infrastructure
resilience
sustainability
“Dispirited by bickering and blatant architectures, the citizen rummages through the city looking for those sights and spaces that reflect a human scale. The citizen finds consolation in the neighbourhoods and unpretentious way stations, the abandoned, the undeveloped, the modest, looking for the town that seeks to be adopted before it capitulates to reality.” (DiCicco, 2007)
An alternative exploration guide to the City of Hamilton, Ontario.
by Ian Dunlop, University of Waterloo

A major research project in Local Economic Development

Note: Some pages have been omitted from this preview PDF document. To obtain a full copy of the book, please visit http://www.hamiltour.ca for details.

Copyright ©2013 Ian Dunlop
All rights reserved.

All maps and photographs © Ian Dunlop, unless otherwise specified.

Published by:

Strategic Interchange
Hamilton, Ontario
www.strategicinterchange.ca

ISBN 978-1-894955-98-0
Preface

This Major Research Project was first conceived as a “Green Guide to Hamilton” to capitalize on the emergent urban green tourism trend. Having recently visited a number of cities across North America with my partner, it was clear that each of these cities have their own identity that has evolved over time based on their location, a unique urban structure, built heritage, and relationship to its surrounding region. From a local economic development perspective, it is important to understand a city’s “place,” in order to develop effective strategies for growth and vibrancy.

There is usually some form of publication available when visiting “rust belt” cities, promoting local tourism, built/industrial heritage, architecture, sustainability projects and alternative transportation. These publications identify and promote the unique places in the city that aren’t the usual tourist spots, and offer an understanding of the history and context behind them.

In creating this book, I saw an opportunity to combine my professional expertise in mapping and design, past business experience in publishing, and urban planning, for my Masters research project in Local Economic Development. Also, my experience working in the Hamilton community arts scene, on initiatives such as rapid transit, on citizen committees and with the Chamber of Commerce has provided me with many insights on the city.

The project has taken me on a journey of discovery through the concepts of urban green tourism, sense of place, and understanding the challenging dichotomies present in Hamilton today. There is no shortage of ideas for what will make Hamilton a better place. But unfortunately there are clear divides between the opinions of central core urbanists, suburbanites and rural residents on the city’s ailments and cures. The extremists in each group are equally unreasonable, for none of them works towards a vision of the whole city. Hopefully, this book will help expand those narrow views, and the views of people visiting the city as well.

Local residents and visitors alike may find this type of guidebook to Hamilton very useful in helping them see a side of the city they otherwise wouldn’t consider. Since undertaking this project just over a year ago, a great deal has changed in Hamilton. New developments are taking place across the city, and I have already made several revisions to early drafts based on the positive changes taking place on almost a daily basis.

I would like to thank my advisor and review committee, Dr. Luna Khirfan, and Karen Hammond from the School of Planning, and Dr. Paul Parker from Geography/Local Economic Development for their input and advice on this project.

This book is dedicated to my partner, Brian, whose patience and support throughout this process has been my greatest source of strength and stability.

Ian Dunlop, University of Waterloo
# Table of Contents

## Introduction ........................................................ 2

## Infrastructure ....................................................... 14
- From Trails to Freeways ........................................ 17
- Railway Hub of Southern Ontario ............................. 20
- Incline Railways .................................................. 22
- Radial Railways .................................................... 23
- Rails Become Trails .............................................. 24
- Mountain Steps .................................................... 25
- The Railway Without Rails ..................................... 26
- Light Rail Transit .................................................. 27
- Mountain Roads .................................................... 28
- Water Works for Hamilton ...................................... 30
- Museum of Steam & Technology ................................ 31
- Canada’s Busiest Great Lakes Port ........................... 32
- Open 24hrs .................................................................. 33

## Innovation .............................................................. 34

## Downtown ............................................................... 36
- I’m Still Standing .................................................... 37
- Mitigating the Superblocks ....................................... 44
- ... and one-way streets ........................................... 45
- The Rise and Fall of Marbled Walls ............................ 46
- Boarded-Up ............................................................ 47
- Concrete Culture and Brick Bureaucracy ..................... 48
- Cultural Annexation ............................................... 49
- Best Intentions of the Time ....................................... 50
- Public Markets: “Buy Local” Starts Here ................. 51
- Heritage, Arts and Culture ....................................... 52
- Raising values ....................................................... 53
- Mobility, Living and Healing .................................... 54
- Opportunities, Large and Small ............................... 55
- Parks are for People ................................................ 56
- Renewal with a side of Chop Suey ............................. 57
- The right time and The Right House ........................... 58
- Context, time and place .......................................... 59

## Communities ............................................................ 60
- Ancaster ............................................................... 63
- Dundas ................................................................. 65
- Concession Street .................................................. 67
- Locke & Main West ................................................ 69
- Westdale ............................................................... 71
- Ottawa Street ......................................................... 73
- Waterdown ............................................................ 75
- Stoney Creek ........................................................ 77

## Environment ............................................................. 78
- Watershed Management .......................................... 80
- Environmental Preservation ..................................... 81
- Capping a Toxic Legacy .......................................... 84
- Wetland Restoration ............................................... 85

## Rural hamilton .......................................................... 86
- Greenbelt and Niagara Escarpment ............................ 88
- Threats and Opportunities ....................................... 89

## Conclusion .............................................................. 96

## References .............................................................. 98

## Index ................................................................. 102

---

Note: Some pages have been omitted from this preview PDF document.

www.hamiltour.ca
Introduction

People are looking for different kinds of travel experiences, whether just for a few hours, a day trip, or as part of a longer excursion. Local citizens should also be aware of the unique exploration opportunities that exist just beyond their own backyards. Increasingly, people desire experiences that are local, encompassing shopping, eating, learning, exploring, cultural awareness and awakening. This type of exploration is called “urban green tourism.” Businesses are waking up to this new trend as well. Once overlooked areas are being revitalized as new residents and businesses move in, seeing the future value of investing there.

This book is a timely undertaking for Hamilton, as many cities are now promoting their sustainable development initiatives, renewal opportunities, established neighbourhoods, arts & culture, heritage, natural and environmental features, to visitors and residents alike. The book is also a personal exploration of the city, and I hope you enjoy reading it.

Figure 1 - Locator Map (Map data: Geogratis, 2012)
What is urban green tourism?

The concept of “urban green tourism” was seeded in Toronto in 1993, when a group of businesses, government and community organizations came together to form the Green Tourism Association. A report was prepared, for what was then Metropolitan Toronto, by consultants The Blackstone Corporation. The report defined urban green tourism as:

...travel and exploration within and around an urban area that offers visitors enjoyment and appreciation of the city’s natural areas and cultural resources, while inspiring physically active, intellectually stimulating and socially interactive experiences; promotes the city’s long-term ecological health by promoting walking, cycling, public transportation; promotes sustainable local economic and community development and vitality; celebrates local heritage and the arts; is accessible and equitable to all. (Blackstone, 1996).

The authors of the report also suggest that the words “green”, “sustainable” and even “healthy” are interchangeable in this context of urban tourism, thereby enabling the concept to encompass a broad range local discovery and contribute to personal and communal well-being. Through engagement in this emerging trend, there is a window of opportunity to generate a competitive advantage for the re-branding of post-industrial cities through tactful economic development and marketing strategies.

The mantra of urban green tourism suits the purpose for developing this book about Hamilton; it is a unique guide to the city that can be enjoyed by local residents and visitors. This book can also contribute to developing a cohesive identity for a city that has lacked one since its municipal structure was amalgamated 2001 into a single-tier municipality by the provincial government in 2001.

So, let’s start with some background information about the city, to begin informing the context for this new guide. But first, here are some symbols that will be used in this book, to help you cross-reference the wealth of information available within it.

Symbols used in the book

Most of the photos in the book have a camera icon and reference number. The number corresponds to a passage in the text description and usually to a geographic location on an accompanying map.

Camera Icons:  are colour-coded by section.

Number Icons:  are used when a picture is referred to in the text.

Page Icons:  are used to identify the page number where you can find additional information or map for a topic being discussed in the text.
brought it, with a sheltered harbour, rail and road network. Inexpensive hydro electric power from the Niagara area (Evans, 1970), earned Hamilton the moniker “The Electric City” (Gilbert 2006). Heavy industry eagerly located here, most notably steel manufacturing, employing 23,000 people in 1967 (Evans, 1970). By 1981, over a third of the city’s total employment was in this sector, and Hamilton’s steel mills produced 70% Canada’s steel production (Jacobs, 2009).

In Pardon My Lunch Bucket (Proulx, 1972), a commemorative book published to celebrate the City’s 125th trumpeting Canada’s industrial powerhouse, saw no end in sight to the...
success for the “Ambitious City”.

Then, the 1981 recession and a prolonged strike at Stelco (photo below), then the city’s largest steel manufacturer, followed in the 1990s by North American Free Trade (NAFTA) and increasing globalization, sent the city on a long, slow industrial decline. The result was a significant reduction in the industrial tax base and the loss of over 44,000 manufacturing jobs between 1981 and 2006 (Jacobs, 2009).

The city’s downtown and central residential neighbourhoods also reflected this economic decline. The city’s deteriorating financial situation is often cited as the impetus for the provincially legislated amalgamation of the city with the five surrounding municipalities of the former Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth in 2001, to bolster the local tax base (Arnott, 2008).

Nevertheless, Hamilton continues to produce most of Canada’s domestic steel, albeit with a much smaller workforce, and has rebounded from economic downturns by continually expanding and diversifying employment within the region that now forms the amalgamated city. Figure 3 shows how employment across sectors have changed over the 20 year period between 1992 and

[Figure 3 - Change in Employment by Sector (StatsCan, 2012b)]

Abandoned auto plant, closed in the 1960s, was just recently torn down for new development.
Introduction

Hamilton in Context

2012. In 1992, the manufacturing sector accounted for 10% of all local employment and now represents just 5% after a 25% decline over the period.

The decline is offset by continuous expansion in service sector, which has not only picked up the slack left behind by lost manufacturing jobs, but added nearly 90,000 jobs to the local economy. Arts, culture and recreation show the most dramatic increase, particularly since the turn of the century. A closer look at the annual numbers reveals this sector is volatile and was hard hit by the 1991 and 2008 economic recessions.

Hamilton’s once booming commercial core, featured large multi-storey department stores Eaton’s, Robinson’s, Kresge, Woolworth, Zellers and the Right House, along with all the major banks, jewelers and merchants of all manner, which succumbed to an unfortunate 1970’s thrust of urban renewal “super-block” projects, and simultaneous exodus to the suburbs. Nearby neighbourhoods, such as Beasley, now house some of the city’s most challenged low income families, as is highlighted in a Hamilton Spectator series, “Code Red” (Buist, 2010).

However, recovery is taking place in the city’s older neighbourhoods as a new generation of residents and small business entrepreneurs, attracted by low real estate prices, begin moving in and begin fixing up houses and storefronts. The Toronto
Star even noticed the trend in an article about the Friday night Art Crawls on James Street North (Chapman, 2007). James is the north-south spine of the downtown’s historic crossroads, King & James Streets. Galleries and studios open their doors to the public on the second Friday of each month, taking over a street that is on the road to recovery, and making it a place for people as it was years ago.

Citizens, artists, and small business start up such events through word of mouth and social media, which gain the recognition of the city administration and formal arts organizations as they become more popular, building vibrant neighbourhoods and commercial districts in the process.

The map in Figure 4 shows Hamilton’s former municipal compo-
Figure 6 - 2011 Census Household characteristics, Wards 2 and 15 (StatsCan, 2012c)
sition, and the current political ward boundaries. To illustrate the dichotomy between the downtown and suburban/rural residents, a series of comparisons from the 2011 census are provided in Figure 5. Ward 2, downtown Hamilton, is comprised of the Beasley, Central, Durand, Corktown and North End neighbourhoods. Ward 15 is comprised of Waterdown, a rapidly growing suburban area, the eastern portion of rural Flamborough and hamlets like Carlisle and Millgrove.

Each Ward elects one member to city council. Although the downtown ward has a much higher population, Ward 15 covers an area over twenty times larger. The age cohort diagram illustrates the prevalence of the “baby boomer” generation and their families in Ward 15, while the downtown Ward 2 is home to a far greater proportion of the next generation of young adults. The pie charts in Figure 6, highlight the differences in personal relationships, family status, and common languages between these two areas. Ward 2 also has the highest population density in the city, with most residents living in high-rise apartment buildings, as compared to the prevalence of single-family dwellings in Ward 15.

The perception of high property taxes in the suburban and rural areas of Hamilton, where property values are highest, also keeps municipal amalgamation a hot topic for many residents of these areas, with groups like the Committee to Free Flamborough determined to break the former town away from the central city. Likewise, many residents within the core areas of old Hamilton consider the amalgamated city’s political ward system is not fair representation by population (McGreal, 2011).

“Us and them” attitudes between different parts the Hamilton have become prevalent over these and other issues, and are now often played out in social media. Different circumstance and ideologies bring about suspicion of motives for economic development and short-sighted goals, alongside conflicting opinions of what is best for the city. This conflict, which may be brought about by the differences in demographic and living circumstances highlighted above, underscore one of the challenges in building a cohesive sense of place to its citizenry. Tolerance is one of the 3T’s neces-
Introduction

Local Characteristics

It is necessary to attract the Creative Class, the others being Talent and Technology (Florida et al, 2009). Low-density suburbs, by their very nature, discourage tolerance because “we spend no time whatsoever in communion with our fellow citizens.” (Kingwell, in Brown & Burns, 2006).

Tolerance starts with an understanding that there are different points of view, and we should not feel threatened by the expression of them. It works both ways; the creative class downtown must also be tolerant of middle class suburban opinion. Both need each other to make a successful city. Where once the suburbs were dependent on the central city for the region’s vitality, the relationship is now one of “uneasy parity” (Rybczynski, 1995). The geographical, political and economic circumstances that have brought Hamilton to where it is today, for better or worse, are continuing to forge its identity and have certainly instilled passion in its residents.

Alongside the unique character of the city’s people and distinct communities stands an impressive built heritage, much of it dating back to the early 20th century. For example, the Pigott Building, Hamilton’s first “skyscraper,” was restored and turned into condominiums (Arnott, 2008). The Lister Block, built in 1924, is another prime example of renewal. This 6 storey, terra cotta accented building, which boasted, the first indoor mall in Canada (Manson, 2011a), reopened, fully restored, in March 2012, after 20 years of being left to decay and neglect. The Royal Connaught Hotel, however, awaits its white knight. Hamilton’s boom times brought these buildings to life, and the bust times ensured that not all of them were destroyed to make way for more modern skyscrapers. There have been many buildings lost, most significantly due to the Civic Square urban renewal developments of the 1960s and 70s. However, the remaining stock of late 19th and early 20th century downtown buildings in Hamilton is still impressive.

The Niagara Escarpment, known locally as “The Mountain,” cuts a dramatic path through the area and provides a backdrop for the city below, or a stunning view from the “upper” city above. The Bruce Trail and a number of city paths and bike-ways crisscross the Mountain, which also connect a series of parks.
There is a tendency to treat places as objects rather than environments (Canter, 1977). The abstract notion of “the best place in Canada to raise a child [etc.]” is imposed independently of Hamilton’s context—objectifying it rather than embracing the multi-faceted qualities of its environment. A better understanding of the diverse communities and challenges the city faces can lead to a more specific vision for the city.

The following list summarizes the current situation in Hamilton and informs some of the themes and topics to be expressed in this book, with the goal of promoting better understanding.

**STRENGTHS**
- Multi-modal transportation hub: Road, rail, seaport, 24-hour airport
- Strategic location
- Natural amenities: Escarpment, waterfalls, and two waterfronts
- Built heritage: Downtown buildings, infrastructure, community cores, renewal/reuse opportunities, heavy industry
- Rural area: Local food, agriculture, recreation, biodiversity
- Unique neighbourhoods, shopping districts and walkable streets
- Economic and social diversity.

**WEAKNESSES**
- Sensitivity to economic downturn
- Negative perceptions of heavy industries,

Hamilton also has a large rural area (see maps on 32-33), with vast areas of farmland, offering a wide variety of locally grown foods. Environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Beverley Swamp 32, and outdoor recreation opportunities abound. Nearby communities offer also offer their own unique cultural and heritage experiences, such as Six Nations of the Grand and Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations, which are just south of the city. Toronto, Niagara Falls and the U.S. border are less than an hour away. There is a lot to say about Hamilton, how it developed, and what it has to offer to visitors, potential developers and its own residents.

The challenge is to break out of the established ways of thinking about the city. We must go beyond the City’s vague strategic vision “To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.”. Citizens need a vision they can rally around and become engaged in.
Introduction

poverty, crime and safety, downtown in decline, high taxes
• Municipal amalgamation threatens community identity and autonomy
• Cynicism and negative attitudes
• Lack of cohesive identity
• Traffic and one-way “traffic sewers”
• Infrastructure deficit
• Inconsistent political leadership and direction
• Social service costs and provincial downloads burden property tax base

OPPORTUNITIES
• Regional and international trade hub
• Proximity to Toronto and U.S. Border
• Attractive property values
• Skilled, diverse workforce
• Growing arts and culture scene
• Downtown renewal
• Waterfront development and recreation
• Alternative transportation: LRT, cycling, one-way street conversion
• All-day GO Train service
• New stadium for 2015 PanAm Games

THREATS
• Loss of heritage features: Decay and neglect of older buildings
• Ageing population
• Climate change straining infrastructure
• Inner suburbs at risk of decline
• Traffic congestion on inter-regional highways (QEW/403)
• De-amalgamation/ political uncertainty

Structure of the Book

The content and layout of this guide is informed by the unique situation Hamilton presents to us. To promote a city successfully requires an understanding of how the place came to be and the historical developments that have led to the place it is today.

Hamilton is built on the infrastructure that supports it: railways, roads, ports, power, water and sewer. These aspects of a city are often taken for granted and overlooked by residents and visitors alike, but what is interesting about Hamilton is how its infrastructure, and thereby its success, is shaped and influenced by the physical geography of its economically strategic location. This section sets the foundation, as good infrastructure should, for understanding and exploring the other parts of the city, starting with Downtown Hamilton.

Downtown has a rich built heritage from nineteenth century commercial walk-ups to modern glass and steel skyscrapers. After emerging from the superblock of the 1970s, Downtown is now entering a more sustainable phase. Old buildings are being restored rather than demolished, and the legacies of superblock plans and one-way streets are starting to be mitigated. Many investors, from small entrepreneurs to large developers, and new residents as well, are seeing the great value and potential of locating here.

Hamilton actually has many “down-towns,” both within its old city limits and the amalgamated suburbs. The next section explores these walkable communities and the diversity of experiences they have to offer. Each description is accompanied by a detailed map and photos to get you started on your tour.

Sections on the Environment and Rural areas of Hamilton continue to take us on our tour outward from the core. The earlier sections of the book provide a context for the environmental remediation and preservation initiatives that are explored. The importance of agriculture to
Hamilton’s economy is also highlighted, a “hidden heritage” often overshadowed by the city’s industrial “brutal beauty.”

The tagline “Brutal Beauty | Hidden Heritage” is being used to encompass the main themes of urban green tourism in the city. Brutal Beauty refers to the industrial landscape and infrastructure in harmony with the Niagara Escarpment, waterfronts and rural countryside. Hidden Heritage refers to the built and cultural history of the city, alongside the natural environment waiting to be rediscovered.

More precisely, this book is an exploration of the city for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, promoting sustainable local economic and community development in the amalgamated city.

If one simply starts thinking in less traditional ways about tourism, and dives into the local creative and cultural undercurrents, there is a lot going on here. Local residents can be a place’s the most influential marketers if a desirable emotional connection and sense of ownership is established. This book is an important step in helping to discover Hamilton’s true identity as it is today, shaped by its past and the former cities, towns, villages and townships that it now encompasses.

Hidden beneath its brutal beauty is the heritage that has made the city a unique and special place, enabling a resilient outlook and sustainable future. Hamilton may lack the flashy attractions of Toronto or Niagara Falls, yet this understated nature is what makes the city attractive to the people already here, and those seeking an alternative to the flashy experience.

There is a lot going on here, and many stories to tell.

Note: Some pages in the following sections have been omitted from this preview, as noted.
See map on page 18-19 for photo locations identified by the green camera.
Hamilton’s early development was brought by the good fortune of its location, with a sheltered harbour at a crossroads of First Nations trails. A rail, and road network, fanned out from the city by the mid 19th century (Evans, 1970). Abundant hydro electric power from the Niagara area, earned Hamilton the moniker “The Electric City” (Gilbert 2006). Heavy industry eagerly located here, most notably steel manufacturing (Evans, 1970).

This section reveals the many generations of infrastructure that helped shape the city, from road and rail, to public transport, to abundant electric power, and an outstanding water and sewer system. Hamilton’s infrastructure is changing, as old rail lines become bicycle routes, transportation priorities are re-evaluated, and waste treatment is upgraded to recapture energy and meet stringent environmental standards.

1 Hamilton Harbour receives ships from the Great Lakes and all over the world via the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Skyway Bridge keeps traffic moving on the QEW. (Photo: B. Montgomery)

2 Railways and electricity are the backbones of local industry.

Below: Map of Hamilton as a strategic transport hub.
downtown

Note: Pages 44 to 59 are omitted from this preview

See map on page 42-43 for photo locations identified by the red camera.
On Friday the 13th of April 2012, Hamilton’s Lister Block was reopened after a $27 million renovation. There was much local fanfare, including live radio and television broadcasts, from the City’s new Tourism office main floor of the building. Images from before the renovation show the dramatic transformation; from the damp and moldy carcass of the original shopping “arcade” to the brightly renewed ground-floor office and commercial spaces. Just a few years ago, the hulking 6 storey structure’s broken windows and crumbling terra cotta details symbolized the long, slow decline and stagnation that had overcome downtown Hamilton since the early 1980s. The Lister’s grand revival after 20 years of neglect and decay is a symbol of resilience and renewal for Downtown Hamilton.

This section presents some of the opportunities, and economic challenges, and development legacies present in Downtown Hamilton today. Renewal, redevelopment and resilience are not new to Downtown. The City is coming out of a dark age, so to speak, as developers and entrepreneurs see the value and potential available—if the timing is right. Downtown will never be the same again, it never was, nor should it ever be: Downtown is alive.
King William Street, which is anchored by the Lister Block, is also coming to life with a mix of cafes, restaurants, nightlife and the newly restored Lister Block as its western anchor. The Dofasco Theatre Aquarius is home to Hamilton’s only professional theatre group, and second largest venue in the city after Hamilton Place. The street has also been reconstructed with textured pavements and sidewalks to add to the pedestrian oriented activities.

The former Federal Building on Main Street is becoming part of a three-tower condominium hotel complex. The old building is being converted to premium condominium units. Original historic details such as friezes are being preserved.

A freight rail line used to run right through the city centre along Ferguson Avenue. The rails are now gone, and in their place is a promenade featuring tributes to Hamilton’s rich railway past, including a station pavilion at King Street used for community events and “makers’ market” craft fairs.

The former inter-city bus terminal building at John and Rebecca Streets now houses a social services centre. Although the old bus bays are still present, it would be a very long wait to be picked up. Bus services were relocated to the Hamilton GO Centre, which replace this outdated facility. The abandoned terminal is reflective of the vacant land and parking lots that could one day be redeveloped to new uses.
Repurposing old buildings is not a new thing to Hamilton—it has been happening for decades. Hamilton’s first skyscraper, the Pigott Building, was converted from offices to residential units in the 1980s.

Once the City outgrew its majestic Public Library on Main Street, adjacent to City Hall, the building was converted to provincial family courts. The main post office at Main and John was also renovated and converted to a courthouse in 1999.

The Landed Banking and Loan Building at Main & James Streets features very ornate detailing and now houses a law firm.

The former Bank of Montreal at the southwest corner of Main and James Streets is also now law offices, after briefly serving as a nightclub. (Photo: B. Montgomery)

Not every building can be saved, nor should it be. Restoration of old buildings is expensive, and can be more costly than tearing down and building new. Inexpensive suburban land lures sprawling development and the rise of the regional shopping mall, whereas earlier core-area buildings tended to be more compact, multi-storey structures on much smaller plots of land. Sometimes, these plots are also contaminated, due to the carefree industrial practices of old, and remediation to today’s stringent requirements is very costly and time consuming.
Likewise, old buildings require expensive retrofitting to meet current ventilation, fire, communications and accessibility standards. As a result, prospective developers cannot always make the business case work even when government programs are in place to provide assistance—it simply isn’t worth the bother when there is plenty of shovel-ready land elsewhere.

The Knitting Mills at Cannon and Mary Streets 14 is one such site, waiting in limbo for the right development environment and investment partnerships to solidify. There are promising signs of life, as the property was purchased by an equity partnership in 2011 and is currently undergoing feasibility assessment. There are many challenges, such as the high volume of one-way traffic passing by on Cannon, and the economic and social conditions in the immediate neighbourhood that could sink the marketability of the project (MacLeod, 2011).

Across the street, the offices of McCallum Sather Architects 9 provide a beacon of what can be done in the neighbourhood. Their own building has been retrofitted with green energy generation, appropriately emphasizing the firm’s focus on LEED-certified and sustainable design projects (MSA, 2012) (Photo: B. Montgomery).

Few sites exemplify “hidden heritage” like the 19th century Amisfield mansion 57, hidden from street view and almost...
completely encompassed by the modern structures attached and surrounding it. At least the adulterated building is still standing and in use.

The wait for a saviour can be too long for some buildings to bear, and many have been lost to neglect, decay and eventual collapse. The Century Theatre suffered such a fate, as did the lobby building of the Tivoli Theatre. The Tivoli’s grand main auditorium is intact (Photo: B. Montgomery). The current owners, the Canadian Ballet Youth Ensemble, originally purchased the building for $1, but recently sold it in the hope that a developer will invest the over one million dollars needed restore the theatre and become their dream home.

It is not only old buildings where renewal opportunities exist. Hamilton’s modern glass towers also have their share of vacancies, although not in any imminent danger of collapse. Prime office space is available, and parking plentiful, to suit all types of ventures. Yet this surplus of commercial space can also make the business case of redeveloping old structures more challenging. Hence, the larger redevelopments, such as the Witton Lofts and Stinson School tend to be residential condominium projects capitalizing on the trends toward sustainable urban lifestyles and Toronto commuters moving to the city attracted by the great value and GO Train service.
Downtown photos are numbered from top-to-bottom on this map. See listing at left.
Hamilton: A City of Many Communities greets visitors on roadsigns as they enter the rural periphery of the City. The statement is indeed factual, but not one in itself to instill a sense of unified community of communities. Each part of the City is distinct, having at some point been separated from each other and gradually amalgamated through successive annexations and provincial amalgamation schemes. The suburban communities of Ancaster, Dundas, Stoney Creek and Waterdown each have their own downtown neighbourhoods; all walkable communities with many amenities at hand. Each downtown has a distinct character, brought about by its history, situation and relationship to Hamilton itself.

New communities within the old City boundaries have emerged over the years, too. Historic neighbourhoods like Barton Village 1, Kirkendall/Durand 2 (Map 2) and the Waterfront 3 offer a rich diversity of experiences and lifestyles. Some communities face challenges, including Barton Village and King East (bottom right) as suburban growth and auto mobility brought an end to linear streetcar patterns of growth by the mid 20th century (Muller, 1995).

This section highlights some of these communities for further exploration by foot, bicycle, transit or car.
In Ancaster’s Historic Village, one could imagine horse-drawn carriages or old jalopies trundling down the street amidst the heritage buildings and low-density surroundings. The slow-paced atmosphere is a far cry from the rapidly developing Meadowlands area of Ancaster, with its car-oriented power centres. The village features a weekly farmers market, and the Firehouse Theatre.
environment

Note: Pages 80-81 and 84-85 are omitted from this preview
The Niagara Escarpment usually comes first to mind when the environment is considered in the context of Hamilton. As this “Giant’s Rib” winds its way through the urban and rural areas of the City, 126 waterfalls, of various height and intermittency, spill over its precipice, making Hamilton the “Waterfall Capital of the World” (City of Waterfalls, 2012).

Hamilton has struggled to resist a negative environmental image, brought on by its industrial past and perceived air and water quality issues. But through the hard work of a number of local actors, these issues are no longer the concern they once were. Energy recovery systems at the City’s waste treatment plant and landfills capture methane and convert it to electricity to feed into the power grid. Thanks in large part to these measures, the City has reduced its greenhouse gas output by over 16% since 2005, and is on track to meet its 2020 target of 20% (Hamilton, 2012b).

The City’s Climate Change Action Charter (bottom, right) has been endorsed by over 40 public and private organizations in the city committed to positive environmental action.

But beyond the ‘feel good’ measures, there is still much ‘heavy lifting’ to be done! This section highlights conservation and environmental remediation efforts underway in the City, with particular focus on watersheds, preservation and the Harbour.
Nature and recreation come together in a sustainable partnership all over Hamilton’s landscape. Several Conservation Areas are centred on reservoirs, managed by the conservation authorities to provide flood and erosion mitigation throughout their watersheds. Here are just a few of these parks and other natural recreation areas:

Valens Lake
- Camping, fishing, swimming, boat rental, wetland with boardwalk trail, birdwatching

Mountsberg
- Fishing, Raptor Centre, nature preserve, birdwatching
- Mapletown (seasonal event)

Christie Lake
- Fishing, swimming, picnics
- Trail connections to Crook’s Hollow and Websters Falls.

Websters Falls and Spencer Gorge
- Hamilton’s most impressive and popular waterfalls
- Trail connections to Bruce Trail, Dundas Valley and Christie

Dundas Valley
- A wilderness area right in the city with an extensive network of trails
- Historic sites and ruins

Cootes Paradise
- Managed by the Royal Botanical Gardens
- Hiking trails, birdwatching, Arboretum
- Wetland restoration

See § for map legend.
Repurposing old buildings is not a new thing to Hamilton—it has been happening for decades. Hamilton's first skyscraper, the Pigott Building, was converted from offices to residential units in the 1980s. Once the City outgrew its majestic Public Library on Main Street, adjacent to City Hall, the building was converted to provincial family courts. The main post office at Main and John was also renovated and converted to a courthouse in 1999.
Grindstone Falls, Waterdown

Note: Pages 88 to 89 are omitted from this preview
Hamilton’s Natural Resources

Rural Areas

In the “City of Waterfalls” 1, the many cascades can be spectacles at any time of the year. The Niagara Escarpment is a defining feature of rural Hamilton, and influences different microclimates across the region suitable for a broad range of agriculture. The most fertile land is also most favoured for development, so much has been lost over the past century. The Greenbelt will help protect what is left.

Quiet crossroads, like this one at Westover in Flamborough 2 often come with an old general store or schoolhouse, now used as a residences, antique shops or other small businesses.

Rural Hamilton’s built and cultural heritage is preserved at Westfield Heritage Village 3, operated by the Hamilton Conservation Authority near Rockton.

Wildlife adapts to the human-induced changes in the landscape. Great blue herons 4 are a common sight in wetlands and waterways, as are turtles, ducks, frogs, salamanders, over 380 species of bird (Curry, 2005) and large and small mammals.

Few cities can boast having caves in their backyard 5. The Eramosa Karst is such a place, and is the newest park under the protection of the Hamilton Conservation Authority. The land was donated to the authority by the Ontario Realty Corporation after pressure to preserve this rare landscape rather than cover it with subdivisions.

This section reveals the City’s rural and agricultural areas, keys to sustainability and resilience.
Hamilton’s rural areas seem worlds apart from the city’s urban industrial core. In the 19th century, small hamlets like Rockton and Troy established to provide services to nearby farmers, such as a general store, post office, blacksmith and inn.

The agricultural heritage continues, with Rockton’s Fairgrounds hosting the annual “Rockton World’s Fair” fall festival.

Nearby, Hamilton’s other airport, the Rockton Airfield, is the polar opposite of Hamilton International Airport. Rockton Airfield’s runways are paved with grass, and most of the planes don’t even have engines! This airfield is home to one of Canada’s largest gliding clubs, SOSA. Introductory flights are offered for those interested in the greenest form of flying.

Rural areas throughout Southern Ontario face development pressures from nearby urban areas. Most of Hamilton’s countryside is protected by The Greenbelt, but certain areas are designated for urban expansion.

Hamlets, like Lynden, offer a quieter pace of life than living in the city’s urban areas, making them popular with commuters.

Topographic Map Legend

- Waterfall
- Building
- Campground
- Marina
- Picnic Area
- Railway
- Municipal Boundary
- Trail
- Powerline
- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- Road built after 1990
- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- Road built after 1990

Map data: Geobase (2012), Geogratis (2013), Queen’s Printer for Ontario (2012)
Binbrook was a rural crossroads in 1990, but is now home to hundreds of new households in suburban subdivisions. Although the agricultural fairgrounds are still present, the area is now completely surrounded. With development comes pressure from new residents for city services, such as public transit.

In Winona, new and infill development encroaches on the country’s most productive tender fruit agricultural zone. The QEW corridor provides convenience for commuters, draws industrial expansion, and new shopping centres to the area.

Refer to the rural maps on 32-35 for the locations of these hamlets and other features of Hamilton’s rural areas.
Conclusion

Symbols of resiliency are important to a community, to foster pride and generate the willingness to move forward. But, the resilience story for Hamilton does not end through symbolic change, only through continuous substantive change from within.

One of the goals of producing this book is to demonstrate the cohesive way Hamilton functions with its amalgamated suburban and rural municipalities. Judging whether the book has achieved this goal, or contributed towards a better understanding of this relationship, will be left to the reader.

For the city as a whole, it is important to raise awareness of the differences between the communities that make up the amalgamated city. The attitude that the urban core is poor and the suburbs are rich is a common one, yet increasingly inaccurate. However, the economic, cultural and demographic make-up of the urban core, suburban and rural areas are different, and this situation leads to conflicting community needs and priorities.

Ultimately, a new form of governance is needed to address such issues. It is not possible for a single municipal council to represent such diverse interests. Maintaining this diversity is essential to keeping the city’s economy and resilience strong in an increasingly competitive and challenging era of technology, climate change, environmental preservation and fiscal restraint.

Another goal of this project is to strengthen local sustainability and responsibility by promoting local travel and consumption choices as well.

“Many cities have more natural features to offer than might be obvious to the visitor or even resident. Making urban green tourism information available can meet their needs for nature and green space in the city and provide new packaging alternatives and ways of profiling the city.” Gibson, et al (2003)

Urban green tourism supports the city’s long-term ecological health by promoting walking, cycling, and public transportation; promotes sustainable local economic and community development and vitality; celebrates local heritage and the arts; is accessible and equitable to all. Cities and regions around the world are recognizing sustainable travel and its potential for local economic development spinoffs.

Urban green tourism does not stop at the urban boundary. There are clear connections between Hamilton’s urban core and the surrounding suburban rural and natural environments. Hamilton, as a region-wide city, encompasses this diversity of environmental experiences within its city limits, extending from the intensive heavy industry along the city’s waterfront to the serene beauty of its remote agricultural pastures and forests.

The goals of urban green tourism also promote improved quality of life. In the case of Hamilton, downtown neighbourhoods that suffer from low esteem can benefit by having the unique aspects of these
areas promoted through things as seemingly innocuous as an old building.

Hamilton: Brutal Beauty | Hidden Heritage is a step in a collective learning process needed to achieve these objectives. A much needed sense of place and identity is still lacking 12 years after Hamilton’s amalgamation. A unified “brand” for the city that its residents can take pride in.

Environmental cognition and perception—gaining knowledge and sense of one’s surroundings—are shaped initially by prejudice. Through collective learning, attitudes can change as people become more familiar with the place and share their knowledge and perceptions with others. But the image presented must be realistic. No place is perfect and without problems, which is why this book has presented a balanced view of the city, flaws and all. For beauty is also seen in imperfection.

The Hamilton Book is not intended to replicate the information contained in the other Hamilton tourism or economic development publications. It is not necessary to detail traditional tourism attractions like Dundurn Castle or The African Lion Safari, list accommodations, shopping or events, as this information is already appropriately promoted. Instead, your attention has been drawn to alternative features and understanding of urban green tourism in the city by:

- Connecting urban and natural environments like the Niagara Escarpment, Waterfront, Conservation Areas, rural nature preserves and agriculture.
- Promoting sustainable infrastructure and transportation, such as bicycle freeways and history of rail transport.
- Exploring urban neighbourhoods, walkable streets and built heritage.
- Discovering environmental remediation, adaptation and urban revitalization projects.
- Alternatives to traditional ways of thinking about tourism.

This book thereby makes its contribution alongside the city’s other marketing efforts, and collectively strengthens the place cognition and perception in the various communities that comprise the city. These outcomes then contribute to building community identity and branding, and drive local economic development

Post-industrial cities are a relatively new phenomenon. The field of urban, green, sustainable tourism is also relatively new, as are the community planning ideologies behind resilience and renewal. Places need to differentiate themselves from one another, promote their unique strengths, and not be afraid to show imperfections as real, livable communities in order to stay relevant, resilient, and competitive in a continually changing global economy and environmental climate. This book will make at least a small contribution to connecting people with Hamilton, and increase awareness of how resilient this city can be.

Ian Dunlop, 2013
References


Brown, J., & Burns, G. (Directors). (2006). [Interview with Mark Kingwell, Professor of Philosophy, University of Toronto]. Radiant City [Motion Picture]. Canada: Burns Film Ltd., NFB, CBC


Hamilton, City of (2012a). Letter of understanding with the Hamilton Port Authority regarding piers 7 and 8. City...


Hamilton Civic Museums ( ).


References


Web Sources:
City of Waterfalls (2012) http://www.cityofwaterfalls.ca
Committee to Free Flamborough. http://www.freeflamborough.com
Hamilton Civic Museums. http://www.hamilton.ca/CultureandRecreation/Arts_Culture_And_Museums/HamiltonCivicMuseums/
Links to more resources and information at:
http://www.hamiltour.ca/links

Like Hamilton: Brutal Beauty-Hidden Heritage, and join the discussion on Facebook!
Index

A
Aberdeen 24, 69
Aggregate quarries 88
AGH 49, 102
Agriculture 89
Airport 11, 16, 33, 94, 101
Airport Employment Growth District 33
Amisfield 40
Ancaster 1, 23, 24, 61, 62, 63, 94
Ancaster Old Mill 62
Ancaster Township Hall 63
Art Crawl 49, 52
Art Deco 53
Art Gallery 45, 49, 102
Asian Carp 85
B
Bank of Montreal 39, 57
Barton Village 61
Battlefield Park 77
Bayfront Park 84, 85
Beasley 53
Beckett Road 28
Beverley Swamp 81, 92
Binbrook 95
Birks Clock 51
B-Line 19, 27, 100
Bruce Trail 25, 64, 66, 76
Buffalo 17, 21, 24
Burlington Canal Lift Bridge 17
Burlington Heights 85
Burlington Street Viaduct 16
C
Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum 33
Cannon 40
Carlisle 93
Centre Mall 72, 73
Chedoke Golf Course 70
Childrens' Museum 72
Chippawa Trail 95
Cholera 31
Churchill Park 70
City Centre 50
City Hall 39, 44, 46, 59, 83
Civic Square 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51
Claremont Access 25, 28, 29
Climate Change Action Charter 79
CN 20, 21
Concession Street 1, 66, 67
Concession Street B.I.A. 66
Confederation Park 95
Conservation Area 81
Conservation Authorities 80, 88
Conservation Halton 80
Cootes Paradise 11, 16, 18, 81, 85, 93, 94
Copetown 92, 94
Copps Coliseum 48
Corktown 54
CP 21, 24
Crown Plaza 55
Custom House 21
D
Design Annex 49
Peter Desjardins 85
Devil's Punchbowl 76, 77
Dofasco Theatre Aquarius 38
Dofasco Trail 95
Downtown Hamilton 20, 27, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45, 56, 59
Dundas 1, 20, 23, 31, 61, 63, 64, 65, 75, 85, 94
Dundas Historical Museum 64
Dundas Little Theatre 64
Dundas Post Office 65
Dundas Street 75
Dundas Town Hall 65
Dundurn Castle 20
Durand 54, 61
E
Eastgate Square 27
Eaton Centre 50
Eaton's 6, 46, 50, 51, 59
Electric 4, 15, 23, 24, 26
The Electric City 4, 15, 26
Elfrida 95
Eramosa Karst 87, 95
Escarpment Rail Trail 24, 30, 66
F
Fairclough Building 48
Federal Building 38
Ferguson Street 38, 55
Fieldcote House Museum 62
Fifty Point 95
Firehall Theatre 62
First Nations 11, 28
Flamboro Centre 93
Flamboro Downs 89
Freelton 93
G
Gage Park 16, 72, 73
Garthshore 31
Giant's Rib 79
Glanbrook 95
Good Shepherd Square 45
Gore Master Plan 56
Gore Park 26, 45, 51, 55, 56
Gore Precinct 55, 56, 57, 58
GO Train 20, 27, 41, 53
Grand River 80, 81
Great Depression 16, 23
Great Western Railway 16, 20
Greenbelt 87, 88
Greensville 93
Grindstone Creek 74, 75, 81
H
Hamilton-Ancaster Radial Trail 24
Hamilton-Brantford Railway Trail 24
Hamilton Conservation Authority 80, 87, 102
Hamilton Farmers' Market 51
George Hamilton 56
Hamilton GO Centre 21, 26, 38
Hamilton Harbour 15, 26, 30, 84, 85, 93, 100, 101
Hamilton International Airport 11, 33, 94, 101
Hamilton & Lake Erie 21
Hamilton & Northwest 21
Hamilton Place 48
Hamilton Port Authority 32, 84, 100
Hamilton-Port Dover 21
Hamilton Radial Electric Railway 23
Hamilton Street Railway 23, 26, 100, 101
Hess Village 45
High Level Bridge 16, 18
Highway 403 17, 28, 69, 71
Hughson 56, 57
Nathaniel Hughson 56
I
Incline Railway 22, 25
International Joint Commission 84
International Village 27, 55
J
Jackson Square 50, 51, 59
James Jolley 28
James Mountain Road 28
James St 22, 37
John St 28
Jolley Cut 28
Juravinski Hospital 66, 67
© 2013, Ian Dunlop
K
Keefer 30
Kenilworth Access 24
King East 61
King Street 38, 45, 49, 55, 56, 65, 71
King William 37
Kirkendall 61, 69
Knitting Mills 40

L
Lafarge Trail 92
Lake Ontario 4, 19, 20, 24, 30, 31, 95
Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail 24
Landed Banking and Loan 39, 83
Landmark Place 55
LEED 40
Lift Bridge 17, 19
Light Rail Transit 27
Lime Ridge Mall 47, 59
Lincoln Alexander Parkway 17, 47
Lister Block 10, 37, 38, 101, 102
LIUNA Station 20, 53, 101
Livestock 89
Lloyd D. Jackson Square 50
Locke St 68, 69
Locke Street B.I.A. 68
LRT 27
Lynden 92
M
MacNab St 54
MacNab Transit Terminal 26
Main St 47
Main West Esplanade B.I.A. 68
McCallum Sather Architects 40, 102
McKeil Marine 32
McMaster Childrens' Hospital 70, 71
McMaster Innovation Park 35
McMaster University 27, 35, 47, 71, 101
Memorial Hall 62, 75
Metrolinx 27, 101
Millgrove 93
Mohawk College 35
Mountain Brow Park 66
Mountain Roads 28
Mountain Steps 25
Mountain View Motel 25
Mount Hope 16
Mountsberg 81, 93
Movie Palace 67

Museum of Steam & Technology 31, 88

N
National Historic Site 31, 100
National Steel Car 16
NGTA 17, 102
Niagara Escarpment 10, 23, 24, 64, 65, 66, 76, 79, 87, 88
Niagara Peninsula Conservation 80
Niagara to GTA 17, 102
Olde Stoney Creek Merchants' Association 76
Ottawa Street B.I.A. 72
P
Pagoda 57
Parrish & Heimbecker 32
John Patterson 23
Peters Corners 92, 94
Pier 8 32
Piggott Building 39, 83
Port of Hamilton 32
Powerhouse 23, 77
Public Library 102
Q
QEW 15, 16, 17, 28
Queen Elizabeth Way 16
R
Randle Reef 19, 84, 100
Raptor Centre 81
Rebecca Street 50
Red Hill Valley Parkway 17
Remedial Action Plan 84, 101
Remediation 79
RHVP 17, 19, 28
Rochester 59
Rockton 92
Royal Botanical Gardens 11, 81, 93
Royal Connaught 55, 58
S
Sheffield 92
Sherman Access 22, 28, 29
Skyway Bridge 16, 17, 19
Spencer Gorge 93
Stinson School 41
St. Lawrence Seaway 15
Supercrawl 52
T
TH&B 18, 20, 21, 24, 26, 35, 54
The Aviary 70, 71

"The Electric City" 4, 15, 26
The Right House 58
Thomas McQuesten 16
Tim Hortons' 73
Toronto 3, 11, 13, 20, 21, 24, 27, 33, 41, 53, 100, 101
Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo 21
Tradeport International Corp. 33
Treble Hall 57
Troy 92
270 Sherman 35
V
Valens 92
Via Rail 21
Victoria Hall 58, 100
Victoria Park 68
Village Theatre Waterdown 75

W
War of 1812 77
Wastewater 31, 88
Waterdown 1, 61, 74, 75, 93, 101
Waterdown Victorian Village B.I.A. 74
Watershed 80
Waterworks 30
Websters Falls 93
Wentworth Incline 25
Wentworth Steps 66
Westdale 1, 70, 71, 101
Westdale B.I.A. 70
Western Gateway 16
Westfield Heritage Village 81, 92
Whitehern 45
Windermere Basin 84, 85, 101
Winona 95
Witton Lofts 41
Workers Arts & Heritage Centre 21

Y
York Boulevard 51

Z
Zucker Sculpture Garden 48
The outsider's impression of Hamilton is most prejudiced by the view of its harbour and industrial megaplex while travelling over the Skyway Bridge. The city has changed since the days when heavy industry employed tens of thousands of workers and provided a substantial tax base. Today's Hamilton is a city of dichotomies: urban and rural, downtown and mountain, rich and poor, a world biosphere and a toxic mess. But its diversity of communities, geographic location, built heritage, infrastructure, and investment opportunities place Hamilton in an enviable position of environmental and economic sustainability.

This book is the result of a major research project in local economic development. It is a unique guide to Hamilton; encouraging residents and visitors alike to explore and learn about how its location, history and environment are influencing its path to renewal as a post-industrial city.

Ian Dunlop
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
Published by Strategic Interchange

ISBN 978-1-894955-98-0