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The Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake

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June 25, 2009
Planning Report PDS-09-069

Report To: Planning Advisory Committee

Subject: TOWARD A VISION FOR THE OLD TOWN – RECOMMENDED DRAFT

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 The Council of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake receives the recommended draft of *Toward a Vision for Old Town* dated July 16, 2009.
- 1.2 Council adopts the document *Toward a Vision for Old Town* as “The Vision for the Old Town” which will guide future policy development and decision making for the Old Town and direct staff and the consultants to commence the Dock Area Secondary planning process using the Vision for the Old Town as its basis.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is recommend that Council to receive and adopt *Toward a Vision for the Old Town* as “The Vision for the Old Town” and to direct staff and the consultants to commence the Dock Area secondary planning process.

3. BACKGROUND

In December 2008 the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake engaged Urban Strategies Inc. to commence the process of creating a Vision for the Old Town and, following its completion, to develop a Secondary Plan for the Dock Area. The visioning process was initiated to provide the framework for developing specific policies first for the Dock Area and then specific policies and special policy areas for the remainder of the Old Town. The Vision will provide Council and residents with a “picture”, in words, of the community they wish to see in 2030.

4. DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The Vision for the Old Town, when adopted by Council, will form the basis for future policy development and Council decisions with respect to the Old Town.

The Old Town visioning process was comprehensive and provided an innovative approach to public consultation that was both broad based and extensive. The work program was completed in 6 months. It began with a Council workshop in early 2009 to introduce the process to Council and to capture Council’s expectations. This was followed by a series of extensive and intensive stakeholder interviews that included all levels of government, local organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, local churches, the Municipal Heritage Committee, local businesses and resident groups. This portion of the process was extended beyond the initial proposal to respond to community desires to speak directly to Urban Strategies.

The interviews were followed in February by a project kick off and a Speaker Series covering such topics as:

- Youth Speak and Mayoral Launch
- Quality of Place and Quality of Life
- Integrating Old Town's Heritage, Landscape and Culture
- Tourism for Tomorrow
- Future of the Waterfront

The Speaker Series culminated in a well attended full day Visioning Workshop on Saturday, March 28, 2009.

Throughout the process the community was provided with continuous communication in the form of a series of Citizens' Bulletins available on the Town's web site and emailed to those community members who requested to be included on an email list (160).

The stakeholder interviews, workshop with Council, Speakers Series and Visioning Workshop resulted in a series of Background Papers entitled:

- Heritage
- Managing Movement
- Urban Structure
- Tourism
- Policy

The draft vision document, *Toward a Vision for Old Town*, was forwarded to the stakeholders and agencies and was posted on the Town web site prior to the presentation to the community at a public workshop held on the evening of June 30, 2009. The consultants have received comments from the agencies and the public and have incorporated many of the comments into recommended draft vision attached.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The consultants estimated the cost of completing Phase 1, including research and analysis and preparing the Old Town Vision at \$69,773.00 exclusive of disbursements and GST.

Funding is being provided through Development Charges and the Planning Reserve. The Region of Niagara has also committed \$50,000.00 towards the cost of the planning program.

Additional out-of-pocket expenses for meetings and advertising have been incorporated into the 2009 budget.

6. COMMUNICATION/NEXT STEPS

Once Council has adopted *Towards a Vision for the Old Town* the consultants will commence the Dock Area Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in early 2010.

7. CONCLUSION

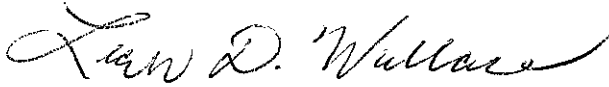
The consultants and the Town undertook an extensive and lengthy public consultation process that included meetings with Council, stakeholders and local youth, a speakers' series which

provided an opportunity for community input, a day long visioning workshop and a final presentation and workshop to fine tune the Vision and the Old Town Vision document. Feedback received both at the June 30th workshop and through emails have been reviewed and incorporated into this recommended vision where appropriate.

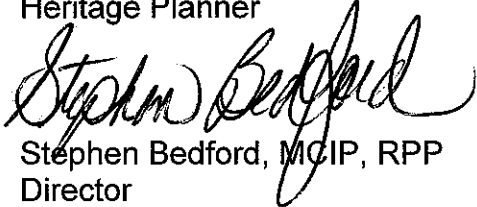
The Vision for the Old Town, when adopted by Council, will form the basis for future policy development and Council decisions with respect to the Old Town starting with the Dock Area Secondary Plan, which will provide comprehensive planning policies and urban design guidelines for the Dock that reflect the community's vision.

The guidance provided by the Vision will ensure that the community can grow and develop in a manner that will maintain that character and sense of place that makes the Old Town a unique place to live and work.

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