

# **PORT OF ROCHESTER**

## **MARKET STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Prepared by

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The final conclusions and recommendations from the Port of Rochester Market Study as summarized below:

The Port of Rochester is a sub-neighborhood of the greater Charlotte neighborhood located in the northern portion of the City of Rochester at the mouth of the Genesee River on Lake Ontario. This sub-neighborhood has historically been a waterfront commercial and recreational area for over 150 years presently characterized by its various restaurants, marinas and entertainment establishments. The Port is also the location of Ontario Beach Park and the new home of Rochester's Fast Ferry which services Toronto, Canada.

The Fast Ferry is both the impetus and catalyst behind the redevelopment of the Port of Rochester. Its success in bringing visitors to the area from Canada and drawing visitors from the greater Rochester area to the Port is essential to the success of any major private development project at the Port and to the commercial businesses that support the Port.

The development site ("Site") under consideration in this market study comprises various parcels of land totaling 17.59± acres surrounding the new ferry terminal. The Site is bounded by Ontario Beach Park to the north, Lake Avenue to the west, the Genesee River to the east and the CSX railroad to the south.

It is essential that additional permanent parking - either garage or surface parking - be constructed prior to the redevelopment of the existing surface parking lots so that adequate parking will be retained both during and after development. It is recommended that this additional permanent parking be developed as either part of a mixed-use building (i.e. sub-surface parking) on the Site or on alternate within the sub-neighborhood, accessible to the various business and activities, but not at the center of the redevelopment.

It is recommended that the Site be developed with a mix of uses that creates a high density permanent resident population base, a year-round daily transient population base and the appropriate mix of commercial uses to support both.

Relative to the resident population base, it is recommended that a mid-rise building(s) of between 3-7 stories be developed with a mix of commercial space on the ground floor, "for rent" luxury apartment units on the middle floors and "for sale" luxury condominiums on the upper floors. Any residential development should maximize views to the north of Lake Ontario, to the east of the Port and Genesee River, and to the south of Downtown Rochester down the river. On-site parking should be developed for the permanent residents.

The density for the residential units should be 10-15 units/acre/floor. Anticipated values for the upper level "for sale" condominiums are \$135-\$185/sq.ft. depending upon floor location, view and amenities. Anticipated rentals for the mid-level "for rent" market rate apartments are \$1.00-\$1.25/sq.ft./mo plus utilities with a unit value of \$100-\$130/sq.ft. depending upon floor location, view and amenities.

Relative to the transient population base, it is recommended that a small scale (25-50 room) hotel or inn be developed to accommodate overnight guests to the area from Canada generated by the Fast Ferry as a means to attract and retain a transient population base needed to support the balance of the development in the area. This facility should be developed around the general theme of the area taking into account the Port's history, surrounding development and architectural styles. It should be an upscale facility with a recognized affiliation but not a typical limited service, budget or economy hotel.

The development of the Port should include an additional year-round attraction with broad appeal to a wide spectrum of the population as a draw to the area for both Canadians visiting via the Fast Ferry and local residents of the Rochester area. Examples of attractions or facilities would be a museum, aquarium, indoor water park, educational facility relating to a maritime theme, and/or a large scale specialty restaurant or bar such as a Hard Rock Café or ESPN Zone as examples. Any proposed project should enhance the character of the sub-neighborhood and complement the resident housing.

It is recommended that a wide variety of commercial retail space be developed on the ground floor of any new building to support the population base and generate more business activity in the sub-neighborhood. Such examples might be: gift, arts & craft, clothing & specialty shops for the transient visitors; drug store, donut shop, coffee shop, hair & nail salon, & pizza shop for the residents; outfitting businesses, specialty food stores, a branch bank, electronics store, and possibly some limited office space for an information center, travel office, etc.

Rents for modern retail commercial space would be expected to be in the \$14-\$18/sq.ft. range on a net basis depending upon size and location. Tenant improvements above the base allowance would be amortized over the term of the lease as additional rent. Most importantly, the development of commercial space should emphasize the Harbortown theme of the neighborhood. There should be sufficient commercial space and other activities to attract visitors to the area. The existing commercial space and uses should be incorporated in the overall plan. Amenities such as walkways, benches, points of interest markers, and lighting are necessities.

A marina should be developed on the west side of the River north of the ferry terminal to provide seasonal docking as an amenity for the permanent residents. More importantly the marina should provide for yet another means for transient visitors to access the Port. The marina should be open to overnight visitors and should have infrastructure to provide for electric and plumbing as well as bathing and restroom facilities. Fueling facilities should also be considered. The marina should be staffed for assistance and safety.

Finally, it is recommended that a overall vision or plan for the whole Port of Rochester sub-neighborhood be developed to incorporate the redevelopment of lands south of the Site down to Stutson Street and west of Lake Avenue. The availability of this additional potential development expansion area is crucial because it will allow for more of the same type of development as what will be proposed for the Site. This is important to the success of any project at the Site. A development such as this should not be isolated or constrained but be a catalyst for the redevelopment of a wider area allowing for other types of residential uses.