



Waterfront

Master Plan

AUGUST, TWO THOUSAND THIRTEEN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



WATERFRONT ADHOC

Deb Kaufman, Chair
Neil Menage, Vice-Chair
C.D. "Mini" Jacques
Bob Clarence
John Wolf
Diane Huber, Councillor
Fred Schildroth, Councillor
Jayne K. Jagelewski, Director of Community Services
Corby Leitch, Administrative Assistant

ADVISORY AND DESIGN

Erik Lockhart, Associate Director from Queens School of Business
Gary Senior, Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority
Nathan Garland, Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority
Geoff Peach, Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation
Sean Kelly, Stempski Kelly Associates Inc.
Laura Crossett, Crossett Design

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Saugeen Shores Council	Gerry's Fries
Town of Saugeen Shores Senior Management	Beachside Café
PARC 55+	Harbourlite Restaurant
Chantry Seniors' Centre	Parks and Trails Advisory Committee
Local schools	Heritage Advisory Committee
Probus Clubs	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Port Elgin Rotary Club	Bruce Birding Club
Southampton Rotary Club	Saugeen Beachers Association
South-Port Optimist Club	Southampton Residents' Association
Propellor Club	Saugeen District Secondary School Planeteers
Chantry Island Cham-bettes	South-Port Horticultural Society
Southampton Marine Heritage Society	Harbour Interest Group
Port Elgin Lions Club	



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Preamble

The Town of Port Elgin, Southampton and Saugeen Township have had a number of Waterfront Master Plan studies completed over the years. Through amalgamation of the three distinct areas a combined Waterfront Master Plan had yet to be developed.



During budget deliberations in the Winter of 2010, it was determined that a “made in Saugeen Shores” Master Plan be developed using the knowledge and expertise of a selected group of volunteers. In January 2011 a Waterfront Adhoc started the process of compiling information which makes up the document that you have today.

This extensive Plan, that encompasses the shoreline areas from MacGregor Park to the northerly boundry of Southampton (excluding the Port Elgin Harbour and the Saugeen River), will assist the Municipality in planning and developing a desirable, sustainable waterfront that will be enjoyed for years to come.

The Saugeen Shores Waterfront was broken down into ten different “Destinations,” that were carefully inventoried and analyzed according to their existing condition and recommendations are provided for future consideration.

The Waterfront Adhoc was cognizant of ensuring that several factors went into the overall scope of the Plan. They included aesthetic, economic, environmental, historical and cultural aspects. With each of these aspects in mind, this comprehensive and user friendly Plan has been designed to be adapted by staff and future Councils.



Purpose of the Waterfront Master Plan

The development of a Waterfront Master Plan (the Plan) is to provide an effective planning tool to allow the Town of Saugeen Shores to move forward with enhancing the waterfront over the next 10 years and beyond. Focus has been placed upon the development of a waterfront vision, themes, design guidelines and programming opportunities for each destination within the overall waterfront in a reference document. This Plan has also been developed in an effort to determine ways to create closer linkages between the communities of Southampton, Port Elgin and Saugeen Township in addition to identifying solutions to protect the waterfront for the benefit of residents, tourists, visitors and future generations.

The Waterfront Adhoc

MANDATE

Is to assist with the creation of a Saugeen Shores Waterfront Master Plan under direction of Council.

SCOPE

To develop a Waterfront Master Plan for the public lands located along Lake Huron and under the jurisdiction of the Town of Saugeen Shores.

MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the quality of life for Saugeen Shores' residents and visitors through the development of a Saugeen Shores Waterfront Master Plan.

ADHOC RESPONSIBILITIES

The Adhoc is responsible for developing a Waterfront Master Plan.

The purpose of the Waterfront Master Plan is to:

- ☀ Create a comprehensive and realistic vision for the waterfront
- ☀ Identify issues with existing circumstances and recommend solutions
- ☀ Create and maintain a high quality multipurpose attraction serving the residents and visitors of Saugeen Shores
- ☀ Improve the level of visitor services and operations within the waterfront area
- ☀ Improve pedestrian and vehicle access and circulation systems
- ☀ Identify future opportunities



- ☀ Create an implementation strategy including ranking projects in priority order. We were unable to provide costs/budget to implement the suggestions partially due to the depth and scope of many of the recommendations
- ☀ The Adhoc shall submit a work plan for Council prior to commencing

The Waterfront Adhoc solicited the resources of Erik Lockhart, Associate Director from Queens School of Business. Erik conducted a series of stakeholder meetings that were attended by invited guests, as well as two evening sessions that were open to the public. The participants were able to provide feedback regarding the waterfront by using support technology which enabled a quick consolidated method of obtaining feedback.

Overall Considerations

- ☀ Being fiscally responsible to the municipality
- ☀ Acknowledging public input
- ☀ Suggesting land uses that are both economically viable and socially responsible
- ☀ Providing public amenity areas including parks, open spaces and plazas
- ☀ Providing continuous public access to the water's edge, where possible
- ☀ Maintaining important public view corridors
- ☀ Encouraging and supporting viable green technologies as they emerge and become more widely used over time



Recommendations

A number of recommendations came forth from the consultation with staff, key stakeholders, users, and the Waterfront Adhoc. Each one is explained fully in this Waterfront Master Plan and then prioritized within each Destination.

The recommendations have been compiled based upon public input from an online survey, through public consultation processes as well as through the Waterfront Adhoc research. In addition to conducting detailed research on various topics, many of the Waterfront Adhoc members attended conferences related to conservation and other waterfront topics. Guest speakers were invited to provide the Waterfront Adhoc with information in areas that as a group, they felt the need to be better informed and educated. Some of the members also visited other waterfront communities to gain a perspective into other communities planning strategies.

Throughout the process of developing the Plan, and providing recommendations for the waterfront, there were differing opinions on what people would like or not like to see occurring along our waterfront. These varying opinions occurred not only through the consultation processes but on occasion with the Waterfront Adhoc as well. The following are the main recommendations that resulted from public consultation and research. There are additional recommendations that can be seen throughout the Plan.

R1. Branding and Economic Development of the Waterfront

The branding and economic development of the Saugeen Shores waterfront that encompasses the setting of a “brand” that is all encompassing for the many unique qualities for which we want to continue. To develop and promote our community as a destination where people want to live and/or visit. This needs to be a co-ordinated promotional effort involving tourism, town staff, local businesses, residents and visitors.

R2. Destinations

The creation of 10 Destinations from our original detailed zone reports. We recognize the value of way-finding signage and branding. Below are examples of names for each zone. We suggest that once the names have been determined and approved, that the required signage be created that is both located at the destination and suitably posted.



Destination (Zone 1) Saugeen Beach

Destination (Zone 2) Gobles Grove

Destination (Zone 3) The Sands at Shipley

Destination (Zone 4) Port Elgin Main Beach

Destination (Zone 5) Northshore Trails

Destination (Zone 6) The Bays of Horseshoe and Miramichi

Destination (Zone 7) South Street Beach

Destination (Zone 8) Long Dock Beach, Chantry Dunes, Chantry View Beach

Destination (Zone 9) Southampton Main Beach

Destination (Zone 10) Scubby's Point and the Northern Sands

R3. Signage/Maps

Employ the use of new QR (Quick Response) Code and electronic display media to convey information at signs and information kiosks along the waterfront. Use matching designer hieroglyphics in brochures and on signs. Create additional destination area signs similar to the (sand blasted) one created for Port Elgin Main Beach. Way-finding signage at entry points need to be clearly marked from both the road (east) and beach (west) directions. Use signage to identify by-laws, points of interest and GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) and ensure they conform to the signage strategy.

- ☀ Create information kiosks at the main beach areas that can easily be changed dependent on festivals/activities/seasons and needs.
- ☀ Create compressive sign/maps that depict the trails/paths along the waterfront and indicate to the users where lookouts, washrooms and other points of interest are located.
- ☀ Encourage creation of Municipal Interpretative Signage program to promote Saugeen Shores' history and heritage. Include waterfront points of interest.
- ☀ Washrooms should employ a common branding signage to clearly identify the facility.
- ☀ Where possible change negative signage describing such things as "No-Dogs Allowed" to positive signage/maps showing where dogs are allowed.



R4. Municipal Entry Points to the Waterfront

Complete practical legal and construction activities in priority order as a matter of public policy and safety to provide fifty-five public (municipally owned) entries to the waterfront. Consideration should be given to the beach entry points that require clearing, enhanced signage and supporting amenities. GPS coordinates should also be considered to be placed on the signage.

R5. Environment

To ensure a sustainable waterfront, environmental aspects should be managed with continuing supporting education being provided.

R6. Blue Flag Criteria

The Town of Saugeen Shores should continue to use the Blue Flag beach criteria to enhance the 18km of waterfront but not pursue accreditation through Blue Flag at this time. Focus must be given on continued education with the public on sustainable beaches. Staff will continue to work toward the principles of the Blue Flag program.

R7. Beach Grooming

Based on public feedback and education, establish clear best practises for beach grooming need to be established for each zone of the waterfront. The users, groups and the public need information available to understand who does what, when and why with respect to beach grooming.

R8. Dunes

During the process of compiling this Waterfront Master Plan, the Waterfront Adhoc listened to interested parties and sought out education to further understand sand dunes. The Waterfront Adhoc was able to walk the 18 kilometres of waterfront and document the many, and various stages of sand dune existence from new conception at the Port Elgin beach, to the established and dynamic ones west of Harmer Street and at several locations along Saugeen Beach Road. It is worth noting there are several other high use recreational beach areas that have lost their sand and are at risk of becoming a limited use wet zone with accompanying equally unattractive grass and insect species. After completing this review and listening to the concerns the Waterfront Adhoc is empathetic to the various groups.



The Waterfront Adhoc recognizes;

- ☀ The need to use the detail contained in this section of the Plan to create policy and procedure which can provide sufficient guidance and oversight
- ☀ The positive economic and tourism draw these dune formations provide to those with a natural and environmentally driven conscience
- ☀ The positive effect dunes provide against beach and property erosion with the ensuing financial impact which is both understood and appreciated
- ☀ The need to encourage and manage the creation of new dunes where sand erosion is exacerbated or undesirable
- ☀ That a requisite level of care and concern should be taken to ensure new dune formations in high traffic destinations are made to be kept in excellent visual keeping (i.e. no weeds allowed to proliferate)
- ☀ That designated pathways are provided which allow movement through, over and around the dunes to prevent negative dune impact and damage
- ☀ The growth of fore dunes beyond that which is necessary to meet the needs of afore mentioned point should be managed
- ☀ The public's interest in wanting to control dune size and dimensions
- ☀ Keeping a dune at a low height may require the dune to be wider – that means less beach space. It also means controlling people's activities so they don't interfere with natural processes
- ☀ That over time, and as finances are available, a suitable barrier be designed and constructed that prevents further migration of the sand dunes from the shore over the boardwalk and onto private property or roadways
- ☀ Once this barrier mentioned above is constructed, sand from the easterly side be removed and re-deposited immediately onto the shoreline or where it is next best needed and with the necessary approvals
- ☀ The municipality coordinates continuing annual open house style meetings where all parties with a vested concern of dunes can gather to receive continuing education, exchange ideas, look to form or change policy and otherwise collectively act as stewards of the dunes



R9. Grasses/Phragmites

Encourage native grasses and other plant life. Actively control invasive Phragmites before it becomes well-established in order to reduce the environmental impact, time and costs. It is recommended that a detailed inventory of vegetation conditions at each site be completed prior to initiating control methods.

R10. Streams and Storm Water

Further identification and cataloguing of streams and water courses should be completed to determine the source of the water. Continued effort should be undertaken to control storm water run-off and to direct them away from the waterfront (where it is causing sand erosion and/or is a health and safety concern).

R11. Water Quality

There is a need for an on going educational component (in partnership with related government agencies) with respect to precautions for safe water as well as sources for contaminants associated with run-off from surface water, springs and ground water. Periodic water samples should be tested at each of the water run-off points, streams and culverts to ensure that there aren't any pollutants being transferred onto our beaches and into water courses to ensure safety.

R12. Water Safety

Use "best of" guides from other jurisdictions and agencies to create comprehensive policies and procedures with a means to educate and enforce expectations. Mark, post and sign designated swimming areas with buoys. Have emergency services determine location of emergency phones and the type of phones. Ask Community Services to review water safety services at community level.

R13. Water Level

Consider both high and low water level eventualities to guide staff, Council and residents in future decision making in relation to waterfront projects and maintenance. Work with all levels of government (such as the Great Lakes Initiative Group) to stay informed with respect to Lake Huron water levels.



R14. Transportation

That there are safe connector routes from the trails system, as well as connectivity to the downtown cores. Consideration should be given to a “Share the Road Program” and an “Active Transportation Plan” that will emphasize safe modes of transportation to our waterfront.

R15. Parking

Develop strategies to ensure that the existing parking inventory is used efficiently and options for additional parking are identified in appropriate locations. Improve management of existing parking as usage increases and to minimize conflicts between active transportation and vehicles. Parking areas adjacent to the main beaches should be redesigned and reconfigured to improve availability and relieve congestion. Parking at the Port Elgin Main Beach is a priority concern.

R16. Trails, Sidewalks and Boardwalks

Expand the existing boardwalk along the entire waterfront to intersect with as many of the entry points as viable. Upgrade the maintenance on existing and future trails. Include accessibility features described by policy and procedure. Consider and plan to convert sections of the road allowance into trails and a beach front sidewalk.

R17. Lighting

A consistent complementary style of lighting should be used along sections of the waterfront. This would assist with replacement costs. Consider energy efficient goals while lighting the environment in an aesthetically pleasing manner that reduces light pollution...minimize energy waste, lower power-related cost, and reduce carbon footprint...preserving a dark sky.

R18. Playgrounds

As a priority, continue providing enhanced and inviting playground areas and related amenities all along the Saugeen Shores waterfront to better serve local and seasonal residents and the many returning tourists that visit our community. Consideration should be given to one or more splash parks constructed as a major attraction or draw at a high use destination.



R19. Washrooms

Improve existing and future washroom/change room facilities and maintain an appropriate standard wherever our waterfront and beaches are well used by the public. Consider the use of additional portable toilets in high use areas. Brand washrooms and consider façade design and high quality washroom standards including water fountains.

R20. Buildings

There should be ongoing improvement to existing and future building structures wherever our waterfront and beaches are well used by the public. New building design guidelines and existing building maintenance requirements should be established. (See the Buildings Report for additional details.)

Private and public development partnerships are a viable means to build and fund development projects worthy of inclusion in our high use and tourist waterfront park areas. Consideration should include facilities such as washrooms that are designed and constructed to be available for use year-round.

R21. Lookout Areas

That existing sheet piling that supported the former Port Elgin Pumping Station be enhanced and that any future lookout areas continue with a theme established at the Pegasus Trails lookout situated along the North Shore Trail with a focal point being the one at the Tall Flag in Southampton

R22. Dogs on Beaches

To respect the needs of all waterfront users we believe there should be consideration of designated dog friendly areas; combined with restrictions in respect of municipal beaches. Dogs on leashes should be allowed to go on trails and boardwalks (but not the actual beach other than in these designated beach areas).

R23. Fire Pits

Plan, designate and construct a series of municipal fire pits complete with related seating areas and located throughout the waterfront (in highly visible areas).

R24. Financial/Partnering

Create a by-law that designates the “waterfront” as a single park. Allocate reserve fund revenue received “in lieu of parkland” to the waterfront park wherever possible.



Branding and Economic Development of the Waterfront

☀ **Branding and Brand Management**

☀ **Tourism Strategic Planning**

☀ **Partnerships**



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

Overall Recommendations

- ☀ **Set a brand for the waterfront** and look at the inventory that the various destinations/zones are offering at the waterfront in terms of experiences, and attractions
- ☀ **Community partnerships** to assist in the planning, co-ordination and promotion of the Saugeen Shores' waterfront branding and economic development

In terms of short term enhancements related to the waterfront and its Economic and Tourism development, the main themes that emerged were:

1. Ensuring the maintenance and cleanliness of the beaches
2. Improved signage and way finding with branding and style guides for both municipal and private operators and businesses at the waterfront
3. More year round programs and activities that strengthen our brand and waterfront themes for each destination/zone
4. Better facilitation of business opportunities that meet the needs of our residents and visitors
5. Regularly scheduled and trained staff for ongoing maintenance and cleanliness of beach and facilities
6. All front line staff should receive customer service and tourism training associated with visitor information
7. Governance: a consolidated approach to the waterfront operations
8. Waterfront kiosks and tourism based information signage needs to be visible to the public at key gathering places



With regards to long term improvements, the major themes connected to these issues of waterfront economic development were:

1. Facilitate waterfront business/commercial opportunities consistent with look and feel of area. These businesses could include year round four-season retail, food and beverage, outfitters, etc.
2. More events and programming on waterfront and beach year-round or at best four-seasons (e.g. volleyball, concerts, waterfront festival, sandcastle competitions, skating, cross country skiing)

Specific Recommendations

1. CREATION OF AN ECONOMIC AND TOURISM PROGRAM AND KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Detail and consideration must be given to a Waterfront Economic and Tourism Program with policy development. Implementation by Town staff that stresses and sets key “messages” and delivers an Action Plan complete with benchmarks to show the importance of tourism as an economic development strategy.

Waterfront Economic and Tourism Plan

This would encompass “The Waterfront Park” and its development, promotion and access. There is a need to research the following:

- ☀ Gather a wide variety of opinions and suggestions from stakeholders on tourism promotion and businesses that are tourism based at the waterfront and key gathering places throughout the community for visitors and residents
- ☀ Learn about the community’s history and culture and what can be promoted and marketed
- ☀ Evaluate the current visitor experience at the waterfront and key gathering places and attractions
- ☀ Evaluate current visitor services

Branding: What is our brand? How do we expand/enhance our brand in the current economic environment and still retain our basic identity?

Positioning: What is our current position, given our circumstances and our plan, within the local, regional, national, international, and generational visitor market validated through the community consultation.



Differentiation: What can we offer visitors (that they can't get anywhere else)? How do we market our uniqueness?

Development: What is our strategy and policies regarding attracting and selecting developers to the various destinations in relation to the economic demands by visitors and residents within the community and the waterfront?

Initiatives

Create on-going partnerships representing all interests in the community, from both public and private sectors. This is vital to tourism planning and policy processes.

Provide adequate, clean, and conveniently located visitor informational and comfort facilities, kiosks with computer/self-initiated programs for visitors and residents, at key waterfront gathering places, satellite visitors centre offices and kiosks, including signage (information) in restrooms and parking areas, and user-friendly way-finding signage at key gathering places

Branding, image, positioning, differentiation, identity! The uniqueness of Saugeen Shores and its waterfront. How many other Canadian destinations in the nation, for example, can boast being designated as one of the "Top 10 Beaches in the World" (Toronto Star – Travel Section – Travel editor February 2013).

Conveniently located "Shopping and Waterfront Tour" can provide a "sense of place" for area residents and visitors alike. This initiative joins the two downtowns to the waterfront. Create a destination – reason to "visit" the waterfront.

Focus on businesses and product development that fits the waterfront.

A waterfront that fits in with community/area, social, cultural, and environmental values, heritage, sensitivity, and context. For Saugeen Shores and our waterfront think fresh, local organic food products, locally produced products and crafts, outdoor outfitters, local/region arts, and the variety of place-based items available in our downtowns, waterfront market, downtown market, municipal and private based programs and events, and businesses, area sites and attractions. In short, make sure the waterfront's Town assets, and local waterfront based business plans and initiatives match the brand. (If biking is promoted as a visitor activity, bike rentals are crucial.)



Sell the experience, and tell the story. While our location and beaches will continue to be the primary visitor draw, our history and marine heritage (lighthouses) is key to part of our image—and having the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre is also an asset.

Give visitors not only a reason to come, but reasons to stay. Again, a cluster/critical mass of waterfront attractions, diversions, activities (and on-line activity guides and QR Codes to municipal tourism website), shopping, lodging (including eco-lodging) dining, walking, hiking, biking, green tours, plus day trips to farms, recreational sites, the waterfront park, and beaches, daytrips and “Town” packages for visitors. (Remember the “whole place” strategy.)

2. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN TO MARKET SAUGEEN SHORES’ WATERFRONT AND ITS DESTINATIONS/ZONES AS UNIQUE VISITOR DESTINATIONS

Use the internet and social networking resources (perhaps a Community Media Center) to reach a diverse, cross-generational visitor market.

“...94% of Internet users make travel arrangements using the Web. The Internet is by far the number one resource for planning travel and vacations.” (Roger Brooks, “Rules for Successful Tourism Marketing,” Let’s Talk Business, April 2004).

3. SURVEY AND ENGAGE LOCAL TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

Annual survey should be done at the waterfront asking our residents and visitors what they want at the waterfront destinations/zones **“Tell us what you think about the waterfront!”**

Survey will ascertain from our customers (visitors and residents) what our Town Staff, our Visitor Information Services and local stakeholders can do to meet the visitors’ and resident’s needs with expectations in regards to:

- ☀ Existing waterfront locations/building and their facades
- ☀ Businesses and opportunities that they would like to see at the waterfront
- ☀ Visitor Centre way-finding signage and building signage
- ☀ Hours of operation



4. THE MARKET SEGMENTS BE INTEGRATED...AND STRATEGIES BE CREATED TO TOP RANKED MARKETS

Saugeen Shores offers a variety of current and potential opportunities for diverse visitor activities, both passive and active. “Leisure travel that emphasizes seeing and observing rather than more active pursuits...” and “A style or philosophy of leisure travels that combines elements of adventure, nature and cultural tourism, with an emphasis on low impact and sustainable tourism...”

Heritage Tourism: The definition of cultural/heritage tourism is noted as Ontario Tourism is “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and peoples of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural, and natural resources.”

With such groups as the Marine Heritage Society, the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre, the Southampton Art School, the Propeller Club and Bruce County Genealogical Society our heritage and inventory, as noted below is rich and diverse.

Cultural Arts Tourism: Because they offer residents and visitors alike an authentic local and regional cultural experience, the fine arts, both visual and performing, are vital to a community’s quality of life. Cultural arts tourism destinations showcase the traditions, values, and lifestyle of communities, and the fine arts can be a catalyst for the development of the entire area.

Recreational/Adventure/Nature

Tourism: Includes hunting, fishing, birding, bicycling, motorcycling, hiking, horseback riding, working farm vacations, and other forms of outdoor recreation. “Adventure travelers engage in outdoor activities and adventures that are “hands-on” challenging and participatory...” (Adventure Tourism, University of Maine Cooperative Extension). Saugeen Shores is well-positioned to accommodate all of the above in an accessible, natural environment.

Ecotourism/Sustainable/Green Tourism: Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the global tourism market. Sustainability, according to the Center for Sustainable Tourism, “is a growing trend in all industries and is now finding its way into mainstream tourism...”.

The Town could develop a working definition of sustainable waterfront tourism that includes “actions that contribute to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues, and taxes while protecting and enhancing the waterfront as a destination’s socio-cultural,



historical, natural and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors”.

Saugeen Shores by continuing to adopt and cultivate environmentally sustainable and responsible environmental and tourism practices at the waterfront, can be a primary destination for visitors who want to learn more about sustainable community living at the waterfront.

The dunes, tree planting, community gardens, Port Elgin’s Flea Market and downtown market garden can all be components that could be encouraged to expand for visitor education in the guise of Ecotourism. People will travel to learn.

Agritourism (Farm-Based Recreation): Income-producing activities can include extensions of waterfront events and programs linked to Pumpkinfest, Marine Heritage Festival, Fishing Derbys and included into a waterfront and harvest festival, farmers’ markets, on-farm museums, “pick your own”, fishing and agricultural based operations, overnight farm or ranch stays, bed and breakfasts, “petting” farms, horseback riding, workshops, fairs, crop mazes, cooking classes, and waterfront and roadside stands.

Area fishermen, farmers or ranchers who partake in the green vision by incorporating organic practices, sustainable water management, etc. are positioned to attract this new type of tourist...”

Visits to farms and fishing boats – “farm and fish watching”– or other agricultural settings as a recreation activity increased 100 percent from 2000 to 2007 in Ontario.

Diversify the local economy. It has been suggested that a kiosk/video system be installed in the Waterfront Visitor Centre satellite office and various attractions throughout the community. It would provide directions and general tourism information for the Town, in addition to technological specifications and educational information about the waterfront and the Town itself.

WE SAW From Our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀ Our waterfront’s building façades, informational signage, and key gathering spots are not themed or have consistency of design, colour or aid in branding of the waterfront as a destination with key gathering places.
- ☀ Lack of visitor information services, promotion and information on-site at key gathering places along the waterfront.



WE REVIEWED The Best Practices From Other Communities

- ☀ Municipality of Kincardine – Strategic Plan for Tourism (Draft Summary Report April 22 2013). <http://www.predc.ca/downloads/81.pdf>
- ☀ Kincardine Tourism Master Plan (2010-11)
- ☀ City of Brantford Waterfront Master Plan.
<http://www.brantford.ca/govt/projects/waterfrontmasterplan/Pages/Reports.aspx>
- ☀ City of Sarnia Waterfront Master Plan.
<http://city.sarnia.on.ca/pdf/Waterfront%20Master%20Plan%20Overview.pdf>
- ☀ “Rules for Successful Tourism Marketing...” Roger Brooks (Presentation to the 2004 Wisconsin Governor’s Conference on Tourism.)

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications And Attending Workshops and Seminars

WHAT IS A BRAND?

Our community’s waterfront brand is the image or perception that people have of our Town’s waterfront, and what they visualized and feel with the concept of the brand; the type of experiences they can expect when they visit.

We are now in the “age of specialization” and the Town will be selling an experience not a destination. If the experience and emotion are appealing and what the visitor is looking for, the location is secondary to the decision of where to visit or even live. We are selling a memory making experience, a brand, not a Town logo.

By adopting the brand for the waterfront, and a recognizable or memorable tag line. We are creating a brand of a waterfront that may or may not be unique across Canada but may however, be unique to our region.

Telling the world “who” instead of “why”.

WHAT IS A MUNICIPAL BRANDING STRATEGY

We learned from community and stakeholder meetings that there is not an understood or municipally endorsed or promoted branding strategy known to local business owners, managers, staff, stakeholders and residents that carries a consistent message. Business owners stated that they did not feel the waterfront and its attractions and assets were branded or that a consistent image or message was being promoted in municipal marketing initiatives or



through local marketing committees/organizations or local businesses relating to the waterfront.

WHAT IS A WATERFRONT TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN?

There is not a known or municipally endorsed or promoted waterfront tourism strategic plan or initiatives known to local business owners, and their managers, staff and area tourism and business based stakeholders that carries a consistent message(s). Business owners stated that they did not feel the waterfront promoted the two downtown businesses and area attractions and Town assets. (Key Stakeholders meetings)

A successful waterfront tourism strategic plan includes:

Incorporates the variety and sustainability of community resources.

A “whole place” strategy and the visitor niches/markets likely to be attracted by each:

- ☀ Natural resources (recreation, environment, agriculture, ecology, etc.)
- ☀ Cultural resources (history, ethnic heritage, etc.)
- ☀ Human resources (arts, crafts, visitor services, etc.)
- ☀ Capital resources (lodging, retail, transportation, etc.)
- ☀ Recognizes that tourism is an economic development activity
- ☀ Involves key stakeholders and asks for their opinions, and suggestions

A waterfront branding strategy would aim to accomplish the following:

- ☀ Contribute to setting an economic development path for the types of investments, programming, amenities, and businesses that the Town wants to attract to our waterfront and the community
- ☀ Develop a unified message for all the community’s marketing about the benefits of visiting, investing, working, and living on or near Saugeen Shores waterfront
- ☀ Contribute to forging a common Saugeen Shores-centric identity for the various waterfronts that would be linked to our downtowns, and neighbourhoods in the towns of Port Elgin and Southampton and the Township of Saugeen
- ☀ Create waterfront marketing synergies as the community’s many private and public organizations undertake their own marketing of waterfront events, programs, initiatives, via employing the waterfront brand, thereby enhancing frequency and consistency in overall messaging



- ☀ Set the foundational messages that community groups can use for subsequent Saugeen Shores and Bruce County “waterfront” marketing activities

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Weaknesses

- ☀ Marketing of the Town is not distinct: Our marketing does not set our waterfront or community/Town apart from other similar destinations
- ☀ Town waterfront assets need upgrading: Town assets need to be updated, rebuilt or enhanced to meet the expectations of users today. What we are promoting and selling to the public doesn’t always match the sales pitch

We are not always able to deliver what we have marketed ourselves as

- ☀ Town not a distinctive destination: In order to create community partnerships the Town and specifically its waterfront must become distinctive destinations
- ☀ Visitor Information Services at the Waterfront: Waterfront Visitor Information Services are not currently available at the waterfront on a consistent basis. On-site visitor information is not available during peak hours that visitors and residents are at the waterfront – early afternoon to after sunset in high season. Current initiatives for visitor service information do not meet the immediate needs of the visitors or residents at the Waterfront. The lack of visitor information and training at these key gathering places does not service the public or support Town staff to deliver necessary service
- ☀ Harbour management and staff, business owners’ and their staff, due to lack of visitor information kiosks and services become “unofficial” municipal visitor service staff

Strengths

- ☀ New Tourism Website: With the launch of the website in 2012 the average website visit duration is now more than four minutes
- ☀ Visitors are doing research before they arrive at destination. “They aren’t going in and clicking away, they are staying on the site, looking around and thirty per cent of visitors are coming back.”



The municipal tourism website includes:

- ☀ Videos
- ☀ Photo galleries
- ☀ Interactive maps
- ☀ Accommodation searches
- ☀ Trip planners
- ☀ Town assets
- ☀ Marketing features (menus/event and things to do at a glance calendar, festivals and event listings)

**April 22 (Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting, Deputation by Joanne Robbins, General Manager of the Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce – 2012 Municipal Tourism Report. Saugeen Shores Chamber is under contract as the municipality's Tourism Department*





⋮ *Historical photo of Port Elgin Beach, circa 1960's*

Destinations



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☀ The creation of ten destinations from our original detailed zone reports. After walking the eighteen kilometres we recognize the value of way-finding signage and branding. We suggest the following be considered/adopted or approved and the requisite signage be created that is both located at the final destination and suitably posted on the highway. The following destination names are listed as examples only:
- ☀ Destination (Zone 1) Saugeen Beach
- ☀ Destination (Zone 2) Gobles Grove
- ☀ Destination (Zone 3) The Sands at Shipley
- ☀ Destination (Zone 4) Port Elgin Main Beach
- ☀ Destination (Zone 5) Northshore Trails
- ☀ Destination (Zone 6) The Bays of Horseshoe and Miramichi



- ☀ Destination (Zone 7) South Street Beach
- ☀ Destination (Zone 8) Long Dock Beach, Chantry Dunes, Chantry View Beach
- ☀ Destination (Zone 9) Southampton Main Beach
- ☀ Destination (Zone 10) Scubby's Point and the Northern Sands

The municipality provide all “Government Tourism” websites and publications with the approved version describing Saugeen Shores, Port Elgin, Saugeen Township and Southampton.

The municipality creates a branding policy and matching way-finding signage strategy.

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

Make Southampton harbour more of a destination for tourists – safer and more attractive.

Consider attracting businesses to offer more rentals (i.e., paddleboats, windsurfers, etc.).

Offer beach chair/lounge and umbrella rentals (with some of the money going back to waterfront development).

- ☀ Aesthetics standards: utilize leases and Town assets with an implementation of standards for beach businesses
- ☀ Destination Marketing Fund (DMF)...hotel levy/tax

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis Inventory Walks

- ☀ The distinct differences in each zone that compliments this destination strategy

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices from Other Communities

- ☀ We visited Grand Bend to learn of their effort to reconstruct their main beach area

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

- ☀ Signage, amenities and appearance are ultimately important as is a supporting tourism and marketing strategy

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

- ☀ We have the ability to develop additional beach destinations for all to enjoy
- ☀ Additional beaches will require signage and basic standard amenities



Signage/Maps



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☀️ Employ the use of new QR Code and electronic display media to convey information at our signs and information kiosks along waterfront
- ☀️ Consider the use of matching designer hieroglyphics in our brochures and on our signs
- ☀️ The creation of additional destination area signage similar to the one created for Port Elgin Main Beach
- ☀️ Way-finding signage at access points to be clearly marked from both the road and from the beach that identifies by-laws, points of interest and GPS
- ☀️ All signage to reflect the Saugeen Shores signage strategy
- ☀️ Main beaches have information kiosks that can easily be changed dependent on festivals/activities/season/needs
- ☀️ A compressive sign/maps that depicts the trails/paths along the waterfront that indicates to the users lookouts, benches, garbages and point of interest
- ☀️ The Municipal Interpretative Signage program that promotes Saugeen Shores' history be incorporated to include waterfront points of interest
- ☀️ Washrooms should have a common branding signage that identifies the facility
- ☀️ Positive signage/maps

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

In reference to signage, we heard that:

- ☀️ Signage is important and needs some improvement
- ☀️ Signage/education that keeps boats away from the high use beach areas
- ☀️ More signs enforcing safety and rules
- ☀️ Upkeep signage on Town buildings
- ☀️ Friendly By-law signs...emergency location signs



- ☀ Signage and map – improve way-finding signage for visitors
 - Enhance all of the entry points to better identify them and make them more accessible
- ☀ Educational signs or other interactive educational tools to show visitors the importance and sensitive nature of shoreline ecosystems
- ☀ Signage policy and strategy:
 - Both landmark historical and informational
 - Inventory of all signage and start to replace with new based on the signage strategy
 - Naming and branding with signage strategy
 - Interpretive maps for entire waterfront

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀ In each destination there were different examples of signage/maps some of which need updating
- ☀ Having signage/maps to explain certain areas is important in each destination
- ☀ There should be more maps showing visitors or residents “you’re here” on the waterfront or trails
- ☀ There needs to be both signage and maps in each zone (destination) area

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices from Other Communities

Trails should have interpretative signs, directional signs, distance makers, trail heads, rest areas, and other amenities. Each trail segment should have a kiosk with a trail map to make the beginning and end. As an example, Midland Ontario uses attractive hieroglyphics in their brochures and signs to indicate their amenities at each park and waterfront area complete with attractive destination signage.



WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

New Bruce County signs have been well received by the tourist public. In addition way-finding signs are currently in vogue and the public looks for and expects these signs to direct them to where they are headed. Interpretive and historical information signs are valued by the public and strengthen the link to tourist needs. We have several great areas to expand upon this, such as where the General Hunter was discovered and the look out to Chantry Island with the many shipwrecks. New QR Codes and electronic display media are being used to convey information in some municipalities.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

The Port Elgin Main Beach sign is an excellent design and top quality. We support the creation of ten destination areas complete with matching signs. A weakness is that we have too many signs with varying structures and themes where we could likely do better with a sign strategy that identifies a single theme, and identifies aspects of our community and information. The need for signage that highlights washroom facilities across the waterfront, a de-cluttering of signage and the importance of historical, way-finding, interpretive, and By-law signage.

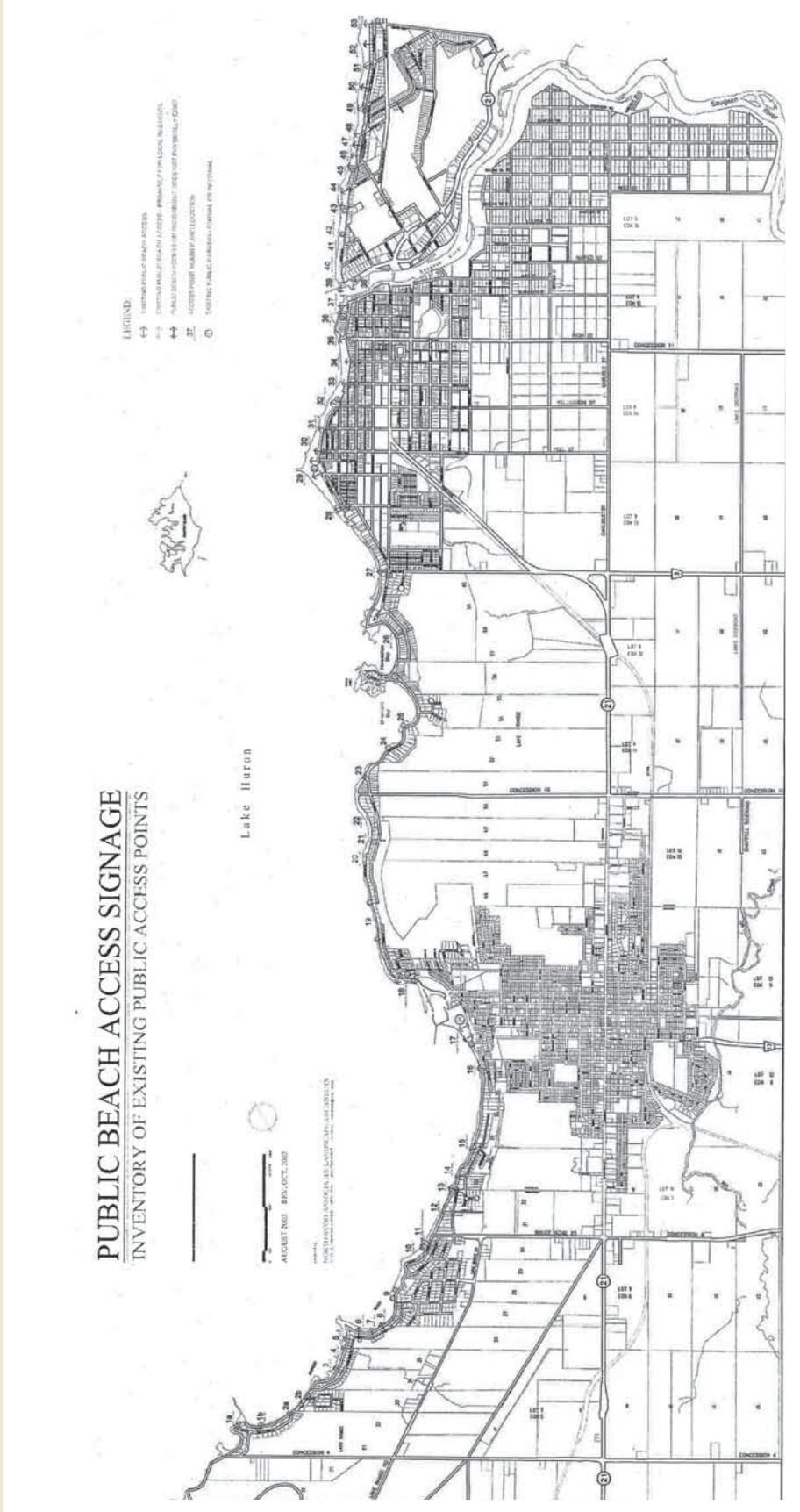


⋮ *A beach entry point*

REFERENCES

(2010). *Brantford Waterfront Master Plan*. Monkey, S. (2011). *Corporation of the Town of Midland Municipal Entry Points to the Waterfront*





•• Inventory of existing public entry points





☰ Public beach access signage (inventory of existing public access points)

Municipal Entry Points to the Waterfront



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

Council should open as many municipal entry points to the waterfront as practicable as a matter of public policy.

Council should ascribe as a matter of public policy to the overriding principle that no municipal entry point to the waterfront should ever be removed directly or indirectly from current or future public use. Council should consider engaging the private sector, not for profit sector, and service groups to assist through funding/provision. Benefits may include:

1. Time limited naming rights;
2. Time limited advertising rights;
3. Promotion and establishment of group objectives such as horticultural displays, birding sites, anglers' sites, photographic sites and historical signage, etc. may be used as inducements to engage volunteers.



The Waterfront Adhoc recommends that:

1. Under/unused municipal entry points be signposted noting that a right of public entry to the waterfront at that site exists, and such sites should be maintained in a manner which promotes public access to the waterfront consistent with available funding opportunities;
2. That any person purposefully obstructing a municipal entry point to the waterfront be required to remove any such obstruction in a timely manner failing which the municipality should remove the obstruction and charge the expense to the land owner. Effort should be made through the planning process to eliminate encumbrances on entry points when properties are rezoned or redeveloped;
3. If the actual gross area, or boundaries of the municipal entry point to the waterfront is at issue from the purpose of any planned improvements, or otherwise as applicable; that a survey be completed and survey monuments installed to memorialize that land which serves the public interest;
4. That municipal entry points undergo a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis taking the following into consideration:
 - ☀ Distance to the nearest other municipal entry point
 - ☀ Accessibility by emergency services
 - ☀ The classification of the waterfront area to be accessed in terms of suitability for recreational use
 - ☀ Availability of vehicle and bicycle parking
 - ☀ Proximity to washroom facilities and drinking fountains
 - ☀ Ease of accessibility by children, elderly, young families, and people with mobility restrictions
 - ☀ Future development
 - ☀ Other relevant consideration
5. Every municipal entry point should, in the fullness of time, be signposted, accessible to emergency services, enjoy easy pedestrian access; be fitted with amenities such as benches, garbage containers; bag dispensers for “Poop and Scoop”, lighting, bicycle racks, and daytime parking. For certain sites viewing platforms and/or fire pits may be appropriate.



WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

The public supports the planned intensification of use of the waterfront by residents, and visitors. Consistent with this view is a community desire to ensure that municipal entry points to the waterfront are not forfeited in fact, or in effect, by practice or omission; and to ensure that easy public entry to the waterfront is maintained throughout Saugeen Shores.

WE SAW From Destination-Zone Analysis

The Waterfront Adhoc visited every entry point. The following information is stated and written as it was observed in 2012.



Destination 1 (Saugeen Beach)

Entry Point 1 (Smith Lane) Extensively walked, photographed, natural shallow water and rocky point. The rocky point is raised and offers a barrier from south and west winds. There is a raised small asphalt covered parking area including a metal guardrail. Has a clear entry point at the non-maintained ramp.

Entry Points 2A, 2B, 2C (Eidts Grove) Extensively walked, it offers a shallow sandy beach, including dunes as well as grassy wet lands. 2A can be accessed by parking at entry point 1 and also has another packed sand parking area at 2A/2B. 2C area is a sand beach area bordered by the Saugeen Beach Road to the east and the lake to the west. It has dunes and as many as four crude wooden boardwalk entrances. Has a clear entry point at the non-maintained ramp.

Entry Points 3, 4 and 5 Extensively walked and forms a single bay that offers no sand beaches (exception one man-made beach). There are grasses and wet lands as well as a rocky shore. There is a well-used bridle path along its full length and several entry points are over grown and are not easy to use. Access is limited or difficult.

Entry Points 6, 7, and 8 This area has a large rocky point separating it from entry points 3, 4, and 5. Several of the entry points are over grown, barricaded and otherwise impossible to use at this time. This location has sandy beaches, streams, piped run-off (or from springs). There is evidence confirming the existence of a rough used trail. Access is non-maintained to none.



ZONE ONE: Smith Lane at the South to George Street at the North



Destination 2 (Gobles Grove)

Entry Point 9 (at the end of George Street where it meets Saugeen Beach Road) Natural shallow water area with a non-maintained access ramp, rocky point and well used sandy beaches. Several small and one larger stream or runoff sections and there is a rough path (trail) and off street parking is attempted. There is an obviously maintained (source unknown) grassy strip between the road. At the thin shoulder there is a grassy section which is elevated above the lower lying sand and natural growth. This area is well used by the many seasonal residents and the area cottages. Access is available at the end of George Street and a former boat launch ramp.

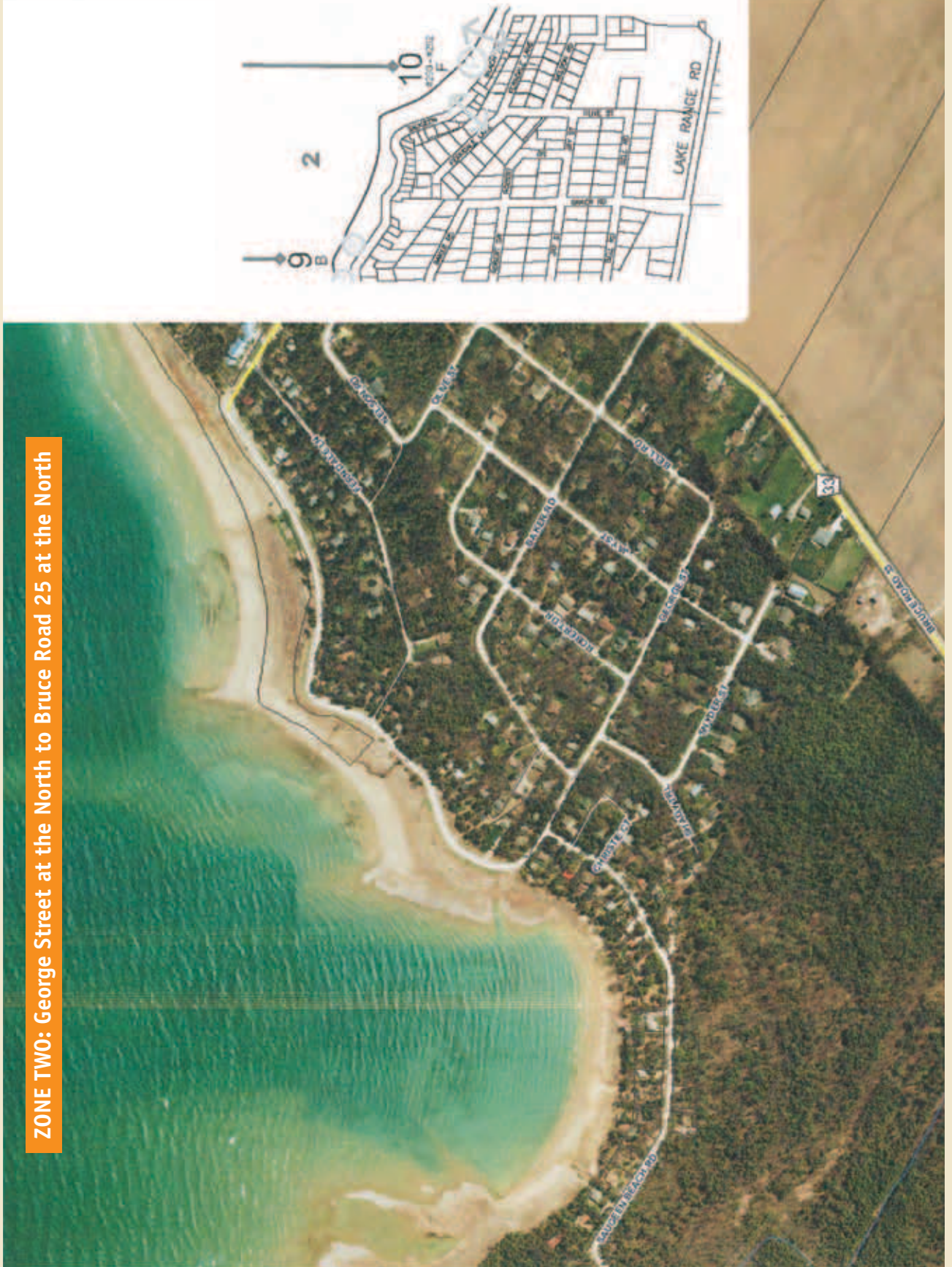
Entry Point 10 (where Ferndale Lane meets Saugeen Beach Road)

Extensively walked and offers a large expanse of shallow sandy beach. Currently, no significant dune formations and some wet lands including grasses as well as some streams and watercourses. Road takes a right angled turn from west to the east as you drive north and there are continued signs of off-street parking by non-resident public to gain access to the sand beach. This area is well used by the many seasonal residents from the area cottages. Access is available near Fire Number 290-292.

Entry Point 11 (Gobles Grove Main Beach, Bruce Road 25) Extensively walked and well known beach is frequented by both local and remote public as well as used by the many seasonal residents from the area cottages. This beach has by request been groomed by the municipality. This beach has recently seen a conversion take place from dry to wet sand and the formatting of wet land grasses. Some dune forming is becoming apparent. There remains ample parking, there is a solid constructed washroom building and children's play area. Access is available at Gobles Grove Main Beach.



ZONE TWO: George Street at the North to Bruce Road 25 at the North

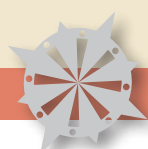
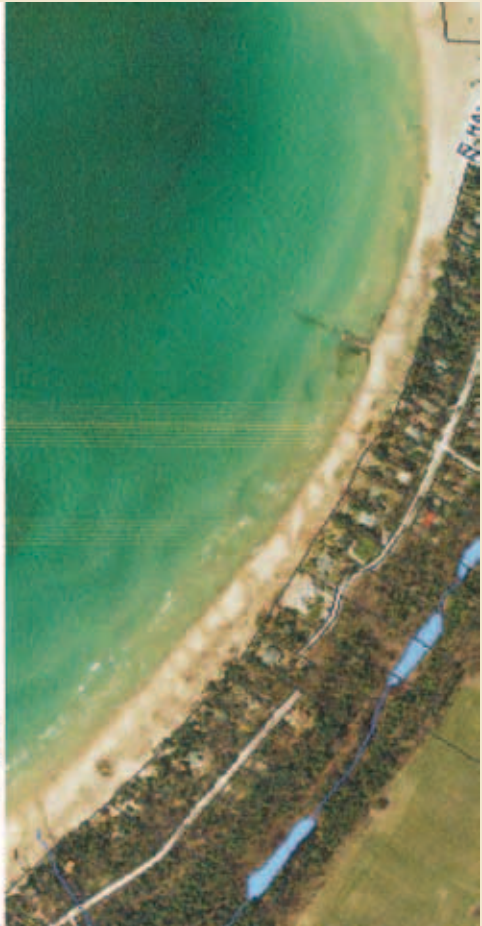
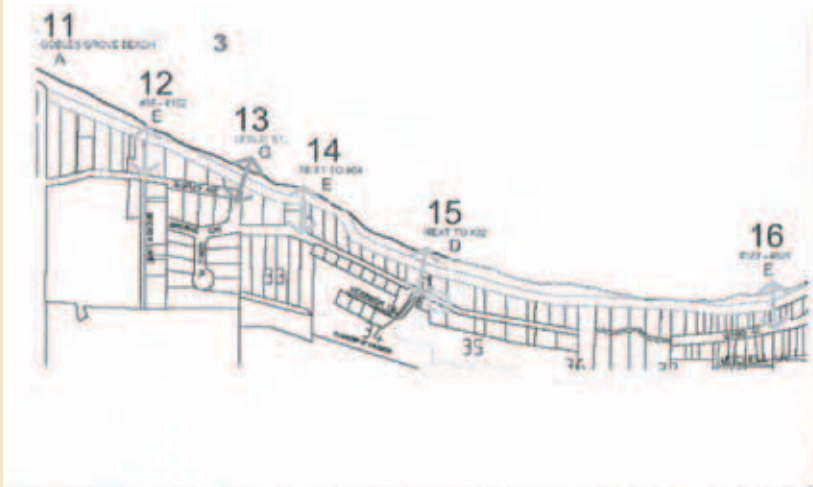


Destination 3 (The Sands at Shipley)

Entry Points 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 At these entry points the beaches are not groomed. There are formed dunes at entry points 12-15, and is a bathing beach. It is currently difficult to determine where the beach entry points are from the water side.



**ZONE THREE:
Bruce Road 25 at the South to Izzard Street
at the North**



Destination 4 (Port Elgin Main Beach)

Entry Point 17 Green St. (includes Izzard and Mill) and Elgin St.

(includes Market Street) Green Street goes straight down to the Port Elgin Main Beach. It is a groomed beach; there are dunes, sidewalks, poor signage and lighting. Elgin Street there are dunes beside harbour pier, sidewalks, lighting and poor signage.

Entry Point 18 (Northshore Park, south at boat storage area and north as the trail leaves the park)

There are no dunes and aged signage, lighting and sidewalks. This is an area where many people bring their dogs to swim. (It is presently not designated as a dog-friendly area.)





Destination 5 (Northshore Trails)

Entry Point 19 (Connects to Fenton Drive) The waterfront at this point is natural with shallow water, rocky points and outcrops. At several locations local users have constructed stairways down to the water. This walking trail along this area is used extensively. Access to these entry points are available but limited parking.

Entry Points 20, 21, and 22 These entry points are more scenic than beach swimming. They are not groomed, beach is very rocky but recently there are pockets of sandy beach developing along the waterfront. Access limited to difficult.

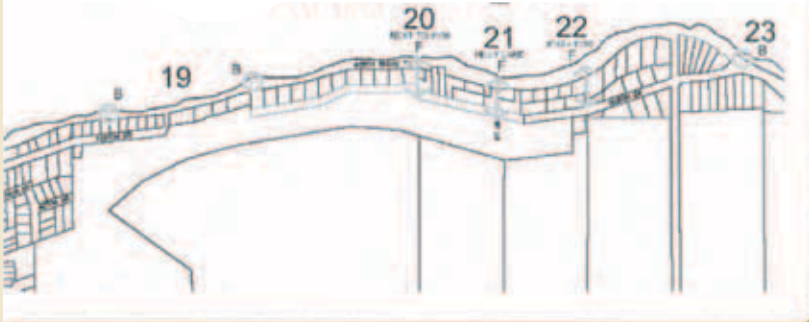
Entry Point 23 (Huron Street – Miramichi Bay Road) The 10th Concession to the beginning of Miramichi Bay begins without access to the waterfront and then opens up into a large shallow rocky access to the Bay. The established trail intersects an area used by cars enjoying the view and bay area. This is not a groomed area. Access to this entry point is available but limited parking.



⋮ *Miramichi Bay (June 2013)*



**ZONE FIVE:
Northshore Park at the South to Miramichi Bay Road at the North**

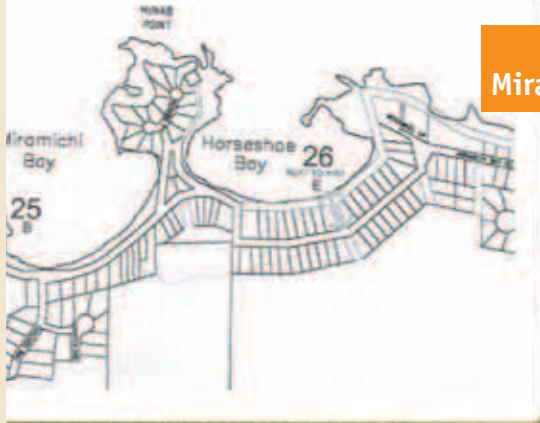


Destination 6 (The Bays of Horseshoe and Miramichi)

Entry Points 24, 25, And 26 These two bays have suffered from lower lake levels and no longer offer swimming opportunities. Horseshoe Bay has large areas of essentially bedrock with little or no visible natural habitat. There is sand in entry points 24 and 26, it is rocky in these entry points. Where there is sand, it has been groomed (but mainly to control phragmites growth). There is some dunes and grooming in entry point 25, but none in the other entry points. Easy access to walking/biking patrons, but parking is limited.



ZONE SIX:
Miramichi Bay, Horseshoe Bay and McCannel Lane



Destination 7 (South Street Beach)

Entry Point 27 (South Street) This area is well known by our local population as a sandy and safe access beach. Dunes are starting towards the north; evidence of cottage residents leaving their belongings on the beach and in the water. Trails are fairly large and open to path to the beach.

NOTE: Limited parking at 27 and 28. Parking for about 10 vehicles at each spot both are very popular entry points.

Entry Point 28 (Bay Street) This area includes the formation of very large sand dunes and have removed from service a previously functioning sidewalk. Trails are fairly large open path to the beach. Evidence of cottage residents leaving their belongings on the beach and in water.



**ZONE SEVEN:
McCannel Lane at the South and Beach Road at the North**



12. Portions obtained under license from members of OGDE. INCLUDES MATI



Destination 8 (Long Dock Beach, Chantry Dunes, Chantry View Beach)

Entry 29 (Beach Street) This area includes two large parking areas and access to more than one popular beach. There are numerous trails through the dunes and the beach is groomed. Lots of parking by Gerry's Fries on Beach Street.

Entry Point 30 (Peel St.), 31(Adelaide Street), 32(Chantry View Drive), 33(Morpeth Street), 34(Palmerston Street), and 35(High Street) In these entry points the beaches are used frequently and have a lot of foot traffic. The beaches in these entry points are groomed. These entry points provide some opportunities for parking, cross dune paths, from a sidewalk onto the sandy beach and onto a short boardwalk area at High Street.



**ZONE EIGHT:
Beach Street at the South and Lansdowne Street at the North**



Destination 9 (Southampton Main Beach)

Entry Points 36 (Lansdowne Street), 37 (Pioneer Park), 38 (Scubby's Point), 39 (River Range Light) The beach area is rocky and is not groomed.



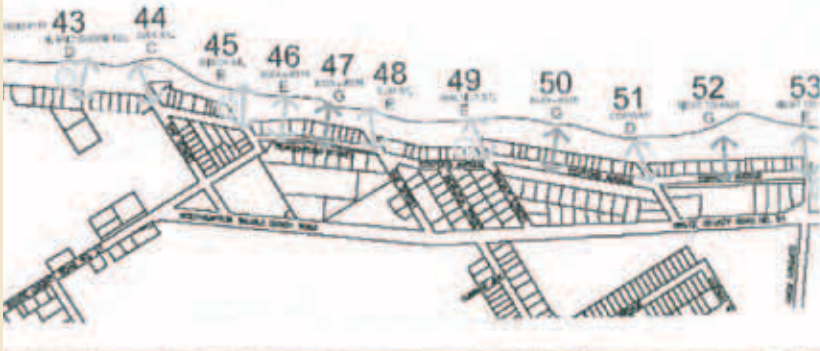
**ZONE NINE:
High Street at the South to Pioneer Park, the Saugeen River and
Scubby's Point at the North**



Destination 10 (Scubby’s Point and the Northern Sands)

Entry Points 40-53 In these entry points there are some formation of dunes, and no grooming.





ZONE TEN:
Scubby's Point at the South to
Copway Road at the North



WE RECOGNIZE The Following Waterfront Strengths and Weaknesses

1. Prioritizing funding and planning is needed to ensure that municipal entry points to the waterfront are not forfeited in fact or in effect by practice or omission, by adopting the recommendations below
2. Private property stored at the water front overnight
3. Removal of trees, vegetation or sand from the waterfront
4. Consideration of whether high and low water level markings should be reconsidered potentially expanding available land at the waterfront especially at Horseshoe and Miramachi Bays. (This is Federal land)

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

Saugeen Shores has 53 municipal entry points to access the waterfront.

Approximate Municipal entry points (6, 7, 8 ...) to the waterfront are unmarked, unkempt, and for the most part not currently used.

Approximately 2 municipal entry points (19 & 20) to the waterfront have been deliberately blocked, obstructed, or obscured by possible land owners, effectively deliberately denying the public the use of such entry points.

APPENDIX A

Appendix 1: Map of municipal public entry points

Appendix 2: Photographs of unkempt, unused municipal entry points;



Environment



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

Forming an initial Environment Committee to further research and educate both staff and the public about environmental issues/concerns affecting Saugeen Shores.



⋮ *Natural beach north of Saugeen River looking south. 2012.*

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers And Surveys

- ☀ More activities planned and promoted on Southampton and Port Elgin beaches
- ☀ Entry points need to be open and maintained properly
- ☀ More lookout points along entire waterfront (including trails)
- ☀ Tourist information booth at beaches
- ☀ Set maintenance standard for all beach areas
- ☀ Fix break wall
- ☀ Clean harbour weeds, debris, trees, etc.



WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀ A variety of natural environmental concerns and considerations
- ☀ Opportunity to attract additional tourists interested in our local flora, fauna, animal and bird life

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

- ☀ About keeping the beaches clean
- ☀ Clean harbour weeds, debris, trees etc.

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

- ☀ Of Waterfront Issues and Challenges from the Capital Regional District (Vancouver)

Aquatic Habitat

With respect to our waterfront and development we require regulations that force more careful consideration of aquatic habitat, water quality and smart growth factors. The overall goal of a strategy could be to develop and achieve consensus on our aquatic habitat to maximize the potential ecological integrity of the waterfront. Strategies such as this would be expected to;

- 1) Identify the potential for self-sustaining aquatic communities in open coast, sheltered embayment, coastal wetlands and streams
- 2) Identify limiting factors, evaluate opportunities and propose actions to protect and enhance near shore habitats and restore the ecological integrity
- 3) Develop sustainability indices to evaluate the success of these strategies
- 4) Develop an implementation plan to restore aquatic habitats along the waterfront, including targets, actions, roles and responsibilities, public education, regular reporting and plan review

(See www.aquatichabitat.ca for full strategy document.)



Erosion Control And Flood Risk

The shoreline is subject to naturally occurring processes associated with flooding, erosion, and water level beach movement. Where there is a lack of vegetation stabilizing the shoreline, land and infrastructure are at risk from erosion caused by wave activity. In each of the zones, shoreline work may be required to reduce the risks associated with flooding and erosion. This work could include the installation of wave breaks, shoreline armor stone, sand management and other measures that will serve to protect public safety and stabilize the shoreline. This could be researched and information provided as guidance by a committee.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

We can improve with education, policy, procedures and some minor enforcement.

A weakness is that we don't currently have sufficient policies and procedures to address many of the items and areas this Plan addresses.

A strength for our community would be the number of residents who are organized and want to improve their local environment.



Blue Flag Criteria



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

In 2008 the Saugeen Shores Waterfront Advisory Committee discussed the Blue Flag Program and decided not to pursue the concept of applying for Blue Flag status.

This recommended that the Town of Saugeen Shores continues to use the Blue Flag beach criteria to enhance and maintain the 18 km of waterfront. Focus must be given for continued education with the public on sustainable beaches. That staff continue to work toward the principals of the Blue Flag Program in their current capacity but not apply for Blue Flag status at this time.

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- Work toward Blue Flag criteria and standards
- Adhere to Life Saving Society waterfront guidelines and Blue Flag signage, lighting, policing
- Water quality strategy – e.g. work toward Blue Flag Program
- Blue Flag beach designation
- Blue Flag certification: water quality and beach safety
- Begin work on Blue Flag beach status – smaller projects

To date, staff have been following the criteria of the Blue Flag Program, and have worked closely with the Lifesaving Society to ensure safety units have been installed in Port Elgin as well as at both harbours. Future safety Society units are to be installed in Southampton and Gobles Grove.

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

Just a few beaches that are listed in Ontario as a Blue Flag Beaches:

- ☼ Sauble Beach – Town of South Bruce Peninsula
- ☼ Station Beach – Kincardine
- ☼ Grand Bend Beach – Municipality of Lambton Shores
- ☼ Wasaga Beach Provincial Park – Wasaga



Just a few marinas that are listed in Ontario as Blue Flag Marinas:

- ☼ Bluewater Marina – Municipality of Bluewater
- ☼ Ontario Marina – Municipality of Lambton Shores
- ☼ Port Franks Marina – Municipality of Lambton Shores

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

The Town of Saugeen Shores practices the criteria utilized for classification of Blue Flag beaches.

Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label awarded to 3859 beaches and marinas in 46 countries. The Blue Flag works toward sustainable development of beaches and marinas through strict criteria dealing with Water Quality, Environmental Education and Information, Environmental Management, and Safety and Other Services. The Blue Flag Program is owned and run by the non-government, non-profit organization the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). The Blue Flag Program expansion has become more rigorous and unified. As of 2006 an international set of criteria has been used with some variation to reflect the specific environmental conditions of certain regions.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weakness

In 2006 the Town of Saugeen Shores had a Feasibility Study conducted pertaining to the Blue Flag Program. It was identified that if a decision was made to proceed with certifying our beaches as Blue Flag destinations there would be significant annual budget implications.





☰ *Gobles Grove, 2012*

Beach Grooming



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☼ Best practises for the waterfront should be obtained as references from the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation, the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, the Great Lakes Initiative Group or other recognized best practices for the waterfront environmental groups
- ☼ Based on community feedback there is a need to establish clear best practises for maintenance for each destination of the waterfront
- ☼ The public need information available to understand who does what, when, why and how
- ☼ Further sand retention strategies for the waterfront may be required where there is loss of sand especially in beaches that are becoming wet or marshy
- ☼ Need to determine best practices for controlling grasses (especially invasive species) with the changing lake levels
- ☼ Communication with stakeholders as well as the general public needs to be a continual process providing information of best practices
- ☼ Timelines for reviewing Town procedures and policies should be established for the waterfront as part of the public education process



- ☼ Consideration of a Signage/Information Board to convey information to the public in key waterfront areas. Wi-Fi or other electronic strategies for improving information of the waterfront could be considered
- ☼ Consideration of land reclamation along the shoreline in areas where water levels have receded

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

During the community and stakeholder consultation of the Waterfront Adhoc, the following key comments for short term enhancements were noted.

- ☼ Ensure the maintenance and cleanliness of the beach
- ☼ Trained staff would enable better maintenance and cleanliness and for key long term enhancements ensure effective environmental stewardship (sand and dune retention)

Listed below are other common themes indicated by the stakeholder and community groups noted in the Consultation Report:

- ☼ Control grasses and remove where not acceptable
- ☼ Regular grooming and define those areas and the level of grooming
- ☼ Deeper sand would create a dryer nicer beach
- ☼ Grade the beaches to remove grasses
- ☼ Determine which beaches are left natural
- ☼ Consider the environmental impact of every decision
- ☼ Public education, educational signage for shoreline ecosystems
- ☼ Public awareness of sand and dune retention
- ☼ Manage the dunes in Southampton (Harmer Street) and create more dunes on the Port Elgin beach

Through the public consultation process, the Waterfront Adhoc recognizes that the public has varying degrees of knowledge on waterfront issues and that a one size fits all solution for all 18 kilometres of the waterfront is a challenge. The inventory of the waterfront identifies that there are significant differences in the amount of sand and the dryness of the beach depending on the location.

In addition, there is a wide variance of opinion in what the beaches should look like at any given time. For example, there are those who believe that the sand should be in pristine condition at all times (smooth, dry



and white) while others are less concerned about the looks and are more concerned with retention and environmental stewardship issues.

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

The beach varied from:

- ☀ Stoney outcrops north of MacGregor Provincial Park
- ☀ Sandy stretches with some wet sand at Gobles Grove
- ☀ Sandy beaches at the Port Elgin Main Beach with dune area having some undesirable plants (weeds)
- ☀ Stoney beach north of the Port Elgin Harbour up to Miramichi and Horseshoe Bays, which have become wet and marshy with some invasive grasses
- ☀ The dunes at Southampton beach accompanied by long sandy stretches
- ☀ Stoney beach from the Flag in Southampton to the Saugeen River
- ☀ Sandy/rocky stretches north of Saugeen River

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

- ☀ Visited Grand Bend, Goderich, Kincardine beaches (some members visited many other waterfronts such as Collingwood, Sauble Beach, Little Current, Gore Bay, Thunder Bay, Orillia, Midland, Penetanguishine, Point Clarke, Parry Sound, Cobourg etc.)

WE LEARNED By Reading And Attending

- ☀ Attended the Lake Huron Coastal Conservation informational sessions in the spring of 2011
- ☀ Read numerous professional articles dealing with indigenous and invasive species of grasses and plants
- ☀ Met with Gary Senior from Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

Concerns have been expressed by property owners regarding growth of vegetation and that it has been progressively growing lakeward for several years. Under low lake conditions, the natural response is for vegetation to grow into open sand areas where competition is low. The vegetation growth appears to be predominately rushes and sedges. This type of vegetation is common on low gradient, wet beaches, like Gobles Grove. It forms wet beach meadow vegetation and has been occurring at many beaches along the shores of Bruce County.



This beach meadow acts as a filtration buffer for storm water runoff and shallow groundwater emerging at the beach. This is important as it enhances water quality in the area. Communities to the south on Lake Huron struggle with high nutrient runoff that contributes to algae fouling of beaches, as well as high bacteria in the near shore, which has led to posted beaches. This is not something that Saugeen Shores has had to do.

Many property owners hold nostalgic views of wide sandy beaches without vegetation. There has been changes in the lake levels over time, where during the 1960's levels were the lowest on record (but only for a short duration). Vegetation did not have an opportunity to become established before the high waters returned. Since then, wave action has kept vegetation at bay. From 1999 onward, below average lake levels have maintained wide beaches providing the opportunity for coastal vegetation to expand. Wave action will not permit vegetation to grow to the water's edge.

There is a trend toward increased water surface temperatures on Lake Huron. This is changing the wind regime on the Lake (higher wind speeds coming off the lake). Higher wind speeds, combined with wide beaches from lower lake levels) mean that there is/will be more sand migration. The importance of dune systems to manage increased sand drifts is greater. If sand control schemes are not considered, then the municipality must be prepared to spend more to clear drifting sand from sidewalks, streets, gutters, catchbasins and harbour. Loss of sand would be permanent and the capacity of the shore to respond to future high lake levels would be compromised. Dune and beach management can help alleviate these costs, and at the same time help enhance the quality of local beaches. Building and retaining coastal resilience to be able to adapt to future climate related changes will be something Saugeen Shores will need to consider in the near future so that it doesn't miss this opportunity.

WE DISCUSSED Strengths and Weaknesses

- ☼ Varying points of view on beach grooming, and/or raking
- ☼ Benefits and disadvantages of dune grasses
- ☼ Indigenous and invasive grasses
- ☼ Disadvantages of groomed grassed areas and geese

REFERENCES

LHCCC – Beach and Dune Maintenance Strategy – 2003

Information Report to Council- B Jones July 4, 2007

Town of Saugeen Shores Corp Policy # PW 02-07 – Schedule A and B

LHCCC News Article Apr 12, 2012

Stakeholder and Community Consultation Highlights – R 2





⋮ *Harmer Street dunes, 2012*

Dunes



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☀ Continued education
- ☀ The establishment of a test plot where dunes are “controlled” (with cooperation and support of the SVCA and MNR)
- ☀ A new waterfront and beaches By-law that comprehensively addresses the “ins and outs” of sand dunes, i.e., when and where grooming or raking can take place, how often this occurs and By-laws in reference to “tampering” with dunes by the general public

WE HEARD From our Open Houses Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Remove or control large dune formations in the Harmer Street region
- ☀ Port Elgin main beach does not require dunes
- ☀ Some people are upset that the Town did not continue the practice of installing dune grasses to aid in the formation of new dunes in 2012
- ☀ Leave the dunes alone as they are assisting to keep our precious sand commodity from disappearing forever and they are inclusive of a local fragile ecosystem worth preserving



WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀ Evidence of dune formation in several of our 18km of Destinations (Zones)
- ☀ Areas of beach and waterfront where new dunes could be established
- ☀ Areas of beach and waterfront where established dunes continue to grow over and onto private property, sidewalks, trails and pathways

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices From Other Communities

- ☀ We talked to Grand Bend and from what we have read; there are different practices in different waterfronts. Some still rake and groom and in some cases, alter the dune formations (which is not the mandate of Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority). The key difference between Saugeen Shores and Grand Bend is that Saugeen Shores is sand limited in specific locations. Grand Bend has a continual supply of sand to its beach system from upshore sources.

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

- ☀ Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation, Dune Planting Guide, 2010
- ☀ Technology ID: Artificial Sand Dunes, Author: Matthew M. Linham, and Robert J. Nicholls, University of Southampton
- ☀ Beach and Dune Stabilization with Sand Fencing & Vegetation, LHCCC-2006
- ☀ A Field Guide to the Sauble Sand Dunes-2005
- ☀ Beach and Dune Guidance Manual for Saugeen Shores, LHCCC-2003
- ☀ Is the Coast Clear, One-Day Conference on Lake Huron's Coastal Environment-2011

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

- ☀ Some new dune formations are required in particular in areas that there has been a loss of sand and it is becoming a "wet" area i.e., Gobles Grove
- ☀ Some dunes are invading private property
- ☀ Some dunes have overgrown beach access sidewalks and pathways especially in Southampton



Grasses/Phragmites



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The following recommendations (initiatives) should be adopted by this plan to both encourage and control grass (and other plant life) that support our healthy and sustainable waterfront and beaches. Controlling invasive Phragmites before it becomes well-established will reduce the environmental impacts, time and costs. The effectiveness of early detection and reporting is greatly increased through public education. Once the existence of the plant in an area has been confirmed, a control plan should be developed and implemented in a timely fashion following best management practices. It is strongly recommended that a detailed inventory of each site be completed prior to initiating control methods. Timing is paramount minimizing negative impacts to the system.

- ☼ Monitor the health and welfare of our beach grasses and other plant life in concert with dunes by providing annual reports including supporting photographic and other empirical data. This can be achieved and completed by municipal staff or local interested experts.
- ☼ Provide public education opportunities such as pamphlets, story and information boards, speakers and open houses with the inclusion of specific and related material into future welcome or visitor centres.
- ☼ Expected control measures education for invasive alien species should be completed for municipal employees, local building contractors and landscaping businesses.
- ☼ A section of a new proposed Waterfront and Beaches By-laws should be completed that speaks to the requirements, policies and penalties regarding grasses and other plant life.
- ☼ Remove grasses (such as Sedge grass) and other plant life where necessary to protect public safety especially in heavily used family swimming areas (i.e. stings from insects).
- ☼ Provide access pathways in suitable numbers and creation to ensure the co-existence and well-being of plant and human life enjoying the waterfront and beach experience.
- ☼ Take a scientific and pragmatic approach to create and beautify “main beach” areas frequented by local and the visiting public. Where this means removing unsightly growth than a controlled policy in support of this can be included in d) above.



- ☀ There is a need to determine the primary use for the beach area prior to planting and or removing grasses.

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Concern of beach and sand erosion
- ☀ Concern that number one priority tourist attraction such as main beaches looks dirty and unkempt with introduction of grasses
- ☀ Concern that some residents are mowing the dune grasses
- ☀ Question from secondary school environmental organization as to why they were not requested to plant additional grasses in 2012 as they had completed in the previous years?
- ☀ Question as to what plans the municipality has to ensure non-indigenous species (such as Phragmites) are sufficiently controlled
- ☀ Getting rid of Phragmites, crucial

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

New grasses proliferating after planting efforts and where sand had been sufficiently eroded and a wet beach had formed. In 2006 there was Common Reed (Phragmites-Australis) invading the Lake Huron Shoreline and Saugeen Shores was seeing this invasive species show up along the beach areas. Sedge grass is quick to grow in a wet sand environment and has a sharp tough stem that is unpleasant to the bare leg and feet.

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

Grasses American Beachgrass, or Marram grass, (*Ammophila breviligulata*) is perhaps the most effective pioneer colonizer in most areas along Lake Huron. While it has been used extensively in dune restoration projects along Lake Huron, sourcing the plant in close proximity to the restoration site is important to avoid contaminating genetic make-up of endemic plants by importing plants from a large distance from the site. Marram grass from the Pinery/Ipperwash area is genetically different from the Marram grass found at Southampton as an example.

Friends of Sauble Beach and Pinery Provincial Park have both taken aggressive measures to prevent the loss of sand from occurring.



WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

Grasses and other plant life are unique to our shared Lake Huron Waterfront. They aid in retaining sand through the formation of stable dunes thus preventing permanent erosion resulting in wet sand conditions, provide opportunity for other wildlife to exist and are sometimes misunderstood by the general public.

When wind encounters vegetation the speed is reduced and the sand grains fall with gravity. Dune grasses in particular thrive on the incoming sand and accelerate their growth to keep up with the new depth.

Several community business and tourism leaders have pondered and rationalized that clean manicured beach sand is and has been gold for the local tourism industry and supporting businesses. Well-meaning public action has resulted in the destruction of some natural vegetation for aesthetic and vista reasons, as well as the creation of newly restored ecologically sensitive dune swaths with protected plantings.

Scientists offer data to show the formation of dunes through fencing and grass plantings provide a natural erosion barrier that aids in the retention of fine sand and provides additional animal species their required habitat. Other grasses, plant and tree life will grow with and on dunes once created thus providing a sustainable and healthy beach, flora and fauna environment and habitat.

When vegetative cover on newly formed dunes is left undisturbed and not trampled it will create conditions which support the colonization and growth of a wider range of plant species.

Other scientific data supports the theory that with lower lake levels the result is wider beaches with shallow water profiles. These lower levels provide some grasses with an opportunity to migrate towards the lake. When left alone they develop outward growing dunes and build up a sand reserve. When these grasses are removed or damaged the opposite effect of upward growing dunes is true.

Alien invasive plant species are well documented as is their effect on the local eco-system. Locally educated authorities are well versed with those threats along the Saugeen Shores waterfront. These knowledgeable persons should be included when designing information documents and protective systems. Being educated about invasive plant species should be continued through the community. Learning about new plants and keeping up-to-date with different invasive species that might affect our shoreline is equally imperative.



“As the beach grass has grown and developed, it has begun to spread outside of the original rectangular spots. This is a positive occurrence and shows how well the plant has adapted to this area. In some instances though Works Dept. crews have reported that beach grass has grown into the pathways causing sand accumulations to occur and creating a situation where people have difficulty traversing the pathway. As mentioned these pathways can be cleared to a suitable grade, and beach grass can be carefully transplanted to other parts of the beach–dune area where sand accumulation is needed. Where sand accumulations are perceived to be getting too high in a particular area, fencing and beach grass plantings can be arranged further towards the west or lake ward of the existing dune accumulations. This will help promote accumulations to occur adjacent to the area of concern. The objective is to contain sand on the beach and not lose it from the shore system.”

(Beach and Dune Guidance Manual for Saugeen Shores 2003)

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Environmental stewardship in the community is recognized as strength.

Overgrown dunes that impact local residents especially lakefront residents is recognized as a weakness.

Dune grass plantations on a main beach area either in Port Elgin, Southampton or the Gobles Grove region is recognized as both a weakness (unsightly) and strength as the beach sand is maintained and not eroded.

REFERENCES

Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

Beach and Dune Guidance Manual for Saugeen Shores (2003)

Invasive Phragmites – Best Management Practices

Waterfront Monkey Survey 2011





☰ Storm water run off, Southampton Main Beach, 2012

Storm Water/Streams

WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☀ The streams identified by the Waterfront Adhoc should be identified as to the source of the water and determine if it is a source that can be redirected away from the waterfront (where it is causing sand erosion and/or is a health and safety concern)
- ☀ A review of current storm water management by the Town should occur to identify best practises
- ☀ Signage of streams should be considered where public hazards exist due to flow and size of the stream
- ☀ Long term consideration for future outlets should include consideration of flow, public safety and water quality issues

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Understanding Storm Water Management” – MOE

The Waterfront Master Plan Stakeholder and Community Consultation Highlights



WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Develop a river walk from Pioneer Park or North Shore to Denny's Dam... better utilize the fish ladder as a tourist attraction
- ☀ Improve storm outlets...eliminate the overland drainage running across the beaches in various locations with a drainage pipe system
- ☀ All municipal services extended south of CAW to 4th concession (water and sewer)
- ☀ Storm drains need covers and signs
- ☀ Understand impacts of storm water runoff into the lake
- ☀ Better drainage catch basins
- ☀ Erosion from drainage of beach
- ☀ Address the water in the parking area at the Port Elgin Beach
- ☀ Remove storm sewage outlets from beaches

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis Reports

- ☀ While walking along the waterfront, the Waterfront Adhoc members observed numerous streams that flow year round and some streams that appear to have dried up. There appears to be little information available as to the source or water supply of each observed stream bed.
- ☀ The flow of the various streams has and does cause sand erosion along some portions of the waterfront. The main discharge outlets along the waterfront may present some hazards to the public depending on the source and flow rates of the water. Flows of water may vary according to the source, for example some roads along the waterfront have culverts that lead to the lake and the Waterfront Adhoc is aware that natural drainage from undeveloped property along the lakeshore contributes to water flows which are directed to municipal roadway ditches.
- ☀ The Waterfront Adhoc is aware that storm water management for the municipality is currently done through drainage pits and retention ponds and that there are very few instances of direct discharge pipes to the lake.





⋮ *North of Saugeen River along Eckford Drive*

Water Quality



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ⊗ Educational component (in partnership with Public Health) with respect to precautions for safe swimming as well as sources for contaminants associated with run-off from surface water, springs and ground water. Periodic water samples should be tested at each of these water runoff points, streams and culverts to ensure that there aren't any pollutants being transferred onto our beaches and into the water to ensure safety
- ⊗ If there is leakage from lakefront faulty septic systems it needs to be addressed and corrected immediately
- ⊗ Address the concern with water runoff from Green Street (includes Izzard Road and Mill Street) and Elgin Street (includes Market Street) to avoid sand erosion and drainage into the lake and harbour
- ⊗ The Town needs to review policies for shoreline wells and pipes that lead into the lake
- ⊗ Develop a comprehensive Waterfront By-law addressing waterfront safety issues/concerns



WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Blue Flag program for water quality
- ☀ Septic tank inspection programme to clean up the beach where required (foam, coloured water)
- ☀ Immediate dredging of critical areas in the harbour and out the channel, as a temporary measure until proper dredging can be done for the long term
- ☀ Remove storm sewage outlets from beaches
- ☀ Water sampling strategy
- ☀ Safety of waterfront user e.g. swimmers, etc.
- ☀ Understand impacts of storm water runoff into lake
- ☀ One local group (SRA), expressed concern about some of the water runoff areas through letters of concern to the Town
- ☀ Currently, Public Health-Grey Bruce Health Unit samples and monitors the lake water periodically

WE SAW From Destination-Zone Analysis

There are a large number of streams as well as culverts and pipes (23) that had water running not only down onto the waterfront area but in many cases into the lake as well. The concern is the pollutants that may be present in some of the water that is making its way onto our beaches and water.

There were some pipes and culverts in front of some lakefront homes as well as at public entry points. There were a number of pipes that were questionable as to the source of the water that was being emitted onto the beach area.

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminar

Some members from the Waterfront Adhoc attended a group of informational seminars presented by the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation in the spring of 2012. Water Quality was a topic of discussion and has been becoming more of a concern in recent years with an increased incidence of beach postings in relation to possible health risks of E. coli and the occurrence of algae, which may be an indication of a problem with the local ecology.



We read that the Public Health Grey-Bruce Health Unit, "... is responsible for monitoring beach water quality and plays a role in identifying factors that have an impact on beach water quality. Municipal authorities and the Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources share this responsibility.

Beaches are monitored to determine pollution levels in the water at beach sites and to prevent illness."

<http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/water/WaterSafety%20Book.pdf>

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Understandably, the cost of redirecting water runoff or installing filtering systems into the existing drainage systems can be costly. It is an aspect that needs to be considered for any future road/culvert/sewage construction and/or maintenance. Storm drains should have the water tested and water quality standards need to be addressed.

REFERENCES

The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

<http://lakehuron.ca/index.php?mact=Search%2Ccntnt01%2Cdosearch%2C0&cntnt01returnid=155&cntnt01searchinput=Water+Quality&submit=Submit>

Public Health Grey Bruce Health Unit

<http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/water/WaterSafety%20Book.pdf>





☰ *Port Elgin beach ring buoys and reach poles, 2012*

Water Safety

WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☼ Using the “best of” guides from other jurisdictions and associations to create a comprehensive Waterfront Bylaw with the means to educate and enforce its expectations
- ☼ Mark, post and sign designated swimming areas with buoys in Port Elgin, Southampton, Gobles Grove and Eidts Grove respectively
- ☼ Investigate alternative solutions for water activities
- ☼ Harbour staff has their VHF license to be able to dialogue with boaters, Coast Guard and other rescue organizations
- ☼ Have Emergency Services determine location of emergency phones and the type of phone
- ☼ Safety equipment – See Blue Flag Program section for added information



- ☀ That the waterfront not be considered as an area to teach learners to swim by municipal staff
- ☀ That water safety is promoted through promotion strategies

WE HEARD From Our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Concerns about people jumping off the pier where the boats go through the gap in Port Elgin
- ☀ The need for the By-law Officer to consistently enforce the various Waterfront By-laws
- ☀ Concern about local first responders water emergency qualifications and availability
- ☀ The need for other process/protocols combined with posted emergency numbers for various water related emergencies: drowning, missing swimmer, kayaker, canoe, boat in distress, etc.
- ☀ Various forms of personal motorized watercrafts coming in too close to public swimming areas including docking onto sand beaches
- ☀ Access to swimmers and other forms of recreational water activities to washroom facilities along the waterfront – emergency service such as an emergency phone can be located at these centres (911 calls)

WE SAW From Our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀ Some of the entry points to the waterfront were not currently maintained presenting an access concern for emergency vehicle or other service if there is a water emergency
- ☀ Power equipped craft at close proximity to beach users and swimmers in prohibited areas

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

The potential cost of reinforcing lifeguard patrolled beaches.

- ☀ The establishment of Beach or Waterfront Patrols from Port Stanley

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

- ☀ The Life Saving Society – Waterfront Safety Standards



WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

- ☀ We have the local talent and professionals to be able to move toward an impressive water safety system. Costs to establish and maintain such a safety system are often prohibitive.

REFERENCES

Local Services – Fire Department, Ambulance Service, Police Services, By-law Officer, Lifeguards

Health Canada

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/recreat/index-eng.php>

Canadian Coast Guard

<http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/Publications/CCG-At-A-Glance>

Life Saving Society-Waterfront Safety Standards

<http://www.lifesavingsociety.com/>

Port Stanley Beach Patrol

<http://www.centralelgin.org/siteengine/activepage.asp?PageID=62>





⋮ *Exposed shoreline due to low water levels at Northshore Park, 2012*

Water Level

WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The municipality;

- ☀ Shall consider both high and low water level eventualities to guide staff and residents
- ☀ Works with all levels of government (such as the Great Lakes Initiative Group) to stay informed with respect to Lake Huron water levels
- ☀ Ensures all waterfront projects and maintenance activities consider both high and low water levels during decision making
- ☀ Ensures a standing Waterfront Adhoc reviews waterfront issues such as boating and swimming related to changing water levels which includes educating the public as required
- ☀ With the current low levels now is likely a good time to put in place measures to protect against future high levels (i.e., maintenance and repair)



☀ With lower water levels, there is an increase in distance from the existing sun shelters to the water's edge. It is recommended that sun shelters are built closer to the water's edge and can be placed on wooden ski-like structures that allow greater mobility if the water level changes

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

Residents are concerned with lower levels reducing their ability to access the water from their docks for boating and swimming.

Boaters are concerned that lower water levels will impact on their ability to dock their boats in the Port Elgin Harbour.

Staff and others are concerned that the original "cribbing" used to support the concrete forms used to build the harbour walls is for the first time since it was installed exposed out of the water and this may hasten its demise (rot).

Lower lake levels are providing additional marshy and swampy areas that enable other wildlife species to exist where they previously could not. Some of this is positive and others like increases in mosquito populations are negative.

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

During the walk around to each zone you would notice certain rocks that would be sticking out of the water that weren't there last year or the year before that. Every year the water level keeps going down. In zone 4 at "Gull" Island West of the Port Elgin Harbour you can now walk out onto the island and in prior years this would not be possible. Lower water levels and the direct effects were obvious in many of our Destinations (zones). Other examples include Miramichi and Horseshoe Bays.

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

Over the years the water levels have been always changing on the Great Lakes from spring to fall. Either it's higher in the spring and lowers in the fall. But what people are seeing now is that the water level is getting lower and lower.

An article in The London Free Press said that "Lake Huron is approaching low water levels not seen in nearly half a century. Environment Canada reported October 11, 2012 water levels in the lake fell 15 cm in September 2012. That's two and a half times its average decline of 6 cm, leaving it 27 cm below where it was in 2011. The potential reasons include change



leading to lower rainfall, as well as ongoing evaporation in winter because of less ice cover. The impact of low water levels includes extended lakeshore property as water recedes, the build-up of sand dunes and migration of vegetation and coastal wetlands.” (Morden, 2012)

Article from Yahoo News said “According to Environment Canada, Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior were already running below the 100-year average last year, and now all the Great Lakes are running below that average – Lake Erie at 22 cm below average, Lake Ontario at 23 cm below average, Lake Michigan-Huron at 63 cm below average and Lake Superior at 34 cm below average. The main reason for low water levels in the lakes in 2012 is due to the warm winter and dry summer. Winter 2011-2012 was considered to be the warmest in decades according to Environment Canada, producing little to no snow pack around the lakes and the lowest ‘total accumulated ice coverage’ on the lakes since records began back in 1972-73, and this past summer was extremely dry from coast to coast.”(Sutherland, 2012)

It should be noted that information in regards to water levels can quickly become outdated and that current data should be researched on a monthly basis.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Low water levels increase the amount of sandy beaches and this provides opportunities for additional visitors to enjoy this experience.

The current sunshades are no longer close enough to the water to be used as intended. This is a weakness that can be reviewed. Consideration for a strong structure that can both serve the purpose and be semi-mobile with minor effort should be considered for future use.

Concerns about water levels are becoming a political matter and action is being pursued at these levels to address the concerns (especially the St. Clair dredging, which was one of the factors associated with the lower lake levels).



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http://www.georgianbay.ca/env_water_levels.htm



Transportation



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☼ That safe connector routes from the trail system is emphasized and consideration be given toward the implementation of a “Share the Road Program”
- ☼ Partnership that would provide bike rental facilities
- ☼ That accommodation is available at the main beaches for bike facilities
- ☼ Partnerships for connectivity to the downtown cores
- ☼ Enhancement of the trails system that encompasses a majority of the waterfront
- ☼ Consideration for winter clearing of the proposed trail system, with consideration of cross country skiing or snow shoeing
- ☼ That consideration is given for an Active Transportation Plan

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☼ Bike lanes along road that lead to the waterfronts
- ☼ Walking trail along shoreline
- ☼ Bike and stroller rentals
- ☼ Cycling enhancements. Bike racks along shoreline areas
- ☼ Yellow Bike Program for our visitors – Health Unit
- ☼ Maintain bike path
- ☼ Accessibilities for the handicap
- ☼ Transit to the beach
- ☼ More bicycle stands throughout the beach area
- ☼ Transportation options e.g. from beach to shopping area...public bike system
- ☼ Shuttle/transportation system to various beaches during July and August



WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis Inventory Walks

- ☀ A gap in walking facilities connecting beaches to roads/sidewalks
- ☀ No walking facilities along roads that are parallel to waterfronts (i.e. Saugeen Beach Road)
- ☀ Lack of accommodation for bikes along the waterfront

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices From Other Communities

Share the Road Programs (The Town of the Blue Mountains)





⋮ Port Elgin Beach parking



⋮ Southampton, Morpeth Street parking

Parking

WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

Strategies must be developed to ensure that the existing parking inventory is used efficiently and that options for additional future parking are identified in appropriate locations. Better management of existing parking will be required as usage increases and to resolve conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

Development must be designed in such a way that enhanced access to the water's edge. A high quality realm can be achieved by providing an attractive and safe circulation network for pedestrians and vehicles.

Existing parking areas will need to be expanded and enhanced to accommodate the increase in waterfront usage that this Plan will create.



The parking areas will have to be designed in such a manner that safety is the prime consideration for all concerned.

Parking areas adjacent to the main beaches will have to be redesigned and reconfigured to improve availability of parking spots and alleviate congestion.

That the existing parking facilities at the Port Elgin beach is reviewed to allow for easier flow of vehicles and expansion for additional parking areas be considered where the former Pump House was and to the south parking be expanded to the east

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Better parking and traffic flow along the Port Elgin and Southampton beach
- ☀ Parking meters e.g. Sauble Beach (were discussed but the majority of participants were not in favour of this strategy)
- ☀ Improve beach access and more parking
- ☀ Existing beach access points that provide parking spaces could have trees trimmed, and sand graded to improve parking spaces and make existing parking more inviting
- ☀ Grading parking lot more often (after rain storms)
- ☀ Parking and beach access clearly defined through better signage primarily in Southampton
- ☀ No parking fees
- ☀ Redo parking at the north end of the Port Elgin Harbour to provide more effective parking for festivals and better use of Lion's Picnic Shelter (North Shore Pavillion)
- ☀ Restrict people from parking on the North Shore road adjacent to the park... a safety issue
- ☀ Parking on main beach/parking, but not at expense of beach space
- ☀ The main beach parking and main beach area are incorrectly balanced because the experts at the high water period of time said that the walkway should be placed where it is. The walkway should be moved back toward the waterfront



WE SAW From Our Destination-Zone Analysis

Destination 1, Saugeen Beach

The parking situation at 2A, 2B, 2C should be considered for upgrades and improvements. 2B currently has telephone poles for parking lines, 2C currently has degrading dunes (with signage) and reduced parking. Look to establish East street side parking and should move to post and rope style. 3, 4, 5 should be considered to establish a small parking area, 6, 7, 9 should be considered to establish a small parking area shared with zone 2 at the non-maintained ramp. Need to ask SVCA for parking expansion criteria and bike racks in newly formed parking areas where added.

Destination 2, Gobles Grove

Future consideration for the removal of hydro poles. Constructed Parking could be applied to entry points 9 and 10.

Destination 3, The Sands at Shipley

There really is no vehicle parking opportunity at this beach entry point, however, consideration could be given for bike racks for neighbours who choose active transportation.

Destination 4, Port Elgin Main Beach

- ☼ Expand the parking down by Beachside Café toward the west
- ☼ Consideration for drop off areas for the harbour parking where boaters can park for 20 minutes to deliver personal items to their vessels
- ☼ Expand parking at North Shore of the Port Elgin Harbour (this will be required if the Dog Off-Leash area is included)
- ☼ Consider moving parking posts along Harbour Street towards the west to allow for angle parking
- ☼ Clean up the area where the former pumping station was to the south of the Port Elgin Beach for more parking and remove posts between former parking boundaries
- ☼ Provide a biking friendly parking area
- ☼ Provide for handicapped parking to the south at the main beach
- ☼ Consider moving the current handicapped parking spots (2) located to the north of the bandshell back to the east to allow for more space to sit for concerts



- ☀ Revamp parking for greater efficiency, safety, accessibility, include recommendations by previous consultant's report
- ☀ Parking in the Flea Market could be better utilized and used for special events as well as a Farmers Market

Destination 5, North Shore Trails

- ☀ Entry point 23 would benefit from an improved parking plan
- ☀ Establish more defined parking area for people wishing to access the park from the north end and/or want to view the lake/sunset/walk

Destination 6, The Bays of Horseshoe and Miramichi

- ☀ Establish more evident parking possibly pavement at strategically located areas where there are greater spans of land between the road and walkway
- ☀ Make gravel area between entry point 24 and 25 a more identifiable parking area

Destination 7, South Street Beach

- ☀ For these entry points a parking improvement strategy is recommended

Destination 8, Long Dock, Chantry Dunes, Chantry View Beach

- ☀ Parking improvements in these areas is a priority

Destination 9 and 10, Southampton Main Beach, Scubby's Point and the Northern Sands

- ☀ Improving and increase the number of parking spots to the full municipal standard

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Innovative solutions can help reconcile parking facility concerns and issues. Good parking management focuses on quality, such as obtaining parking information, the safety and convenience of walking from a parking space to destinations and the attractiveness and security of parking facilities.

Improving walkability increases "park once" trips, that is parking in one location and walking rather than driving to other destinations which reduces vehicles trips and the amount of parking required at each destination.



REFERENCES

Saugeen Shores Parks and Trails Master Plan

Parking Management Best Practices by Todd Littman





Port Elgin Harbour boardwalk, 2012



Southampton boardwalk (near Morpeth Street), 2012

Trails, Sidewalks and Boardwalks

WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

In order for the Waterfront Master Plan, and any future modifications to be effective, it must recognize the diverse needs of Saugeen Shores residents, must be forward thinking, fiscally and environmentally responsible and community-driven. Therefore, the recommendations reflected in the Waterfront Master Plan are a culmination of community input, in-depth research and sound planning practices. Recommendations were made to open up as many of the entry points as viable and upgrade the maintenance on existing and future trails.

Any encroachments that currently exist on municipal lands, whether along boardwalks/sidewalks/beach entry points should be reviewed as per the Encroachments on Municipally Owned Lands Policy.



WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Improvements to the walking trails... connection/extension to trail system
- ☀ Walkway developed from MacGregor Park all the way to North Shore Trail
- ☀ Improvements to the walking trails...connection/extensions...extend the trail that would be used by walkers, joggers, bikers etc. that would extend from North Shore to South Beach area
- ☀ Southampton: need a sidewalk extension from Gerry's Fries to Pump House
- ☀ Extend boardwalk from flag to harbour (Southampton). Widen it to incorporate bike lanes
- ☀ Port Elgin Harbour connection to trail at North Shore Park needs to be improved right from the Harbourside to the Park. Area in front of new development needs to be improved
- ☀ Develop a shoreline trail which runs from the south end of the Port Elgin beach all the way to either Eids Grove or MacGregor Park
- ☀ North Shore Trail needs to be carried on in both Southampton and Port Elgin. Get people to our main streets
- ☀ More trails accessibility (handicap, mobility, etc.)
- ☀ Bike paths to the beaches

Results from the public and stakeholders meeting regarding the Waterfront Master Plan indicates that a waterfront trail encompassing the entire 18 kilometers is desirable.

WE SAW Our Destination-Zone Analysis Reports

The Waterfront Master Plan evolution should illustrate the layout of the waterfront trails, sidewalks and boardwalks and how they incorporate into the existing Parks and Trails Waterfront Master Plan. The prospective plan amendments should connect to trails, staging areas, rest areas, interpretive and historic sites. The existing trails and parks have proven to be an important symbol of the communities' attitude to the waterfront and a catalyst for waterfront improvements and enhancement for tourism.

As the Waterfront Master Plan is further refined in design and construction following adoption of the Waterfront Master Plan design solutions, the plan will need to develop priority action items on a site specific basis. A large portion of currently conceptualized waterfront trail is in place at



present and well used. A small portion has been lost to sand and requires reclamation. The evolution of the Waterfront Master Plan document will be a summary of knowledge learned about past and existing trails, trails uses, users, key attractions and destinations.

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

It has been proven that communities with a good trail system are an attractant for both casual tourists and also people considering moving to the area. They also act to retain existing permanent and seasonal residents. To this end the Saugeen Shores Parks and Trails Master Plan has been a huge success to date. The Waterfront Master Plan incorporates the whole community and is designed to direct people to the waterfront which in itself is an 18 kilometer long park and trail system.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town of Saugeen Shores recognizes the important role of park open spaces and trails, sidewalks and boardwalks in contributing to the communities social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being, enhancing quality of life, and creating an attractive and desirable place to live. Parks and trails, sidewalks and boardwalks are valued community assets and a key objective of the current Plan is to ensure protection and enhancement of parks and trails as a recreational resource for local residents, seasonal residents, tourists and future generations.

Beach Access Routes

Any newly constructed and redeveloped beach access routes that the municipality intends to maintain, including permanent and temporary routes that are established through the use of manufactured goods, which can be removed for the winter months, must meet the AODA.

REFERENCES

Saugeen Shores Parks and Trails Master Plan

Waterfront Master Plan Stakeholder and Community Consultation Highlights

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005





☰ *Lighting at Port Elgin Harbour, 2012*

Lighting



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☀ A consistent style of lighting should be used along sections of the Waterfront. This would assist with replacement costs. New or additional lighting should tie into an existing light standard for any new waterfront developments
- ☀ Consideration should be given to a similar theme as proposed for uptown efficient goals while lighting the environment in an aesthetically pleasing manner that reduces light pollution...minimizes energy waste, lowers power-related costs, and reduces its carbon footprint...preserving a dark sky...." (*lightefficientcommunities.com*)
- ☀ Consider replacing existing lighting with more energy efficient forms and lights on timers or motion sensors offering both economical and environmental benefits. (Location of these adaptive lighting technologies need to take public safety aspects into consideration.)
- ☀ Regular maintenance and/or replacement of damaged or dysfunctional lights



- ☀ Local interest groups could form a Local Improvement Committee (similar to Southampton's effort) to choose and fundraise for a certain design motif for their destination (zone)
- ☀ Consideration to move wires and the accompanying poles to minimize negative effect on view and vista along Southampton main beach
- ☀ Outdoor Lighting Standards, Codes and Policies should be considered even though it is not a regulated requirement in Ontario. [Reference has been made to the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA)]. Note that IESNA does not provide very much information on alternative forms of outdoor lighting such as LED's

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Concerns about the maintenance of existing lighting (specifically lights that were broken)
- ☀ Inconsistency of light styles in certain areas
- ☀ Dock lights in the harbour at Port Elgin need to have diffused pedestal lighting that offers many other features beyond lighting – water and power and optional cable, Internet, and telephone connections as well as Life Ring, alarm, and strobe lighting. Lighting which is dark sky appropriate, will also be more aesthetically appealing to our waterfront

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀ Different styles and forms of lighting throughout the 18kms of the Waterfront. (This isn't to suggest that there can't be different forms of lighting but within one zone it would be aesthetically pleasing to see one form for the pole-type of lighting.)
- ☀ Lights were broken at the Port Elgin Harbour area

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

- ☀ Lighting is definitely important as it helps with safety and security
- ☀ Lighting can create an aesthetic appeal to buildings, signs, landscaping, monuments, etc.
- ☀ Lighting allows accessibility to areas after dark as well as during off season times



WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

- ☀ Alternative forms of lighting should be considered to avoid light pollution, which blocks out the night sky
- ☀ Awareness that some lighting can have adverse impact on bio-diversity
- ☀ Use of energy efficient lighting will save money

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

A lighting policy will...

“enhance safety and security to people and property, control aesthetics in a defined space, and deliver lighting economically in terms of equipment, installation, operation, and maintenance, while minimizing environmental impact.”

(Municipal Policy Options Guide for Advanced Outdoor Lighting)

Outdoor lighting will illuminate parking areas, boardwalks or trails, public areas, buildings and signage. Lighting also assists with safety, security and the quality of the public space.

REFERENCES

<http://lightefficientcommunities.com>

http://www.popcenter.org/Responses/street_lighting/print/

(Good resource providing different types of lighting as well as a checklist for formulating a plan, getting support, implementing the plan and assessing effectiveness)

<http://www.darksky.org/assets/documents/Lighting%20Code%20Handbook.pdf>

(American Codes but often referred to by other countries such as Canada as a reference.)

<http://www.horttrades.com/landscape-lighting-specifications>

(This requires a membership – Landscape Lighting Standards, Ontario – Green For Life)

http://www.lightsavers.ca/files/Final_LightingGuide_TAF_04042011.pdf

(Municipal Policy Options Guide for Advanced Outdoor Lighting – Natural Resources Canada)





⋮ *Playground at Port Elgin Main Beach, 2012*

Playgrounds



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The Waterfront Adhoc is of the view that there is a great untapped potential for providing enhanced and inviting playground areas and related amenities all along the Saugeen Shores waterfront to better serve local and seasonal residents and the many returning tourists that visit our community every year.

Improvements in playground related amenities including an increase in the current number, and an enhancement of scope, breadth, design and sophistication of such areas could also assist the community in creating a further inducement for visitors to come to Saugeen Shores with all of the related economic spinoffs provided by destination visitors eg. splashpad parks.

Improvements in playground areas may be completed over time, and provide an excellent opportunity for manageable fund raising initiatives and private public/service group partnerships.



WE HEARD From Our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

Playgrounds should be integrated with other amenities such as washrooms, drinking fountains, bicycle stands, benches, sun shelters, informational signage, trails, sidewalks, free parking and food and beverage amenities so that the areas integrate families of varying ages, interest and mobility/access challenges.

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

A playground of a larger scale might be considered in the design concept for the Port Elgin Main Beach and potentially at Pioneer Park and an expansion behind Gerry's Fries. The design plan may possibly incorporate a popular attraction (in other communities) that being a splashpad park. From our research, the Waterfront Adhoc members found that many Waterfront communities were installing these water attractions to not only draw families with young children of all abilities and capabilities but it also provided an alternative if the water conditions in the lake were not conducive for swimming or for other water sport activities. The splashpad concept is not limited to the waterfront area since many communities are incorporating them within their communities. With this in mind, the consideration for a Splashpad in Southampton would be another possibility (especially by Rotary Accessible Playground where there is already a draw for families with young children).

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

Future placement of playground equipment needs to consider safety aspects such as location to traffic as well as environmental factors such as wind, snow, rain and nearness to water and especially drainage runoff. When placing equipment, the playground site lines need to be open and visible from all angles to allow for clear and safe supervision. Another consideration would be the incorporation of shade areas through structures such as awnings as well as picnic tables nearby for comfort.

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

All new fixed playground equipment must meet the Canadian Safety Standards for Children's Play spaces and Equipment. (<http://www.csa.ca/cm/ca/en/search/article/childrens-playspaces-and-equipment-standard-fourth-edition>). The placement and design of any new playground areas and equipment should take a number of factors into consideration such as



accessibility. There should be consideration for accessible parking close to the playground equipment as well as boardwalks that can accommodate wheelchairs or other assistive equipment. Universal outdoor play equipment should be considered to meet the needs of all children.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

There was some discussion as well for the development of an Outdoor Adult Fitness area. The location would be an important decision for safety and to avoid inappropriate use (by young children in particular that could get hurt). Signage would be required to provide any necessary warnings and to ensure appropriate use of the equipment. An example of this type of recreational space can be viewed on the following Internet site, http://www.archsd.gov.hk/english/knowledge_sharing/ua2/3_4_3_2.html

An additional consideration near any playground equipment would be the availability of barrier-free washroom facilities and water fountains.





☰ *Local washroom examples*

Washrooms

WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The following recommendations (initiatives) should be adopted by this Plan to improve existing and future washroom/change room facilities wherever our waterfront and beaches are well used by the public.

- ☀ Assess the current population use at the various waterfront and beach areas and ensure two considerations are adopted;
 - a. Existing washroom facilities are improved and maintained to a new building, maintenance and cleaning standard
 - b. Develop new washroom facilities based on need that meet the new standard of washroom excellence in Saugeen Shores



- ☀️ Develop a waterfront and beach area washroom standard of excellence to be adopted by the municipality and detailed in a new Waterfront Comprehensive By-law
- ☀️ Starting with Port Elgin Main Beach, upgrades should be completed to existing washroom facilities that include;
 - a. Meeting the requirements of the new standard
 - b. Construction of a new washroom building at the Harbour Office that will be stand alone and integral to the future expected building upgrade proposal

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀️ Concern that washroom facilities do not meet the needs for total number and cleanliness all of which is further described in the standard summary

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀️ A number of washroom facilities along the waterfront and beach areas from port-a-toilets to full flush permanent buildings
- ☀️ Many of the permanent building structures looked tired and were of an older and more heritage design

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

Many communities use low cost methods to leverage their existing assets with good signage, especially useful for the first time visitor. When a portable toilet is provided, placement should consider esthetics, security and maintenance. A sufficiently wide base should be considered to prevent tipping by wind or bored teenagers.

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports and Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

To include the following as considerations for the washroom standard:

- ☀️ Define the number of washrooms required based on the total waterfront and beach users in the area on an average busy day in July
- ☀️ Public restrooms shall be equipped for family needs with a baby changing station when remodelled including when space allows, a separate single-use family restroom shall be provided
- ☀️ Full access for the handicapped and physically challenged should be within easy reach of the main beach areas



- ☀ All material, including structure and finishes, shall be designed to resist impact, etching, graffiti, and water damage. Fixtures and accessories shall be designed for easy maintenance. Damage due to vandalism and accidents are expected and occur more often than in other parts of the community. Removal of fixtures and accessories shall be fast and easy for the maintenance crew with proper tools, but shall not be easily removed by hand or with simple basic tools
- ☀ Large easily identifiable signage should lead the public to the facility
- ☀ Bright lighting, clean crisp looking finishes and easy access doors
- ☀ Consider the use of upgraded portable washrooms for use during busy times and where new beach areas are developed

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Total number of washrooms as a strength, the location and amount of cleaning particularly during high use times as a weakness.





⋮ *Harbourlite Restaurant, 2012*



⋮ *Port Elgin and Northshore Railroad, 2012*

Buildings



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The following recommendations (initiatives) should be adopted by this Plan to improve existing and future building structures wherever our waterfront and beaches are well used by the public.

- ☀ Establish new building design guidelines and existing building maintenance requirements. During this assessment consideration should be given to:
 - a) New buildings and structures required to replace existing
 - b) New buildings and structures to be added to existing stock
 - c) Create an inventory to address annual minor and other long term maintenance



- ☀ Create standards and policy to apply to “new build” buildings and structures that consider the following;
 - a) Impact on the waterfront park environment
 - b) Impact on neighbouring residential property
 - c) Exterior finish that is both able to withstand weather and be visually pleasing
 - d) “Coastal” theme and look
 - e) Functional signage that meets the needs of users, visitors and those with accessibility requirements
 - f) Security features (e.g. locks, lighting) to keep building structures and users safe
- ☀ Create policy that encourages;
 - a) Private and public development partnerships as a viable means to build and fund development projects worthy of inclusion in our high use and tourist waterfront park areas
 - b) Three and four season use where facilities such as washrooms are designed and constructed to be available for use year round

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☀ Refurbish and enhance existing recreational activities – train and mini putt
- ☀ Tourist information booth at beaches
- ☀ Set a maintenance standard for all buildings in all beach areas
- ☀ Retail opportunities
- ☀ Security – the beach is a hot spot for people late at night and is at risk for vandalism

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

- ☀ Outdated and tired buildings and structures
- ☀ Nondescript (lacking character) buildings and structures



WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

From the Brockville Waterfront Master Plan

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Our strength is the waterfront which is considered a gem.

The current appearance and use of our waterfront is viewed as a weakness.

REFERENCES

Brockville Water Master Plan





☰ Seating area constructed at Pegasus Trails along North Shore Trail with view of lighthouse

Lookout Areas



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

- ☼ That the existing sheet piling that supported the former Pumping Station be enhanced as a focal point at the Port Elgin Main Beach
- ☼ That consideration be given to lookout/sitting areas that are similar in design to the one constructed in 2012 on Miramichi Road by Pegasus Trails.
- ☼ That these lookout areas could be considered for sponsorship possibilities
- ☼ That the existing bench style be reconsidered for maintenance purposes
- ☼ That the flag area in Southampton be enhanced to provide a small staging area with amphitheatre seating and accommodates increased seating for watching the sunset and performances. (i.e. weddings, cultural events, etc.)

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

- ☼ New or refurbished benches
- ☼ Painting or staining the benches on the dock to make them appear coordinated
- ☼ Fix benches and picnic tables and more regular maintenance



- ☀ More lookout points along entire waterfront (including trails)
- ☀ Enhance lookout and vista opportunities – create pedestrian connections to them
- ☀ Natural seating (non-varnished)
- ☀ Many more memorial benches everywhere
- ☀ More benches under shade trees
- ☀ Benches; need to upgraded or replaced
- ☀ Benches; seek sponsorship from individuals families, clubs for new builds and/or up keep
- ☀ New benches and gazebos on newly extended boardwalk

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis Inventory Walks

- ☀ Old benches of varying sizes and shapes along the waterfront
- ☀ A majority of benches utilized particularly during the sunset
- ☀ Opportunity to develop areas of conversation with multiple areas to sit
- ☀ A busy environment where people enjoy to meet

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

- ☀ Areas where the general population prefer to sit and chat
- ☀ Existing sitting areas that could be enhanced both aesthetically and by adding additional seating areas





☰ *Dog playing in the water on North Shore Park, 2012*

Dogs On Beaches



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The Waterfront Adhoc recognizes that forward thinking and open minded communities are in favour of being all inclusive, and this supports a policy of being inclusive of dog owners.

We recognize our dog owners and their families cherish time spent walking with their dogs along the waterfront, and having their dogs swim in the lake.

To respect the needs of all waterfront users we believe a blend of designated dog friendly areas; combined with restrictions in respect of municipal beaches with such restrictions being based upon historically high use areas, times of the year, and times of the day will provide our community with a balanced and workable solution for all.

We recommend acceptance of the following recommendations.

- ☼ Include some or all of the items contained below, within a new Waterfront By-law
- ☼ Include a provision in the By-law that requires dog owners to maintain care and control of their animals, and to use a leash at all times except where an off-leash area is designated



- ☀ Include, if an amendment is required to existing By-laws, a provision permitting dogs on leash on all sidewalks and designated walking trails along the waterfront
- ☀ Include an Etiquette Guide on waterfront signage highlighting as a minimum the following requirements in respect of dogs and their owners
 - a. be courteous and respectful by recognizing not everyone likes dogs
 - b. keep your dog away from children, and other adults unless an adult indicates they wish to be in proximity to your dog
 - c. be especially diligent when your dog is off-leash in the designated dog park
 - d. use the stoop and scoop method always
 - e. respect all waterfront users' rights of enjoyment
- ☀ Facilitate the installation of plastic bag dispensers and garbage containers with dog rules and etiquette signage at most waterfront access points, with an emphasis on heavily used areas; and encourage donation of plastic bags by veterinarians and pet supply businesses and others who may place advertising on the bags as an inducement to donate
- ☀ Provide positive supporting signage at the designated areas and other signage along the waterfront to point to the designated areas

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

Many other communities in North America have progressive policies to balance the rights and opportunities of dog owner families with those persons who dislike sharing public space with dogs or who have a fear of dogs.

Most of the reasons cited in objection of dogs in public spaces are manageable such as risk of attack (leash rules); feces (managed by poop and scoop and fines); or unfounded, like dog urine dangerously contaminates water or sand (in water, it is disbursed harmlessly – in sand, it is filtered and evaporated).

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

The issue of dogs and their place at the waterfront and in particular at our municipal beaches has been a contentious issue for decades.

It is not uncommon for citizen's views to be found on extremes with favouring total prohibition of dogs in public waterfront space on the one hand; and persons advocating unlimited access for dogs to waterfront areas on the other hand.



Neither such extreme position is appropriate or viable for Saugeen Shores. The Waterfront Adhoc believes that dogs, their owners and the general public can harmoniously share the waterfront in clearly delineated areas and times.

The Waterfront Adhoc also believes that during peak use periods, that dogs and their owner families must have a lower priority on heavily used municipal beaches.

The Waterfront Adhoc also believes that no “one size fits all” rule is appropriate for the waterfront areas in each of the designated zones in this report.

Some zones require virtually no restrictions on dogs and other zones require a common sense balancing of opportunity, obligation, and respect for others. In the recommendations above, the Waterfront Adhoc is of the view that it has formulated a reasonable protocol and process for reconsidering the current dog/waterfront status quo which frequently involves individual dog owning families exercising personal judgment as to what access is appropriate as the existing prohibitions are routinely ignored.

REFERENCES

*Gobles Grove-Saugeen Beach Road at lot 237 and former boat launch ramp
Port Elgin; to the west of the harbour boat launch
Southampton; to the west of Pioneer Park
Hilton Head Beach Regulations*





☰ *Example of potential fire pit design*

Fire Pits

WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The Waterfront Adhoc envisions a series of municipally planned, sited, constructed and in some cases supervised fire pits and related seating areas located throughout the waterfront, which may be made available to persons meeting the requirements of use at each such fire pit area.

The Waterfront Adhoc envisions that some fire pits would be located in high pedestrian traffic tourist areas such as Port Elgin Main Beach to North Shore Park, and Pioneer Park and be available on a first come, first served basis.

The use of the fire pits may incorporate some of the following concepts:

- ☼ The fire pit areas will be of uniform design and construction and will utilize fireproof bases, and manufactured steel. Rules of use shall be signposted at each fire pit area.
- ☼ The fire pit areas will generally be situated in areas characterized by close road access and parking, and where lighting, water and washroom facilities are available. Signage will clearly state fire pit rules of use. Consideration may be given to publically identify and sign posted camera surveillance (for use after the fact if required).



- ☀️ Persons breaching the fire pit agreement or rules will be prohibited from attending fire pit areas for a period of time.
- ☀️ Such other policies and procedures as may be deemed advisable to maximize the proper, safe and lawful use of the fire pit areas.

It is hoped that the creation of multiple community fire pit areas will reduce the number of spontaneous bonfires which regularly occur at present on public property along the waterfront.

WE HEARD From our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

We heard from some of the boaters that use the Port Elgin Harbour, that it would be nice to have an area off the dock to sit with friends and/or family (and within a reasonable walking distance from the docks).

WE SAW From our Destination-Zone Analysis

We observed numerous areas along the waterfront where there had been fire pits.

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

Fire pits and related seating areas can be a useful and a welcome amenity for the community. At present fire pits are not legal on public property in Saugeen Shores, and fire pits on private property are restricted to those used for cooking. (By-law particulars to be determined).

The Waterfront Adhoc is of the view that properly constructed; situated, monitored, supervised and clean fire pit areas can provide quality enjoyment for families and community groups that will enhance the use of the waterfront area. The Waterfront Adhoc proposes similarly designed fire pit enclosures for use throughout the community.

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

Consultation with Police, Fire, Ambulance, By-law Enforcement and other affected municipal employees/departments will be required to craft reasonable and workable policies and procedures and rules governing the use of the fire pit areas; as will a municipal By-law amendment be required.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths And Weaknesses

We did feel that control and maintenance of fire pits could present the Town with some concerns as well as additional manpower and maintenance.





☰ *Example of existing partnership at Gravenhurst Muskoka Wharf*

Financial/Partnering



WE RECOMMEND Short and Long Term Goals

The municipality;

- ☀ Creates a By-law that designates the “waterfront” as a single park.
- ☀ A percentage of reserved fund revenue such as monies received “in lieu of parkland” are allocated to the waterfront park.

WE HEARD From Our Open Houses, Speakers and Surveys

Residents are concerned with increased taxation to pay for improvements to the waterfront.

Council and the administration are continually under pressure to hold or reduce services during budget deliberations. This is not likely to change and will require different funding models.

WE SAW From Our Destination-Zone Analysis

Many destinations and projects that will require varying amounts of money to create new and rehabilitate older structures, washrooms, parking and lighting to name a few.



Each of these projects should be categorized and prioritized in to three funding groups such as;

1. Greater than a million dollars
2. More than a hundred thousand dollars
3. Less than a hundred thousand dollars

WE REVIEWED The Best Practices

Potential Funding Sources

Some municipalities include thoughts of public and private sector investment appropriate for waterfront locations needed to develop new facilities and enhance existing facilities to achieve their vision for the waterfront and its related economic benefits. There is no certainty that funding will be awarded and various programs have limits to the amount of funds that are available, there are a number of potential funding sources. Saugeen Shores should continue to investigate all potential funding sources including a range of government programs which are or may become available (e.g. Ontario Trillium Foundation, Canada Infrastructure Fund and Canada Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund)

Public/Private Partnerships

Public and private partnerships may also be an approach to achieve specific objectives. The municipality is encouraged to consider such an approach on certain lands along the waterfront within the Harbour area. Muskoka Wharf is an example of a public/private funding and development model. Other examples include expanding and rejuvenating the already operating waterfront facilities (e.g. The Station).

WE LEARNED By Reading Reports, Publications and Attending Workshops and Seminars

Municipal Initiatives

The Municipality could employ a number of financial incentives to help pay for the cost of rehabilitating lands and buildings especially at the Harbour Area and high traffic beach usage areas. Additional potential tools used to facilitate development include environmental study grants, development charge exemptions and/or grants through community improvement plans. The Green Municipal Fund, established by the federal government and managed by FCM, is another potential funding source for our storm drain issues such as feasibility studies, field tests and sustainable community



plans up to a maximum of \$350,000. Our Municipality could also set aside funds in its general operating budget to cover the costs for redevelopment in the Port Elgin main beach and harbour area especially for land acquisition.

Fund-Raising

Saugeen Shores can partner with user groups to raise funds for the development of the Saugeen Shores Waterfront. The specifics of each partnership should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Donations/Volunteers

Saugeen Shores can provide opportunities for private citizens and groups to provide cash donations for benches, bricks, trees and other amenities throughout the waterfront parks system. Volunteers may also be used to implement parts of the Waterfront Master Plan.

Naming Opportunities and Corporate Sponsorships Naming of specific elements addressed within the Waterfront Master Plan should follow the established Council approved policies. Corporate sponsors are an excellent vehicle for promoting and providing a funding source for our 18km of waterfront. The “Lookout” near Pegasus Trail on Miramichi Bay is an example of one that can be built with corporate or private sponsors for under \$10,000. The Plan further identifies several opportunities to add others along the waterfront as the 18km of connecting trail is developed.

WE DISCUSSED Our Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength within our municipality that has proven time and time again is our volunteers who can accomplish plenty when provided the opportunity. A weakness is there is a perceived reluctance to employ private/public partnership programs which could both secure a high class venture and maintain public access/use.

REFERENCES

Works Cited;

Oshawa Waterfront Master Plan



Governing Policy

The Department of Community Services and the Public Works Department is jointly responsible for the maintenance of the waterfront for a number of years. Regular maintenance items are done routinely by the designated departments. The existing operation appears to be operating relatively smoothly, however, there appears to be a concern from the public on the effectiveness for identifying issues at the waterfront and with whom they need to deal when there are issues, concerns and/or questions related to the waterfront. It has been strongly suggested that there is a need to have a designated staff person/department head that oversees and coordinates the operations at the waterfront and deals with communication when it comes in inquiries and/or concerns.



Conclusions

The Town of Saugeen Shores' waterfront is an abundant resource that provides residents and visitors with an array of waterfront experiences. As the demand for these experiences increases, it is imperative that Saugeen Shores provides a sustainable Waterfront Master Plan to ensure the waterfront is enjoyed forever. The ever changing ecosystem of the waterfront can, at times, cause frustration with those who wish to ensure future generations have the opportunity to enjoy the waterfront setting in the same way they once did.

It is imperative that it is recognized that the existing waterfront is not a desirable entity in its current state. The investments proposed within this Plan will strategically place Saugeen Shores as a desirable waterfront destination. The continued maintenance and enhancements will ensure that the waterfront is enjoyed for generations to come.



Next Step

That Council deems the waterfront as an economic driver and invests in the future growth and improvements to lead it forward as a desirable destination.

With the adoption of a Waterfront Master Plan, it is advisable that Saugeen Shores Council develop a Waterfront Advisory Committee to commence the implementation process of the Waterfront Master Plan. This Committee should become part of the selection process that is coordinated every two years with members being selected by the Striking Committee.

Due to the fact that this Plan is being launched in 2013, it is recommended that a Waterfront Advisory Committee be selected immediately by the Striking Committee. It is also recommended that a member of the Parks and Trails Advisory Committee be positioned to liaise on the Waterfront Advisory Committee to ensure communication and continuity between both Committees. Future consideration for the long term should be reviewed to determine if the Waterfront and the Parks and Trails Advisory be amalgamated in moving forward after a majority of the work has been completed from the Waterfront Master Plan.



