

WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR WINDSOR & ESSEX COUNTY

Background:

The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce wishes to express its continued support for the development of a Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy and Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Following the initial Brownfield Redevelopment initiative in December 2005 our Chamber developed a policy direction on Brownfield Redevelopment as it applies to the Windsor and Essex County Region. This policy resolution is attached to this letter.

The Chamber is concerned about the apparent lack of progress in the 2½ years since the original stakeholder meeting in December 2005. Our policy recommendation included timelines that have been surpassed and apparent progress has been slow. We understand that much of this time was taken up by preparation and submission of an application to the FCM for funding towards the cost of this work. The Chamber applauds the fact that these steps were taken to mitigate the financial impact on the taxpayers of Windsor. However, stakeholders could have been better informed about the work going on in the background, and should have been re-engaged earlier this year, prior to many of them taking a break from meetings for the summer vacation season.

Further to the consultation process, the time frame of two weeks for providing comments is overly restrictive, given that most of the stakeholders are groups and not individuals. This does not allow sufficient time for most volunteer driven organizations to put together a comprehensive and coherent set of comments on the information presented, as most organizations meet on a monthly basis.

Recommendations:

Having been briefed by your consultants on the status of work on the Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy and Community Improvement Plan on May 22, 2008, as well as the new project timelines, we are forwarding the following specific comments:

1. We are encouraged that the process of developing the City's strategy and CIP has been reinstated and that a target date for completion of approximately 10 months from now has been set. We believe this is a reasonable time frame for completion of the identified activities.
2. Further presentations within the consultation process should account for the time lapsed between December 2005 and the present. Improve future presentations to stakeholders by eliminating the portions that are not as relevant to the development of a strategy and CIP (i.e. details on remediation technology that might be potentially used). While these may be of interest to some of the participants, they really are not necessary for the development of a strategy and CIP. More

focus should be on the details of the strategy elements themselves, as well as an overview of the proposed CIP.

3. We would suggest that you look to the process used for development of the City's EMP as a model for development of the strategy and CIP. Under this model, stakeholder meetings provided opportunity for stakeholder input, rather than simply being a vehicle for presentations by the consultants and/or city staff.
4. We applaud and support the statement of your vision to have a partnership approach with the City and stakeholders to understand needs, goals and impediments in Windsor," but the reality falls somewhat short of this statement. We believe that the consultation process needs improvements in order to achieve this vision of a partnership. Sufficient time for stakeholders to hold internal consultations prior to providing input and the proper selection of the timing for stakeholder communications are key to this partnership succeeding.
5. As a significant stakeholder, the Windsor Essex Development Commission (WEDC) should be engaged in the development of the Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy and CIP as partners. You have identified marketing of the strategy and CIP as a critical success factor, which we would strongly support. Because of this, as well as the strong linkage between the success of the Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy and future economic development, we feel that it is critical that the WEDC be engaged in this process, as we stated in our Brownfield Redevelopment policy. You indicated at the meeting that the WEDC was approached for involvement in the steering committee and has declined at this time. We would urge you to be persistent in seeking their active participation, and in the event of their failure to reconsider, would urge you to seek a proxy representing the business community. Perhaps a community leader in this area, such as the Rosati Group. Alternatively, the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce could perhaps serve as a proxy.
6. The Chamber strongly believes in a regional approach to economic development. We would strongly encourage the engagement of the County as a stakeholder at a minimum, but preferably as a partner. This would allow for the cost sharing of a Brownfield Coordinator, which would seem to be advantageous given that you indicated in the presentation that it might not be possible to hire a full time Brownfield Coordinator for the City.
7. We strongly support your planned inclusion of the entire urban area within the designated zone.
8. We would strongly urge that both the Windsor Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce and the WEDC be included in the formal list of stakeholders.