

IDEAS AND PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO IEPC

Idea: Various

In response to your request for ideas that have the potential of enhancing London's economic prosperity, we propose a few initiatives for your consideration.

Let us preface by saying that the City of London's Tourism and hospitality sector, based on a 2011 economic impact analysis by the Conference Board of Canada, generates annually approx. \$500M in tourism spending by 4.6M visitors which include 1.6M overnight stays. The tourism industry in London supports 4,300 full year jobs which represent 2.7% of local employment and contributes approx. \$25M annually in municipal taxes. Tourism accounts for 62% of total occupancies in London hotels.

Since 2001 London has hosted 15 major national and international events that have generated in excess of an estimated \$120M in economic activity. The 2013 World Figure Skating Championships alone is estimated to generate about \$28M in direct economic activity.

The tourism economy in London is a major wealth generator and should be recognized as a key strategic development component in determining London's economic future. The industry should be consulted on major economic, transportation and infrastructure projects.

Tourism is an economic driver in Ontario (\$21B) that contributes more to Ontario's economy than mining and supply (\$5.6B), pharmaceuticals and biotechnology (\$B), and advanced medical technologies (\$4B) sectors combined! In 2009 there were 147,000 tourism related businesses in Ontario. This represented 17% of the total number of businesses in the province.

In the context of the aforesaid, we submit the following initiatives for consideration that we believe have the potential of increasing visitations and job opportunities for Londoners:

Community Attraction/Event Development Fund

- Create an industry lead fund through a broadly applied user fee (accommodation, restaurant, transport, retail as example) that would support new and existing initiatives that have the potential to stimulate visitations (both day and overnight) and economic activity.

JLC Expansion

- The JLC is a premier sport/entertainment destination that has and will continue to be London's premier venue for national and international events. What has become obvious is that the JLC is being challenged by space limitations and therefore it needs to expand "back of house" to improve space requirements for major events as well as provide more dressing and meeting rooms, media and reception areas which are currently at a premium. A proposed two level expansion plan that would encompass the lot off the west side of the current structure would resolve the aforesaid and assist the London Knight organization in amenity improvements (dressing room, work out/exercise area) that would serve to attract top tier hockey talent to London and maintain the teams highly competitive reputation. There would even be enough room to create a proper Sports Hall of Fame. This expansion if approved would create an additional 30,000 sq. ft. of additional space. The cost of the expansion could be shared by the City, Global Spectrum and the London Knights.

Heritage Museum (Old Central Library)

- Acquire and convert this building to a heritage museum that would provide visitors and citizens a one stop information/education centre about London's history and the story of the people who created and contributed to what London is today. This facility would give context to who and what we are as a community. This could become a "must see" for those new to London and beyond.

Destination Casino

- In consideration of the changes that the OLG is considering with regard to gaming ownership and operation, we would strongly suggest that a renewed casino development be considered in the context of becoming a "destination/attraction" and create experiences that offer more than just additional slot machines and gaming tables. As example, consideration should be given to attaching a 1,200-1,500 seat acoustically superior, community/casino shared performing arts facility to the development. A key element to consummating an arrangement like this would require private sector capital to offset community contribution. This performing arts facility would serve as a draw to attract overnight visitations and hopefully garner more revenues and visitor spending. A cost sharing operating and occupancy agreement could insure financial viability of the facility. Additions to the site such as a water works display, light show etc. would give the development a distinctive look and, as noted earlier, hopefully encourage more overnight visits than the existing casino model generates.

Amphitheatre (Fork at the Thames)

- Construct a 1,000 seat covered amphitheatre. This would provide for an excellent outdoor summer venue for community performing arts groups and ad a significant

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architectural feature to the area(the late distinguished London artist Philip Aziz designed a distinctive looking amphitheatre that should be given serious consideration).

Permanent Sound and Light Show (Museum London)

As a summer/fall attraction, invest in the development of a unique sound and light show that would project a 15 minute show from Museum London on to the provincial court house building on Rideout Street. A perfect cement canvas. This would surely create a unique attraction for London and stimulate visitations from in and around the region.

CONTACT:

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