



Corporation of the Township of Brock

Staff Report to the Mayor and Members of Council

From: Robin Prentice, MCIP, RPP

Position: Director of Development Services

Title / Subject: Waterfront Area and Open Space Plan – Update Report

Date of Report: August 29, 2023

Date of Meeting: September 11, 2023

Report No: 2023-DS-015

1.0 Issue / Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Waterfront Area and Open Space Plan (Waterfront Plan) and get Council direction on the location for the Wishing Tower sculpture.

2.0 Background

In December 2022, The Planning Partnership was retained to prepare a Waterfront Plan that provides a long-term vision for the waterfront on Lake Simcoe and the open space lands that connect Downtown Beaverton to the harbour on Lake Simcoe to capitalize on the many attributes of the community and its geographic location.

The Waterfront Plan project is based on a four-phase work program:

1. Review Background Information
2. Overarching Vision and Design Concepts for Key Areas
3. Design Guidelines, Costs and Phasing
4. Recommended Plan

As part of Phase 1, the project team reviewed the background information and analyzed the existing conditions, identified opportunities and challenges for change and conducted the following consultation:

- Waterfront Advisory Committee meeting;
- One-on-one meetings with members of the public and Council;
- Setting up the Waterfront Plan project page on the Let's Talk Brock website;
- Workshop #1 was held on March 8, 2023 and approximately 70 people attended.

A report outlining a summary of what we heard in Phase 1 can be found as Attachment #1.

3.0 Analysis

As part of Phase 2, a public workshop was held on April 20, 2023. Approximately 80 residents participated in the workshop. They were invited to join a table group where designers from The Planning Partnership worked to create various concept options through discussion with residents and based on a number of variables for key components. Three concept options were then made available in June, along with an interactive online survey to help the team understand the preferred components and elements of each option.

The online survey was administrated through the Metroquest platform and hosted on the project web page. The survey was conducted from June 22, 2023 to July 14, 2023. In total, 448 people answered the survey, which was promoted by the Township through the newspaper, social media posts, emails and other communication tools.

3.1 Analysis of Feedback Received

The online survey provided an overview of the three concept options that were developed during the design workshops and asked participants to provide feedback on the various components of each concept. The survey also asked participants to indicate if they agree or disagree with the various elements, by giving a thumbs up (agree), or a thumbs down (disagree).

The following is a summary of the comments received, as outlined in more detail in Attachment #2.

Some of the top-rated elements that 90% or more of respondents agreed with, include:

- 93% support for swimming platforms along the south side of the South Pier.
- 92% supported patios along the river.
- 90% support maintaining the play area/playground in Mill Gateway Park while redesigning the area with walkways, seating and plantings.

Some of the poorly rated elements that less than 50% of the respondents supported include:

- Providing a trolley car between the Harbour and Downtown Beaverton (37%)
- Converting the harbour parking area into a green space (41%)
- Removing the boathouses over time and replacing them with public access to the water's edge (47%)
- Relocating both baseball diamonds from the Fairgrounds to create a multi-use recreation and naturalized park (37%)
- Reconfigure the parking and implement a pay and display parking for visitors (45%)
- Locate the wishing tower sculpture in Mill Gateway Park (43%)

A report outlining a summary of what we heard as part of the survey can be found as Attachment #2.

3.2 Next Steps

Based on the feedback received on the 3 concept options, the project team will prepare a draft preferred Waterfront Action Plan and associated implementation strategy that will be presented to Council and subject to additional public consultation in the Fall of 2023.

3.3 Wishing Tower Sculpture

Three locations for the wishing tower sculpture were included in the survey, as outlined below along with the corresponding survey results:

- on the top of the hill at the harbour in the location that avoids underground services (62%)
- the fairgrounds (53%)
- Mill Gateway Park (42%)

Based on the survey results, the highest percentage (62%) selected the top of the hill at the harbour as the preferred location. There are many inputs and components that are taken into consideration as the preferred plan comes together. The consultant has confirmed that they support the location at the top of the hill that avoids underground services and will include this location as part of the preferred plan.

The final Waterfront Plan report will also include a recommendation that the Township prepare a public art strategy to guide the identification of locations, types of public art, a process for securing art and a maintenance strategy.

Based on this input and in working with the Beaverton Special Events Committee, Township staff recommend that Council approve the location for the wishing tower sculpture that would allow staff to continue working with the Committee on this project.

4.0 Related Policies / Procedures

Related staff report 2022-PCA-014.

The Brock Township Official Plan articulates several important key principles that are related to the Waterfront Plan. These include the following:

- To provide a long-term strategic policy framework that will balance population and economic growth with the need to protect the natural environment, by guiding the decisions affecting the use of land;
- To encourage economic development in appropriate locations;
- To maintain a high quality of life and secure the health, safety, convenience and well-being of the present and future residents of the area; and
- To encourage development that is environmentally and economically sustainable.

The Brock Township Official Plan speaks to the importance of the Lake Simcoe waterfront, the downtowns and other unique locations and indicates that these areas will be developed to support tourism development and improve recreational and cultural opportunities. [Official Plan - s.2.2.6]. Related objectives in the Official Plan include the following:

- To ensure that development along the Lake Simcoe shoreline will protect and restore the shoreline;
- To pursue a program to increase the opportunities for public access to the waterfronts of Lake Simcoe, Talbot River and the Trent-Severn System;
- To support and promote the continued focus of commercial activity in the downtown cores of Beaverton, Cannington and Sunderland; and

- To develop a trail system within and between the settlement areas and the key natural features.

5.0 Financial / Budget Assessment

The approved 2022 capital budget includes \$100,000 for the Waterfront Plan (ie. Harbour Master Plan) funded from development charges and the capital reserve fund. Based on the preferred consultant's proposal, the proposed contract is \$88,412.00 excluding HST or \$89,968.05 including the HST impact. Staff are working closely with the consultant to ensure budgeted amounts are adhered to.

6.0 Climate Change Impacts

Sustainability and climate change impacts will be taken into consideration as part of this process, including the Lake Simcoe shoreline with respect to water levels and flooding, as well as drainage and environmental enhancement opportunities.

7.0 Communications

A comprehensive public consultation program has been established as part of the Waterfront Plan process, with a series of workshops, open houses and meetings to obtain input, along with social media platforms.

Notice of the interactive survey was provided and advertised through the newspaper, website, social media, and via email to interested parties and community groups.

8.0 Conclusion

This report provides an update on the work completed to date as part of the Waterfront Plan and outlines the next steps. Staff recommend that Council provide some direction with respect to the Wishing Tower sculpture that would allow the Township and Beaverton Special Events Committee to move forward with that project.

9.0 Recommendation

Be it resolved that staff report 2023-DS-015 regarding the Waterfront Plan Update; be received, and

That Council endorse the preferred location for the wishing tower sculpture at the harbour.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: What We've Heard Report #1 (dated April 2023)

Attachment 2: What We've Heard Report #2 (dated July 2023)