



The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle

To: Mayor and Members of Council

Prepared by: Kevin Miller, Deputy Clerk

Department: Administration

Date of Report: July 2, 2020

Report Number: AD-08-2020

Subject: Small Cost Waterfront Experience – phasing and financing

Recommendation

That the Report of the Deputy Clerk regarding the Small Cost Waterfront Experience dated July 2, 2020 BE RECEIVED; and that Council:

1. Authorize administration to move forward with the necessary plans to implement Phase 2A and 2B as outlined in the report;
2. Authorize administration to take the necessary steps to implement the financial plan as outlined in the report; and,
3. Proceed with public consultation as outlined in the report.

Report

The purpose of this Report is to outline for Council the recommended components for phase 2 of the Small Coast Waterfront Experience project. As Council will recall, this \$50M project was submitted under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Community Culture and Recreation Stream Multi-Purpose Category grant.

Unfortunately, the Town was not selected as an approved project. As a result, the Town will now turn its attention to determining how to move forward with the project in a phased manner.

Phase 1 of the project included the acquisition of the lands needed to complete the vision. Seven additional properties have been secured and together, with the existing holdings, will provide for a waterfront park of approximately 65 Acres. Recognizing that the grant did not come to fruition, phase 2 will focus on how to implement the overall concept plan in a phased, financially responsible approach.

As background, Council will recall that the LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront Experience is intended as a connected, multi- amenity environment (refer to figure 1 – overall concept site plan). The individual components will offer a mix of uses for both indoor and outdoor programming. These components also offer a wide range of venue sizes for even greater programming and use potential. But most importantly, when assembled together on this site, the resultant activity hub will act as a social condenser and a symbol of community pride. The key components of this fully accessible project will be:

Festival Event Lawn

LaSalle currently holds numerous festivals year-round. One of the most significant events that has taken place is the annual Strawberry Festival. This project will make the event lawn more conducive for future events. It will relieve flooding concerns and offer appropriate inclement weather solutions such as the paved hardscape of the Event Plaza, and use of the indoor Event Centre.

Event Centre

The existing dry boat storage structure (approximately 30,000 square feet) will be converted into a multi-purpose Event Centre to host seasonal events such as farmer's markets, art and craft fairs, etc. These multi- purpose spaces collectively form a cultural hub envisioned as a space where social, recreational, commercial and learning opportunities merge. A new Event Plaza and hardscape area will be developed immediately west of the building to facilitate indoor and outdoor year-round event opportunities. The Event Plaza is ideally located immediately next to the Festival Event Lawn offering both hard and soft surfaces for events.

Recreational Water Feature

As part of the larger site, the former marina has approximately 1600 lineal feet of boat slip space. The slip area would be upgraded, with a portion of the total length potentially being used for transient recreational boaters. The remaining portion of the existing marina slip space will be converted to a recreational Water Feature. This feature will be adaptable for a variety of uses from a winter skating rink, to summer fountain, or for use by remote-control sailboat clubs, as an example. This area is also being explored as a potential component of the storm water management system.

Community Centre

The community centre will be used for social, cultural, and recreational purposes such as rental space for private functions, community fundraising events, or private celebrations/birthdays. One of the important features of this component will be the beautiful scenic views of the Heritage Detroit River and Fighting Island. This Centre

will be constructed to increase space and event opportunities within the Town of LaSalle.

Leisure Zones and Sport Zones

Ready and able to sustain a variety of uses, from family gatherings under a canopy to a leisurely walk in the snow, these large open passive spaces will deliver much-needed opportunities for reconnecting to the land. The project proposes Leisure Zones which offer multi-purpose passive areas for visitors, individuals, family or community use. These spaces will provide open green areas lined with indigenous plants and trees and form a crucial transition between the active spaces (Sport Zone, Festival Event Lawn and Event Plaza) and the nature preserve and shoreline. From a fitness perspective, the hub will continue to offer formal sport opportunities including baseball, tennis, children's play zone and an outdoor water feature.

Natural Preserve Zone

Working with the Essex Regional Conservation Authority and in partnership with the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup (DRCC), and the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER), LaSalle will seek to preserve the natural marsh areas present on the site. This will include a conservation design which will protect, but also showcase, these regional jewels.

Trails, Markers and Beacons

Through fully accessible meandering paths, a riverwalk, and new bridges over the water and promenades, the main open spaces will be interconnected with the buildings and facilities across the entire hub. Trail Heads will mark key points along the routes offering information about each stop. Designated paths will be designed for emergency vehicle safety to allow first responders vehicle access out towards the water's edge. Two beacons are proposed at the ends of Laurier Drive and Bouffard Road at the water's edge. These fully accessible spaces are meant to draw visitors to the water and are envisioned as look-out constructs. They will offer weather station information, wildlife watching, and magnificent vistas, as well as learning opportunities to showcase energy saving and carbon reduction best practices.

Waterfront/Shoreline

This natural and man-made shoreline will be preserved and enhanced for its current use as a point of contact with the river's edge. Future generations will benefit from the commitment to keep and maintain it as a part of the Heritage River waterway.

Historic Zone

The Historic Zone will focus on heritage and cultural aspects through the restoration of a 1920's built home, which was the original home constructed and owned by the first Mayor of LaSalle. Functioning as the new LaSalle Historical Heritage House/Museum, the facility will house important dioramas, archives, artefacts, and exhibits showcasing LaSalle's rich culture and history.

Relocated Boat Launch

There is a shortage of publicly owned boat launches that are available with direct access to the Detroit River and therefore this launch needs to be maintained for community use. This busy and important municipal service will be more appropriately relocated so as to relieve vehicle congestion within the site. This will relieve safety concerns and free-up the central greenspace by eliminating the large truck/trailer parking area. Its new location will offer a unique conceptual connection to LaSalle's past as it will be situated at the site of a former Rum-Running boat dock. This location will offer another historical layer to the information and exhibits to be found within the Heritage House.

Technology/Innovation

Power (using best practices wherever possible to utilize renewable energy sources) will be ubiquitously provided throughout the site to offer users an opportunity to "plug-in" so as to not hinder future use, but to remain future-proof. Additionally, the individual components of the activity hub and waterfront experience will be seamlessly connected to data points situated throughout the site. Whether the final solution is an app or a series of in-situ devices, the site will offer interactive kiosk and locational information at buildings, Learning Markers, and Trail Heads. Visitors and users will be connected to cultural/historical data, component-specific information, and real-time environmental metrics.

Together, and along with the Heritage House, these amenities will enhance user experience by providing a much-needed activity hub waterfront environment. These shared and multi-faceted spaces are meant to encourage social and communal connections - where members of the community, regardless of age, gender, religion, or race, are able to share and participate in activities unique to LaSalle. It is intended that the site will be designed in such a manner as to accommodate and adapt to both current and future forms of accessibility/mobility needs.

The hub will feature an interactive web-based portal for visitor and community use. This portal will tie every component of the project together into a single unified voice offering information on schedules, upcoming events, and key data about the health and

sustainable features of the site. This will allow users to actively engage in the site and provide greater accessibility both on and off-site.

As can be seen from the above, this ambitious project encompasses many different elements. In the absence of senior levels of government funding, it will take the Town a number of years to fully complete. As a starting point, the following are recommended to be included as part of Phase 2. For reasons that will be explained further in this report, phase 2 will be broken into 2 components (refer to figure 2 for lands included in phase 2A and 2B).

Phase 2A of the project is proposed to include:

- Renovation of the former boat storage building into an event Centre. JPT architects have been working with administration, and subject to Council approval, could be ready to tender by the end of 2020 with a 5-6 month construction timeframe. Attached to the report as figures 1-3 are conceptual renderings of the building. It is noted that the orientation of the interior layout is still under review.
- Event plaza outside of the Centre. This area is proposed with a new hard surface together with an access route to Front Road.
- Level grade and seed in and around the Event Centre.
- Renovation of the Benoit house to a heritage house/museum. JPT architects is currently preparing some preliminary concepts for the renovations, required infrastructure, and a budget. It is anticipated that the renovations will also proceed in a phased manner given the costs to renovate the entire house and coach house. Administration will also be providing Council a subsequent report on the operating model for the house.
- Construction of a new parking lot between the Event Centre and the Heritage House/Museum. It is intended that the access to parking will be via the Ulster Street extension.
- Extension of Ulster St. westerly to access new parking area.
- Upgrade of existing courts (i.e. tennis, basketball, volleyball). Administration has completed a review of the existing facilities and identified the investment that would be required for each facility to extend their life until they are replaced in as part of a future phase.
- Construction of pedestrian linkage on the site
- Commence Master Drainage Study. Administration has had 2 preliminary meetings with Stantec to discuss a work program to undertake a Master Drainage Study along the Detroit River. This study will also proceed in phases commencing with the central part of the municipality including the park area. With the Town making investments of this magnitude, it is important that attention be

given to the flooding that has been occurring in the community. The study will address not only flooding in the park, but also address the impact of flooding on residential and commercial properties along the Detroit River. In discussions with Stantec, it has been stressed that it is important that phase 2A move forward in 2021 with phase 2B sometime soon thereafter. Recognizing the time required to finalize the drainage study, and other environmental studies it was deemed appropriate to break phase 2 into two components. In addition to the drainage study, Stantec will assist the Town in completing the necessary studies and permitting that will be required for work adjacent to the waterfront/wetlands. Administration anticipates a work plan and costing to complete the studies in the coming days. The cost of the studies will be included in the financial model.

Phase 2B of the project is proposed to include the following:

- Construction of a new boat launch and parking area. Subject to the findings of the environmental studies and permits, the new launch would be installed to access the existing marina slip.
- In order to provide for the new parking area, substantial fill will be required. Administration will seek out opportunities to obtain the fill at little or no cost to the Town.
- Removing existing boat launch and parking area. This will include level grade and seed the area and return this part of the park to green open space.
- Extend Ulster St. westerly to connect with boat launch parking.
- Install new break wall and remove slips from marina. Depending on the preliminary work by Stantec, some or all of this work may be completed as part of phase 2A.
- Proceed with the construction of the pump station, pending completion and findings of master drainage study.
- Construct central promenade. This elevated walkway will provide a key pedestrian link on the site, as well as functioning as a stormwater management/flooding tool.

Public consultation

Notwithstanding recommendations regarding the components for phase 2A and 2B there is still necessity to consult the public as to how the vision set out for the project can become a reality. Public consultation will focus on how the Event Centre should be programmed, what should be included in the heritage house/museum, what a new water feature could include, what new festivals could be held, and/or how we incorporate the cultural and natural heritage of the community. It will be important to gain an understanding from the community how these and many more questions are answered. The public input will help shape how the various components of the project are ultimately developed.

The timing of the consultation has been delayed due to the pandemic. However, plans are far enough along that public input would be the next logical step. Although Windsor/Essex is in stage 3, administration is looking to hold the consultation virtually and through an online questionnaire. It is proposed to release a short video each week over 5 or 6 weeks that highlight specific features of the project. The public will be encouraged to watch the videos and provide feedback and comments about the project. As part of the presentation of this report, the introductory video prepared by the communications officer will be shown to council. It is also proposed that a number of storyboards with a URL to connect to the project's webpage be prepared and displayed at public places to outline the nature of the project and solicit comments. At the conclusion of the public engagement, administration will summarize the comments and submit to council as part of an overall report.

Financial

The overall budget for phases 2A and 2B is approximately \$24M. This includes \$18M for park development with the balance for construction of the pump station and Ulster St. Currently, the pump station is estimated at approximately \$4M and the extension of Ulster St. and intersection improvements at \$2M. The cost of the studies will be included as part of the Master drainage study funding.

The funding for the park development will come from a combination of reserves/reserve funds and debt as outlined below.

Waterfront Project Phase 2 Cost **18,000,000**

Funding Sources:

Federal Gas Tax	4,500,000
Pedestrian Safety Reserve	500,000
Development Charges	1,000,000
2021 Debt Issuance (20 years at 2.2%)	7,000,000
2022 Debt Issuance (5 years at 1.3%)	<u>5,000,000</u>
Total Funding	<u>18,000,000</u>

It is recommended that the \$12M of debt be broken into 2 time periods. \$7M would be issued over 20 years and the remaining \$5M would be issued over 5 years. In endorsing this approach, \$5M would become available every 5 years to reinvest in future phases of the project. As previously noted, in the absence of grants, this project will take numerous years to complete. This financial strategy will provide a funding envelope to continue with future phases (refer to figure 3).

Outlined below is the impact of the project on the Operating Budget.

**Waterfront Project Phase 2
Operating Budget Impact**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+
\$7M debt issuance (20 year debt at 2.2%)	-	220,000	440,000	440,000	440,000
\$5M debt issuance (5 year debt at 1.3%)	-	-	550,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
	-	220,000	990,000	1,540,000	1,540,000
Allocation from master plan reserve			235,000	385,000	
2020 master plan build-up annual allocation	355,000	355,000	355,000	355,000	355,000
2021 master plan build-up annual allocation		200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
2022 master plan build-up annual allocation			200,000	200,000	200,000
2023 master plan build-up annual allocation				400,000	400,000
2024 master plan build-up annual allocation					385,000
allocation of surplus funding to master plan reserve	(355,000)	(335,000)			
Total	-	220,000	990,000	1,540,000	1,540,000
Opening master plan reserve balance	500,000	855,000	1,190,000	955,000	570,000
2020 impact on master plan reserve	355,000				
2021 impact on master plan reserve		335,000			
2022 impact on master plan reserve			(235,000)		
2023 impact on master plan reserve				(385,000)	

2024 impact on master plan reserve

2025 impact on master plan reserve

Closing master plan reserve balance	855,000	1,190,000	955,000	570,000	570,000
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Estimated impact on tax rate

200,000

200,000

400,000

385,000

Estimated tax rate impact

0.56%

0.53%

1.00%

0.92%

With respect to the pump station/master plan study, this component will be funded through the annual storm sewer reserve. The extension of Ulster will be funded through the annual road reconstruction reserve. It is noted that sufficient funding is available for this project with no direct impact on the tax rate.

Based on all of the above, it is recommended that Council endorse the phasing and financial plan and authorize administration to proceed to implement the elements in part of phase 2.

The immediate work would include:

- Finalize plans for Event Centre and issue tender. It is anticipated that this work would be completed by mid 2021. This would include the Event Plaza and access routes.
- Commence design of parking area between Event Centre and Museum,
- Commence design for the extension of Ulster St.
- Commence design of pedestrian linkages on site
- Subject to review of work plan and cost – engage Stantec to commence master drainage study (with phase 1 of the plan focusing on the central portion of the Town)
- Commence environmental studies and review of permitting required to bring on phase 2B
- Commence design of renovations for the Heritage house
- Finalize details for upgrade of existing facilities

Consultations

Public Works

Finance

Corporate Communications and Promotions Officer

Financial Implications

The financial implications are set out in the Report.

Prepared By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Miller', with a stylized, cursive script.

Deputy Clerk

Kevin Miller

Link to Strategic Goals

	Enhancing organizational excellence
Yes	Sustain strong public services and infrastructure
Yes	Strengthen the community's engagement with the Town
Yes	Grow and diversify the local economy
Yes	Build on our high-quality of life

Communications

	Not applicable
Yes	Website
Yes	Social Media
Yes	News Release
Yes	Local Newspaper
	Bids & Tenders
	Notification pursuant to the Planning Act

Notifications

Name	Address	Email

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	AD-08-2020 - Small Cost Waterfront Experience - phasing and financing .docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront Experience - Site Plan - Figure 1.pdf- LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront Experience Figure 2_.pdf- LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront Experience - Financial Model - Figure 3.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 17, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Chief Administrative Officer

Joe Milicia