
From: "Paul Rexe"
To: <info@tswpanel.ca>
Sent: September 14, 2007 9:56 AM
Subject: comments for the panel

September 14, 2007

Sims Latham Associates,
170-1 Memorial Ave., Suite 157,
Orillia, Ontario
L3V 7M9

Mr. Douglas Downey,
Chair, and Members of The Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway

Lady and Gentlemen:

The Trent-Severn Waterway is a major success. Today it is one of the primary recreational attractions in central Ontario. Thousands of boaters and motorists visit the Waterway and its corridor each year to enjoy unrivalled fishing, cruising and scenery.

Year after year, the Trent-Severn Waterway, meandering 386 km along central Ontario, continues to create unique experiences. After each spring thaw, the Waterway's historic locks and canals open, linking a passageway so magnificent it has been named ³one of the finest interconnected systems of navigation in the world². Those who visit, reminisce long after leaving. They can't help but remember the impressive locks and lofty legends that make up one of Canada's most spectacular waterways.

Most Canals in North America do not charge for recreation boating. Exceptions are the Historic Canals in Ontario and the New York Canal System. In Ontario, user fees were introduced in 1978 to the Trent-Severn. They have been increased a number of times since then.

The New York Canal System up until 2005 had a user pay system for recreational boating. Then, the New York Canal Corporation Board recognized that recreational boating tolls were negatively affecting tourism and economic development and for the 2006 boating season, they waived recreational boating tolls in an effort to draw more tourists and vacationers to the 524-mile waterway. As a result of the increase in traffic, tourism and economic activity, they have also waived the tolls for the 2007 season.

Now, using the canal is free and in addition, tourists can relax and spend as much time as they want, visiting the villages, townships and cities along the entire length and exploring the canal communities. An economic analysis prepared for the New York Governor showed that there were significant increases in retail, attendance at historic attractions, antiquing and

dining.

How can we make recreation boating on the Trent-Severn Canal free, and pay for the operation and capital improvements to the system?

An analysis shows there are approximately 8,500 acres (34.4 square kilometres) of above-water Canal lands throughout the Trent-Severn Canal System. Some of the lands would be classified as retained canal lands. However, a majority of those lands would be classified as uncategorized. In New York State, it was found that slightly more than 60% of the New York Canal lands were uncategorized, that is not needed for canal operations.

Here in Ontario, a more in-depth parcel-by-parcel analysis should be conducted on the uncategorized lands of the Trent-Severn to determine potential adjacent uses and compatibilities. Then, a review of the potential revenue that could be derived from leasing the land for development could be undertaken.

The lands must remain in public hands for if sold, the revenue would go into general government revenues. However by leasing the land, the Canal could financially benefit from development. There are a number of parcels that could be leased to create the revenue needed for free recreational boating and operating expenses.

Members of the panel are asked to consider the feasibility of using uncategorized land for development purposes to contribute to the financial viability of the Canal.

Sims Latham Associates is contracted to prepare an economic development analysis for the eastern part of Simcoe County. Five of the local governments are impacted by the Trent-Severn Canal. A full economic development proposal should take into account canal lands that could be developed for the benefit of the region and the canal authority.

Paul Rexe, M.A., C. Dir.,
Associate,
Sims Latham Associates.