



It's time to reimagine Peterborough

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Are we reimaging what's possible for Peterborough?

Based only on a concept drawing of a potential downtown multi-use sport and event centre, an exciting conversation about what's possible for our city has been ignited.

The timing couldn't be more perfect. This is exactly the kind of conversation Peterborough needs to have in 2017 as the city conducts a comprehensive review of its Official Plan for the first time in 36 years! It demonstrates that city-making today can be

about creating thriving, diverse and sustainable places to live, move, work, play -- and prosper.

In only a short time since the release of the concept drawing commissioned by Mayor Daryl Bennett from Lett Architects, leading voices from the sports, business, and design communities, as well as the local media -- part of our "competent community" -- have come forward eager to discuss, contribute, and reimagine what they want for Peterborough over the next 20 years.

Many have celebrated that an events centre could boost Peterborough as a destination, provide a venue for big-name entertainment, and serve as a foundation for a strong downtown economy, and more connected greenspace. These and other comments reflect the values, priorities, expertise and enthusiasm our citizens have and want to see translated into policy and planning direction at City Hall.

Questions about cost, uses and logistics have been raised and would need to be considered alongside other planning needs as part of any decision-making at City Hall. This is why it matters to have an Official Plan that is built by and for the community. A well-informed Official Plan can capture the priorities and opportunities we see for Peterborough in the next 20 years, and provide essential guidance to current and future City Councils about what the community wants (and doesn't want).

We commend this initiative of the Mayor and others to explore new and innovative ideas that promote urban renewal, intensification, greenspace and local economic strength. We welcome the positive, possibilities-oriented conversation that is emerging and encourage more community discussion with a diversity of voices in similarly constructive forums.

Reimagine Peterborough believes the rewrite of our Official Plan this year is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to come together as a community to create, share, and engage in envisioning the future we want. Constructive discussion is key; there is a city-wide desire to improve our urban planning processes for addressing the complex challenges and amazing opportunities of the 21st century.

So let's keep talking and working together - on both the Official Plan Review and creative projects that align with our emerging community vision.

This is the first in a new series of columns from Reimagine Peterborough, a citizen-led movement to invite the incredible potential within our city to come together to create, share, and engage on a city plan for a brighter future. For more information, visit reimagineptbo.ca