



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

**CITY WIDE
IMPLICATIONS**

To:	Chair and Members Economic Development and Planning Committee PED07198		
From:	Tim McCabe General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department	Telephone: Facsimile: E-mail:	905-546-4339 905 546-4364 tjmccabe@hamilton.ca
Date:	June 22, 2007		
Re:	Civic Gateway Design Study (City Wide) (PED07198)		

Council Direction:

The Civic Gateways project was identified for study as part of Council's 2001 budget deliberations.

Information:

In 2001 Council identified the need to install civic gateway features at the major highway entrances to the City. The intent was to develop a sense of entry into the City by enhancing these strategic locations in a way that will present a positive image to its citizens and visitors. A budget amount of \$100,000.00 was allocated from the capital budget to study the issue and develop designs.

The Planning and Economic Development Department commenced the Civic Gateway Design Study in 2002 and developed a terms of reference for designs for gateway features at five major entry points to the City. Terms of reference were developed outlining a three phase process as follow:

- Phase 1: site identification.
- Phase 2: develop design options for each site.
- Phase 3: prepare cost estimates and an implementation strategy for each site.

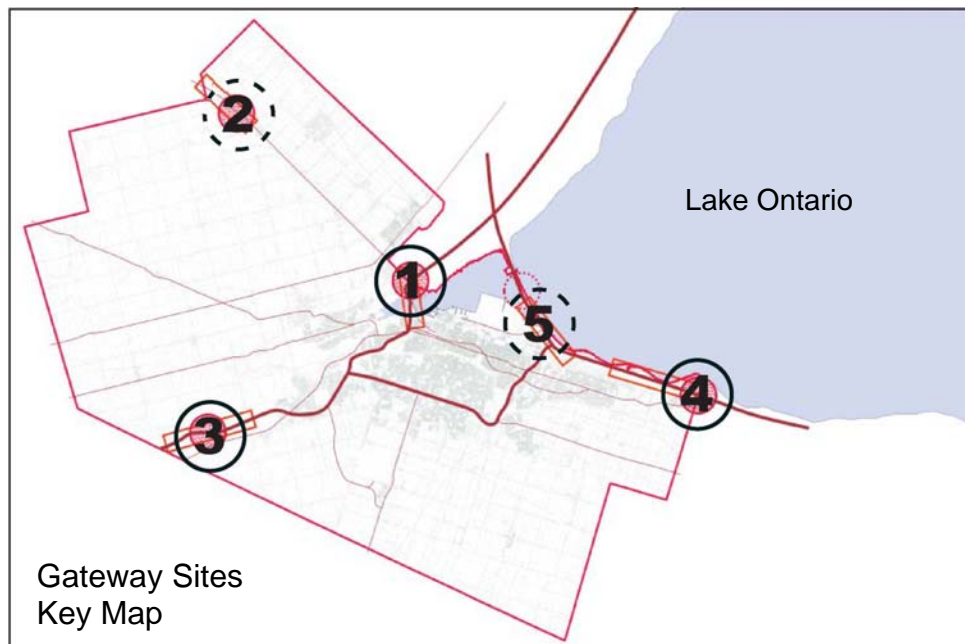
Phase 1:

A consultant was retained in 2003 and the first phase of the study was completed in June 2004. This phase identified a number of alternative locations and recommended preferred sites for gateway features based on MTO requirements and sight lines along

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the 400 series Highways and Highway No. 6 North. Based on this study, preliminary locations have been selected as follows:

1. Highway No. 403 and the Highway No. 6 interchange.
2. Highway No. 6 and Freelon Road.
3. Highway No. 403 at Alberton Road.
4. The Q.E.W and Fifty Road.
5. The Q.E.W. at the new Burlington Street/Red Hill Creek Expressway/Centennial Parkway interchange.



Phases 2 and 3:

A second consultant was retained in June 2005 and is presently working with City staff to complete Phases 2 and 3 of the study developing designs and implementation strategies for three of the five sites identified in Phase 1. In addition to the three primary gateway features, this phase of work will also propose a design for a secondary gateway feature that may be installed at less prominent entry points to the City such as Highway No. 6 South, Highway No. 20, and Highway No. 8. At the detailed design stage, work will be directed towards refining a design, with specific concern for the selection of construction materials and landscape planting. City staff will continue to be involved through the Steering Committee, including staff of Public Works.

Types of Gateway Features:

A civic gateway to a City can be defined and marked in many different ways. It can be a sign and landscape feature at the side of the highway, an architectural landmark such as a bridge, a building, or a piece of art, or it can be a significant natural feature.

A review of the characteristics of each of the five proposed sites was undertaken to determine the type of gateway feature most suitable for each site. These are as follows:

Sites 1, 3 and 4:

These sites can more easily accommodate the typical sign and landscape gateway feature type and, therefore, are the focus of Phase 2 of this study.

Sites 2 and 5:

Site constraints at these sites such as existing MTO signs, width of the road allowance, and sight lines make the effective use of the sign and landscape type of gateway difficult. These sites have, therefore, been left outside of the consultant's current scope of work. City Urban Design staff are, therefore, working with Public Works staff and the Red Hill Project team to determine appropriate sites and designs for possible gateway features in these two areas as follows:

- Site 2: Initial discussions are underway with the Public Works Department to determine if the Freelon water tower can be painted to serve as a gateway feature for those entering the City from the North on Highway No. 6.
- Site 5: Presently a gateway pedestrian bridge is proposed for Site 5, the Q.E.W. and the new Red Hill Creek Expressway interchange, for those entering the City from Toronto over the Skyway Bridge. This has already been presented to Council by the Public Works Department.

Developing Gateway Design Options:

The following process was followed to develop design options for the three proposed sign and landscape gateway features.

1. Identifying Constraints and Requirements

The consultants and City Urban Design staff worked with a staff steering committee identifying and reviewing design precedents, goals and constraints, as well as background information that may affect the design of a civic gateway for Hamilton. This included:

- A review of gateway features in other communities.
- Ministry of Transportation requirements and approval processes.
- Site constraints and opportunities at each proposed gateway location.
- A review of background information on the City, including the Tourism Hamilton Marketing Plan, The City of Hamilton Branding Program Information Package, and City of Hamilton Community Profile.

2. Developing Themes

Understanding the project design requirements, constraints and goals, the steering committee worked with the consultants to develop a series of themes for the civic gateways unique to, and reflective of, the City of Hamilton. Several themes were developed that could portray a unified civic identity, while taking into consideration the need to reflect the following aspects of the City:

- Its history.
- Its diverse communities.
- Its diverse topography and natural features.
- Its positive outlook for the future.

This process generated a number of possible themes that included:

- A City of many communities.
- The City's distinctive topography/geography.
- Bridges.
- Nature/garden City.
- Industry.
- Corporate logo.

3. Design Options

The Consultants and City Urban Design staff developed sketch designs for these themes to explore their viability as gateway features. The sketch designs were then evaluated against the following criteria to determine design options for further study:

- Is the design representative of the City?
- Is the design flexible enough to be used at different locations and in different sizes?
- Can the design clearly communicate its message to drivers in the highway environment?
- Can the design be cost effectively constructed and maintained?
- Does the design generally comply with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation requirements?

This evaluation resulted in the development of four Gateway Options that were further refined to take forward to Council and the public to determine a preferred design.

Gateway Design Options:

The following four gateway design options were developed through the process described above under Developing Gateway Design Options. They are to be used as part of a public consultation process to gain further input into selecting a preferred design.

Option 1: Corporate Brand



This design option adopts the current City corporate brand as basis for the design. This corporate brand consists of the City's "H" logo and the City name in specific fonts and colours. This is presently used to identify the City on letterhead, on the side of vehicles and in advertising.

This design consists of a large free standing City "H" logo with the City name in free standing letters beside it supported on a low concrete wall. The logo is in the standard yellow and blue colours. The City name is in the standard font. Vertical evergreen shrubs behind provide a continuous background to unite the two elements.

Option 2: High Level Bridge



This design seeks to recall the historic T. B. McQuesten High Level Bridge. This bridge is one of the most prominent and easily recognizable landmarks in the City. The bridge theme serves as a reference to numerous elements throughout Hamilton that bridge or span key parts of the City engaging the City's distinctive topography. It is also seen as a symbol of links between communities. This was an important concept in the development of the City's corporate logo.

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The design consists of 2 parallel concrete walls. The front and lower wall is in the form of a silhouette of the distinctive arch and columns of the T. B. McQuesten High Level Bridge. The second and higher wall is approximately 80 cm behind the first and supports the City's name in a bold clear typeface.

The top of the second wall is planted with low shrubs as intended to recall the edge of the escarpment in the distance. Both walls span between two mounds of earth that are planted with small trees and sod to create an opening that recalls the Desjardin Canal that the bridge spans.

Option 3: City Name with Cor-Ten Steel Background



This design option seeks to subtly recall the City's proud industrial heritage and natural setting, while presenting a contemporary forward looking image.

The City name is created in large bold free standing three dimensional stainless steel letters that are easily legible at highway speed. A Cor-Ten, or weathering steel, wall is placed approximately 60 cm behind them. The contrasting dark rust red colour of the wall serves to further emphasize the City name to the viewer and to subtly recall the City's long and proud association with the steel industry.

The feature is set in dark green ground cover and has a large evergreen hedge to serve as background. This landscape provides a contrasting colour to the Cor-Ten steel, which serves to provide more graphic impact for the viewer.

Option 4: City Name with Local Landscape Background



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This design seeks to present a bold and forward looking image, while at the same time recognizing the diversity of the City's unique natural landscapes.

The City name is created in large bold free standing three dimensional letters that are easily legible at highway speed. The background landscape at each site is to be different. It is to be a landscape representative of the locality or site of each gateway and to express the diversity of the City's unique natural setting as follows:

- QEW at Fifty Road: A small grove of fruit trees arranged in a grid to recall the orchards that are a typical feature of the local landscape (represented in the example illustrated above).
- 403 at Alberton Road: A grove of Sumach, a native species, with a distinctive red fall foliage and red berries that can be seen at the edge of wood lots and along hedgerows throughout the area.
- 403 at Highway No. 6: Red grasses planted on the hillside behind the feature blending into the green and brown meadow grasses that already cover the hillsides in the area.

Evaluation of Options:

Staff has not presented a preferred option anticipating more input from Council and public consultation. However, a summary of the positive and negative aspects of each of the four designs in terms of the design criteria are as follows:

1. Representative of the City

How does the proposed design appropriately and positively represent the City's character today and into the future?

Option 1 - Corporate Brand:

- This design recognizes the City's diverse communities through the use of the City logo that signifies the six former municipalities joined together through the bridge/"H" symbol.
- The use of the corporate brand builds on the strength of the City logo that is already associated with the City through its current use in many other forms of communication.

Option 2 - Bridge:

- The design through its use of the High Level Bridge reflects the City's heritage and unique natural setting.
- The bridge has been identified as a symbol of connecting diverse communities.
- The bridge is used as part of the City's logo.

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- The design recalls the City's history, but may not be seen as looking toward the future.
- The design does not specifically recognize the City's diverse communities and may be seen as representative of the former City of Hamilton only.

Option 3 - City Name with Cor-Ten Steel Background:

- The design recalls the City's rich industrial heritage.
- The design does not reflect the diversity of Hamilton's current economy.
- The design recalls the City's proud history and economic strength but may not be seen as looking toward the future.

Option 4 - City Name with Local Landscape Background:

- The design reflects the diverse geography of the City through the use of different locally significant landscape features at each gateway site.
- The design attempts to be as inclusive as possible of all of the City's diverse cultures, industries and heritage by employing a simple clear design that does not include any elements that would exclude a specific aspect of the City 's diverse character.
- The simple, contemporary and clear design portrays a forward looking and decisive tone.

2. Flexibility

Can the design be easily and successfully adapted to a variety of locations and sizes?

Option 1 - Corporate Brand:

- This design will work at a variety of sites and at a variety of scales.

Option 2 - Bridge:

- The design will work well on large flat sites but will not be effective at locations with varied topography or size constraints.

Option 3 - City Name with Cor-Ten Steel Background

- The design will work well on large flat sites, but may not be as effective at locations with varied topography or size constraints.

Option 4 - City Name with Local Landscape Background:

- The design will work well on a variety of sites and scales and can be configured to provide a unique design for each site, while maintaining a unified image for all gateway sites.

3. Legibility

Can the design clearly communicate its message to drivers in fast moving vehicles?

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Option 1 - Corporate Brand:

- The standard font specified for use with the City logo and corporate brand was designed for use in print media and may not be as clearly legible as other fonts at large scale in the highway environment.

Option 2 - Bridge:

- The design clearly identifies the City name.

Option 3 - City Name with Cor-Ten Steel Background:

- The design clearly identifies the City name.
- The rich dark colour of the cor-ten steel background in contrast with the stainless steel letters will make the feature highly visible from the highway in all seasons.

Option 4 - City Name with Local Landscape Background:

- The design clearly identifies the City name.
- The landscape background will have to be carefully designed to ensure suitable contrast in all seasons.

4. Construction and Maintenance

Can the design be cost effectively constructed and maintained?

Option 1 - Corporate Brand:

- The proposed construction materials and simple landscaping will require little maintenance and be simple to construct.

Option 2 - Bridge:

- The fabrication of the silhouette of the bridge and the concrete retaining wall background may be more costly than the other designs.
- The large amount of landscaping and the need to keep it small in relationship to the bridge will require more maintenance than the other designs.

Option 3 - City Name with Cor-Ten Steel Background:

- The proposed Cor-Ten steel construction will require very little maintenance.
- The simple but more formal landscape design proposed will be simple to install but will require more ongoing maintenance.

Option 4 City Name with Local Landscape Background:

- The proposed construction materials will require little maintenance and be simple to construct.
- The proposed landscaping varies from site to site, but is intended to be indigenous in most places and, therefore, will require little or no maintenance.

5. Compliance with Ministry of Transportation Requirements

Does the design conform to and/or comply with provincial standards and guidelines?

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Option 1 - Corporate Brand:

- The use of the Logo will require special approval from MTO as the policies call for the name of the municipality only.

Option 2 - Bridge:

- This design generally complies with the intent of the MTO standards and guidelines.

Option 3 - City Name with Cor-Ten Steel Background:

- This design generally complies with the intent of the MTO standards and guidelines.

Option 4 - City Name with Local Landscape Background:

- This design generally complies with the intent of the MTO standards and guidelines.

Consultation with the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario: The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) regulates all features on the road allowance of provincial highways and all signs within 400 metres of the right-of-way to ensure public safety. Civic Gateways are allowed under the Decorative Municipal Identification Displays Policy. This policy outlines some of the following requirements.

- All signage must be restricted to the name of the municipality.
- Display can be 3 metres above the ground or above the highway—whichever is higher.
- Advertising of seasonal or special events is prohibited.
- Connections to MTO power sources and overhead hydro is not permitted.
- Changing, illuminated or mechanical moving signs are not permitted.
- The municipality is responsible for maintaining the display.
- Proposed access to the display must be approved by MTO.

City staff and the consultant have been meeting with the MTO throughout the study process. MTO have provided a preliminary review of several design options. Final designs will require an MTO permit before construction can begin.

Consultation with City Departments: Throughout the process the consultant and Urban Design staff have been working with a steering committee of City staff from the following Departments, Divisions and Sections

- Community Planning and Design.
- Economic Development.
- Communications.
- Culture.
- Public Works.
- Tourism.

Next Steps:

Public Consultation: Public input will be sought to identify any outstanding issues, confirm the appropriateness of the four proposed designs, and identify a preferred design option. This public consultation process will be undertaken through the City's website and at a public Open House to be held in central Hamilton. Both will be advertised in the Spectator. It is anticipated that this consultation will occur in fall 2007.

Phase 3: Based on the results of the public consultation, a more detailed preferred design will be developed for Phase 3 of the study. The detailed design will involve refinement of a favoured design concept with special attention given to the advice sought through public consultation. Particular attention will be directed towards refining a design with specific concern for the selection of construction materials and landscape planting. City staff will continue to be involved through the steering committee, including staff of Public Works. The preferred design will be the basis for creating an implementation strategy and cost estimates through discussions with the consultant, Public Works staff and MTO staff.

Study Completion: It is anticipated that Phase 3 of the study will be complete in the first quarter of 2008. Implementation by the Public Works Department could then proceed in mid 2008, depending on Council approval and budget allocation.

Local Civic Gateways:

This Civic Gateway Design Study is concerned with developing a unified civic identity for the City as a whole. Members of the steering committee and other staff have indicated that there is a need for local gateways to identify unique areas within the City. This is presently being addressed by the Downtown Renewal Division. They are designing and implementing signage programs that include gateway features for Business Improvement Areas within the former City of Hamilton and the downtowns of the former municipalities. Signage and landscape gateway features have been installed at the entrances to downtown Dundas and Concession Street as part of this work. Other gateway features are planned for Waterdown, Westdale, Ottawa Street and Stoney Creek.

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