



Dundas Works Roundtable #4: DEVELOPMENT IN DUNDAS
Tuesday, February 13th, 2018 Dundas Museum 7-9pm Rev. 1 - July 12, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Bob James welcomed the group, gave some background, introduced the topic, guest speakers and structure for the evening.

Guest speaker George Sweetman from Indwell introduced the ideas and values inherent in the planning process starting with the strategic provincial planning act and how that shapes specific municipal decisions. There are key policies that drive resilience in terms of density, climate change and transit. These must be in place at the higher order plans to have any real impact on a specific development applications. See attached graphic "Hierarchy of Ontario's Land Use Planning System."

Guest speaker Allison Maxted of Hamilton Community Land Trust presented some ideas of what intensification is, what smart development can look like and how communities can help shape new development. A key component of intensification is infill development, which is the development of vacant or underused parcels in a built up area. Because of policy, geography and land economics, most future development in Dundas will be intensification. So the question becomes how to do intensification well. Infill underused sites, design is key, must be responsive to existing neighbourhood patterns, form based zoning geared to pedestrians.

Tim Leslie framed the group discussions and questions to focus on. A representative from each group gave a very brief summary of key points to wrap up the evening.

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 #4
DEVELOPMENT IN DUNDAS
Detailed Meeting Minutes

Welcome by Bob James

Welcome to the fourth in a series of public roundtables into the Dundas we wish for our future. We all, as a group of citizens, have come a long way already. For those of you who haven't been to one of our previous three Community Roundtables before here is a brief summary of our reason for doing this, and our goals for this open forum. Dundas Works as a group began about five years ago, initially fighting for solutions for our high schools in Dundas, and then focused on ideas for repurposing the Parkside High School building into housing combined with a community hub. After years of reacting to what seemed to be already-made decisions, we decided that what was needed was a more proactive approach. We felt that a regular community forum was needed to provide a voice to those who wanted a say in decisions in Dundas. To begin we felt that we need to begin to draft a Vision together—one we can use to defend and enhance the public places that we collectively value in the place where we actually live. We held our first meeting early in 2017, based on the knowledge that Dundas is a great place to live; that our public and shared spaces contribute immensely to our quality of life; and that decisions were being made without meaningful citizen participation. We felt that long-respected values that have led to Dundas being a socially-connected and compassionate community are threatened, and we wished to be pro-active in influencing the future of our much-loved town. So...we have held three roundtables to date, and tonight is our fourth.

Through these roundtables, we feel you have begun to elucidate a vision of Dundas. We all would like a community in which people have the ability to live comfortably, interact socially, and earn a living locally. We all would like a community in which transportation—whether by foot, by bicycle, by car, by wheelchair/scooter, or by public transit—is easy and safe. We all respect and encourage diversity in cultures, age groups, socio-economic status, religions, and gender identities. We all value the welcoming nature of Dundas and want to maintain and enhance it. We also value our built and natural heritage and wish it to be well maintained. And we see this happening in a complete, and compassionate, community. We already have a good start on this, in Dundas in 2017. From our previous two meetings, looking at the gaps in the realm of activities in Dundas, these four issues seem to keep coming up: 1. transportation and connections 2. affordability and development 3. public assets 4. the democratic deficit.

While we are sure these do not cover all the issues brought forward, we felt these represent clear stepping stones towards a vision for Dundas. We can add to these as needed, but we felt it necessary to work towards defining and determining a path forward that we can use with candidates in the next municipal election. Our hope is to begin tonight by looking at “affordability and development”: beginning with the values underlying development in our Town.

We have two people to help us with this: George Sweetman, who has worked with InDwell, a not-for-profit development group associated with Christian charities and successful in bringing to completion a number of housing projects in Hamilton and elsewhere; and Allison Maxted, recently employed as a planner by the Hamilton Community Land Trust, an organization which works to re-purpose unused land into affordable housing, and has recently acquired its first property in North Hamilton. These two well-qualified people will give us a very brief introduction to the ideas and values inherent in the planning process.

After their intro, we will divide into groups for discussion, then re-form to share our ideas. And we will let you go by 9 PM. Enjoy the evening.

George Sweetman

See slide "Hierarchy of Ontario's land use planning system"

Guiding principles include complete communities, complete streets, residential intensification, mixed use buildings, affordability and housing using a range of types. It is important to focus on the “high level” discussion and not get bogged down in the “micro-minutiae”.

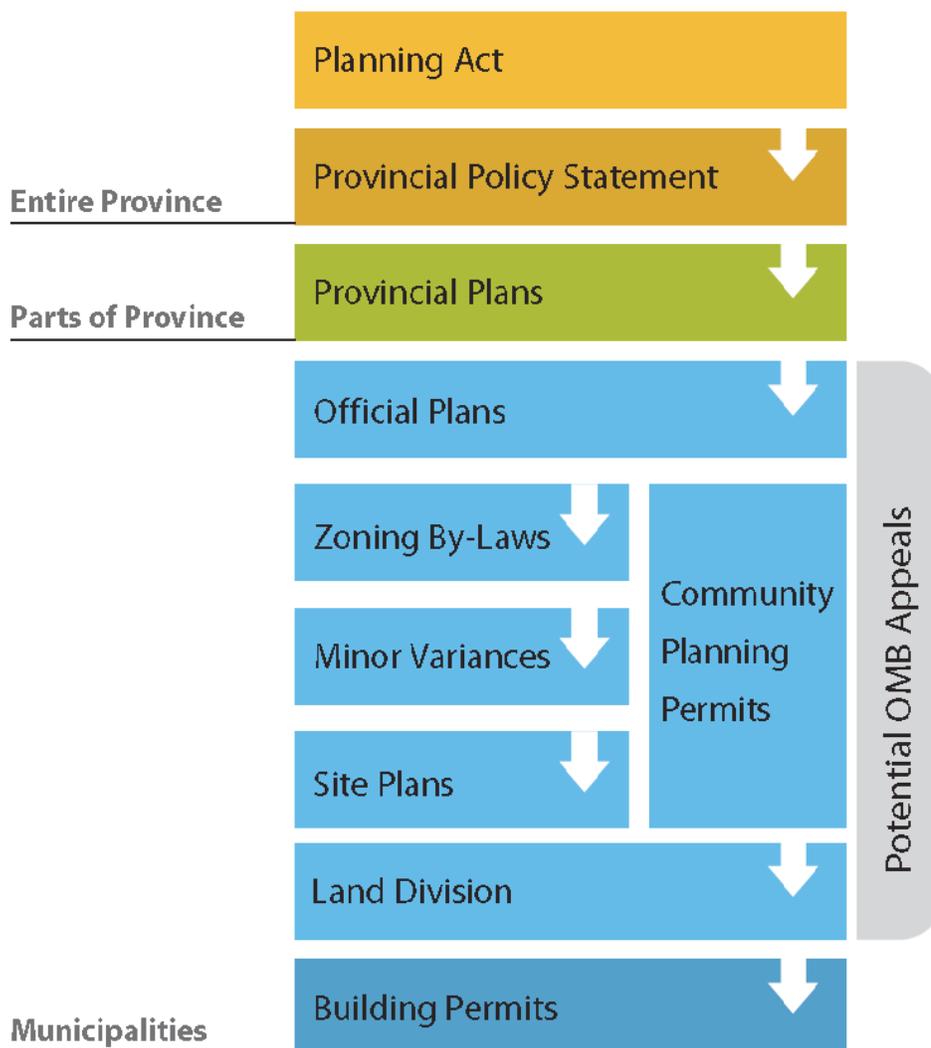
Ontario has a 5 year climate change action plan 2016-2020, a first which is a step in the right direction.

The Hamilton Grids 2 Growth Summary 2006-2016 needs to be updated:

<https://d3fp1lf1m7bbt3.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/media/browser/2017-09-20/grids2-growth-summary.pdf>

The subject of land-use planning is complex. These meetings will be the start of our journey to learn enough so that we can ask probing questions and make positive contributions to the development of our community.

Land Use Planning System in Ontario



Allison Maxted

Allison presented some idea of what intensification is, what it can look like and how communities can help shape new development. See presentation Intensification.pdf

Simply put, intensification is the development or redevelopment of a building, site or area, in an existing built up area, to a density higher than what currently exists. A key component of intensification is infill development, which is the development of vacant or underused parcels in a built up area.

Because of policy, geography and land economics, most future development in Dundas will be intensification. So the question becomes how to do intensification well. There are many benefits to intensification including reduced sprawl, more efficient use of land and infrastructure, population densities that can support a variety of transportation options and amenities, new supply of housing, and an overall renewed sense of vitality for a community.

With higher concentrations of people in a community comes greater support for the local shops and increased transit service, for example. Also, intensification can be an opportunity to return cultural, social, recreational and entertainment opportunities, and gathering places, to older centers and neighborhoods. Less desirable land uses like strip malls can be redeveloped into mixed-use buildings, for example, with shopping, housing and community amenity space.

Nearby in Mississauga, for example, the City is embarking on targeted intensification to try to transform some of their car-oriented places into more complete and livable communities. One of the things they have targeted is five areas that are anchored by indoor shopping malls.

But especially in communities like Dundas, intensification also has its challenges. Development in existing built up areas vs. greenfield sites is typically more complex, and developers often face community opposition due to resistance to change.

Intensification can also destroy a neighbourhood or community's unique character and lead to other issues if it is not done with a careful consideration of context and location.

Urban design is therefore extremely important in a successful approach to intensification.

There are a few key things to consider when it comes to successful approaches to intensification. First, developments should respond to existing neighbourhood patterns, like where buildings tend to be situated on the lots, orientation of the buildings towards the street, trees and landscaping, and the general rhythms of development.

A diversity of building designs and even building densities can actually fit well within one neighbourhood, as long as they follow the basic patterns.

Turning a building away from a main street, for example, or situating parking as the main interaction with the street, can totally kill the street's vitality.

Second, building heights and form should be appropriate to the location. New building heights should respond to the existing heights of neighbouring buildings, but also take into consideration the level of services like transit that exist and that are planned for the future. For example, the city is wanting to intensify around the LRT stops and the new GO station in downtown Hamilton.

Design becomes important again, because higher buildings can be introduced to existing areas through a number of design strategies that limit the impact of the buildings on privacy, views, light and the feeling of height at street level.

For example, step backs, where upper stories are set back from the street, can make a building appear less imposing.

These are examples of building types that introduce higher densities into older, low-rise neighbourhoods by mimicking the design and development pattern of single family homes. In fact, some of these building types already exist throughout Dundas. They include accessory units, duplexes and fourplexes, small multiplexes of 5-10 units, courtyard housing, and laneway housing or carriage houses.

To have more control over what new developments look like, communities are increasingly turning to a new type of land development regulation called “form-based codes”. In typical zoning, we mainly regulate the use of the building and only abstract notions of form. We supplement zoning with urban design guidelines, but these are advisory and not regulations.

Form-based codes, by comparison, regulate the features, configurations and functions of buildings in exchange for more leniency on the use of the building.

A primary objective of form-based codes is to reinforce the unique attributes of special character areas, and create complete built environments that are geared to the pedestrian experience.

In Ontario, many communities that have recently updated their zoning bylaws have taken a hybrid approach, where they adopt some components of form-based codes on top of traditional zoning. These communities include Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville, and Ottawa.

So far, the City of Hamilton has not chosen to incorporate form-based codes into their bylaw update. Given the importance of urban design to successful intensification, it might be an approach worth considering for Dundas.

Tim Leslie

Many of us here tonight attended last night's meeting at our Town Hall where we were invited to be involved in shaping future development through helping to shape a secondary plan for Dundas. We heard from ...that they need our ideas and support to make this process work. This was music to my ears...because I believe that if we want to have a strong vision for development in Dundas it has to come from and have broad support from the grassroots.

Tonight is the first opportunity for us to respond. As an independent community group we are not bound by the limits of what is allowed by the current rules and regulations. While we need to educate ourselves as to what the planning framework is, as George and Alison have admirably begun to do tonight, we educate ourselves in order to make our ideas become reality.

So tonight is a brainstorming session where we can dream what we feel Dundas should look like in 30 years! Once we have the dreams, then together we can begin to figure out how to make them concrete. This is the goal of these Community Roundtables ... to help shape our collective visions into a future reality. And if we can achieve a broad consensus as to what this vision is, we can have enough clout that the Province and City

Hall will have to implement it.

To help focus our discussion tonight we came up with a few questions that we want you in small groups to discuss.

1. What ideas for development in the core of Dundas do you have for how to preserve and strengthen the character that we already have?

2. Where are the areas in Dundas that are underdeveloped and what are your ideas for how we should best improve them in the future?

As we've done in the past we will go around the circle in each of the small groups in order to hear from everybody.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

GEORGE'S TABLE: (13 people including George)

Elizabeth – loves Dundas. Need to improve/intensify the entrance to Dundas on Cootes Drive. Hatt Street – need more residences at the far end. No to any intensification on Governors Road

Mary – Entrance into Dundas from Cootes needs trees in the Boulevard. As it is, it looks like the entrance to any other town. Need to fix and intensify the Canadian Tire and McDonalds strip. Add better retail and residences. The entrance to Dundas needs “beautification”.

Les – Dundas reminds him of a small English Town. A lot of traffic and transport trucks on the main street (King Street). Look at making King Street walkable. Can we move the large trucks to Hatt Street?

Jill – Hatt Street is becoming busier. Can it become “better”?

Mary Anne – we need bike lanes on Hatt Street and in other areas. We need more signage for the bike routes

Martin – Hatt Street is an opportunity. Make a grass boulevard and narrow the road. Possible intensification on the street. Gas stations and mechanics and parking lots on King Street are under-used space. Perhaps move these to other streets?

Jay and Rebecca – Looking at a central facility of library and community centre. The pool/theatre and the hockey rink – is there a central location concept for these facilities? Look at the Waterdown example

Anthony – What are the City's intensification targets for Dundas?

Ed – Always been an issue that Dundas has faced: people make the town – that is what we love about Dundas. Make sure spaces are utilized better. Transportation needs to be improved

Marie – We have under-used spaces. Many changes are happening slowly in Dundas. Loves the phrase “the valley town”. Need to improve the transportation in areas “above the valley”. How do we link the BIA and the Rotary Club to these development issues? To others in the centre of town? Memorial Square – who looks after it and how do we keep it?

Mary – likes Memorial Square

Bob – can we shrink the width of streets?

Elizabeth – can we re-purpose the area around University Plaza?

Jill – Main Street and King Street – improve bikeability and walkability

Marie - outdoor patios, tree-lined streets, would like to see retail on ground floor, services on the second floor, residential on the third floor, gardens in behind. Use Hatt Street for development, perhaps use form-based planning and look at expanding the nodes

Les – older large properties that could be used for larger homes are not subdivided – keep the old house and sub-divide the lot for another home

Martin – like the policies – we can deal with intensification with these policies

Anthony – like the Niagara-on-the-Lake approach to focusing development. Can a granny-flat be used to address affordability?

Ed – example of Savannah – good, full plan was implemented and lasts for 200 years! Hopkins Corners – perhaps a roundabout as an approach?

Bob – streetscape is important. Lack of walkable neighbourhoods along Governors Road

JIM'S TABLE

(notes in the colour red were used as the summary of the table's discussion): (16 people including Jim)

Jean – the **node boundary** should be all of the “valley town”. We need to preserve it all

Scott – Dundas District Lofts is a great success story. 75 Main is an example of a failure

Greg – maximizing the area of the node is a good thing. We must protect against heights and keep the heritage

Wayne – no more development like the Shoppers Drug Mart! Again, keep heights to a maximum

Gail – We need a **height restriction** to keep our main street's character

Judy – Shoppers Drug Mart is really bad! Worried about precedents that bad development establishes for future projects. McDonalds and Canadian Tire at entrance to Dundas are very unattractive

Margot – We need to keep our small town heritage. Height restrictions are needed

Beth – Downtown has a small town feel that must not be destroyed.

Tanya - Developers have money and the city wants taxes so developers always get their way

Paul – Would like to see more intensification in the core. Maybe more uniformity to the facades

Jim – King Street needs to become a complete street less focused on cars. We are losing the charm of downtown as the traffic volume and speed appear to be increasing. Intensification is a good thing if it is done properly.

Rashie – preserve the old homes! It is wrong that the home on Witherspoon was torn down. Expand the heritage and historic district. **Don't have to build new buildings – let's retrofit existing large houses to accommodate more people.** Need more housing that people can afford. Need more rental units. 2 to 3 story walk-ups are best.

Brian – we can learn from Montreal where they have many 3 and 4 story walk-ups. Read works by David Cohen, a former Councillor. Could Hatt Street be our traffic artery instead of King Street? Tiny homes and laneway homes are needed

Keith – an issue is the **Conservation Authority** which has a lot of say about development in Dundas.

Memorial Square should be a people space. Close off the street between the firehall and the Shed Brewery.

Peter – citizens need to engage with the King Street property owners to get their ideas and input. The time to act is now! We need more intensification to make public transit work.

Sandy – **Intensification can drive complete streets.** Don't let streets become “traffic sewers”. Inclusionary zoning is good as it requires developers to put in affordable home ownership in their developments. But could be there be “unintended consequences” of inclusionary zoning such as bigger developments so developers make their profits?

Jean – **RBG lands at the entrance to Dundas are flood-prone** but still present a development opportunity

Scott – could we put more people in the core of Dundas? The Horn of Plenty and the units above the old Police Station are examples of positive change and intensification

Greg – Dundas is already above the intensity target now. Most of the heights are medium and low. Need to set maximums now to prevent high buildings

Wayne – Canadian Tire area and where the Beer Store are now should be changed. Hatt Street should have low rise housing.

Gail – the 18 Dundas Street development is an example of good intensification

Judy – Harmonizing the zoning across the city is a good idea. Need for zoning to allow for secondary suites for seniors.

Tanya – Flood plain concerns are real. We have lots of asphalt in our downtown core. What about the infrastructure to enable the growth for Dundas? West of Hatt Street is an opportunity for increased density but it must be well done

Paul – it costs money to do things well. Anything east of York Street is a struggle with the Conservation Authority. Unless you have lots of money, it is difficult to get things done. East of York Street on King is a big opportunity for development.

Jim – The suburbs up Governors Road are like “deserts” relative to walkability and places of interest. Essentially nothing of what we value of the Driving Park exist in the barren space of Veteran’s Park. We need to look to the suburbs to take more population and jobs. If we want Dundas to be a place to live, work, play and learn, we need to accept that we need a range of housing that people can afford or more of our schools will be converted to cemeteries.

Rashie – **Completely agree that we need to go into the suburbs. We could achieve more density through retrofits.** We need better public transportation everywhere for kids and seniors. We need more stores and cafes in the suburbs.

Brian – we should go after University Plaza and redevelop it to get the LRT extended past there to the Town Hall in Dundas where it would “turn around”. The Dollarama Plaza should be redeveloped. Then we could walk from the core to the LRT to have access to the rest of Hamilton easily. We need to get jobs in the suburbs which have lots of underutilized space.

Keith – Valley City was going to be condos but the Conservation Authority held it up so much that it was sold. The Conservation Authority also held up the arena upgrade.

Peter – Pleasant Valley subdivision is very vulnerable as it has no services anymore. We need a complete community approach. Perhaps it would be better to pull down single homes and replace them with small buildings?

Sandi – North End Hamilton Secondary Plan is a very interesting read. Kirkendall Neighbourhood Association does a design review of developments in their neighbourhood. Co-op housing should be allowed in the by-laws. Explore the concept of pocket housing.

MICHELLE AND MARGOT'S TABLE

Ideas for development in core to preserve and strengthen character

1. King Street can be improved to be more pedestrian friendly, enhance business, bring vitality

-wider sidewalks, enhance walkability, extend shopping/village area to blend with current architectural style, preserve character, discourage eyesores (like Dairy Queen) that sit for years, promote as tourist area, less car centric, more pedestrian and bike friendly

-develop Hatt Street next to Spencer Creek, can enhance business, i.e. Valley City

- make new building look like old buildings

- Allison showed a slide of commercial units on main floors with a step back design of higher residential levels

2. Green Space/ Clean Growth/ Climate Change Resistant

-Spencer Creek should be preserved and showcased

-Dundas is in flood plain with increased risk for flooding with climate change, must be addressed

-intensification with less emphasis on cars in future, integration to LRT/transportation

- Dundas' parks and natural greenspace are a jewel, they are valued, intensification must not compromise

3. Meet Needs of the Future/ Changing Community

-Dundas is a senior-friendly community, can promote this aspect with development that supports seniors, make it "special for seniors"

-multigenerational aspect important, need to attract young people and families also, need affordability

-intensification, if done properly can bring vitality

4. Walkability & Connections

- this is key to preserving the character of Dundas - complete streets, compact core
- built to be pedestrian friendly, less car-centric
- transportation, LRT connections improve with more people/ intensification
- limit parking directly on King Street and divert traffic in core to enhance sidewalks for foot/ bike traffic.

Recurrent Theme (heard at our table and in conversations):

Development bylaws need to be enforced i.e. building height caps, or all this development planning is just hot air and an affront to citizens' desires.

Underdeveloped areas in Dundas and ideas to improve them

1. Gateway (Cootes) to Dundas can be developed, it is underutilized

- encourage business, preserve character, cap on building height (and enforce it!), York to Cross could be more attractive, welcome sign(s) to Dundas,
- ecopark by canal needs to be preserved environmentally, which limits how it is developed, may not support intensification with flood plain issues
- it is a corridor connecting Hamilton to Dundas "node", public transport, bike, and car corridor, can be beautified, even if it is not suitable for intensification

2. Head Street may have room for more development of light industry and university areas

- supports mixed use development, employment opportunities, local services

3. Hatt Street is wide and has amazing potential

4. underutilized space even within "the core"

5. Attract younger generation back to Dundas

- encourage more connection with McMaster students and recent graduates, innovation hub in Head Street area
- 5. By building for people, you can reclaim a significant amount of space that car-centric development eats up in terms of parking and street widths, which you can gear toward pedestrian and cycling traffic.*

Other ideas:

- Greensville needs better access for pedestrians and bikes
- community centre that can provide programming for all ages - youth, family, adults and seniors
- importance of cycling infrastructure, connecting to other communities and destinations

TIM & DAVID'S TABLE

Participants (apologies in advance for guessing at some names & spellings)

Phyllis Kraemer, Nancy, Kevin Gray, Dave & Carol Moffat, Tim Leslie, Margret, Marcia, Peggy, Chris, Ruth, David Wilson

Group Discussion of the following questions (paraphrased):

1. What is it about Dundas that is unique and valued?
2. Where in Dundas should intensification take place?

Most common theme: Improve/beautify the presentation of the east entrance area of town:

Presently non-descript, underutilized; described as "sad, dismal and lacking" (Marcia): Canadian Tire & Beer Store parking lots; rear of Dewitt Moving and vehicles; plain façade of the Yoga Studio building; rear of the Air Force Club; awful 'fountain' in median of King St; gas stations, car lot, giant billboard – future 6 story development proposed for the Beer Store site

Hidden gems being overlooked: Desjardins Canal and the new park on the bank; Urquhart Butterfly Garden & formal park at west end; Spencer Creek nearby; marshy/wooded vistas on approach to Dundas coming

from Cootes Drive; King St median with small creek & some stone fencing alongside

Some ideas:

Clean-up & improve the canal:

provide higher level sewage treatment before emptying effluent into the canal – this should be pristine, not an odorous cesspool

remove concrete debris, pipes etc that show along the banks

retain the banks in places to enhance and shape its appearance and to make it more accessible in select locations --

perhaps provide some connected paths to adjacent parks, a boardwalk or dock

bring back the Turning Basin

enhance the existing formal park at the west end

replace the streetlights with something in a 'heritage' aesthetic

landscape the median along Cootes Dr and on King St

create a more pronounced physical 'entranceway' – an arch, or sculpture or columns . . .

Popular theme: problems with current development process through The City:

symbiotic dynamic exists between politicians & developers – each feeding off the other – to the detriment of good planning outcomes

attitude of council needs to change

apparent lack of planning and/or The City ignores its own zoning and guidelines

current development process seems to lack an effective democratic component

71 Main St cited as an example of the broken process; still a sore spot for the group in general

264 Governor's Rd development proposal an active sore spot and significant area of concern that the current process will fail to deliver good planning as per 71 Main St

'Form-Based zoning' mentioned as desirable and a good idea by several people to provide clearer

development structure to combat the current process issues; perhaps incorporate a theme 'template' to help align development design to support a heritage 'period' feel

Other overlooked 'gems' that significantly contribute to Dundas and bear protecting:

Dundas Museum

The vibrant arts community – DVSA, Carnegie Gallery, private studios, potters, McMaster Framing gallery, local artisanal based stores

Dundas Park

Webster's Falls Park, Tews & Borer's Falls, The Peak, the Spencer Gorge

Spencer Creek itself, running right through the middle of town, mostly sight unseen – a huge gem! What about beautiful, heritage bridges that support pedestrians & a view rather than plain, poorly done, utilitarian traffic structures? What would Paris be without its bridges?

Intensification & other ideas:

- Develop areas west of Dundas along Governor's Rd & on top of escarpment

King St: slow down and divert traffic:

Divert majority of traffic along Hatt St (perhaps re-route east entrance traffic along Dundas St to Hatt – perhaps continue the route behind and to the west of Fischer's Field to connect to the hill) and encourage commercial development/intensification along & off of Hatt St

Divert some traffic along Park St

Create additional parking similar to present model of locating parking areas between Hatt & King and between Park & King

Reduce car volume and slow traffic along King St by designing the street more for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit – perhaps using raised sidewalk 'crossings' that gives priority to pedestrians

Perhaps remove one lane of parking where possible to broaden sidewalks & allow bike lane