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File No. O-7938
Planner: S.GALLOWAY / H.McNEELY

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & POLICY COMMITTEE
FROM:	JOHN M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT:	STATUS OF RETHINK LONDON KEY DIRECTIONS AND DISCUSSION PAPERS JUNE 10, 2013

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following information report on the ReThink London process and discussion papers **BE RECEIVED**.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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December 4, 2012, Planning Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) regarding the status of the ReThink London community engagement report.

January 30, 2012, Planning Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee regarding the final Terms of Reference for the Official Plan Review.

PURPOSE

This report serves to provide an update on the ReThink London process and the discussion papers related to the eight key directions.

STATUS UPDATE

Following the December report to SPPC, a ReThink London public event was held on December 12, 2012 with approximately 225 people in attendance. At this event, we released the draft Vision, Values, and Directions that were presented to the SPPC. Brent Toderian, a nationally and internationally known practitioner with over 20 years of experience in advanced urbanism, city planning and urban design was the keynote speaker. Brent was the former Chief Planner for Vancouver and was the first Manager of Centre City Planning & Design in Calgary, as well as the City's Chief Subdivision & Neighbourhood Planner. During Brent's stay in London, staff from Planning, Engineering and Development Services had the opportunity to meet and engage with him about what makes cities great, and to discuss the ReThink London process.

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Since the last report to SPPC on December 4, 2012, ReThink London has continued to engage the public. The engagement involved a variety of organizations and groups, including:

- Downtown Rotary
- London Health Sciences Centre
- Chamber of Commerce
- Western University Engineers
- London Youth Forum
- Matthews Hall
- Fanshawe College Urban Design Charrette
- Huron University College - Sustainable Development Panel
- Kiwanis Forest City Club
- Middlesex Kiwanis Club
- London Photowalk
- Polish Discussion Club
- Goodwill Community
- South London Women’s Group
- Ark Aid Mission
- Middlesex London Health Unit - Creating Healthy Active Communities
- Northeast London Community Engagement Committee
- Housing Advisory Committee
- Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee
- Childcare Advisory Committee

ReThink London attended the 2013 Lifestyle Homeshow on January 25th to 27th where we spoke with 304 Londoners. 279 of these people were new participants to the ReThink London process. At this event, we reached a significant milestone. More than 9600 Londoners have now participated in ReThink London community events and meetings since May 2012.



Heather McNeely, Jerzy Smolarek, and Sean Galloway

February 27, 2013 – Lifestyle Homeshow

Discussion Papers on the Eight Key Directions:

From the public engagement on ReThink London, a vision has been developed – “**Our Future: Exciting, Exceptional and Connected London**”. Eight key directions that represent what we heard from Londoners have been developed and discussion papers have been prepared for each key direction. These eight key directions will be the basis for the policies in the new Official Plan.

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Fostering A Prosperous City

At every session, in every discussion, and through the thousands of comments we received through our engagement process, the idea of prosperity was consistently raised. Your overriding voice has become our main purpose – to create a Plan that will propel London towards prosperity.

It is as simple as that. ReThink London, and the Plan that will arise from this process, is all about creating a city that builds on our existing strengths, addresses our weaknesses, and leads to a city that is tremendously prosperous. We believe that this is beyond debate – we all want a prosperous London.

Connecting the Region

London can be thought of as an “Island City”, a stand-alone city in the context of its geography. During our conversations regarding ReThink London, we heard your ideas and concerns about how you would like to see us better connect to the region that surrounds us.

In this paper, we will look at why we need to connect with the region surrounding London and identify the benefits these connections will bring. We may be an island city, but it does not limit us from working with our partners in the County and surrounding Towns in order to become collectively stronger and smarter.

Building a Mixed-Use, Compact City

Over the past 40 years, we have been growing in a very spread-out pattern and we are consuming much more land than we ever dreamed we would need. We estimate that in the next 50 years our population will grow by more than 50%, with an additional 200,000 people calling London home. The decisions that we make and actions that we take now will have an impact on future generations of our families.

We have heard much from Londoners about how you would like to see growth in the future. We have also heard from our development community and they want to work with us to develop the London of the future.

Providing Transportation Choices

Transportation is a major component of our everyday lives and our economy. Ever increasing environmental concerns and increased gas prices are making choices in transportation, like walking, biking and transit more desirable. We know that the car remains the most common choice for many Londoners to travel. However, we have heard from Londoners that they want alternatives to become more viable, convenient and affordable. Responding to trends in transportation choices is important in keeping London competitive – both to businesses and to attracting new residents.

In this paper, we discuss the link between land use planning and transportation and the affect it has on the health and well-being of residents as well as the economic benefits of a well-connected city.

Building a Greener City

As London is known as the “Forest City”, it is logical that we strive to be “green”.

This paper sets the stage for London to build on its strengths to be a regional and provincial leader in environmental initiatives, stewardship and sustainable development. Doing our best to reduce and mitigate our impact on the environment and to develop local strategies for climate change adaptation sets the context and “lens” for this discussion paper. Strengthening our valued urban forest by growing and protecting more trees while improving our level of forest monitoring and maintenance is also addressed. The broad goal is to build a resilient and greener City for our citizens, neighbourhoods, and community, now and for future generations.

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Supporting a Culturally Rich and Diverse City

Recently there has been a significant focus on culture and diversity as an important driver of economic prosperity. This paper builds on the recent Cultural Prosperity Plan to describe how we can support cultural programming, leverage London’s cultural assets and better celebrate and promote culture. The majority of growth in Canada now comes from immigration – not natural increase. Many immigrants come to Canada with a wealth of knowledge, experience and skill. We explore the ways in which we can attract and welcome newcomers to London in the way we plan our cities and services.

This paper also explores the important role of our Downtown and our surrounding heritage neighbourhoods in promoting cultural activities in our City. Live/work opportunities, public art, and formal and informal performance venues are all described as part of our cultural infrastructure.

Building Strong and Attractive Neighbourhoods

Our neighbourhoods are the centre of our day-to-day activities, where people live, work, shop, play, and enjoy a high quality of life. They are an important part of London’s “prosperity offering”, helping us to attract newcomers and retain our valuable workforce. We have heard Londoners tell us that they want their neighbourhoods to be safe, clean, well connected, walkable, beautiful, healthy, engaging, supportive of community gathering and interaction, interesting, diverse, and integrated with recreation and the natural environment. We have also heard that some Londoner’s needs are shifting, and they want viable neighbourhood options that offer more urban experiences that are less reliant on the automobile.

This discussion paper is about developing complete and livable communities with a better mix of housing, jobs, gathering places, parks, shops and services in close proximity to one another. It also looks at complete communities as offering housing and service options to meet the needs of people in all stages of a person’s life and income level.

Making Wise Planning Decisions, Careful Management

Through ReThink London, Londoners have been working hard to create a vision for our future and developing a new London Plan that will propel our city towards that vision. It is important that there is a strong level of accountability to this plan in all of our decisions, the investments we make and our approach to planning applications. Wise planning decisions and the careful management of the outcomes of those decisions require consistency and flexibility as we drive toward our collective vision. In order to achieve this, it is important that we all understand the principles and processes that we will use to make these decisions.

In this paper, we focus on the process in which decisions are made and clearly state the planning principles that will be used as we undertake “city building” - one project at a time. This is critical to ensure buy-in, consistency and understanding as the London Plan is implemented over the next 20 years.

Over the month of May, these discussion papers were released to the public. The papers each focus on those points that were most often raised in the community discussion. They also discuss some best practices that we have learned from other communities. Finally, the papers provide an indication of where we are heading in the preparation of a new London Official Plan.

As part of the “roll-out” of these discussion papers through May, they were posted on the Rethink London website. In addition to the papers, visitors to the site were able to respond to a survey about each direction. Visitors were also able to leave comments about each direction. Since the first roll-out on May 2nd, more than 3500 persons have visited the website.

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On June 5, 2013, the ReThink Team held an event with more than 300 registrants. The purpose of this event was to engage Londoners on the discussion papers for the eight key directions. The keynote speaker at this event was Ken Greenberg, an architect, urban designer, teacher, writer, former Director of Urban Design and Architecture for the City of Toronto and Principal of Greenberg Consultants. Mr. Greenberg’s presentation was sponsored by the Urban League, London Area Planning Consultants, London Home Builders’ Association and London Development Institute.

Next Step for Public Input:

Over the next month, the ReThink London team will continue to engage the public on the discussion papers for the eight key directions. This next step in the review process will confirm what we heard from Londoners is generally consistent with the key directions.

The discussion papers serve to tie together what we heard from Londoners to the ReThink London policy approach for the new master plan for the City. The full set of discussion papers is provided in Appendix ‘A’ to this report.

It is anticipated that the draft policies for the new Official Plan will be prepared before the end of the year.

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May 30, 2013

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APPENDIX 'A'

ReThink London

Discussion Papers
May 2013

