

Renew Hamilton: High Level Messages

1. Downtown Hamilton and adjacent neighbourhoods **truly matter** to the future prosperity and wellbeing of our entire community.
2. The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and its partners are playing a **leadership role** in the renewal — economic, social and environmental — of downtown Hamilton and adjacent neighbourhoods.
3. This role is in **collaboration** with the City of Hamilton and myriad partners.
4. The urban renewal process needs to be **intentional and managed** — it requires a clear vision, supportive policies and programs, community engagement, and leadership (these ingredients are largely in place in Hamilton and it is a matter of raising public awareness of “the big picture” goals and acting on existing plans and priorities).
5. The pace and scope of renewal in downtown Hamilton have increased and hence the focus has shifted to a **new set of community challenges**, that includes:
 - Helping Hamiltonians to better understand the **economic fundamentals** of downtown renewal (risks and rewards) particularly from the perspective of the private sector.
 - Helping Hamiltonians understand the **shared benefits of urban intensification**.
 - Finding feasible solutions to the **preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings**.
 - Promoting **quality building standards** that reflect the unique character of downtown Hamilton.
 - Providing **better connections** between and among buildings and neighbourhoods in and around downtown Hamilton.
 - Assessing the long term merits of **two way streets** and **LRT** as part of the recipe for exceptional urban renewal in Hamilton.
6. The Chamber and its partners believe that we will achieve better long term outcomes through working together to identify and act on shared needs and interests – *let’s work to avoid polarization*.

Specifics

<p>The Chamber’s Motivations to Lead the RH Project</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Act on priorities voiced by community leaders (including many Chamber members) at successive Hamilton Economic Summits facilitated by the Chamber – i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reenergize downtown Hamilton as part of a complete community ▪ spark more investments in downtown Hamilton (private and public) ▪ make downtown Hamilton a magnet for next generation talent 2. Align with the Chamber’s overarching policy theme: “Grow Hamilton’s economy through smart infrastructure” – i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ urban environments that support new and emerging forms of economic development ▪ urban amenities that appeal to people from 8 to 80 ▪ urban transportation options that connect people to opportunity 3. Represents an opportunity for the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce to provide balanced thought leadership on a complex and sensitive topic of importance to all Hamiltonians.
<p>Renew Hamilton Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - What? - So What? 	<p>Why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A number of factors are driving the growth of Hamilton’s renewal economy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognition of the inherent value of Hamilton’s rich inventory of unique community assets concentrated in our downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods. ▪ Government policies and programs that are encouraging the intensification of downtown Hamilton — greater intensification is more cost efficient over time leading to <i>savings</i> in energy, municipal services, public and private transportation, etc. as well as higher <i>tax and assessment</i> revenues. ▪ Market demand for unique real estate (commercial and residential) in downtown Hamilton. ▪ Need to rehabilitate Hamilton’s aging infrastructure, particularly in downtown Hamilton. ▪ New and emerging business and employment opportunities directly tied to preserving, restoring and reutilizing under-performing historic assets. ▪ Growth in the acceptance of the long term benefits (economic, social and environmental) derived from sustainable development — the cornerstone of green growth occurring in cities worldwide.

	<p>2. Demonstrate that renewal <i>is</i> happening in Hamilton and support key players who are enabling progress.</p> <p>3. Create a local renewal culture that learns from the lessons of the past (good and bad) and utilizes the best of contemporary thinking and practice.</p> <p>What?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An initiative of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce funded by the public and private sectors and led by a multidisciplinary Project Team. ▪ Three key deliverables between 2012 and 2014: <i>video case studies / speaker series / education program</i> ▪ A culminating full length video in early 2015. <p>So What?</p> <p>The Renew Hamilton Project is designed to provide a number of impacts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A forum to help galvanize broadscale support for urban renewal in Hamilton. ▪ A bright signal that Hamilton is pushing forward with urban renewal in a big way. ▪ A hope that we will not repeat the mistakes of past downtown renewal initiatives.
<p>Balanced and Informed Perspectives</p>	<p>This is where we need our partners to weigh in on topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The lessons learned to date from participating in the RH Project ▪ The signs of progress that are attracting development to Hamilton ▪ The importance of residential intensification ▪ The lessons learned from past redevelopment efforts in Hamilton ▪ The effectiveness of municipal incentives ▪ The inherent risks and rewards of downtown renewal ▪ The effects of uncertainty on downtown investments ▪ The importance of funding The Gore Master Plan ▪ The emerging opportunities and challenges ▪ and more ...

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
March 2013

No.	Question	Answer
1.	What <i>beliefs</i> are at the heart of The Renew Hamilton Project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Renewal of the built and natural environments make economic sense — this is one key reason why the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce is a champion of downtown urban renewal. ▪ Renewal is sensible in <i>all</i> areas of Hamilton: Rural Suburban Urban — let’s encourage it <i>everywhere</i> as a preferred policy. ▪ Urban renewal — especially in our downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods — is particularly compelling (it can reap the highest returns on renewal investments and provide the greatest benefits to the city as a whole). ▪ Hamilton is in a <i>new age</i> of urban renewal driven by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rising demand by local and GTHA consumers for a walkable downtown ○ Modern policy, planning and incentive approaches that favour adaptive reuse in downtowns ○ Constraints on greenfield development — less land supply, higher development costs, etc. ○ Rising concerns regarding the future viability of suburban living — road congestion, etc. ○ Increased public acceptance of the intrinsic value of historic downtowns ○ Next generation citizens — entrepreneurs, young professionals, etc. — who want to live in historic downtowns ○ Investments in public transit — especially in downtown centres ▪ The development shift is on and Hamilton can be a leader in progressive urban renewal — the ingredients are in place. ▪ More and more examples of urban renewal are happening in Hamilton. ▪ The focus has changed to a question of quality: “<i>How can we ensure that urban renewal in downtown Hamilton and adjacent neighbourhoods is of the highest quality possible?</i>” ▪ We believe that the documentation and promotion of local renewal projects can help achieve this goal — i.e., the work of The Renew Hamilton Project.
2.	Who determines the future of downtown Hamilton?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It’s important that Hamiltonians help shape the future of our city in intentional ways. ▪ Renewal <i>is</i> happening — let’s manage change and demand the highest standards possible. ▪ It starts with collaborative leadership and engaged citizens — the process of urban renewal demands higher levels of participation than conventional suburban development. ▪ Government takes its cues from the community and sets the policy and investment framework. ▪ The private sector invests in assets and amenities. ▪ <i>People</i> create the dynamism necessary for the downtown to prosper. ▪ It’s a team sport.

No.	Question	Answer
3.	What do you mean by the “renewal economy?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It’s a large concept that applies to sustainable approaches to energy, housing, transportation, etc. ▪ For us, we view the ‘renewal economy’ through the lens of urban <i>redevelopment</i>. ▪ Building a more sustainable future on restorable assets (built and natural). ▪ Contrasts with urban growth typified by “green field development” at the edges of the city. ▪ Recognizes the value of unique historic assets that give Hamilton its distinctive character.
4.	What are the “restorable assets” in downtown Hamilton and adjacent neighbourhoods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They fall into a number of categories, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Buildings (commercial residential institutional) ○ Neighbourhoods ○ Public Spaces ○ Natural Landscapes ▪ We view these as <i>assets</i> as opposed to <i>liabilities</i> ▪ Through renewal, restorable assets often attain greater value (economic, social, etc.) — hence there’s an economic incentive to renew. ▪ The city and others have created inventories of downtown assets — particularly older buildings and public spaces that make us a truly unique city.
5.	How can urban renewal help Hamilton address its top challenges of the early 21st century, including fiscal health, infrastructural renewal, talent retention, etc.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hamilton’s fiscal future has been raised as a concern by our city manager, and others — the status quo (growth with minimal tax increases and high service levels) is <i>not</i> sustainable. ▪ Smart urban renewal is a big part of creating a more sustainable Hamilton in a prolonged period of <i>austerity, stagnant economic growth</i> and <i>diminished resources</i>. ▪ Focused efforts to renew downtown Hamilton and adjacent neighbourhoods can help deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greater intensification that provides higher municipal revenue per hectare of developed land ○ Decreased expenditures on public services, including mass transit, water, energy, etc. ○ A solution to the chronic outmigration of youth who seek vibrant urban centres ○ A unique image that sets Hamilton apart and attracts investment (<i>generic power centres and subdivisions do not add to Hamilton’s unique value proposition on the regional stage</i>) ○ A <i>raison d’être</i> to invest in rehabilitating older infrastructure ○ Compact livable neighbourhoods that invite walking and human interaction (contributors to improved physical and mental health among citizens)
6.	Why invest in the renewal of downtown Hamilton?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Renewal utilizes existing infrastructure that has been paid for by previous generations — much of our infrastructure is currently underutilized. ▪ Downtowns are the preferred option cited in the province’s long range growth strategies: “Places to Grow” and “Green Belt Plans.” ▪ Proximity to dense employment lands (24,000 jobs downtown at 1,600 locations). ▪ Epicentre for commerce, culture and professional sports. ▪ Downtowns set the image and reputation of an entire community. ▪ Vibrant downtowns respond to growing market demand for “walkable urban places” among the young and old.

No.	Question	Answer
7.	Why are “adjacent neighbourhoods” important to urban renewal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hamilton’s downtown is surrounded by a rich variety of distinctive neighbourhoods, Durand, Beasley, etc. ▪ People in these neighbourhoods rely on the downtown for local needs and wants. ▪ Adjacent neighbourhoods ensure that there’s a strong residential component to a downtown.
8.	How would you characterize downtown renewal — <i>what makes it different?</i>	<p>The renewal of downtowns is different from rural and suburban renewal in three important respects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensitive: Downtowns are historic (lots of embedded memory) and there are many highly engaged stakeholders. 2. Complex: Reimagining and renewing existing public spaces and older buildings is fraught with unexpected technical difficulties and surprises. 3. Costly: Downtown renewal is typically more expensive than new structures and/or greenfield developments. <p>HENCE: Developers of renewal projects exhibit unique attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial resources to deal with “the unexpected” ○ Patience ○ Willingness to engage the larger community in projects
9.	How are governments supporting downtown renewal in Hamilton?	<p>There’s a growing alignment between policies and plans:</p> <p>Federal: (TBD)</p> <p>Province: Places to Grow Green Belt Legislation Intensification Targets Metrolinx Siting GO Train Station Downtown Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) Heritage Preservation and Restoration, etc.</p> <p>Municipal: City of Hamilton Official Plan (at OMB pending provincial approval) Downtown Transportation Plan Downtown Secondary Plan Municipal Incentives (grants, loans and tax measures), etc.</p> <p>The principles of Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (‘Putting People First’) — is a foundation for renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public realm improvements ○ Connect downtown to surrounding amenities and features ○ Residential living downtown — “downtown neighbourhoods” ○ Protect and build on strengths — an asset-focused approach ○ Modest improvements and changes are okay ○ Yet, pursue big/bold projects too

No.	Question	Answer
10.	Who is investing in the renewal of downtown Hamilton and what are the trends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A broad <i>mix</i> of people and organizations are investing in the renewal of downtown Hamilton. ▪ This is a good thing as diversity is the key to sustained investments at all levels. ▪ Types of investors (predominantly local): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individuals (residential and commercial) ○ Public (housing, infrastructure) ○ Silent Investors ○ Institutional ▪ Downtown investments in land and real estate are on the rise, particularly in key adjacent neighbourhoods, including the North End (near the waterfront), James Street North, Durand and Corktown — i.e., residential areas. ▪ In some cases, downtown properties are <i>appreciating more rapidly</i> than suburban properties — a clear signal that the tide has turned. ▪ It's a good time to buy and live in downtown Hamilton. ▪ Matters of affordability and gentrification (relatively new issues for downtown Hamilton) are beginning to emerge and require thoughtful attention — a vibrant downtown requires a mix of residents and income levels.
11.	How do you respond to people who say: <i>I haven't been downtown in years and I have no intention to return?</i>	<p>The Renew Hamilton Project uses a number of responses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban living and experiences are not for everyone — research says that 1/3 of people love the suburbs, 1/3 of people love downtowns, and 1/3 of people could go either way (The Brookings Institution). ▪ Hamilton's downtown is on a pathway that is different from the past — progressive downtown renewal is NOT about recreating yesterday. ▪ The new pathway is based on creating an environment different from the suburbs. ▪ Come see/experience what makes downtown Hamilton truly distinctive: <i>Unique restaurants / unique architecture / unique districts / unique adjacent neighbourhoods</i>
12.	How do you measure the progress of downtown renewal in Hamilton?	<p>The Renew Hamilton Project does not currently have a set of formal performance indicators.</p> <p>We are considering measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changes in population ○ Changes in assessment and tax values ○ Changes in commercial lease values ○ Etc. ...

No.	Question	Answer
13.	<p>What’s needed now to move downtown renewal to the next level?</p>	<p>Many Foundations are in Place Hamilton has demonstrated early successes needed for sustained downtown renewal, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment in a downtown renewal office currently led by Glen Norton and team ▪ Formation of the Downtown Hamilton Realty Corporation ▪ A vision for a mixed use, walkable downtown (“People First Downtown Secondary Plan”) ▪ Policies and plans to create “walkable urbanism” downtown ▪ Significant public investments in buildings and public realm (a placemaking approach) ▪ Financial incentive programs to spur desired renewal projects ▪ Examples of private/public partnerships in renewal — Lister Building, etc. ▪ Examples of indigenous, arts-led renewal activities — SuperCrawl, etc. ▪ Examples of large-scale developments/redevelopments by the private sector — Witton Lofts ▪ Examples of complete streets ▪ Creation of a downtown grocery store at Jackson Square <p>All these successes are moving toward a critical mass required for continuous renewal ...</p> <p>Now, the most important goal is to increase the number of people who live, work, play and learn in downtown Hamilton and adjacent neighbourhoods.</p> <p>What’s Needed Most? — Based on input from Renew Hamilton partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote the “People First Downtown Secondary Plan” — it’s not well known and understood ▪ Protect our built, natural and cultural heritage — the building blocks for a renewal economy ▪ Promote the community-wide benefits of urban intensification ▪ Create more <i>certainty</i> needed to spur additional private sector investments — e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoning (“make the right things easy” ~ Christopher Leinberger, The Brookings Institution) ○ Waterfront development opportunities ○ Light rail transit plans ▪ Continue to offer municipal incentives ▪ Leverage the revitalization of HECFI as a renewal opportunity ▪ Continue efforts to secure a postsecondary campus in downtown Hamilton <p>Continue to document, promote and accelerate the regeneration of downtown Hamilton and adjacent neighbourhoods — the mission of The Renew Hamilton Project</p>