides an important connection to Canatara Park.



iv) To develop linkages with the Downtown

The Downtown Concept Plan provides a strategy for the development of linkages between the St. Clair River waterfront and the Downtown area. This strategy remains relevant today and is incorporated into the Waterfront Master Plan.

Linkages can strengthen ties between the Downtown and the waterfront. Linkages can also be regarded as features in themselves, as well as extensions of the downtown pedestrian system. A unique character can be developed by the use of a co-ordinated design for furniture, paving, landscaping, lighting, signage and information kiosks.

It is important that the walkway linkages maximize the benefit of the location and pedestrian destinations, rather than merely provide a means of public access. Linkage design should create an environment that assists the user in experiencing the interaction of land and water to the fullest extent. Interpretive and informative signage and features related to the landscape can assist in turning a purely functional system into a recreational experience.

v) To provide infrastructure improvements

The importance of ensuring an ecologically healthy river and waterfront should not be overlooked. Ongoing infrastructure improvements to the City storm and sanitary systems are critical to the improvement of water quality in both the St. Clair River and Sarnia Bay. The Plan encourages the continued upgrading of these services.

vi) To enhance the natural environment and open space

Naturalization activities should continue to be carried out to further enhance and preserve the natural environment of the waterfront lands. The Plan encourages the continued provision of high quality landscaped open space along the waterfront.



SECTION 4 - BACKGROUND

4.1 Specialized Reports

Preliminary technical reports were prepared which pertain to the three areas identified as having exceptional development potential. The information contained in these reports will be necessary for any type of development on the waterfront to proceed. These reports are included as Appendices to this plan to provide background information for both developers and the City, to facilitate the evaluation of any of the three sites prior to preparing detailed development and design proposals.

The Reports are as follows:

- 1) Archeological Assessment - Stage 1 (2004)
- 2) Environmental Site Assessment - Phase 1 (2004)
- 3) Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation (2004)
- 4) Sarnia Waterfront Shoreline review (2005)
- 5) Bright's Grove Waterfront Feasibility Study (1991)

Other reports and studies may be prepared from time to time as required to deal with specific proposals or issues.

4.2 Corporate Strategic Plan

The City's Corporate Strategic Plan which was prepared in 2000, recognized the importance of the City's waterfront. The waterfront is acknowledged in the City's Vision:

"Our VISION is that as a progressive, caring waterfront community with a solid economic base, Sarnia maximizes its potential for growth and prosperity for the benefit of its people."

Under the Strategic Theme, "Promotion and Economic Development", the Strategic Plan identifies waterfront development as an important objective in promoting a positive community image and ensuring economic viability. The Plan identifies the following series of actions designed to provide a vision for the waterfront:

- (i) Review, revise and update the Waterfront Master Plan, and design and undertake a public consultation program and process to integrate feedback.
- (ii) Identify opportunities for public-private ventures and new opportunities for waterfront enhancement.

- (iii) Obtain corporate commitment to implement an integrated waterfront plan and source/co-ordinate local, provincial, federal and special purpose bodies funding.
- (iv) Create alliances with waterfront partners and shareholders.
- (v) Promote, market and program the community waterfront as a major attraction.
- (vi) Seize opportunities to link waterfront development and adjacent areas.

4.3 Committees

The existing Sarnia Waterfront Study was completed in November of 1982. A number of changes have occurred over the intervening years and it is now important to create a new Waterfront Master Plan. It was determined that the main body of the plan would be prepared in-house by City staff and this effort would be supplemented with reports prepared by consultants on specific topics that are beyond the expertise of City staff.

The area of Lake Huron waterfront owned by the City which extends from Christina Street to Mandaumin Road in Bright's Grove was not included in the area to be studied by the staff Committee. It was determined that the Planning Advisory Committee could undertake a special project and accordingly, the Planning Advisory Committee was temporarily reconstituted as the Waterfront Access Committee and assigned the task of studying and making recommendations for this area.

(i) Waterfront Master Plan Regional Committee

At the same time that the City staff group was developing a master plan for the area of waterfront owned by the City of Sarnia, both the Village of Point Edward and the Bluewater Bridge Authority (BWBA) were actively developing new master plans for their respective areas. This activity presented a unique opportunity to review the master plans for all publicly owned property on the waterfront to ensure, to the extent possible, a unified direction. Representatives from the Village and BWBA were invited to sit on a Regional Waterfront Steering Committee along with other involved parties as set out below:

- City Manager
- Director of Community Services
- Director of Planning and Building
- Director of Economic Development and Corporate Planning
- Manager of the St. Clair Parks Commission
- Clerk of the Village of Point Edward
- Manager of the Bluewater Bridge Authority
- Representative from the St. Clair Conservation Authority
- Representative from Tourism Sarnia Lambton
- Representative from Sarnia Lambton Economic Partners

A series of meetings were held by this committee and it was recognized that the participants' master plans would require completion before any overall direction could be considered. As a result, the review of all individual plans for the purpose of ensuring compatibility became a second phase of the regional project to be concluded later in 2005/2006.

The Regional Waterfront Steering Committee did create a set of Objectives and Outcomes to be used as a framework in the development of a "regional" Master Plan. These are restated as follows:

Objectives

- A. Establish the Waterfront Task Force as the recognized public-private sector partnership with an enduring, on-going mandate to create and recommend a Master Plan for the Huron \ St. Clair waterfront that provides a dynamic, coordinated on-going planning framework to guide both development\re-development initiatives and program\operational matters, and as a tool to guide all participating authorities in developing their current and capital budgets, so as to ensure the coordinated implementation of the Master Plan by all.
- B. Recognize the Waterfront as the part of our community of which we are most proud, and ensure that both the Master Plan and the master plan planning process serves to maximize the potential of the area to reflect our collective community pride
- C. Maximize the potential of the waterfront to attract a balance of new commercial, residential, open space and leisure uses, to maximize the potential for economic development opportunities, and ensure that new development and uses are of a character and scale that are in keeping with the surrounding area and adhering to sound environmental principles.
- D. Promote the Waterfront planning area as an integrated destination for major tourism initiatives, developments, celebrations and events.
- E. Recognize existing business uses (e.g. Harbour; Cargill) as an integral part of the diversity of waterfront functions, and ensure the Master Plan provides for the future needs of such uses to better integrate such uses into waterfront development, and to maximize their community economic benefit and development potential.

Outcomes

The following is a list of outcomes to be derived from the above noted Waterfront Objectives:

- Ensure that the Waterfront Master Plan is sufficient to provide a basis for applying for funding from senior level government, in the event that grant monies or programs become available.
- Encourage a diversity of active and passive uses along the waterfront to maximize the potential of the area.
- Ensure that new uses and activities are planned and managed in such a manner as to be as safe, flexible and adaptable as possible, and maximize the advantages of an integrated waterfront area in all aspects of planning and operations (e.g. infrastructure and services, parking, landscaping, linkages, maintenance, signage).

- Identify opportunities to create or strengthen linkages between the waterfront and other areas in proximity to the waterfront.
- Complete an inventory of all relevant information that will be required to prepare and maintain the Waterfront Master Plan; undertake studies and further investigations as required to complete the inventory of information; and integrate all information and data into a multi-layered Geographic Information System as the methodology of choice for recording and maintaining this complex and diverse information base.
- Conduct an infrastructure analysis to assess the adequacy of existing service systems to attract and support new investment and development, and provide for the completion of upgrades as may be necessary.
- Identify waterfront lands and locations where new development can occur, and recommend where a set of pre-approvals to assist in attracting such new investment could be considered by appropriate parties.
- Prepare a set of comprehensive prospectus documents to clearly identify development opportunity locations, incorporating all necessary information and providing pre-approvals where appropriate, to attract interest in waterfront development and increase the area's investment appeal.
- Compile detailed site plans for recognized major parks, activity nodes or identified development sites along the length of the waterfront (e.g. Canatara Park; the Water Treatment complex; Point Edward Park; marinas; Casino South Development area; the Point Lands; the Federal Harbour; Centennial Park; others).
- Prepare a set of design and building guidelines that will contribute to integrate development along the waterfront, create a safe environment, and that will facilitate the attraction of an interesting and vibrant mix of uses and activities
- Create a continuous linear walkway in proximity to the lake and river shorelines to maximize public access both to the water's edge and to water based events and activities.
- Ensure that the Waterfront Master Plan preserves the shoreline edge by the integration of various shoreline protection works, and incorporates policies and methodologies to address the impact of such hazards as flooding or wave uprush.

- Create development plans based on sound business principles and capable of timely implementation.
- Provide for the Waterfront Master Plan to be measured to quantify projected costs and the range of economic benefits (e.g. new assessment; job opportunities; economic multipliers) that will result from the implementation of the Master Plan.
- Ensure a waterfront master plan planning process that encourages both public and private sector input, and opportunities for the development of public – private partnerships.
- Undertake activities (e.g. Real Estate Industry shows) to promote the entire Waterfront District as a location for development
- Examine the potential for the creation of international public – public partnerships (e.g. Waterfront Task Force / Port Huron) to maximize the potential of the entire waterfront.
- Provide for the Waterfront Master Plan to recognize and reconcile the various benefits and challenges between short / long term development issues and short / long term operational issues.
- Create a process and protocol to provide for the coordinated use of all main activity areas for major events, concerts and festivals (e.g. BayFest; Tall Ships; River Fest; Mackinaw; Highland Games; others).



(ii) City Waterfront Master Plan Staff Committee

This committee consists of:

- the City Manager
- the Director of Community Services
- the Director of Planning & Building
- the Director of Engineering
- the Director of Economic Development and Corporate Planning
- the City's Senior Planner/Landscape Architect

Waterfront Staff Committee Objectives:

The Waterfront Master Plan Staff Committee established the following objectives with regard to the waterfront study area from the former CN Lands to the Point Lands and along the Lake Huron waterfront:

- i) To enhance the opportunity for public enjoyment of the waterfront having consideration for persons with special needs;
- ii) To preserve and tell the rich history of Sarnia to the community, visitors and tourists;
- iii) To preserve and enhance the natural environment of the waterfront;
- iv) To create conditions on the waterfront in the Downtown waterfront section that will increase pedestrian traffic and which may assist the core businesses;
- v) To create a continuing source of community pride and progress;
- vi) To maximize the potential for economic development opportunities, and ensure that new development is of a character and scale that is in keeping with the surrounding area and respectful of sound environmental principles;
- vii) To promote the waterfront as an integrated destination for major tourism initiatives, development, celebrations and events;
- viii) To create or strengthen linkages between the waterfront and other areas in proximity to the waterfront;
- ix) To continue with the creation of a continuous linear walkway in proximity to the river's edge and maximize public access to the water's edge and to water based events and activities; and

- x) To recognize existing and future business uses as an integral part of the diversity of the waterfront landscape and function.
- xi) To improve existing public accesses to Lake Huron and to acquire additional land for public use based on the recommendations contained in Section 14 along with the detailed property acquisition report.

(iii) Waterfront Access Committee

Council utilized the Waterfront Access Committee to undertake a study of the Lake Huron waterfront. The committee consisted of the following volunteer members:

Donald van Goozen	Chair
Arthur Teasell	Vice Chair
Elizabeth McDonald	Secretary
Betty Eyre	
Debbie Krukowski	
James Mackenzie	
Alison Mahon	
Patricia McLean	
Ivan Mater	
Councillor John Vollmar	

A set of objectives was established for the Waterfront Committee, as follows:

- i) study the Lake Huron Waterfront from Christina Street to Mandaumin Road;
- ii) identify City owned land that allows public access to Lake Huron;
- iii) review each of the road ends, municipal parks and other City owned waterfront property located in the study area to determine existing facilities and make recommendations;
- iv) identify areas where new accesses can be gained to Lake Huron and analyze the opportunities for procurement;
- v) investigate all funding opportunities that may be available to improve and/or gain access to the waterfront;
- vi) develop a geographic based priority list to assist the City in knowing where to best spend available funds, if land for access becomes available.

Note: The full report of the committee is included as Section 14 to this plan.

4.4 Public Input



As part of the study, public input was obtained through the use of a questionnaire that was published in local newspapers. During the summer of 2004 a display was set up on the waterfront where members of the public were invited to fill out the questionnaires. Two hundred (200) questionnaires were returned to the Committee. Sixty (60) came from the newspaper inserts and the remaining one hundred forty (140) were filled out at the waterfront display.



The questionnaire provided the Committee with a “snapshot” of the public’s likes, dislikes and suggestions at the time the survey was taken. Several of the public’s concerns or suggestions had already been addressed as a result of the City’s ongoing waterfront improvements and maintenance programs. Examples include the installation of additional lighting along the walkway, the planting of additional trees and the construction of a walkway to the park from Exmouth Street.

The most frequently mentioned single suggestion was to provide for more of the same waterfront development as it presently exists. Perhaps more significant was the fact that the remaining responses consisted of one hundred and two different suggestions for new development or activities on the waterfront.

Based on the input received from the questionnaire, other groups and organizations, and in conjunction with Committee input and analysis, the Waterfront Committee has developed this Master Plan to promote improvement and expansion of the waterfront parks system while permitting the introduction of selected activities and facilities which are sensitive and complimentary to them. Specific development or activity proposals may require additional study beyond the scope of the Master Plan.

Prior to final completion of the Waterfront Master Plan, a draft was prepared for review and comment by Council and other interested parties. This input was used to finalize the plan.



SECTION 5 - PLANNING DOCUMENTS

5.1 Official Plan for Former CN Lands to Point Lands

The City of Sarnia Official Plan designates the City owned lands along the St. Clair River, Sarnia Bay waterfront and the Federal Harbour area as “Waterfront”. The purpose of this designation is to permit water oriented activities, including ancillary commercial uses (i.e. hotels, restaurants, boutiques, etc.), public services and utilities, private and public open space and recreational facilities. The designation also permits the existing terminal grain elevator, the winter storage of ships and related repair activities and docking facilities for transient boats, display ships and tour boats. Residential uses are not permitted in the Waterfront designation.

The protection of fish and waterfowl habitat within the Waterfront designation is also a City priority. The Plan provides that the City will endeavour to ensure that development in the Waterfront designation will maintain and improve, wherever feasible, the natural environment of the area. The Plan states that Council will promote the development of the waterfront lands as a continuous major open space system. The Plan also states that no City land will be disposed of in the Waterfront area and that Council will attempt to acquire privately owned lands where appropriate and feasible. The tourist potential of the waterfront is acknowledged and is to be enhanced by the development of water related recreational, commercial and entertainment facilities.

Development along the waterfront is not to interfere with the development of a continuous public walkway at or near the water’s edge. The orientation and design of new buildings and structures are to seek to minimize the visual obstruction of the St. Clair River and Sarnia Bay from in-shore areas and of the shoreline from shoreline locations.

The Plan encourages uniformity of design for elements such as benches, railings, lighting fixtures, walkways and signs.

The Plan recognizes that the Waterfront designation provides a unique and desirable location for public facilities that will serve the cultural interests of both City residents and tourists. In this respect, such uses may include educational or heritage displays and exhibits on matters of local importance such as the petro-chemical industries, the Great Lakes and Great Lakes Shipping.

The Official Plan acknowledges that the Waterfront has historic and functional links to the Downtown. The Downtown is located adjacent to and abutting much of the St. Clair River portion of the Waterfront. The Plan recognizes that the Downtown policies are to be complementary to the Waterfront policies and it also promotes the following objectives with respect to the Downtown:

- a) to encourage both the land based and the water based activities associated with the waterfront and to strengthen their relationship to the Downtown;
- b) to recognize that the waterfront includes the shoreline land based activity area located along the periphery of the Downtown;
- c) to develop and manage the waterfront to reinforce its links to the Downtown in such a manner so as to serve the varied interests of such diversified groups as visitors, tourists, recreational users, marine users, residents of the area and the general public;
- d) to develop, redevelop and manage the Waterfront and Downtown areas as a linked land use and water use area in terms of the following:
 - i) that public access to the waterfront be maintained at street-ends, over public open space areas, and along the waters edge;
 - ii) that the private security and enjoyment of the area by the water based marine users, commercial establishments and local residents be respected in providing public access to the waterfront;
 - iii) that visual access to the water area be by streets in the Downtown that terminate at the Waterfront maximized from Front Street and wherever possible around buildings located adjacent to the waterfront and be maintained in association with open space areas; and
 - iv) that adequate public parking be provided along the waterfront or in close proximity to the access points, to service the public parking needs of tourists, recreational users and general public.

5.2 Zoning By-Law for Former CN Lands to Point Lands

The land based component of the City's waterfront is zoned as Waterfront 1 (W1). This zoning permits a wide range of uses consistent with the policies of the Official Plan. Residential land uses are not permitted.

The water based component of the waterfront is zoned as Environmental Protection Area 1-1 (EPA 1-1). This zoning limits development to a variety of docking facilities as well as recreation uses.

5.3 Downtown Concept Plan

The Downtown Concept Plan approved by City Council in 1996, emphasizes the relationship between the downtown area and the waterfront. The Concept Plan notes that the diversity of functions associated with the Downtown combined with a location adjacent to a successfully developing public waterfront as being its primary strengths. The Plan further states that every effort needs to be made to further develop and strengthen the multi-purpose character of the downtown by re-establishing the downtown and waterfront as the dominant focal point in the community.

The concept Plan notes that the waterfront which parallels the downtown area offers excellent opportunities to enhance the attractiveness and economic viability of the downtown. The Plan also promotes a co-ordinated effort in developing the downtown and waterfront in an effort to link these two areas as an important focal point in the community. The Plan proposed that the downtown and riverfront areas be jointly described as the “Downtown/Riverfront District”, in recognition of the importance of the relationship/interdependence between the two areas.

The major initiatives provided for in the Plan which are designed to forge a closer relationship between the downtown and waterfront are three walkway linkages. These are:

- (i) the Lochiel Street linkage;
- (ii) the George Street linkage; and
- (iii) the Ferry Dock Hill/Cromwell Street linkage.

The construction of the Lochiel Street linkage started a few years ago with the installation of a pedestrian walkway, landscaping, planters, benches, a parking lot, an arbor and an information kiosk in the area between Front Street and the waterfront. Further improvements, including decorative lighting in the area as well as streetscape improvements which could include outdoor cafes along Lochiel Street to the Bayside Mall entrance will complete this linkage.

The George Street and Ferry Dock Hill/Cromwell Street linkages are still in the planning stages. The concept for these linkages will be similar to the character of the Lochiel Street linkage.

5.4 Official Plan for Canatara Park

The Official Plan designates Canatara Park as “Major Open Space”. This designation is intended to address significant areas of parkland and open space. Canatara Park is the largest and most diverse major park in the City with an area of approximately 75 ha. (200 acres). The Park is characterized by a variety of landscapes, some of which are in a natural state and others which have been altered to accommodate public recreational and educational activities. It is a policy of the Official Plan that the future enhancement and development of Canatara Park be guided by the Canatara Park Master Plan.

5.5 Zoning By-Law for Canatara Park

The Zoning By-Law zones Canatara Park as Major Open Space 1 (MOS 1). This zoning permits a limited range of cultural, commercial and recreational land uses consistent with the Official Plan policies.

5.6 Canatara Park Master Plan

The Canatara Park Master Plan was prepared by the Canatara Park Preservation Volunteers and approved in principle by City Council in 1996. The Plan provides City Council, Community Services staff and the Canatara Park Preservation Volunteers with constructive direction for the future enhancement and development of the park.

The Canatara Park Master Plan identified many locally significant natural areas within the park which support locally unique plant communities and wildlife habitat, encompassing various types of woodlots, wetlands and grasslands. The Plan provides that the locally significant natural areas in the park be maintained in their natural state and protected where appropriate.

The Plan identifies two major zones. The first zone is a Developed Zone which recognizes the major day-use facilities such as the roads, parking areas, picnic grounds, playgrounds, washrooms, bandshell, information centre and the Children’s Farm. The Plan recommends that any new facilities added to the park in the future be located within the boundaries of this zone.

The Second Zone is a Nature Preserve Zone. This zone contains locally unique plant communities and wildlife habitat located within various types of woodlands, wetlands and grasslands. The intention is to have these areas maintained in their natural condition with minimal grooming. The Nature Preserve is comprised of five identified preserve areas. These include; the Lake Chipican Preserve, the Tarzanland Preserve, the Meadowland Preserve, the Farm Preserve, and the Dunes Preserve. The Plan provides a series of goals and policies designed to enhance the development, restoration and preservation of the park.