



## **Submission to Finance & Economic Development Committee**

**August 18, 2011**

### **Agenda item 2: Lansdowne Partnership Plan Implementation Status Update**

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It is good to have an update on the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park. Although we have had many questions about the course proposed for that redevelopment, it is agreed by all that the policy of deliberate neglect must stop.

The staff report presents Council with a revised timetable for the project. Because of the change in timing, it is proposed that, rather than proceeding to let contracts on a permit-ready basis, the working drawings will be 95% complete at the time that contracts are let. As residents of the city, without experience in such matters, we were surprised that it had earlier been intended to move ahead with drawings only 30% complete. If we don't know what we are buying, the risk of cost escalation is high. What is proposed now seems much preferable to the course of action earlier intended.

It is proposed that a new cost sharing agreement be drawn up for the project. No doubt Councillors are aware that the issue of "who pays for what" in the redevelopment of Lansdowne continues to be a topic for public discussion. While it seems quite appropriate to have the City Manager negotiate such an agreement, and the outline of an eventual agreement is evident in the reports before you, we would recommend that the cost sharing agreement be ratified by Council and be a publicly available document.

Similarly, we request that all the documents coming before Council over the autumn be fully available for public scrutiny. Council will be asked to approve the legal agreements, the governance model and other specific arrangements. All these lengthy documents should be freely available for examination by the public. In our view, it is not sufficient to provide summaries of legal arrangements being entered into by the City. A summary is convenient but the whole and complete document should be available.

As neighbours we will have an interest in governance of the site. We suggest that it should be clear how public access to the site or portions thereof will be maintained. There have also been inquiries as to use of private security guards versus reliance on the Police Service in management of public spaces at Lansdowne.

One of the applications to be brought before Council in the autumn will be a request that the Lansdowne project be granted exemption from the City's signage by-law. We appreciate the advance notice of this. The Glebe Community Association will study such a proposal with interest. We have

opposed previous applications for giant intrusive signage at Lansdowne and we have grave doubts about granting blanket exemptions from City policies for the Lansdowne project.

We note that PriceWaterhouseCoopers have conducted a comprehensive review of the June 2010 financial arrangements and submitted a report this month. We failed to find that report in the material made available for this meeting and wish to know when that report will be released to the public. Some members of our community have questions about the changes in flow of funds between June 2010 and August 2011. Release of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers report would add to public understanding about the cost to taxpayers of this project.

Reference is made to environmental remediation requirements at Lansdowne and the staff report calls for actions prior to June 30, 2012 without any explanation of the significance of that date. It is widely understood in our community that the Lansdowne Partnership is anxious to accelerate dealing with contaminated soil because newer and more demanding regulations come into effect in 2012. If this understanding is correct, we believe this should be stated openly and not concealed from Council or from the public. If the community understanding is incorrect, this would be a good time to clear up the matter. We recommend that the City take action to inform residents near Lansdowne about the nature of the problem, what is being done and whether there is risk for neighbours during remediation or thereafter.

In the report prepared by Graham Bird Associates (page 11) it is stated that consultations with the community on operational plans and transportation demand management have occurred as called for in the Minutes of Settlement for the zoning of Lansdowne. In June there was a preliminary meeting at which the project team made presentations regarding traffic issues associated with large events, but there has been no consultation as such. Our interest is not confined to major events; day-to-day activity at the redeveloped site will also impact our community. The Association has proposed that some terms of reference be established for the consultations and the community looks forward to further opportunity for discussion with the project team.

Finally, we wish to refer to the following item on the Committee's agenda – the proposed procedure for sale or lease of air rights for development at Lansdowne. A distinction is made between residential and office development. For the latter, air rights are only to be leased whereas rights can be leased or sold for the former. Members of Council may be under the impression that the distinction between residential and office development is clear and established in the zoning for Lansdowne. In fact, this distinction is not clear in the zoning – most of the site is zoned for mixed-use development. If Council wishes to differentiate among the proposed buildings in the site plan, this might provide greater clarity to the process.