



The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle

To: Mayor and Members of Council

Prepared by: Kevin Miller, Deputy Clerk (for application team)

Department: Administration

Date of Report: November 1, 2019

Report Number: AD-15-2019

Subject: LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront Experience Grant Application

Recommendation

That the report of the Deputy Clerk dated November 1, 2019 (AD-15-2019) regarding the LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront Experience Application and presentation BE RECEIVED.

Report

The purpose of this report is to highlight the key components of the Town's application for the "Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program". This program is intended to create long-term economic growth, build inclusive, sustainable and resilient communities, and support a low carbon economy. The Province is a cost sharing partner in these programs. The cost sharing formula for the program is 40% Federal; 33.33% Provincial and 26.67 Applicant (municipal). This intake – the Community, Culture and Recreation funding stream, is intended to support projects that improve access to and/or quality of community, cultural and recreational priority infrastructure projects. Priority will be given to projects that are community-oriented, non-commercial and open to the public. All projects within the program must be completed prior to March 31, 2027.

Petite Côte, or "Small Coast," is the original name of the region that became the Town of LaSalle. It was named Petite Côte after the land was claimed by France in 1749. The area was populated largely by French families, though First Nations populations had already been living on the land for many years. In the French tradition, the land was divided into narrow strip farms that reached the Detroit River. The land lacked dense forest, which made it ideal for farming. Petite Côte is therefore one of the oldest farming communities in Ontario. By the end of the eighteenth century, the land was becoming infertile and farming was challenging. Thus, the fur trade was also extremely important

to the local economy. Petite Côte was later renamed LaSalle after the French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, who sailed extensively through the Great Lakes.

The application is centred on a rejuvenation of the expanded Front Road Park. The main objectives of the application include creating:

- a year-round Activity Hub with multi-purpose amenities centered around our Heritage Waterfront
- an authentic site capturing the history and culture of LaSalle showcasing our Indigenous, French and English cultures
- a user-friendly, accessible environment with multiple recreational opportunities
- a sustainable environment using energy-efficient design for the betterment of our climate and to address rising water level

The LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront Experience is a connected, multi-amenity environment. 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 (refer to attached site plan) 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 as it will relief flooding concerns and offer appropriate inclement weather solutions such as the paved hardscape of the Event Plaza.

Event Centre

The existing dry boat storage structure will be converted into a multi-purpose Event Centre to host seasonal events, 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 Town owns a current marina with approximately 1600 lineal feet of boat slip space. The slip area would be upgraded with a portion of the total length 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 winter skating rink to summer fountain or for use by remote-control sailboat clubs, as an example.

Community Centre

The community centre will be used for social, cultural, or 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.

University of Windsor's Freshwater Restoration Ecology Centre at the Riverdance Building

The existing University of Windsor's Freshwater Restoration Ecology Centre at the Riverdance Building, located right near the shores of the Heritage Detroit River, provides faculty and students with state-of-the-art technology to study the restoration of damaged ecosystems, invasive species biology, and water quality of the Detroit River along with the Great Lakes. The Centre currently contains 14 tanks and two swim tunnels to conduct cutting-edge research. It intends to be a hub for environmental research, with plans to expand their educational program to include live fish exhibit opportunities, as one example.

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 two Leisure Zones which offer multi-purposes passive areas for visitor, individual, 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 swimming pool within the Sport Zone.

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 conservation design which will protect but also showcase these regional jewels.

Trails, Markers and Beacons

Through fully accessible meandering paths, a riverwalk, 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 Rd 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. Through discussions with the applicable agencies, the Town will explore opportunities to create new fish habitat building on the successes of the Sturgeon Habitat that was created in the mid-2000's on the south side of the site. Future generations will benefit from our steadfast will to keep and maintain it as a part of the Heritage River waterway. Upgrades will be completed to ensure it will endure time and small interventions to facilitate special events related to our history as observed during our "Rendezvous Voyageur" event which commemorated our land's founding inhabitants.

Historic Zone

The Historic Zone will focus on heritage and cultural aspects through the restoration of a 1920's built home that was the original home that was constructed and owned by the first Mayor of LaSalle. The Town will explore the option to designate this property under the Ontario Heritage Act so that it becomes a permanent and treasured fixture of the site. Functioning as the new LaSalle Historical Heritage House, the facility will house important dioramas, archives, artefacts and exhibits showcasing LaSalle's rich culture and history. The Heritage House/Archives will be the first "museum type" facility in the Town.

The new activity hub provides an environment where all members of the community have access to the history and cultural significance of LaSalle's waterfront. As displayed by our recent "Rendezvous Voyageur" (Fall 2019) weekend festival held at this site, the Town of LaSalle is committed to outreach, education, and presentation of their founding heritage. This includes the contributions of First Nations, Métis and French Peoples to the development of the community. The Detroit River was used by early French explorers as a primary means of travel to help establish trading routes, settlement areas, and resource gathering. Many of these explorers relied greatly on Indigenous tribes in order to navigate the unknown territory of the Great Lakes region. This proposed site along the waterfront played a role in the historical birth and development of the early populations of this "Small Coast".

The project will represent its Indigenous past through events like "Rendezvous Voyageur" and permanent exhibits at the Museum. Additionally, key Learning Kiosk locations such as the Experience Markers, Beacons and Trail Heads will supplement the broader work of the Museum. This will be crucial in providing "on-the-ground" information; offering relevant facts based on actual position/location on the site.

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. Waterway metrics will be coordinated with the Riverdance Fish Facility already located on the site. Riverdance forms part of the University of Windsor's Great Lakes

Institute for Environmental Research conducting research on our local waterways, species, and habitat.

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 signal unified voice offering information on schedules and 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.

Accessibility

The structures that are to be constructed or rehabilitated will be completely accessible as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Accessible Design for the Built Environment guide and the Ontario Building Code (OBC). Entrances, signage, and washrooms will be fully barrier-free. There will be accessible parking spaces, sidewalks, pathways, curbed ramps leading to all amenities, and a barrier-free playground

The project will demonstrate innovative solutions for greater accessibility by incorporating wide paved paths connecting the designated zones and barrier-free bridges over water inlets and wetlands. Sidewalks, curbs, and crosswalks at the surrounding streets and promenades will feature the most up-to-date Accessible Pedestrian Signalling (APS) devices which provide auditory, visual, and tactile information. Buildings, both new and existing, will be completely barrier-free. This includes restrooms and signage. Trail Heads and Learning Markers will use advanced technology, in all accessible formats, for presenting information about the activity hub as a whole and about the River, landscape, and its history.

The project envisions an Observation Deck with a lift/elevator to ensure that all residents, regardless of age or mobility, can fully take advantage of the 360 degree view of the magnificent vistas, Detroit River and surrounding areas. 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.

Public Consultation

Notwithstanding the key objectives as outlined in the application, public consultation will still play a major component in the final development of the site. As shown on the site plan, the enlarged property is divided into numerous zones. The grant would allow for the main infrastructure to be put in place i.e. Event Centre and Plaza, Community Centre, Heritage House, bridges and trails, waterfront beacons etc. but, how each zone eventually develops will be based on input that is received from the community. This is intended to be a unique activity hub rooted in the rich history of LaSalle; so engaging the public will be an important part of the overall development of the site. It is anticipated that the public engagement process will commence in the early to mid-part of 2020.

Property Acquisition

As council is aware, the Town is in the process of acquiring four additional properties adjacent to the existing park. The application has been developed on the basis that the additional properties will ultimately be incorporated into the overall area of the new activity hub. These lands are at varying stages of acquisition and it is anticipated that all the lands will be in municipal ownership by the mid-2020. However, in the event that one or more of the properties remain in private ownership, the project would need be amended accordingly.

Consultations

Application Team

J. Milicia – CAO;
L. Silani – Director of Strategic Initiatives;
P. Marra – Director of Public Works;
D. Langlois – Director of Finance;
G. Ferraro – Manager of Finance;
P. Funaro – Manager of Recreation & Culture;
D. Hadre – Communication and Promotions Officer; and,
JP Thomson Architects

Financial Implications

As outlined at the outset of the report, the Town will be required to cover approximately 27% of the total project cost. Attached to this report is a cost estimate of the project. Based on a total project cost of \$48.5M, the municipal share would be approximately \$13M. The Town would fund the municipal share through both reserves and the issuance of debt. As with all projects – both large and small – the Town undertakes a critical review of the financing model to ensure that the project is fiscally responsible.

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 Priorities

Yes	Expanding and diversifying our assessment base
Yes	Effectively communicating the activities and interests of the Town
Yes	Managing our human and financial resources in a responsible manner
Yes	Promoting and marketing LaSalle
Yes	Promote a healthy and environmentally conscious community

Communications

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

Notifications

Name	Address	Email

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	AD-15-2019.docx
Attachments:	- 19-103-Site Plans - Waterfront 1.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 8, 2019

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


Chief Administrative Officer

Joe Milicia