



***FUTURE OF THE
TRENT SEVERN WATERWAY
TOWNSHIP OF RAMARA
PANEL SUBMISSION***



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF RAMARA

Proud History - Progressive Future

Submission to the Panel on the Future of the Trent Severn Waterway

To Doug Downey, Chair

The Township of Ramara sits strategically on the Trent Severn Waterway between where the Talbot River flows into Lake Simcoe and where the Severn River flows north from Lake Couchiching. The Township's entire southern and western boundaries border the Trent Severn Waterway. Our shorelines are built out with cottages, homes, resorts, marinas, settlement areas and unique features.

The Township appreciates the opportunity of presenting this submission on the future of this historic waterway and wishes this panel the best in finding solutions to the numerous challenges being faced.

Background

The Township of Ramara is located within the County of Simcoe. We have a permanent population of approximately 9,200 that swells to 16,000 people in summer. The majority of our population resides along our approximate 79 kms. of shoreline, most of which borders the Trent Severn Waterway. We have settlement areas at Atherley, Bayshore Village, Lagoon City and Washago located along the waterway. Six commercial marinas dot the shoreline of Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching within the Township along with first class resorts like Fern Resort and numerous summer camps such as Geneva Park and the Ontario Leadership Camp. Ramara is definitely orientated toward its lakes and rivers and its land mass is divided between the Great Lakes lowlands and the Canadian Shield.

Rama Mnjikaning First Nation, Indian Reserve #32, is located within our boundaries which is home to Casino Rama. This casino attracts 15,000 persons daily.

Both the Reserve and the Township use the lakes as a source for potable water. The Reserve draws its water from Lake Couchiching for treatment, while the Township has two surface water treatment plants drawing water from Lake Simcoe. Lagoon City/Brechin water system services 1350 households and businesses. South Ramara water services 111 households. Water quality is vital to our residents.

We submit the following recommendations for the Panel's consideration.

Deteriorating Infrastructure

Lock 37 Dam

The waterway is showing its age in its deteriorating infrastructure. A drop in lock usage and more usage between locks is the result.

The Township is directly affected by the failure of the dam at Lock 37. It is currently in the environmental assessment stage of a long overdue repair. Our problem with this failing infrastructure is that our emergency services asked for an inundation study so that in the event of a flood we could quickly evacuate those living downstream in the event of a collapse. What did we get. A letter advising that the Trent Severn would provide an inundation study of the new dam. Such a study may be useful in 200 years, but our worry is the current failing dam.

As a result of persistence, we have now been promised the mapping for the existing dam but it has yet to be received. Your engineers don't perceive a problem with a catastrophic failure but the residents in the areas and local municipal emergency management must consider worst case scenarios.

Once the dam project is complete, it will be a much needed repair, but it is only one of many that is required. Each and every dam and lock requires a close inspection and funding to bring the waterway back to being a reliable system.

RECOMMENDATION

A long term plan to repair infrastructure with sustainable funding is a prerequisite to a safe and reliable waterway.

Bolsover Swing Bridge

Recently on July 27, 2007, we received notice of the closing of the swing bridge located at our border with the City of Kawartha Lakes. The bridge requires emergency repairs and will be out of service for 6 to 8 weeks. This closure will affect vehicular traffic movement and emergency response. Why is there no regular inspection program so that problems are discovered early and repairs completed in down times and not at the height of summer traffic?

RECOMMENDATION

Regular inspection of all infrastructures is required to develop a plan of renewal.

Deteriorating Locks

The deteriorating locks have resulted in many breakdowns, slowness in traversing locks and at times, closures. This has led to a canal system where a user cannot be assured of getting to where they are going in a required time frame. Such unreliability has led to less use of the locks and more use of the system between locks. Less use of the locks lead to less revenue.

RECOMMENDATION

Locks must be reliable and open longer hours to better serve the user.

Protecting Significant Historic Resources

The fish weirs at the Atherley Narrows is one of the oldest historic sites in Canada and probably the least known. It dates back 5000 years to the time of the pyramids and is a National Historic Site. Why isn't there an interpretation centre? Why isn't there a parking lot? Why isn't there boat docking facilities?

The majority of the 5.5 million people who attend Casino Rama annually, cross the Atherley bridge above the weirs. What a great place to introduce people to our proud native culture and introduce people to the historic Trent Severn Waterways.

The Township envisions an interpretation and visitor centre and has some land available for such a facility. A broad partnership involving Parks Canada, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, Mnjikaning First Nation, Ramara and others would be a huge benefit for the waterway.

RECOMMENDATION

That a broad partnership be formed between the federal government, provincial government, First Nation and local municipality to explore the development of an interpretation centre at one of the oldest historic sites in Canada, the 5000 year old fish weirs.

Communication With The Users

Many of the patrons using the waterway system are looking for things to do. Visiting historic sites, shopping, golfing, theatre, walking trails, etc. Directional signage to places of interest is required at all locks for boaters to see. Such signage would promote local businesses and local sites of interest and would provide options for our customers, the boaters, as they enjoy the waterway.

Costs need not be borne by the Trent Severn Waterway. Selling sign space could generate revenue. The TODD's signage experience by MTO is an example.

RECOMMENDATION

Investigate directional and advertising signage at each lock as a way to promote local places of interest and a way to raise revenue.

Communication With Municipalities

Communication with local government who abut the waterway system is also required. Spring and fall meetings between your staff and ours would be beneficial to all.

As an example, when you flush the canal at Lake Simcoe each spring, the debris and bacteria that has built up over the winter severely affects our South Ramara water plant. A couple of days notice would be beneficial to us to allow our staff to prepare.

Likewise when detours are put in place, whether planned or emergency, we take your bridge system with its low tonnage limit into account, but on occasion we have had to stop trucks from traversing your bridges, who want a quicker route. We can't be there all the time and likewise you don't have an operator at these bridges all the time. Biannual meetings would allow your staff to know what is happening in the area.

We are not suggesting individual meetings with each municipality, but with groupings of municipalities.

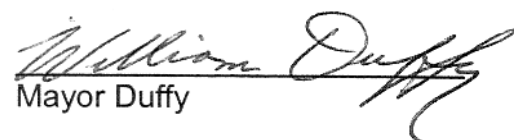
RECOMMENDATION


Hold biannual meetings with local municipalities to exchange information on items common to each party.

Conclusion

We have a historic waterway that with some planning, repair, improvement, promotion and co-operation amongst all stakeholders can become a major tourist attraction.

Thank you for your time and for listening.


Mayor Duffy


Richard P. Bates, B.A.S., C.E.T.
Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk

Presentation to the panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway

1. Introduction

2. Local Factors

- TWSP Geography
- TWSP Population distribution
- Jurisdictional Issues
 - Port Severn
 - Shoreline Management
- Competing Priorities
 - Waterway use
 - Logistics infrastructure
 - Crown Land Use

3. Panel posed questions

4. Conclusion/questions

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

A.	# of TSWP Households	5030
B	# of Port Severn Households (GBT)	602 (12% of A..)
C	# of TSW Households (GBT)	873 (17% of A..)
D	Total B and C Households (GBT)	1475 (29% of A.)
E	Water Access Householods on TSW (GBT)	291 (33% of C.)

NOTE: This is GBT side of waterway only

Future Household Distribution on TSW – **40%**

LEVELS OF TSW

