

Life after clean-up of the CIP lagoons: a glimpse of how it could be

Draft report talks of improved quality of life, a new vision for Hawkesbury

By Louise Sproule

HAWKESBURY — Remediation and redevelopment of the 254-acre CIP wet and dry lagoon site could increase the town's population of 11,000 by an additional 3,000 persons, or the equivalent of the population of Alexandria, according to a draft report presented to the Town of Hawkesbury last December.

FoTenn, a planning and urban design firm, was hired by the town last year to prepare a socio-economic benefits study related to the clean-up and redevelopment of the land formerly owned by the CIP, located along Hawkesbury's waterfront on Main Street West.

The study analyzes current market conditions in Hawkesbury and presents a plan for site redevelopment which would include a mix of housing types, greenspace with recreational trails, a marina, a municipally-run facility including a theatre, small cinema and meeting space, public access to the waterfront, retail development and commercial space, a hotel and meeting facility, and an optional school site.

The time frame for the full redevelopment of the site is 30 years.

Residential development would include 1,508

housing units of various types, including 349 senior housing units. The development would include the potential for estate housing, which the study says is in short supply in Hawkesbury, driving those seeking such housing to nearby Champlain Township and the Township of East Hawkesbury. Estate lots will represent about nine per cent of the units, while affordable rental housing will be located along Main Street. Attracting high-end residential and commercial development will require a significant amount of marketing to create a new image of and vision for Hawkesbury, says the study, which also says that there is already an oversupply of hotel rooms and meeting space in Hawkesbury. Significantly more business-related hotel nights and leisure/tourism trade on a year-round basis would be required before the market could support more hotel and conference space.

For the municipality, additional municipal tax revenues of \$11 million could be generated by the time site redevelopment is complete.

These are the opportunities and much of the FoTenn study is devoted to outlining development of the site.

>> 3.

<< 1.

But the history of the site and obstacles which must be overcome before the site can be redeveloped are also contained in the report.

Of the total 254 acres under discussion, the "wet lagoon", which is currently owned by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, consists of about 40 acres of land on the east side of the site. The wet lagoon contains both compressed and light paper sludge, with construction waste and wood waste in the western portion of the parcel, which extends to the Hawkesbury Riverfront Estate portion of land. To facilitate development of the site, it is hoped that the town will take ownership and therefore control of the remediated "wet lagoon" property, according to the report.

The "dry lagoons", considered brownfield sites, cover about 200 acres of land on the west side of the site and are owned by two private landowners: Asco Construction and Hawkesbury Riverfront Estates. There are six dry lagoons on this portion of the site. The dry lagoons originally contained sludge and fine wood chip materials, says the FoTenn report, but since the closure of the CIP mill, these materials have dried out. Grass cover and low brush indicate some level of nutrient enrichment, says the report.

The study says that a Community Improvement Plan will be needed to assist the municipality by addressing property rehabilitation, brownfield cleanup and redevelopment programs, incorporating public consultation, planning and the use of financial-assistance programs.