

	<b>THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG</b>
	<b>STAFF REPORT</b>

TO:	Mayor and Members of Council	
FROM:	Dean A. Hustwick, Director of Recreation and Culture	
DATE OF MEETING:	Committee of the Whole – July 03, 2018	
REPORT TITLE/SUBJECT:	Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan (Waterfront Plan) - Updated Report from June 4, 2018	
REPORT #:		File #

## **1.0 STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Town of Cobourg Strategic Plan (2015-2018) established the community’s vision to be a “progressive, vibrant lakeside community” and several important objectives including the implementation of the 2013 Parks Master Plan.

In February 2017, Council updated the Strategic Plan and established a separate objective related to a new Community Waterfront District:

Objective 1: Developing and implementing a Community Waterfront District Plan

1. Define the Town’s community waterfront district and scope of the review
2. Conduct stakeholder engagement sessions to identify user needs and objectives
3. Develop detailed designs and options based on the priorities
4. Develop cost estimates, revenue opportunities and timeframes for implementation
5. Prepare a business plan for approval

Desired Outcomes:

- Unencumbered public access to the waterfront
- Public trust and confidence in waterfront development as a fair and positive process
- All user groups feeling welcomed by a waterfront that meets their needs
- The waterfront and facilities are maintained as a valuable Town asset
- Sustained waterfront operations
- Cobourg recognized as a model multi-use waterfront
- Cobourg continuing to receive the Blue Flag certification

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended:

WHEREAS the Committee of the Whole has received from consulting firm thinc design the Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan and presentation;

WHEREAS the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee supports the Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan as a framework for further planning and decision-making by Council and staff and recommends that the Plan be adopted by Council;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council adopt the Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT municipal staff consider the Plan and bring recommended projects forward to Council for its consideration.

## **3.0 ORIGIN**

Prior to the establishment of the Strategic Plan, on May 13, 2013, Council established the 2013 Parks Master Plan as the formal guide for future parks and waterfront development:

*WHEREAS the Committee of the Whole has considered a report from the Director of Public Works regarding the Town of Cobourg Parks and Waterfront Master Plan;*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council receive the Parks and Waterfront Master Plan prepared by peter j smith and company inc. dated April 2013 as presented and utilize the plan as a framework within which to guide the development of specific parks and waterfront projects.*

The 2013 Parks Master Plan identifies the waterfront as “the defining element in Cobourg’s park systems” and outlined many concepts for enhancing the waterfront.

The Parks Master Plan also identified seven distinct areas defined by the experiences they offer and the roles they play in diversifying our waterfront. The seven experience areas (as outlined in Appendix I) are:

- Natural Waterfront Experience - emphasizes natural beach environment
- Urban Waterfront Experience - emphasizes urban character, structured, organized, active
- Park Experience - emphasizes green character, passive/pastoral quality
- Beach Experience - emphasizes active beach use; beach environment
- Town Commons - emphasizes downtown character, active, public gathering
- Historic/Cultural Experience - emphasizes heritage/cultural interpretation; appreciation
- Active Experience - emphasizes active recreation

As noted in Appendix I, the Harbour is clearly identified as an active zone within the Urban Waterfront Experience area while the West Headland and West Beach areas are within the Natural Waterfront Experience area. The recommendations of the new Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan (Waterfront Plan) are aligned with these experience areas.

In order to prepare for implementation, the Parks Master Plan recommended the development of Waterfront Project Design Plans:

*The concepts developed for the waterfront are preliminary and are intended to illustrate a range of ideas for enhancing the waterfront as a destination and an icon of Cobourg. Based upon the potentials captured in the concepts, it is recommended that more detailed studies, or Project Design Plans (PDP), be undertaken of the primary areas that comprise the master plan.*

On September 12, 2016, the Town of Cobourg Committee of the Whole considered a detailed report from the Director of Recreation and Culture that recommended proceeding with the first phase of implementation of the Parks Master Plan. On September 19, 2016, Council ratified the Committee's motion:

*WHEREAS the Committee of the Whole has considered a Memo from the Director of Recreation and Culture regarding the Parks Master Plan Implementation: Phase I - Waterfront Use and Design;*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council approve implementation of Cobourg's 2013 Parks Master Plan in phases beginning with a waterfront user assessment and detailed waterfront design; and*

*FURTHER THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee be asked to act as a Steering Committee for this planning process by providing input and advice to the Director of Recreation and Culture who will: procure expert services with considerable experience and expertise in the design of waterfront communities and stakeholder management; engage the public and all local stakeholders with an active interest in the design and use of the waterfront to develop a comprehensive user needs assessment; and create a comprehensive waterfront design to be presented to Council for its consideration by the spring of 2017; and*

*FURTHER THAT the \$45,000 allocated in the approved 2016 Budget for the West Harbour be re-allocated for this planning process; and*

*FURTHER THAT the Director of Recreation and Culture, in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, prepare a report to Council if additional funds are required to complete this phase of the implementation process.*

On January 30, 2017, Council approved the awarding of the Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Project to *thinc design*.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

### **Transparency and Objectivity**

Very little direction was provided to the consultants at the outset of the project, either by Council members, Town staff or the Steering Committee. This was to ensure independent and unbiased outcomes. The consultants were asked to use their professional experience and skills in waterfront planning and design to engage the community and to develop a plan that addresses the strategic objectives outlined above.

Staff, the Steering Committee and, ultimately, the public brought to the attention of the consultants issues that have generated community debate in recent years, including:

- potential future uses of the campground property;
- criticisms of marina operations; and
- a previous proposal for increasing the number of boat slips in the marina.

Staff provided the consultants with copies of the Cobourg Tourism Investment Opportunities Study and the Cobourg Marina Expansion Operations and Facilities Study, along with a great number of other documents, plans and reports (as outlined in the Waterfront Plan). No staff direction was provided to the consultants on how to address these issues outside of the stated objectives of the project. With respect to the marina, the consultants were asked to fully assess all aspects of the operation and to consider all future options for the marina, including retaining it, leasing it to a third party and closing it permanently.

### **Steering Committee**

The project Steering Committee, comprised of the individual members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, had no decision-making authority and simply provided background information and advice predominantly to *thinc design*, a company hired for its expertise in waterfront planning. This advice related mainly to the following topics:

- Project timeline;
- Number and frequency of public engagement opportunities;
- Identification of community groups for engagement purposes;
- Waterfront issues that may need to be considered;
- Types of questions to be asked in surveys;
- Evaluation criteria; and
- Potential design concepts.

The Steering Committee held its first meeting on February 28, 2017, to meet *thinc design* and to formally begin the project. It met subsequently four more times: April 7/17, June 6/17, September 14/17 and May 4/18. The Town very much appreciates the time and contributions these individuals invested in this project, which certainly contributed to its overall success.

### **Public Engagement**

The project carried out the most transparent and extensive public engagement process in the Town's history to ensure that every individual and group interested in the waterfront had the opportunity to share their needs, wants and opinions. Public meetings had multiple sessions to accommodate individual preferences and schedules.

The significant and tremendously successful public engagement opportunities and activities were displays of democracy in action. Never before in Cobourg have so many residents become so deeply and directly involved in a community planning exercise. This level of engagement resulted in a clear understanding of what the majority of residents in this community want for their waterfront.

The following activities conducted as part of this project demonstrate the Town's commitment to a robust public engagement strategy:

- 8 Interactive Open Houses - 2017
  - #1: April 4
  - #2: May 10 – two sessions and a questionnaire
  - #3: June 27 – two sessions
  - #4: October 26 – three sessions
- 2 days of Interactive Pre-Charrette Workshops: April 10 & 11, 2017 (make-up sessions on May 3 and 16) – 30 organizations participated
- 1 Interactive Community Design Charrette: May 31, 2017
- Delivery of more than 8,000 postcards to residents in Cobourg promoting the individual survey and upcoming Open Houses
- Three Surveys:
  - Household (**2,000 responses**)
  - Community Stakeholder Organizations
  - Businesses
- Presentation of preliminary recommendations to Cobourg Council (open session): August 21, 2017
- Presentation of draft Final Report to Cobourg Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee: May 16, 2018
- Presentation of Final Report to Cobourg Council: June 4, 2018
- Additional Communications:
  - Regular newspaper ads
  - Ongoing updates to the Town's Website
  - Email blasts

#### **Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan (Waterfront Plan)**

There has been some criticism of the process lately by some individuals and groups that the Town was attempting to rush the adoption of the Final Report without adequate public consideration and input.

It is important to note that the consultants first presented interim survey results and preliminary recommendations during the two public meetings held on June 27, 2017, which involved a dot exercise that encouraged members of the public to help identify priority recommendations.

On August 21, 2017, the consultants presented to Council a detailed project update that included final survey results, 80 design recommendations grouped according to 10 topics/areas and the outcome of the June 27<sup>th</sup> public meetings and dot exercises.

On October 26, 2017, the consultants led three public meetings during which they delivered comprehensive presentations that explained the process and activities to date, the 80 design recommendations grouped into 29 specific projects along with an explanation of the 13 scoring criteria.

Between November 2017 and March 2018, the consultants conducted additional research and prepared their written report to fully explain their recommendations and cost estimates. During this period, the recommendations changed very little, increasing slightly to 83 and grouped into 24 cohesive projects, a small reduction from the 29 projects outlined in October.

The draft Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan (Waterfront Plan) was posted publicly on CivicWeb on Monday, May 14, 2018, in advance of its presentation to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting on May 16, 2018. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee passed the following recommendation to Council:

*THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee supports the Town of Cobourg Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Report as a framework for further planning and decision making by Council and staff;*

*And FURTHER THAT the Committee recommends that the Report be adopted by Municipal Council.*

Media stories with links to the draft Waterfront Plan began circulating on May 17. Notice of the presentation of the Waterfront Plan was posted on CivicWeb on Friday, May 25, 2018, for a June 4<sup>th</sup> date. Hard copies of the draft Waterfront Plan were printed for Council members and interested parties starting on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

The final Waterfront Plan and the consultant's presentation were posted on CivicWeb on Friday, June 1 as part of the June 4<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole Meeting. The only difference between the draft Waterfront Plan and the final Waterfront Plan were some minor revisions to financials regarding the marina economic impact and future projected capital repairs based on updated information obtained by the Town.

On June 4, 2018, the consultants presented their final Waterfront Plan to the Committee of the Whole. At the same meeting, 12 delegations spoke on the Waterfront Plan.

All project documents have been posted to the Town's Website and have remained available to the public since the project began in early 2017.

## **5.0 ANALYSIS**

The Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan (Waterfront Plan) by *thinc design* is an innovative and comprehensive report that expands on the 2013 Parks Master Plan's goal to "enhance the urban waterfront as the primary attraction and premier destination in Cobourg." The Waterfront Plan identifies the community's priorities for a beautiful, accessible and sustainable waterfront and specifically addresses several important objectives, including:

- Enhancing access to the waterfront for all users
- Improving utilization of the community's assets
- Identifying revenue generating opportunities to help fund improvements and ongoing maintenance

**81% of residents indicated the need for waterfront improvements  
(44% minor improvements and 37% major improvements)**

The Waterfront Plan successfully addresses Objective 1 (Developing and Implementing a Community Waterfront District Plan) of the Town's Strategic Plan (2015-2018). Specifically, it:

1. Defined the Town's community waterfront district
2. Conducted stakeholder engagement sessions to identify user needs and objectives
3. Developed detailed designs and options based on the priorities
4. Developed cost estimates, revenue opportunities and timeframes for implementation
5. Prepared a business plan to support its recommendations

The Waterfront Plan represents much more than achieving strategic objectives. It represents a defining moment for the community's future that should be celebrated. Residents of all backgrounds, ages, interests and abilities came together to help design a waterfront that will have profound and positive impacts on the community's physical attractiveness, quality of life and culture for many years to come. The decisions made today, may have the greatest impact not on ourselves, but on the next generation that will reap the true benefits.

At the end of every public and democratic process, there will be some groups and individuals who disagree with some of the findings and recommendations, but it is important that the Town focusses on what is best for the community as a whole.

The Waterfront Plan is the culmination of more than a year-and-a-half of work by experienced consultants, a Steering Committee of community representatives and a large segment of the population. The recommendations are aligned and linked together into projects for ease of implementation. All projects and most recommendations will be dependent on funding that will be debated and approved through the annual Budget process, which will certainly involve many other competing municipal priorities. Therefore, it is not necessary to debate each of the 83 recommendations at this time. Staff need to fully assess the Plan's projects and recommendations, in light of all other divisional and community priorities, and determine which recommendations should be brought forward each year for funding consideration.

Nevertheless, approval of the Waterfront Plan is essential to establish the framework by which future planning and decision-making can occur.

### Delegations

While both staff and the consultants believe that the specific recommendations do not need to be debated at this time, both agree that it is important to address the comments from the delegations to the Committee of the Whole on June 4, 2018, because some were requesting that specific recommendations be removed or altered from the Waterfront Plan or that the whole Plan be deferred for the sake of details that are not relevant at this stage.

It is the role and responsibility of municipal staff to provide Council with adequate information, facts and analysis so that it can make fully informed decisions. That role includes clarifying and correcting information, particularly incorrect information, that has been presented to Council by public delegations and presentations.

Some of the delegations at the June 4<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole implored Council to “listen to the people.” Listening to the people is exactly what the entire waterfront planning process has been about.

But the process has become emotive because of some groups’ refusals to consider new facts and information that might contribute to objective re-consideration of intransigent positions that were taken prior to this study. Simply because the Waterfront Plan does not support the positions of some groups and individuals, does not mean that these groups were not heard.

Nor does it mean that the Waterfront Plan is not based on the beliefs and wishes of the majority of the community. The project carried out an extensive public engagement process that involved 2,000 individuals, 30 community groups and 71 businesses, all of whom took time out of their busy schedules to attend public meetings and to complete lengthy surveys in order to provide Council with their opinions on a broad range of issues. These opinions matter and were the driving force behind the recommendations in the Waterfront Plan.

### Harbour

The Town of Cobourg was established and evolved predominantly because of its link to Lake Ontario as a major transportation route. Construction of Cobourg Harbour started in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century and was built over generations to leverage commercial and industrial shipping opportunities for economic growth and prosperity.

By definition, a “harbour” is for boats:

***A harbor or harbour (see spelling differences), also called a haven, is a body of water where ships, boats, and barges seek shelter from stormy weather, or are stored for future use. The term harbor, referring primarily to a sheltered body of water, is often used interchangeably with port, which is a man-made facility built for loading and unloading vessels and dropping off and picking up passengers. Ports usually include one or more harbors.... Harbors may be natural or artificial. An artificial harbor can have deliberately constructed breakwaters, sea walls, or jettys, or they can be constructed by dredging, which requires maintenance by further periodic dredging.***

*Wikipedia*

Other than pedestrians on the periphery, and the occasional swimmer, Cobourg Harbour today is enjoyed entirely by boaters:

***Boat: A small vessel for travelling over water, propelled by oars, sails, or an engine.***

*Oxforddictionaries.com*

### Harbour Users

There are five organized water user groups that regularly utilize Cobourg Harbour:

Ranking (#s & use)	Boat Group	History	Number of Users
1	Cobourg Marina	<p>In the 1960s, Cobourg leased the harbour from the federal government and began collecting revenue from the marina shipping activities.</p> <p>In 2002, the Town of Cobourg went through the Divestiture Transfer Program with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, which granted the Town full ownership and authority over Cobourg Harbour.</p> <p>In 1989, the Town built the Administration Building through a provincial grant to provide better services for local and visiting boaters and to build the Town's reputation as a tourism destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 seasonal boats</li> <li>• 1,330 transient boats (3,370 transient overnight stays in 2016 bringing in approx.. 7,077 visitors)</li> <li>• 288-400 reciprocal boats each year on west side of Centre Pier</li> <li>• 945 boat launch uses annually</li> <li>• 50 -100 boats anchor in harbour annually</li> </ul>
2	Cobourg Yacht Club	<p>The Cobourg Yacht Club dates back to 1964 when the Great Pine Ridge Marine Association was formed. In 1965 the club received its official charter and launched the Sailing School that continues today to educate and train people of all ages about boating and water safety. The Club also began hosting visiting boaters when Cobourg was selected that year as the end of the first leg of the Freeman Cup Race.</p> <p>In 1967, the Club built its first clubhouse and began performing rescues on Lake Ontario. The Club built the existing clubhouse beginning in 1985 with the assistance of a provincial grant, donations and volunteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 341 members (includes members and program participants)</li> </ul>
3	Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club	A dragon boat club started in 1999 and expanded in 2008 to become the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 210 (includes program and summer camp participants)</li> </ul>
4	Canadian Coast Guard	Federal Search and Rescue Operation	N/A
5	Survivor Thrivers	A dragon boat club formed in 1999 as a non-profit, charitable organization that organizes and promotes exercise and racing for individuals who have survived breast cancer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 Paddlers</li> </ul>

Each of these user groups provide valuable services and benefits to the community and are very much supported by the Town of Cobourg. Through enhanced collaboration, scheduling and marketing, these programs can become more accessible and popular. Discussions to begin this process have already occurred with some groups.

**Harbour Usage**

The main Marina Operations Area utilizes only 24% of the space within the Harbour but accounts for 58% of its total use. The 24% of the Harbour utilized by the Marina includes the west side of the Centre Pier and the boat launch. The west side of the Centre Pier has been rented for years by the Cobourg Yacht Club specifically for docking boats – more than 400 boat stays a year dock in this space, sometimes tied together several deep – bringing more than 600 visitors into the community. But there are no docks or services, which is an ongoing customer service issue. Almost 1,000 boats a year utilize the boat launch, making this space between the boat launch and the Centre Pier a high-traffic part of the Marina. It is within this small space that the Waterfront Plan proposes adding boat slips to manage more effectively and safely existing usage as well as to increase the profit of the Marina by accommodating additional boats.

Although nearly 76% of the entire Harbour is common space available for paddling sports and other activities, the Yacht Club programs account for only 18% of the usage and paddling clubs only 17%. Furthermore, the Marina is completely devoid of boats for six months each year.

User	Current Harbour Usage in Person User Days by User Group (%)	Harbour Space Available for Use
Marina Operations	57.5	23.5% (44,889 m <sup>2</sup> )
Safe Refuge Anchorage	0.5	75.6% (144,428 m <sup>2</sup> )
Cobourg Yacht Club	18.3	
Paddle Clubs	17.4	
Canadian Coast Guard	6.3	0.0% (1,619 m <sup>2</sup> )
Totals	100	100% (190,936 m <sup>2</sup> ) (difference due to rounding)

***73% of residents agreed (only 7% disagreed) that an active harbour is important to the successful development of the waterfront***

These statistics are clear evidence that the Harbour is underutilized. Currently, use of the Harbour is not managed like all other recreational assets like arenas, multi-purpose rooms, playing fields, ball diamonds, parks and the beach. With better management and scheduling, utilization of the Harbour can increase significantly.

***48% of residents agreed (only 8% disagreed) and 59% of businesses agreed (only 3% disagreed) that the Town should organize and schedule the use of the harbour to reduce potential conflicts and to increase access by all users, including power boats***

During the last few months, staff have reviewed carefully the 2018 program information the Town has been able to acquire from all organized Harbour users (not all Harbour user groups have been cooperative in sharing information about either their organizations or their programs). Staff have also monitored actual use of the Harbour very carefully each day of the week and at all hours. The clear conclusion is that the Harbour has considerable capacity to accommodate additional water use.

Each year, the Harbour remains devoid of most boats (all power and sail boats) for five months. During the other seven months, five months involve very limited use of the common Harbour area (76% of the Harbour) and only two months involve significant organized programs and activities, predominantly by one group. Even during the busy months of July and August there remains additional capacity, particularly because some programs involve very few boats and not all program time is on the water. More formal management of the use of the Harbour will further improve capacity throughout the seasons.

#### **April**

There is no scheduled use of the Harbour outside of the Marina.

#### **May**

There are some scheduled programs Monday to Thursday at various times between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Programs do not begin before 4:00 p.m. on those days and there are no scheduled programs on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Program participants are not on the water at all times.

#### **June**

There are some scheduled programs Monday to Thursday at various times between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Programs do not begin before 4:00 p.m. on those days and there are no scheduled programs on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Program participants are not on the water at all times.

#### **July**

Numerous programs are scheduled predominantly between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. seven days a week with evening programs Mondays to Thursdays between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Friday evenings are free). Programs do not start earlier than 9:00 a.m. Programs end at 4:00 p.m. on weekends. Program participants are not on the water at all times.

#### **August**

Numerous programs are scheduled predominantly between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. seven days a week with evening programs Mondays to Thursdays between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Friday evenings are free). Programs do not start earlier than 9:00 a.m. There are no scheduled programs on Saturdays and Sundays. Program participants are not on the water at all times.

#### **September**

There are only eight hours of scheduled programs in all of September.

#### **October**

There is no scheduled use of the Harbour outside of the Marina.

### **November - March**

There are no boats in the marina and no scheduled use of the Harbour.

Furthermore, the Waterfront Plan recommends additional dredging on the western edge of the Harbour to increase programmable space and capacity even further.

Most of the groups and individuals that appeared before Council on June 4, promoted the use of the entire harbour, including the western portion of the harbour, for boats, although their preference is for boats powered only by paddles. The groups stated that there have never been conflicts in the western portion of the Harbour between human-powered boats and the sail and motor boats that are used for training and teaching, racing, launching, anchoring and docking on the west side of the Centre Pier.

Their fear that the placement of wooden floating docks on the west side of the Centre Pier will introduce conflict, limit or preclude their ability to operate, and negatively impact the environment are not based in fact. The Plan's significant research and environmental assessment of the Harbour clearly suggests that the Harbour has additional capacity and opportunity to increase use by all users and to generate additional revenue, all in an environmentally respectful manner.

### **Revenue**

The Marina accounts for 100% of the revenue generated within the Harbour, as other users and clubs pay little to no user fees. This lack of revenue will become a more significant concern as the Town contemplates implementation of the Waterfront Plan and completes condition assessments of the Harbour's permanent infrastructure, including the East Pier.

***55% of residents agreed (only 15% disagreed) and 64% of businesses agreed (only 6% disagreed) that the Town should invest in the marina if resulting revenues could finance harbour/waterfront improvements***

Despite the fact that the Marina produces annual surpluses, like other municipal recreational programs and services offered to its citizens, there is no requirement for it to do so. The municipality offers a wide range of programs and services to all demographics in the community, including:

- Special Events (e.g., Christmas Magic, Canada Day Celebrations, Sandcastle Festival, First Night, etc.)
- Swimming (Centennial Pool)
- Hockey/skating (Memorial Arena and Cobourg Community Centre)
- Seniors Centre programs and activities (Cobourg Community Centre, Market Building)
- Registered recreational programs (Cobourg Community Centre)
- Curling (Jack Heenan Arena is municipally owned)
- Tennis
- Baseball, softball, slow-pitch
- Soccer
- Rugby
- Lawn bowling (Victoria Park property is municipally owned)

- Walking, jogging, running, bird watching (parks, trails and paths are municipally owned and maintained)
- Concerts, musicals, plays and speakers (Concert Hall and Bandshell are municipally owned and maintained)

Most of these programs and services involve user fees of one type or another and all are subsidized by the taxpayers – despite some appealing only to certain demographics.

But that’s the nature of municipal government as it attempts to promote active lifestyles, a vibrant culture and a high quality of life for its citizens.

### **Clean Marine/Blue Flag**

Delegations also suggested that the Cobourg Marina should seek a Blue Flag designation. In fact, for the last nine months the Waterfront Operations Department has been actively working on a Clean Marine certification. Blue Flag has 38 assessment criteria and only eight marinas certified in Canada, six of which are in Ontario. Clean Marine, on the other hand, has 220 assessment criteria and over 300 businesses certified in Ontario.

A Clean Marine site audit was conducted on June 21 and Cobourg Marina was awarded a 5-Anchor rating - only the second time in the program’s history that a marina had been awarded a 5-Anchor rating in the first year of its participation in the program (the highest ranking for a first year participant). The only other marina to achieve this was Friday Harbour, a mega resort marina near Barrie. The Town was also advised that based on the assessment, Cobourg Marina will likely move up in the ranking after it completes a mandatory first year of participation.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION**

In total, the Waterfront Plan recommends 24 projects with estimated costs of approximately \$26 million and a proposed implementation schedule of 24 years. Two of those projects, a new downtown parking structure and a new community waterfront building, account for more than \$13 million.

### **Asset Management**

The Town has also initiated a new Asset Management Program which involves conducting condition assessments of all public assets/facilities to help develop long-term capital improvement plans and budgets. The Town has completed condition assessments of the Memorial and Jack Heenan Arenas and is currently in the process of conducting condition assessments of the Harbour. The Waterfront Plan (Business Case for the Harbour and Marina) includes a long-term capital improvement plan for the Marina and a placeholder of more than \$700,000 for structural repairs to the East Pier.

The Town is in the process of conducting a condition assessment of the East Pier that will cost approximately \$50,000. An initial condition assessment of the Centre Pier has identified approximately \$4 million in long-term structural repairs, although a more invasive and underwater assessment (similar to what will be done with the East Pier this year) will be required. Similar assessments of the Harbour’s north wall and the West Headland breakwall will also be necessary as deterioration has been occurring.

It is anticipated that the Harbour's permanent infrastructure will cost millions of dollars over the next 20 – 30 years. Even if the Town is able to obtain federal and provincial grants, taxpayers will have to absorb the burden of these expenses. This burden can be reduced through increased revenues from waterfront users.

### **Tourism**

Our local tourism industry can often generate interesting debates locally about its value and benefits. The Waterfront Plan provides considerable insight into that industry, including many invaluable statistics including the following:

***80% of residents agreed (only 9% disagreed) and 77% of businesses agreed (only 7% disagreed) that Tourism is or will be important to the Town's economy***

***46% of businesses stated that they either depend on the trade from tourists/visitors or benefit from it***

***76% of residents agreed (only 5% disagreed) that tourists should contribute a larger share of improvement costs through enhanced revenue generating opportunities***

The popular Waterfront District is a critical component of Cobourg's tourism industry and overall economy. But it's full potential is still untapped. For these reasons, the Waterfront Plan recommends leveraging existing assets and operations and pursuing new revenue generating opportunities, like the floating playground.

***56% of residents agreed (24% disagreed) and 72% of businesses agreed (and only 12% disagreed) that the Town should further develop waterfront-based recreation activities as a source of revenue generation***

There are four primary economic drivers within the Waterfront District.

### **Harbour**

The marina is a powerful economic engine for the Town of Cobourg that has been generating annual profits that have been used to subsidize taxpayers by paying for general Harbour expenses.

**Marina Annual Financials**

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Marina Revenue	\$649,909	\$676,426	\$651,394	\$666,298	\$551,997	\$552,835
Combined Marina & Common Harbour Expenses	\$580,392	\$628,092	\$592,939	\$567,699	\$488,808	\$503,718
<b>Marina Profit Transferred to Marina Reserve Account</b>	<b>\$69,518</b>	<b>\$48,334</b>	<b>\$58,455</b>	<b>\$98,599</b>	<b>\$63,189</b>	<b>\$49,117</b>
*Estimated Common Harbour Expenses (Non-Marina Expenses – Taxpayer Dividend) Paid for by Marina Profit	\$113,420	\$119,298	\$85,694	\$82,696	\$70,584	\$68,866
<b>*Estimated Potential Marina Profit without Common Harbour Expenses – Taxpayer Dividend</b>	<b>\$182,938</b>	<b>\$167,632</b>	<b>\$144,149</b>	<b>\$181,295</b>	<b>\$133,773</b>	<b>\$117,983</b>

The economic impact of the Marina from recreational boating for the 2010 to 2016 period alone has been calculated by *Touristics* to be \$12,282,480 (see Appendix II). The Marina operation was responsible for \$4,148,820 in direct expenditures while seasonal boater expenses on insurance, supplies and repairs were estimated to be \$2,512,080.

Expenditures by transient (visiting) boaters at grocery stores, restaurants, marine supply outlets, other retail outlets, and tourist attractions and events within the Town of Cobourg were estimated to be \$5,721,580 (these are direct financial benefits to local businesses and organizations). This reinforces the economic importance of the marina as a whole and transient boat slips in particular.

The economic relevance of the other Harbour user groups, while important, pale in comparison to the Marina operation. During the same 2010 to 2016 period, the Cobourg Yacht Club generated \$1,199,360 and the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club generated \$585,100 (see Appendix II). The Survivor Thrivers did not generate any direct revenue from the use of the Harbour.

The Waterfront Plan suggests that the profitability of the marina combined with the underutilization of the Harbour as a whole creates a significant opportunity for the Town to leverage this recreational asset in order to generate additional revenues that can be used to subsidize taxpayers further by offsetting future operating and capital improvement costs. The Waterfront Plan recommends numerous Marina enhancements including the addition of boat slips, travel lift and service improvements.

The Waterfront Plan also concludes that the other groups using the Harbour for paid summer camps and training are doing so at no to little cost, and recommends that all users pay towards the provision of public facilities similar to other recreational assets.

**59% of residents agreed (only 11% disagreed) and 54% of businesses agreed (only 16% disagreed) that user groups should contribute to operating and capital costs of new/improved facilities/amenities**

### Campground

Victoria Park Campground provides a unique urban waterfront camping experience to both local and visiting camping enthusiasts. There are 71 serviced RV sites and 5 un-serviced tent sites that hosted 5,800 overnight registrations in 2017 (each with multiple individuals). The Campground is another important tourism attraction for the Town as these customers invest in our community by purchasing groceries, gas and other supplies, eat at local restaurants and shop in local businesses.

The Campground has also been a very profitable business unit for the community, providing significant financial dividends to taxpayers. In the last six years alone, the Campground has generated a profit of \$961,096, with \$881,096 transferred to the Town’s general revenue to help keep taxes lower.

#### Campground Annual Financials

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Surplus Campground Revenue (profit)	\$182,075	\$172,208	\$167,913	\$170,679	\$140,932	\$127,289
Surplus Campground Revenue (profit) Transferred to Campground Reserve Account	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0
<b>Surplus Campground Revenue (profit) Transferred to General Revenue (taxpayer dividend)</b>	<b>\$182,075</b>	<b>\$152,208</b>	<b>\$147,913</b>	<b>\$150,679</b>	<b>\$120,932</b>	<b>\$127,289</b>

The opportunity to expand revenue from this operation is limited without expanding the footprint of the campground. The Waterfront Plan recommends retaining the existing footprint, building a public buffer space, upgrading services/facilities and increasing fees.

### Parking

Parking is an important source of revenue for the Waterfront District, bringing in almost \$170,000 annually (gross) from seven parking lots and metres. After expenses, the profits from this business are used to offset waterfront costs and other municipal operations as an additional tourism dividend.

The Waterfront Plan outlines numerous recommendations to improve parking including the reconfiguration of the Hibernia Street/Marina Parking Lot, building a new downtown parking structure and increasing rates.

### Food and Beverage

While the Town currently generates \$20,000 (net) from the Victoria Park Canteen contract, this profit is more than offset by almost \$50,000 in annual maintenance costs for the adjacent washrooms. However, there is significant potential for increasing the revenue from food and beverage at our waterfront to better serve the tens of thousands of waterfront guests.

The Waterfront Plan recommends enhancing food and beverage services through vendors, food trucks and a restaurant.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

Every organization and municipality requires a long-term vision and leadership to deliver that vision. The combination of vision and leadership in the 1980s and 1990s transformed Cobourg's waterfront, helping the community to establish itself as an even more popular destination for visitors, residents and businesses. But that was not an easy process and there were opponents, but Council and the community stayed focused, persevered and achieved tremendous success.

Today, we have been presented with a new Waterfront Plan – a new vision to guide the next phases of waterfront improvements that will help to achieve Council's strategic objective to establish Cobourg as a progressive, vibrant lakeside community, a destination of choice and a community with an exceptional quality of life.

The Waterfront Plan is an opportunity to celebrate the beauty of our community and its vast potential, to build new partnerships and collaborations and to focus on community building. The community is growing and the Waterfront Plan will help guide and manage the waterfront's evolution in the years ahead.

If the Waterfront Plan is adopted by Council, staff will bring forward recommended projects for Council's consideration at the appropriate time.

# Appendix I



## Appendix II

**EXHIBIT 33 – ECONOMIC IMPACTS DUE TO USE OF COBOURG HARBOUR FOR RECREATIONAL BOATING (Waterfront Plan/Business Case for Cobourg Harbour and Marina – updated to include Cobourg Yacht Club)**

<b>Economic Impacts Due to Use of Cobourg Harbour for Recreational Boating (revised to include Cobourg Yacht Club)</b>	<b>Cummulative 2010 to 2016</b>
Total Revenues from Marina Operation <sup>1</sup>	\$4,148,820
Total Seasonal Boater Expenditures Away from Marina <sup>2</sup>	\$2,512,080
Total Transient Boater Expenditures Away from Marina <sup>3</sup>	\$5,721,580
Total Revenues Generated by Cobourg Yacht Club using marina and outer harbour	\$1,199,360
Total Revenues Generated by Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club using outer harbour	\$585,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,166,940</b>
<b>Value Added or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Town of Cobourg</b>	
Direct	\$5,205,680
Indirect	\$1,665,700
Induced	\$1,399,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,270,930</b>
<b>Total Taxes</b>	
Federal	\$1,618,190
Provincial	\$1,950,080
Municipal	\$389,490
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,957,760</b>

<sup>1</sup> EXHIBIT 30

<sup>2</sup> Expenditures in Cobourg exclusive of monies spent at marina, based on number of power boats at \$3,600.00 per year and sail boats at \$2,800.00 per year for insurance, supplies and repairs

<sup>3</sup> Expenditures in Cobourg exclusive of monies spent at marina, based on number of transient boats attracted to marina and an average per person expenditure of \$47.00 for less than 24 hours, and \$211.30 for an overnight stay (average stay 2 nights). Assumes 2.1 persons per boat as per industry average.