



CITY OF KINGSTON
INFORMATION REPORT TO COUNCIL

Report No.: 13-155

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Cynthia Beach
Commissioner, Sustainability and Growth

RESOURCE STAFF: Carola Bomfim Lima
Manager, Project Development

DATE OF MEETING: April 3, 2013

SUBJECT: Public Feedback Summary and Heritage Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Attached as Exhibit A is a summary of the public feedback and questions that have been raised by the public at the Public Open House on March 28 and provided through the project specific email address - northblockproject@cityofkingston.ca.

In addition, attached as Exhibit B, is the executive summary from the draft report prepared by Andre Scheinman regarding the designated heritage buildings at 19-23 Queen Street. Several of the inventory images were presented at the public open house as well.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for information purposes only.

April 3, 2013

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AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER _____ Cynthia Beach, Commissioner, Sustainability and Growth
ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER _____ Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

CONSULTATION WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMISSIONERS:

Lanie Hurdle, Community Services	N/R
Denis Leger, Transportation, Properties & Emergency Services	N/R
Jim Keech, President & CEO, <i>Utilities Kingston</i>	N/R

(N/R indicates consultation not required)

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Attendance at the public open houses was estimated to be 100 people. We received 15 feedback forms at the meeting, and there were several others who indicated that they would go on-line to complete the forms or send us an email with their comments.

In addition, we used this opportunity to pilot a digital media campaign to engage the community in the discussion via Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. This included a special session from 2:30 to 3:30 where we responded to questions that we received via Facebook and Twitter. Based on the number of people involved in the conversation representing a balanced cross section of our community and given that this was the first time the City has taken this approach, the responses were favourable. We were able to reach an audience that we wouldn't have reached otherwise. Over 10,000 people were exposed to the North Block District - Block 4 conversation through the use of social media. Based on the 'digital conversation' regarding the project, 89% of those involved in the conversation had positive sentiments and 11% had negative sentiments.

The North Block District website was visited over 700 times between March 18 and April 1, 2013.

Exhibit A attached contains a summary of the specific comments and questions that were obtained during the consultation.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

N/A

CONTACTS:

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OTHER CITY OF KINGSTON STAFF CONSULTED:

EXHIBITS ATTACHED:

Exhibit 'A' - Summary of public feedback and questions asked
Exhibit 'B' - Executive summary of heritage building inventory report

Following is a summary of the public feedback, comments and questions generated by the Open House held on March 28, 2013.

Below is a two part summary. The first part summarizes comments. The second part summarizes questions for which responses have or will either be responded to directly, provided to the media as a part of a press release, and/or posted on the "Frequently Asked Questions" section on the North Block District – Block 4 web page.

Part 1 – Comments:

- **General comments** – The general tone was positive regarding revitalization of the North Block District, as is supported by the comment: "Let's stop trying to imagine that we need to bring people downtown. Let's concentrate on having people live downtown." The desirable aspects mentioned included space and support of the arts community, vibrant public spaces and courtyards, and an emphasis on supporting and enhancing the pedestrian environment.
- **Building height** – the majority of comments on height were that the 16-18 storey buildings did not fit into the context of the historical downtown and there were concerns about overshadowing the heritage buildings, blocking/diminishing the impact of City Hall, and shading neighboring properties. There were a few comments that people would be open to a middle option (between the 18 storeys and the 6 storeys), perhaps with buildings of varying heights. There were a couple of comments about how people understood that there might need to be trade-offs to provide "public good" items such as public parking, protection and restoration of the heritage buildings and public open space, and that a certain amount of increased height might be reasonable. There was one comment that "the higher the better" and that the area needs investment.
- **Public parking** – there were several comments about the shortage of parking downtown, but it appears they were generally from people who weren't at the open house or didn't understand that the City was working on a broader strategy to address downtown public parking needs impacted by build out in the North Block District.
- **Building uses** – the majority of comments supported residential uses, and "useful" retail uses. A couple of people noted their support of addressing needs of student and young professional demographic. There were concerns noted about continued support of the grocery store. There were also comments about the amount of vacant retail space downtown currently, and whether it would be a good idea to add more. The main comments regarding the hotel/conference use were regarding capacity of Kingston to have another hotel, and one about financial impacts of the development overall.
- **Transportation** – There were some comments regarding the planned increased Wolfe Island Ferry traffic and the impacts on traffic when the project is built out, but in general the transportation analysis and responses addressed the majority

of concerns. Areas that were suggested to pay attention to were pedestrian traffic, access to and from the parking on site, and interface with Wolfe Island ferry traffic/congestion on Ontario. Once comment also suggested waiting until the Wellington extension was completed.

- **Heritage buildings** – all feedback was positive about the approach proposed (the inventory of items that were mandatory to retain and the items that were encouraged to be retained) and supportive of protecting the buildings.
- **Infrastructure** – There were a couple of concerns expressed about the capacity of the existing infrastructure and the impacts of additional buildings on these (and the potential costs to address this).

Part 2 - Questions:

- **Q:** What is the anticipated duration of the tax rebate program and when can the City anticipate tax revenue from the development?
A: This will vary depending on the amount of the increase in the tax base (which is linked to the amount of building area and use). As indicated in Exhibit 'B' of Report to Council 13-150, with Scenario A the duration is estimated to be about 4 years, with Scenario B it is estimated to be about 3 years, and with Scenario C it is estimated to be 2 ½ years.
- **Q:** How will the cost of infrastructure upgrades be offset (policing/fire, etc.)?
A: The developer will be required to pay development charges and impost fees as would any other developer. The rates for these charges have been established in the City's DC and impost by-laws. Any site specific servicing required for the development will have to be constructed and paid for by the developer.
- **Q:** What are the costs to relocate the hydro substation?
A: Previous estimates have been in the order of \$10,000,000 to relocate substation, but perhaps the bigger issue is the question as to where it would be relocated to. Because of the type of service this substation provides, and the infrastructure that feeds to and from it, any relocation would need to be in very near proximity to the existing location. There are no funds allocated at this time to relocate the substation and it is proposed to stay in the existing heritage building.
- **Q:** Why the rush for the special meeting?
A: Rejuvenation of Brownfield properties has been identified as a Council Priority in the Kingston Strategic Plan. Block 4 is considered one of the strategic Brownfield properties that the City owns and back in 2009, Council adopted the recommendations in the North Block District Community and Business Enhancement Opportunities Study and directed Staff to undertake the next steps for the redevelopment of this property (Council Report 09-165).

In November of 2012 (Council Report 12-369), Staff provided a timeline for the project. This timeline targeted April 23rd as the Council meeting where direction as to the content of a Request for Proposals be provided. Because of the complexity of the project and the number of important decisions required of Council, it was decided that a dedicated meeting be scheduled to discuss Block 4. April 3, 2013 was the only available date where all of Council were available, so that was the date selected.

- **Q:** What is the market demand for development on Block 4? What are the demographics/growth statistics that support different uses on Block 4?
A: We see residential demand from empty nesters, singles, young couples and other groups interested in sustainable downtown living. We see a consistent but modest, long term demand for people living in the downtown that are looking for walkable communities with a maintenance free lifestyle.
- **Q:** What will happen with Food Basics as a result of development on Block 4?
A: The Request for Proposal will be issued only for Block 4 (the City owned property). It would be reasonable to expect that if there are more residents in this part of downtown, it would have a positive effect on the grocery store. All planning work that has been done to date has acknowledged the importance of keeping a grocery store in this part of downtown.
- **Q:** What is the vacancy rate of downtown retail space currently and what is the trend?
A: The vacancy rates vary from month to month, and currently it is considered high, however we do not anticipate a significant amount of new retail in Block 4. In addition, the more people that are encouraged to live downtown, the better it bodes for improving market demand for downtown retail uses.
- **Q:** Will there be any offices and will there be fibre optic service?
A: Office use would be possible. Fibre optic service would likely be provided to this site.
- **Q:** What is the timeline for the project? What are the next steps?
A: If Council provides direction as to the desired content in the Request for Proposals in April, Staff would proceed with preparing the Design Criteria and draft Request for Proposal and Evaluation Criteria. These would be presented at the next Public Open House some time toward the end of May or early June. The two stage Request for Proposals process would then begin sometime in July, with submission of proposal being made by pre-qualified bidders sometime in November of this year. The proposals would then be evaluated. The proposals would also be exhibited to the public at another Open House. The feedback would be summarized and submitted, along with the evaluation results in a recommendation on a preferred proponent to Council in January of 2014. If Council accepts the recommendation, Staff

would then proceed to finalize the Purchase and Sale Agreement, targeting completion by September of 2014.

- **Q:** Why build a conference facility? Has a market/demand assessment for a conference centre been completed?
A: There has been a high level report generated by KEDCO as to potential target markets, however no detailed business case has been developed as yet. The conference centre discussion is one of the items on the agenda for the Council Meeting on April 3, 2013.
- **Q:** Why is the transit hub no longer considered for North Block District?
A: The decision to eliminate the transit hub was made for the following reasons:
 1. Allows for greater development opportunities and intensification.
 2. The City wants the main transit hub to be closer to the major employment locations – Empire Life, Hotel Dieu Hospital, City Hall, etc.
- **Q:** Why is the city selling the land and not putting it out as a long term lease?
A: A leasing structure would limit the value and marketability of the property. It would also effectively eliminate the use of the property for residential condominium purposes as our experts have advised that market demand for residential uses on leased land is weak.
- **Q:** Has the City considered partnering with a Developer?
A: Council may still be presented with the opportunity to engage in a partnership structure as a result of the RFP process, and which time they can make the appropriate decision.
- **Q:** What are the shadows generated by the various scenarios?
• **A:** Regarding the concern about shadowing, any specific development proposal the City ultimately receives would need to provide an impact analysis that includes shadowing, wind and view corridors. In addition to height, the form and orientation of the ultimate design of the new buildings will influence their impact on neighboring properties.
- **Q:** Have any archaeological studies been completed?
A: Yes. There are no archaeological constraints on Block 4.
- **Q:** How will the City encourage good quality building and urban design?
A: The Request for Proposals will include specific design criteria that will need to be adhered to in the preparation of any development proposal. These design criteria will be based on the currently existing criteria and updated to reflect the new or more specific information available about Block 4 at the time of issuance of the Request for Proposal.

- **Q:** Why is the city issuing a Request for Proposals and not simply putting the land up for sale?
A: The RFP is an accepted mechanism that offers an equitable process designed to achieve highest value for a desirable public asset.
- **Q:** In your report to Council on November 20, 2012 you state that the developer would be required to replace between 120-165 public parking spaces on the property. On the North Block website it is now noted that the developer would only be required to provide 40 on the property. Is the number of parking spaces final or is it subject to additional review?
A: City Staff have been working on a broader strategy for public parking downtown over the last few months, and part of that has been trying to establish the appropriate number of public parking space that would be required on Block 4 because we realized that provision of 120-165 parking spaces would add an enormous financial burden to the project. Currently we feel that the number is around 40 based on the potential alternate provisions off-site. This number also coincides approximately with the number of parking spaces that were available on Block 4 at the time that the KRock Centre was completed (before the Police Station was demolished).
- **Q:** It is the understanding that the 3 heritage buildings on Queen Street (19-23 Queen Street) are to be retained by the developer. Has Staff given any direction if the entire building/structure is to be retained or just the facades?
A: Yes. We have commissioned a report that includes an inventory of the building elements that must be retained by the developer, as well as items that would be desirable (but not mandatory) to retain. Essentially, the building envelope will need to be retained and restored, but aside from demising walls, there is little on the interiors that must be retained.
- **Q:** What sort of information does the City have about the site contamination?
A: As indicated on the presentation board at the Open House (and available on the North Block District – Block 4 web page <http://www.cityofkingston.ca/city-hall/projects-construction/north-block-strategy>.) The City has already invested a significant amount in the clean-up of the property in 2000 and additionally in 2009. In addition, the Request for Proposals to be issued to developers will include the Phase 1 and 2 Environmental Site Assessments, which will provide bidders with the background information they need in order to formulate a Risk Management Plan (which would include some additional clean-up of the site) and ultimately obtain a Record of Site Condition in conformance with the Ministry of Environment's requirement for re-use of contaminated lands.
- **Q:** What will be the anticipated impacts on traffic in the area if Block 4 gets developed?
A: The three scenarios as presented at the Open House would have potential for a very high modal split (different ways to move around) to transit and active

transportation modes, and consequently, vehicular impacts during the morning and afternoon peak hours are anticipated to be relatively minor.

Executive Summary of a draft report entitled "THE REDEVELOPMENT OF BLOCK 4: PRESERVATION COMPONENT":

The objective of meaningfully preserving 19-23 Queen Street, despite the challenges, reflects the acknowledgement of the site's heritage significance, as well as the importance to the overall character of downtown Kingston of maintaining its heritage fabric, ideally interwoven with vibrant and thoughtful new design.

The heritage importance of 19-23 Queen Street as the base of the Kingston Gas and Light Company (1849, originally a private company but later an agency of the City), as one of the city's few surviving mid-19th century industrial complexes and, as an example of a residential scale stone range used for industrial purposes, has long been recognized and this status has been reinforced over the course of many different studies through the years, each one aiding a deeper layer of understanding of this unusual, early industrial site.

At this critical juncture in the history of the row the City intends to include as part of its RFP framework, the following elements:

- A definitive inventory of the site's heritage attributes required and/or desired to be preserved (divided into Category A, B and C);
- Technical guidelines for the conservation/restoration of the heritage buildings;
- General design guidelines with regard to the interfaces and interplay between new and existing construction, as well as such matters as traditional views to, from and through the site.

Category 'A':

These attributes must be preserved in any development scenario. If commitment to the preservation of these attributes is not acknowledged in the proposal the proposal will be considered 'incomplete' and rejected. These attributes include, but are not limited to:

- The full front, east and rear elevations of the main range known municipally as 19-23 Queen;
- The main transverse (originally) stone fire walls extending above the roof line as parapets and including those parapets (as well as that abutting the Hydro building);
- The cut stone corbels at the base of the parapets including the surviving corbel at the front west eave abutting the Hydro building and at the rear between 21 and 23 Queen Street;
- The existing roof pitches of the main range including the side gable roof form of 21 and 23 Queen Street and the parapeted low-slope form of 19 Queen Street

Category 'B':

These attributes are also important and should be preserved. Where the proponent feels that extenuating circumstances and/or other critical aspects of the total design preclude the preservation of any of the attributes in this category they may make that argument within their proposal.

Category 'C':

These attributes, while contributing to the heritage character of the property, are not as essential as those listed within Category A or B. While they are still considered worthy of preservation there will be no penalty if the proposal indicates that they cannot be preserved. However retention of these attributes may be subject to 'bonus points' within the proposal evaluation matrix.