

A VISION FOR DUNDAS

based on the 2017-2018 Roundtable Series hosted by Dundas Works.

Dundas is an historic, small town community characterized by its independent owner-operated businesses and vibrant arts and cultural scene, surrounded by the rich natural beauty of the escarpment. It has a variety of housing types and public facilities accessible to many age groups and demographics, where people walk down tree-lined streets, and say hello when they meet. It is a place that inspires people to care about it and each other, where you want to grow up and grow old....you are known here....it feels like home.

Dundas Works facilitates community roundtables on topics that concern the people of Dundas.

OUR GOAL

Dundas will be a more diverse, sustainable and resilient community by providing more opportunities to live, work, learn and play while respecting its past and protecting its environment. This can be achieved through:

DEMOCRACY

A vibrant, engaging democracy in Dundas.
An elected Community Council.

DEVELOPMENT

The character of the historic core is paramount.
An Urban Design and Secondary Plan for ALL of Dundas, its core and neighbourhoods.
Environmentally and socially sustainable intensification that is contextually appropriate.

EDUCATION

Walkable schools in the heart of our neighbourhoods.
Schools are community spaces.
Lifelong community learning.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

A mix of home ownership and rental housing for all ages and incomes.
Affordable, sustainable housing through broadbased community input.

PUBLIC SPACES

An inventory map of the parks, buildings, squares and the streets, sidewalks, laneways, pathways, and trails that connect them.
A community endorsed plan to maximize the use of public spaces and ensure their future.

TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTION

Excellent sidewalks, cycling lanes and public transit to increase social connection, health, and independent living.
Networks that are safe and comfortable, accessible and convenient, continuous and connected.
Dundas: Walkable. Bikeable. Accessible.

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Dundas Works Roundtable #1
DUNDAS VALUES
June 2017, summarized by Tim Leslie

What we VALUE

We value the natural setting that Dundas is in. We value the **escarpment** which contains our community and limits sprawl. We value the abundance of **trees** within Dundas. We love the fact that **nature** is on our doorstep throughout the **Dundas Valley**. Waking up to the sound of **birds singing**.

We value the sense of **history** that you feel in Dundas. We love the **small town** atmosphere, the sense of **community** here. Independent **owner operated** businesses. The feel of King Street. The **Dundas Driving Park** is a gem. It's a **walkable** and **bikeable** community. We are a **cultural hub** with a rich arts and cultural community. Walkable Schools. Beautiful **churches**. We have something for every age group here.

We feel **the love** in this community. People **say hello**. Welcoming, accepting, **caring for neighbours**. Invested and engaged. We love the Victoria Day Fireworks and walking away with the crowd afterwards. **It feels like home**...people know you on the street. Churches are really involved in the community. We feel **safe**. There is a rich history of **activism**.

What we ENVISION FOR THE FUTURE

Completion of the Cootes to Escarpment Ecopark System. Densification without high rises.... **Intensification with imagination**. Smart development that preserves **character** and keeps us wanting to live here, and avoids the loss of **key infrastructure**. Excellent **public transit** with better access to McMaster. We need to work on the **affordability** problem especially for those buying a first house. Better **seniors facilities**. Better **recreational facilities** and programming for **all ages**. **Schools** improved and should remain in the heart of our **neighbourhoods**. Attention to **aesthetics** as we develop. Developers should not have too much say. An official Secondary Plan. More **sidewalk cafes**. Attention given to improving sidewalks. A centre for **innovation**. A better landscaped **entrance** from Cootes Drive.

We have the potential to be a **complete community**. We should **grow slowly** so we can have a say. Progress comes from our participation... **If you appreciate something -use it!** Enculture a speaking tradition. We need to work together to **achieve our goals**. We need to have **effective leadership** that can **communicate** our desires to City Hall. More opportunities to work in Dundas. Services for people that may fall through the gaps. Improved accessibility for people in wheelchairs. **Festivals** need to be updated to be **relevant**, current and reflect the character of Dundas. Create alliances with other area communities. Involve **young people** in planning for the future.

Dundas Works Roundtable #2
PUBLIC SPACES
September 2017, summarized by Tim Leslie

“Places are environments in which people have invested meaning over time...Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to making the place where they already live great.” (Project for Public Spaces)

We Value OUR PUBLIC PLACES

If we want to have a say in what Dundas will be, we have to begin with an inventory of what we have, and why it is important.

Natural Areas & Parks... We value that our parks **offer something for everybody**. We value the memories of using Dundas’ parks and natural areas with our children, and we want to **protect and enhance** them for generations to come. We value the ability to hike, paddle, bird watch, mountain bike, **right on our doorstep**.

Buildings & Public Spaces... KING STREET is a **social anchor** for Dundas, where you can meet people in a variety of settings. We value its unique shops **where shopkeepers care**, a friendly atmosphere, a unique vibrancy. Downtown Dundas has a distinct artistic diversity. We value our **Historic Architecture**, where we **repurpose old buildings** rather than tear them down. We value our **walkable elementary schools**, but grieve the loss of a high school in the core.

Connectors...A network of STREETS with SIDEWALKS...The grid layout of historic Dundas allows **multiple routes** for walking and driving, so we can meet and see people casually....Walking is interesting because every house is different and you know exactly where you are.

...interlaced with PATHWAYS, LANEWAYS & TRAILS...All over Dundas are lovely little connector lanes and trails.
...connected to PARKING LOTS behind the scenes ...What helps make King Street work so well are the 7 parking lots on Park and Hatt Streets....where people find their way to the shops and businesses on King St through small pedestrian passages...

IDEAS & POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Just get up and do it ...You've got to protect it for the future

Natural Areas & Parks... WEBSTER’S/TEW’S/DUNDAS PEAK TRAIL LOOP...would like the trail **to be rebuilt** and be continuous again. New TRAILHEAD....From Old Dundas Train Station Site: to the Websters / Tews gorges New SHUTTLE FROM DOWNTOWN... Originate shuttle from downtown parking, then hikers **will come back** and enjoy the shops and restaurants of Dundas. DRIVING PARK....More use for events. SPENCER CREEK TRAIL...muddy, **needs upgrading**...COOTES AND DESJARDINS CANAL....Need places to sit and watch the water...needs new WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Buildings & Public Spaces... Spaces in Dundas that are **under utilized may be at risk**...CLOSE OFF KING STREET BETWEEN CROSS AND SYDENHAM... temporarily (or permanently) to **make a town square**. OUTDOOR MAP needed to point out Dundas historical spots, shops and cultural attractions...Recognition of Dundas’ industrial origins... Need BENCHES ON SIDEWALKS to **rest when walking**, FIREFIGHTERS MUSEUM at DUNDAS FIRE STATION to **showcase the 5 antique fire trucks we have**. HERITAGE DISTRICT....worry that new housing additions will degrade historical feel of district...Public access to historical places should be required of developers. New SENIORS CENTRE with **activities that are free**...HISTORIC CHURCHES As some lose members can we save the buildings by sharing their space?....also the SCHOOLS that we have, and **protect them** by sharing their facilities and outdoor space.

Connectors...We need to protect the CONTINUOUS PHYSICAL CONNECTORS that connect areas of town to each other and to downtown....if we lose them we lose our community...Use PARKING LOTS for **community events** that foster meaningful human connection...Could lose parking lots, most now leased to city...could that change?...Need BIKE LANES, too many bikes on sidewalks, RAIL TRAIL...Cyclists are scary for walkers... TRAFFIC LIGHTS should allow more time to cross...LOCAL BUS ACCESS to Hwy 5.....

Dundas Works Roundtable #3
TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTION
November 2017, summarized by Michelle Chin

Transportation is important in everyday life for all people. Good physical connections within town, between streets and neighbourhoods to destinations ensure meaningful human connection and reduce social isolation. Connections are key to the health and vitality of both individuals and communities.

Self propelled activities allow people of all ages to live independently and sustainably. Walkable, bikeable and accessible environments are important demographic equalizers, as many do not have the choice or ability to operate a car. Safe and comfortable sidewalks, cycling networks, and public transit systems need to be prioritized in the built world, with connections to recreational hiking and cycling trails.

The **WALKABILITY** of an authentic and aesthetic town is paramount to the quality of life, character and vitality of Dundas. Pedestrian life can be prioritized by designing and developing mixed use, human scale buildings with compact frontage. These principles can be applied to the more suburban areas of Dundas which have significant potential to become intensified neighbourhood centres with increased connection. *"Actual destinations in a compact space are key to walkability."*

Significant improvement to the **BIKEABILITY** of Dundas is needed. Implementation of safe, year round commuter bicycle lanes that offer convenient, continuous routes to various destinations in Hamilton, in addition to seasonal recreational trails, is a physically healthy and sustainable mode of transportation. *"If cycling is safe and convenient, more people will do it. If it is inconvenient, unpleasant and unsafe, less people will do it."*

ACCESSIBILITY of public streets and spaces, transit and stores for strollers, walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, using slopes, ramps and lifts need special consideration during design, construction and upgrade. People who need these vehicles should be consulted to identify priority projects and suggest improvements.

PUBLIC TRANSIT systems within Dundas and connecting to Hamilton and other communities must be convenient, safe, easy to use, accessible and time effective in order to be accepted and inclusive. Transfers and wait times from downtown Hamilton to surrounding areas of Hamilton are a significant barrier in usage of public transit. *"We can learn a great deal by examining what already works in other cities with similar demographics and densities."*

Dundas Works Roundtable #4
DEVELOPMENT
February 2018, summarized by Jim Sweetman

The City of Hamilton is updating its GRIDS plan to accommodate the additional population and job growth allocated by the Province to the year 2041. While Dundas' population growth has been essentially zero since 1999, it is very probable that our population will increase in the coming years. Given that our growth is geographically constrained by the escarpment and Conservation Authority lands, development within the Dundas Node and Neighbourhoods will occur. Intensification, done thoughtfully, adhering to zoning and bylaw requirements – will be positive for Dundas.

1. The character of King Street from Cross Street to John Street needs to be preserved and protected via very restrictive zoning and by-laws. The Dundas Node Secondary Plan – now being created - must establish height restrictions that will be established and uncompromisingly enforced.
2. The character of the existing heritage district – most of which is outside the Dundas Node boundary - must be maintained.
3. We need to work together with the Conservation Authority to ensure that any development considers and protects the environment in Dundas.
4. Memorial Square should be redeveloped into a square for pedestrians and cyclists only.
5. The suburban area of Dundas, i.e. those neighbourhoods outside the Downtown Node, presents a number of development opportunities for intensification of both people and employment.
6. New development in Dundas must consider and be consistent with increased public transit and cycling infrastructure options.
7. The trails along the sides of Spencer Creek – particularly in the Dundas Node – are opportunities for developing recreation spaces.

Dundas Works Roundtable #5
AFFORDABILITY
March 2018, summarized by Margot Carnahan

Dundas has become unaffordable to low income and many middle income earners. There is a pronounced shortage of affordable rental and ownership dwellings. For a vibrant, sustainable future, a complete community requires housing with a range of types to accommodate all levels of affordability, all ages, and offering support services. This includes ownership, rental, social housing, rent-geared-to-income, lodging homes, shared/community living, socially supported, and emergency/temporary shelters.

Affordability can be achieved by increasing availability and other methods such as the following:

- 1) Incentivise or legislate developers to build more rental housing. Also, legislate inclusionary zoning to create affordable, accessible, and socially supported units.
- 2) Set rent controls and maintain strict enforcement.
- 3) Create zoning to permit granny flats, multiple units per home, laneway housing, and community or shared land ownership models.
- 4) Design a Secondary Plan that encompasses all of Dundas (core and outer neighbourhoods) to include mixed-use development, supporting all residential types listed above.
- 5) Require infill (underutilized) and vacant public property (like schools, churches) to be converted for affordable housing or community use rather than sold to developers.
- 6) Gear future development to "net zero" building codes to decrease operating costs. (Net zero codes employ a combination of technologies that reduce energy requirements and use on-site renewable energy systems.)
- 7) Provide incentives (i.e. tax breaks, grants) for sustainable housing plans. Housing should be viewed as a need, not as an investment. Be more open to renting rather than owning, which is more similar to European communities.

Dundas Works Roundtable #6
DEMOCRACY
May 2018, summarized by Bob James

A series of democratic “**tensions**” were identified: local vs city wide issues, municipal vs provincial mandates, urban vs rural needs, participatory vs representative democracy.

Is there a Democratic Deficit? What are the Gaps?

- **Civic Engagement** is low. Life is busy. Many people feel their daily voices and votes do not make a difference anyway, that their “representatives” have a personal or private agenda without consultation. Disenfranchisement is felt at all levels of government - municipal, provincial and federal. Active engagement matters and is the foundation of democracy.
- **Accountability** is limited to once every four years at voting time. Democracy could be improved through a continuous **accountability and recourse** process, e.g. a municipal ombudsman office and by-elections when required. Communication must be a two way street and not top down. The Dundas Community Council could be a powerful tool, if democratically chosen, transparent and communicative with regularly scheduled meetings that allow for citizen input. Town halls and consultation should be open to the entire ward which the councillor represents, beyond the 400 ft rule.
- **Amalgamation** has led to a decrease in what can be done locally. It began with regionalization in the 80s, amalgamation of Hamilton in 2000, and today means 16 representatives for 537,000 people. While this has led to some benefits, it has also removed decision-making from local to distant; we have one councillor for 26K (soon to be 35K) citizens in Ward 13, versus 9 councillors for 23K in the past. City Councillors are subjected to information overload, they are expected to deeply understand and champion issues in their own ward and also address issues in 14 other wards. There may be a critical mass of population and geographical area that one person can effectively represent.

How can we make our voices more effective?

- A **job description** for every mayor and councillor, written by the people to be represented, updated every 4 years prior to a municipal election. This would inform candidates and clearly outline the needs and priorities of the people.
- **Councillors at large** to eliminate territorial decision making
- A **ranked ballot system** to affect a majority win.
- Impartial objective **Citizen Education** starting with youth and available to all citizens would help people make informed decisions. Education on important government issues cannot just be left to the press which could have inherent bias and opinion in its coverage.
- A **form of mandatory voting** could be considered. Voter Education is critical to make this meaningful. **Technology** can facilitate education, polling, referendums and voting to increase citizen participation.
- **Grassroots groups** can help to gather public input and can assist representatives in understanding the pulse of the community.
- Further discussion on **non-partisan vs civic parties** in municipal government is required.