



# **The Case to Maintain and Leverage Public Ownership**

**May 18, 2016 Community Meeting**

# Introduction

- Purpose of presentation
- Today's presenters – FOA Board representatives:  
Richard Allen & Eric Lootsma
- Labour of love
- Varied sources of information/inspiration
- No shortage of ideas ... *yet, first things first*
- **Key Words:** Journey | Partnership | Stability | Public Ownership | Investment Ready | Private Sector Engagement | Creativity

# About Friends of Auchmar

- Community based, not for profit
- Committed volunteers with a record of success in heritage renewal
- Mandate is to rally, educate and advocate for Auchmar
- Proactive, positive, partnership mindset – a model that works
- Cognizant of many “competing pressures” for public funding – due diligence is welcome
- Let’s grow the Heritage Renewal “pie” citywide

# Supportive of City's Work

- We're thankful to Municipal Team for its work on behalf of Auchmar:
  - Public stewardship by engaged Mayor and City Councillors
  - Successful stabilization and preservation efforts to date
  - Community engagement – led by Anna Bradford and Ian Kerr-Wilson
  - Operations Plan – Preserve, Present, Sustain (integrated approach)

# Our Position

- Our “North Star” – **maintain Auchmar as a publicly-owned, community asset for all to enjoy**
- We are open to dynamic, innovative models with the private/philanthropic sector – Isaac Buchanan would likely appreciate our entrepreneurial approach
- We seek fiscal responsibility and a long term ROI measured in economic, social and environmental terms
- We have not declared support for any particular proponent

# FOA – 5 Core Beliefs

- Heritage renewal in the beginning often requires **catalytic public investments** – share the risk and benefits across sectors
- Heritage renewal done right generates **economic and social spin offs** – e.g., Lister Building, Witton Lofts, Radius, Treble Hall, Dundurn
- Heritage renewal is a key element of **quality place making** in leading modern cities – key attractor for next generation
- Heritage renewal attracts premier tenants and clientele – **great spaces, high value uses**
- Heritage renewal is **happening across Hamilton – let's continue to invest in heritage renewal citywide**

# Auchmar – Recent History

- Acquired by City of Hamilton
- Municipal Heritage Designation
- Provincial Conservation Easement

# About Auchmar Easement

- Voluntary legal agreement between the City of Hamilton (current owner of Auchmar) and the Ontario Heritage Trust - a “protective covenant”
- Establishes mutually-accepted conditions that will guide and ensure the conservation and sympathetic adaptive reuse of Auchmar
- **Easement is registered on title and runs in perpetuity**

# Benefits of Auchmar Easement

- Easement is a ***big plus*** for Auchmar and the broader community:
  - Demonstrates a long term vision on part of City
  - Provides “stability,” “context” and “predictability” – adds value
  - Profile for Auchmar as a provincially-significant heritage asset
  - Comprehensive protection: buildings, landscapes, archeology
  - Pathway to potential provincial/federal funding
  - Owner requires consent from OHT for any changes/modifications
  - **Changes to OHT easement agreements are very rare**

# Current Situation

- Proposals submitted to date not acceptable to City
- Council Direction to Staff in 2015:
  - close the RFP process
  - place “real estate option” on hold
  - consult with the public
  - test support for funding options
- **Decision imminent on the future of Auchmar**

# Key Decision Point

- **June 15 Council Meeting (TBC):** City cultural staff will present its “Operations Plan” and other information
- FOA will make its case to maintain and leverage public ownership
- Other delegations welcome – *let's fill the bleachers*

# Rationale for Public Ownership

- Council's Choice: **Maintain in city ownership** *or* **sell the property**
- We Say: “Maintain and Leverage Public Ownership!”
- **RATIONALE**
  - ✓ Provides ongoing stability, expertise and resources needed to sustain momentum and ensure quality outcomes!
  - ✓ Is the key to unlock needed private and philanthropic investments!
  - ✓ Will mitigate the risk of a stalled initiative!

# Auchmar's Strengths

- Municipal **Heritage Designation** *and* Ontario Heritage Trust **Conservation Easement**
- A **compelling narrative** tied to The Honourable Isaac Buchanan
- **One of few** significant heritage assets that remain on Hamilton Mountain
- Very **unique asset** - a distinctive blend of built, natural and cultural features
- A **significant destination** linked to urban pathways that connect three mountain wards and beyond

# More Strengths ...

- Adjacent to a **growing institutional cluster** anchored by St. Joseph's Healthcare and Mohawk College
- Near the new **integrated transit hub** at Mohawk College
- Support of **Councillors** and other “friends”
- Support of **FOA**

# Auchmar Challenges

- A large and complex site – *yet this is its advantage!*
- Vying for share of attention among other worthy community initiatives – let's grow the pie
- Current restrictions on public access to Auchmar buildings and landscate leads to a low level of awareness
- Significant capital and maintenance costs across numerous features

# Case to Maintain Public Ownership

- Proof of concept examples exist – e.g., Bell Gairdner Estate in Mississauga, Dundurn Castle in Hamilton ...
- Let's all benefit from public investments to date in Auchmar
- Leverage the OHT conservation easement for the public good
- Community, public and private uses can cover annual operating costs
- Best decision to ensure a desirable future – stability and predictability
- Sets the stage for myriad proposed uses and revenue generation
- Public ownership enables public uses

# Our Draft Recommendations

- Maintain and leverage city ownership
- Boost awareness of Auchmar and engagement – get creative!
- Set up a “city-community task team” to guide renewal
- Make phased public investments over time – move steadily forward
- Seek corporate and philanthropic contributions for specific elements
- Submit ongoing applications for provincial and federal funding
- Short list strategic partners/tenants that align with use criteria
- Phase in private partners as opportunities arise

# Next Steps

- Join Friends of Auchmar
- Help strengthen our “case”
- Tell your friends
- Call your councillor
- Speak at June 15 council meeting (date TBC)

**LEARN MORE at [friendsofauchmar.ca](http://friendsofauchmar.ca)**