

**Waterfront Community Improvement Plans
Community Meeting East Bayfront, West Don Lands, Port Lands**

February 28, 2008
Turner Schoolhouse,
106 Trinity Street
Toronto, Ontario

This report is a compilation of questions and comments received during the Community Meeting held on the evening of February 28, 2008 on the City of Toronto's Waterfront Community Improvement Plans (WCIPs).

The following were in attendance:

City of Toronto

Gwen McIntosh, Manager, Community Planning, City Planning
Peter Moore, Project Manager, Policy and Research, City Planning
Jamie McEwan, Project Manager, Waterfront Secretariat
Denise Graham, Senior Planner, Community Planning, City Planning
Eric Arm, Senior Financial Analyst, City Finance
Rebecca Condon, Economic Development
Leontine Major, City Planning
Tom Davidson, representative from the Office of Councillor Pam Mc Connell

This meeting was facilitated by Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited

Dave Hardy (facilitator), Principal
Melissa Clements (facilitation support), Intermediate Planner
Olav Sibille (note-taker), Intermediate Planner

Approximately 35 area residents and other people attended the meeting.
Meeting started at 7:10pm

Introductions

Dave Hardy from Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited (HSAL) welcome the participants, and introduced himself as the facilitator, as well as the representatives from the City of Toronto.

Dave stated that the purpose of the meeting was for residents and stakeholders of the affected areas to learn more about the Waterfront Community Improvement Plans (WCIPs) and to comment on the planning process' objectives, project areas and rationale. He also briefly spoke about the questions that residents would be asked and the importance of participants' input in the process. Then, *Dave Hardy* introduced City staff.

Presentation

Staff gave a presentation on the Waterfront Community Improvement Plans (WCIPs), what they are, and how they connect with the City Official Plan and the Growth Plan.

A *City staff* member spoke about the authority that supports this initiative (coming from the Planning Act and the Official Plan), about the provincial and City approval processes for the CIPs, historical background of CIPs, and other City-wide CIPs. The presentation also included information on tax relief for brownfield remediation, development grants, [Tax Increment

Equivalent Grants (TEIGs)], land acquisition and disposal, support for other incentives as well as next steps on the WCIPs.

In closing, *staff* invited people to check the appropriate box in the comment form to be notified of future meetings.

Comments from the Discussion Period

Following *staff*'s presentation, *Dave Hardy* asked the participants to share their questions and comments. *Dave* asked participants what were their opinions about the effectiveness of the proposed boundaries.

A member of the public asked what proportion of the CIP area is owned by the City and the Province?

Staff responded that much of the land is publicly owned. Another member of the public asked about the proposed land uses and timing associated with public lands in the hatched area of the map (the areas not part of the CIPs).

Staff commented that additional planning must be undertaken regarding the disposal of public land. The Planning Act allows disposal of public lands, and the City can do that through mechanisms like the CIPs. The *Staff* member also explained that at this time no CIP is being considered for the area because there is no secondary plan for that area.

A member of the public asked about the land acquisition and disposal process. The resident wanted to know if the public land would be for sale or for leasing in the future.

Staff responded that lands could be transferred to the Waterfront Corporation, and that the CIP is a useful tool that allows enabling those lands to realize their full potential.

Additional questions of clarification and comments were asked by members of the public. A *resident* asked if City *Staff* could you give an example of how TIEGs work.

Staff explained that TIEGs facilitate development and infrastructure. Some of the infrastructure development would be completed by WaterfrontToronto. The City can also stimulate through tools like the CIPs. *Staff* further explained that to be eligible, the land should be used for activities that would generate a positive economic impact through employment generation, e.g. office buildings. It was also mentioned that the City is keen in getting strategic industries to locate in the CIPs area.

A resident asked if the areas in question are problematic lands that the City is trying to get rid of.

Staff explained that the idea behind the CIPs is to enable redevelopment and that it has been used successfully in other places to improve the value of lands. If private owners were reluctant to invest it would be beneficial that the City invested in the land.

BREAK-OUT DYNAMIC:

Dave Hardy invited the participants to form groups to discuss the five questions posed to the public. There were five working groups organized around the same number of tables. Each

group was assigned an initial different question and invited to address all of the rest of questions in sequence.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS FROM GROUPS:

The following summarizes the comments received from the participants to each of the questions posed.

QUESTION 1: What areas should the incentives apply to?

A *resident* stated that Incentives should apply to redevelopment of areas for manufacturing

A *resident* stated that the film sector is a risky and volatile industry; it is in a way putting all eggs in one basket.

Another *resident* stated that there was a lack of clarity on the difference between Waterfront-specific CIP and City-wide CIP.

A *property owner* expressed his concern of CIPs becoming segregation lines between neighbourhoods that receive TIEGs and those who don't, creating resentment in the later ones.

There was concern from a resident about the hatched areas in the Port Lands not being included in the CIP because there's no plan yet for it. In the *resident's* opinion, a strategic area with potential should be given an opportunity to prosper. He also warned that some incentives could be utilized by companies that 'come and go'. Long-term development in certain land patches is alright, but the City needs to see how they connect to the benefit of the whole area.

Question 2: What uses should be eligible to receive incentives?

A *resident* stated that cultural and institutional uses will largely be in the hands of public agencies.

Another *resident* stated that the community needed a large swimming pool, or some kind of similar facility.

A *resident* stated that employment could be created through the development of cultural or hallmark events, especially in the West Don Lands.

Another *resident* stated that any employment use, with exception of heavy industry and retail, should be suitable for the area. The City should refrain from targeting specific industries.

A *resident* stated that so-called '21st century' industries are vulnerable. They develop information and computer systems that support low wage industries. High tech is not the greatest industry, doesn't contribute to the consumer, consumes considerable amounts of resources and doesn't actually benefit the economy.

Another resident stated that uses allowed should be those of a capital-intensive nature.

A *resident* stated Don't be too restrictive in your list of eligible uses, for example some industries may last short periods; e.g. Graphic design etc.

Another *resident* stated that the CIPs should not deter entrepreneurs and that they should promote fairness for businesses by capturing all types of jobs.

A *resident* suggested also developing in the CIPs areas as water-related businesses, e.g. reaching out to shipping industries.

Another *resident* advocated for social enterprises noting that a move to local food industries in the area could have a good future.

Another *resident* noted that if an economic activity needs incentives maybe we don't need it.

Question 3: How much of the property tax should be returned to the owner? Should more or less than 60% of the tax increment be returned to the developer? Should the amount fluctuate over the ten years?

A *resident* stated that brownfields need lots of money (for cleaning up). Besides they not only need to be clean but also green.

Another *resident* mentioned that it was hard to come to a precise answer to this question, and that people needed to know first what it takes to be competitive. The grant should be given in enough amounts to make businesses competitive.

A *resident* stated that in order to bring businesses to the area, the City needed to have adequate infrastructure to be attractive in comparison to other areas. Investing in infrastructure ahead of time will attract businesses and people.

A *resident* mentioned that she did not have enough information to form an opinion on the matter. A regular business may not know whether the 60% benchmark is enough. While the 60 percent may seem alright to some, it may seem too low to others.

Another *resident* asked how the City could provide flexibility to accommodate case-by-case situations.

It was suggested by a *resident* that grants could be also based on the number of employees that the new land use would generate; the higher the number of employees the larger the amount of the incentive they should receive.

Question 4: How long should the owner be eligible to receive the incentive? Is the proposed time period appropriate or would a shorter or longer time period be more effective?

Most *residents* agreed that this was a difficult question to answer, given that most of them did not have business expertise. Participants suggested contacting people 'who know', as this is very technical issue.

Question 5: Should other types of financial tools be considered? Are the incentives put forth in the CIPs sufficient or should other alternative financial tools be considered? What tools?

A *resident* stated that the City could provide non-financial type of supports through business development programs (marketing plan, services, etc).

Instead of replacing what the TIEGS proposes, it was suggested by a *resident* to add other incentives to it that could be based for example on the number of jobs that a company creates.

A *resident* mentioned that to attract business, infrastructure will need to be in place first.

Wrap up after the group discussions

Staff clarified that for the TIEGs to be implemented, the activity for which a grant is sought, has to be tied to physical development, as under the provisions of the Planning Act it cannot be based on employment alone. It is the tax increase on the physical building that makes this mechanism possible. If it was only based on a job-creation criterion, the Province would consider it as *bonusing*, which is not allowed. The TIEG's will only be based on the tax increment.

A *resident* commented that environment and transportation planning needs to be better connected to economic development. So he suggested that an integrated planning process is desirable for the whole area, East and West. This could involve options such as car free areas, areas dedicated to wildlife movement, brownfield remediation, etc. In closing, he mentioned that good environmental practices do attract economic development.

Staff explained that TIF (Tax Increment Financing) is an American idea. It is a tool that advances future gains in municipal taxes collected to finance the public improvements that will create those gains. When a public project such as hazardous waste cleanup or public infrastructure is carried out, there is an increase in the attractiveness of the area and in land values. This increased site value and investment creates more taxable property, which increases tax revenues.

Staff also explained that in Ontario giving tax cancellation or relief to support development is not allowed; that's why the TIEGs are considered 'grants'. The City collects taxes, and then gives back a portion of them.

A *resident* pointed out that there were several important lands around Eastern and King South, and that there were industrial buildings on Eastern going through redevelopment and that there were no incentives to the north side. That seemed to the participant to be unfair, especially because both areas were within the TWRC.

Staff answered that there will be a City-Wide CIP, that could also benefit the areas not currently included in the Waterfront CIP.

A *resident* needed clarification on eligible uses asking if it was 'everything but' residential or retail. *Staff* answered that it depends on what area of the CIPs we are talking about. He mentioned that the City hasn't finalized the list of eligible uses. For example in the East Bayfront

area uses being considered include; creative industries, information and communication technologies, bio-medical industries, Scientific R&D, also office buildings.

Staff also mentioned that there will be considerable transit development in the area, and that it would be very similar to the West Don Lands. In the Port Lands, uses considered include film studios, industrial uses, information and communication technologies and green industries; while in South of Eastern, the plan will target film industries, office buildings, among other uses.

City Staff concluded that as part of the development of the Waterfront there were businesses that would need to relocate.

Once *Dave Hardy* confirmed that there were no more questions and comments, he thanked participants for their attendance, and reminded them that there were comment sheets available for them to submit written questions or comments.

- The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm. -