

February 27, 2010

Synthesis of Discussion: Table 1

## General comment

The table grouped over 15 participants. The conversation was mostly in English. A good mix of areas and interests was represented at the table. Most people at the table participated in the discussion.

## Themes

### 1. Character

Old Chelsea and New Chelsea were recognized as distinctive rural villages- although there was no consensus on what rural village character meant. With respect to density- most did not want to see an Hautes Plaines type development. Some saw rural as 1 home per acre with well and septic. There was a good comment that there is not necessarily a direct link between the notion of density and being a rural village. A mention was made that density is not necessarily the most important issue but aesthetics. Another comments was that labels such as rural or suburban or urban don't help.

The importance of the Hendrick Farms in defining the character of Chelsea was recognized

There was a good discussion on the future of businesses in the study area. It was recognized that due to Chelsea's proximity to Ottawa/Gatineau, many businesses that were deemed desirable services would not choose to locate in Chelsea

Preserving Chelsea's history was seen as essential to Chelsea's villages as distinct, but more incentives needed (financial, contests). Architecture important to tell the story of Chelsea. Many feel that we are at risk of loosing treasures in Chelsea such as the Manse. Instead of building new we should be making better use of what we have. Landscaping and gardens considered important to unifying old and new architecture. Education is needed so that people want to conserve the built heritage

Participants felt that it is important that development not be led by tourists but by residents and that this would in turn attract tourists. Businesses that are in

keeping with the rural character of the historic villages and not suburban type business were seen as desirable. It was recognized that closed businesses and vacant are not good for the villages. Also, municipal planning and bylaws were seen as important tools to allow only certain types of businesses. There was an interest in attracting cultural businesses. It was also recognized that is important to differentiate between type of businesses, the look of the building that it is in, and the infrastructure needed to support it.

One comment was that there is a need to careful with the land we have- increase density to make most efficient use of land we have. Others were concerned about high density development.

There was no consensus on the issue of water and sewers.

We must recognize the proximity of the Gatineau Park and take into consideration that conserving habitat is a particular issue for Chelsea.

## **2. Mobility**

Much of Chelsea's traffic problems (including noise problems) are a result of commuter traffic bypassing Gatineau. Driving speed is a concern and traffic issues would worsen with development

Some of the ideas to deal with traffic included changing traffic pattern (ex., turning Old Chelsea Rd into 1 way) and a 3 way stop at Old Chelsea and Scott to slow down traffic and a roundabout at Scott, Kingsmere and Old Chelsea

It was recognized that parking was an issue but participants were concerned that parking be constructed in a way that was aesthetically pleasing. Some ideas included:

- 'No Parking' areas on Old Chelsea Rd should be eliminated
- Put in parking at entrance to Old Chelsea and make Old Chelsea pedestrian zone on weekends
- Paid Parking on Old Chelsea Rd would be unwelcoming

It was recognized that better parking, transit and walking trails would help to alleviate the traffic problems. Biking needs to be safer

Participants felt that pedestrian, cycling and skiing links were missing between villages and in the triangle in general. There was a sense that walking or cycling was not a good or safe experience and that straight roads such as Old Chelsea road invite speeding. Paths separated from the road by grass or landscaping would improve things. It was also recognized that paths need to be safe and in-view. Police compliance was felt to be an important tool to bring speed down.

Participants felt it was important to connect residential streets in the study area with cycle, pedestrian paths. This should be enforced for new development and in bylaws.

People thought that there was a greater need for transit options- car share, buses

There was a suggestion that a Chelsea bus could go back and forth to Freeman to connect up with bus network. Within Chelsea, the possibility of tour bus to take people do different attractions in the study area was discussed.

### **3. Uses**

People expressed a need for public meeting spaces that would be used by people of all ages. The idea of a public park, in keeping with a commons or central park idea. Some ideas were:

- The Meredith Center
- Land beside the NCC Visitor centre

Participants recognized that Chelsea already has many public places such as the soccer fields and the existing community centre and that perhaps we should enhance these spaces before creating new spaces. The concept of parks designed for different seasons was also discussed.

Participants discussed the concern that Chelsea is becoming too expensive to promote diversity and that there is a desire to ensure that some houses can be affordable to a greater number of people. A senior's residence was discussed as were concerns about low income housing.