



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF PARKS, FACILITIES, RECREATION & CULTURE

MISSION STATEMENT: Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.

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To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Information Report for K. Walter Ranta Park Proposed Boat Ramp

1. RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that:

1. Council **RECEIVE** this report for information.

2. BACKGROUND:

K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park is a 6.9 hectare (17 acre) park located along the banks of the Detroit River. The park is a beautiful greenspace with rolling terrain, large trees, a parking lot and a playground. Parkland at this location was originally conveyed to the Township of Anderdon from Allied Chemical in August 1984. The conveyance of the deed was a "donation of parkland."

At one time the entire park consisted of two parcels as outlined under **Appendix A:**

The subject property is described as follows:

(Marina) Concession 1, Part Lot 28, RP12R-7626, Part 1
(Park Area) Concession 1, Part Lot 28, RP12R-7626, Part 2
Town of Amherstburg

The former Ranta Marina, now named River Canard Yacht Club, was sold by the Town of Amherstburg in 2010 to a numbered company, 1797530 Ontario Limited which ran the Marina for a number of years. Tax records indicate that, in 2017, the property was sold to another numbered company, 2562915 Ontario Limited and further, that in 2021, it was sold to its current owner, Jones Realty Inc. the current owner of the marina.

In 2022, Council began to receive correspondence and delegations from boaters in Amherstburg regarding fees charged for public boat launch as only a seasonal pass was available at River Canard Yacht Club for \$500. While fee for daily launch fees at Coopers Marina of \$15/day were deemed reasonable concerns with parking at that location were raised. Based on discussions with the owners of Rivard Canard Yacht Club, Jones Realty Inc., at that time they did not yet have infrastructure in place to support the general public accessing the launch in a controlled way.

In 2023, Jones Realty Inc. installed new infrastructure that currently allows the general public to use the boat launch for \$20 a day flat rate. Seasonal passes are still available to boaters with unlimited use and an occasional user launching only a few times a season can do so at the \$20 a day rate. In addition to this launch location, Coopers Marina continues to be available at a flat rate of \$15 a day.

In 2022 it was requested that Administration investigate the possibility of installing a public boat launch at K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park located directly south and abutting the Walter Ranta Marina.

Council Resolution 20220613-06 directed Administration to plan for a boat launch at K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park.

'Request for Public Boat Ramp at K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park - Rodney Ferris, AMA Sportsmens' Association Resolution

*Moved By Councillor McArthur
Seconded By Councillor Courtney*

That:

- 1. The delegation **BE RECEIVED**; and,*
- 2. Administration **BE DIRECTED** to plan for a boat ramp and water access at K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park inclusive of considerations for Provincial and Federal funding opportunities.*

The Mayor put the Motion.

Motion Carried'

It should be noted that no funding was identified or approved for this initiative at the time the resolution was made, and therefore only a high-level preliminary analysis was conducted. A subsequent report was brought forward to outline required studies needed to develop the park and the following resolution was made:

Council Resolution 20230523-004 stated:

- 1. That the delegation **BE RECEIVED**.*
- 2. Council **DIRECT** Administration to proceed with necessary Archeological Assessment, geotechnical and survey work required for re-development of K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park;*

3. Council **DIRECT** the studies be funded from the K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park Bequest Reserve to a maximum of \$170,000; and,

4. Council **DELEGATE** authority to the Chief Administrative Officer to award and issue purchase orders and or sign and execute any agreements or contracts as may be required to execute the scope of work for the Archeological Assessment, geotechnical and survey work including any soil sampling, satisfactory in financial content to the Chief Financial Officer, and in technical content to the Director of Parks, Facilities, Recreation and Culture.

3. **DISCUSSION:**

Administration issued an RFP to undertake a Stage 1 and Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment, which was completed in December 2023. The purpose of the assessment was to determine if the site was archeologically sensitive as this would have a grave impact on cost for construction and development of the park including any potential boat launch. Indigenous consultation was included as part of the assessment whereby participation from all First Nations was sought with feedback from both Caldwell First Nation and Huron-Wendat Nation.

The Stage 1 background study included a review of current land use, historic and modern maps, past settlement history for the area and consideration of topographic and physiographic features, soils and drainage. It also involved a review of previously registered archaeological resources within 1 km of the subject property and previous archaeological assessments within 50 m. The background study indicated that the property had potential for the recovery of archaeological resources due to the proximity (i.e., within 300 m) of features that signal archaeological potential.

The subject property consisted of some non-ploughable lands which were subject to Stage 2 assessment via standard test pit survey. Based on 19th-century maps and 20th-century aerial photographs, it was clear that a large portion of the parkland was comprised solely of fill that was placed within the wetlands that once existed on the property. The test pit assessment was thus limited to the area between the eastern boundary of the subject property and the original shoreline, as was clearly depicted in 20th-century aerial photographs. The initial test pits excavated demonstrated evidence of extensive and deep disturbance. As a result, it was deemed of low archaeological potential. However, if future impacts are planned within the Canard River, a Marine Archaeological potential checklist should be completed, and a marine archaeological assessment may be required.

Administration also hired an independent contractor to dig some test pits in areas of the park on the far west side of the site that exhibited large settlement holes. Four test pits were dug to identify the soil conditions, but nothing unusual was uncovered. The test pits remained dry and showed no signs of collapse or decomposing matter below the surface. Although the test pits showed no signs of collapse there was a higher than normal concentration of topsoil/loamy soils with lower bearing capacity in this vicinity and further testing and bearing capacity test will be required for erecting any type of building/ structure or roadway within these areas.

Potential Locations for a Boat Ramp at K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park

Administration investigated two locations within the park for a potential boat ramp access as indicated in **Appendix B**.

Option #1 – Depicts a long access drive 7.5M wide for in and out traffic with a boat ramp at the far west side of the park abutting the river. It also shows parking area large enough to accommodate 15 boat trailers for standard fishing boats.

Option #2 – Is located closer to the road and shows an enhancement to the existing parking area to accommodate boat trailers and regular vehicles visiting the park. This option would require dredging the canal that is owed by the Town and opening up the channel at the far end for access to the river. This option would also require rock revetment down both sides of the channel to mitigate erosion of the banks and control wake within the channel.

Administration reached out to experts in the field to obtain considerations for both options and if Council wishes to investigate the cost in more detail a proposal to do so has been attached as **Appendix C** for consideration.

Option #1 – Boat Ramp at the far West End of the Park along the River

This option offers launching directly into the channel that abuts the Detroit River. A long access drive/road would need to be constructed to facilitate access to the boat launch, parking area and the river. Currently the Town does not have any roadway access or parking close to the water. High level preliminary costs are outlined below to construct a roadway for access, boat launch and parking area with a turn around at this location. The timeline for this option is estimated to take approximately 2 years to complete pending required ministry studies and approvals.

	Description of Costs Associated with Option No. 1	Approx. Cost
	Topographical Survey of the entire park	\$20,000
	Soil testing, trucking and disposal of any contaminated fill and tipping fees required for contaminated excavated materials. Clean fill will remain on site. This cost is light considering there is approximately 4300 sq. meters of area impacted and we don't know the depths at which the fill would need to be excavated to support vehicular and truck traffic for the drive. Minimum depth based on current knowledge of the site indicate a minimum of 18" or more in some areas.	\$50,000 - \$100,000
	Labour and material to excavate the roadway and construct the turnaround and parking areas in gravel only approx. 4300 sq meters including the supply and placement of parking bumpers, signage, drainage and stormwater management controls.	\$375,000
	Construction of concrete boat launch ramp itself with wingwalls, including permits and stamped engineering drawings.	\$250,000

	Ministry Fish Study. This cost is approximate and could go up or down based on Option 1 or Option 2.	\$30,000
	Ministry fees/ approvals and permits (DFO, Federal Navigation Protection Program etc.)	N/A
	Supply all labour and material for the complete installation of an on-site gated monitoring system with payment options for boaters, not including ongoing subscription and software licencing fees required	\$85,000- \$100,000
	Site servicing electrical connection and internet connection for cameras (we would need to investigate cost of a meter and brining electrical service to the site there is not one currently on site).	N/A
	Overhead roadway lighting cameras and monitoring system, there is no lighting currently in the park.	\$280,000
	Dredging excavating and clearing of the boat launch approach at waters edge, disposal of excavated and potentially contaminated material. Costs are dependent on level of silt build up and amount of material that is required to be removed. Cost do not include ongoing maintenance and dredging required.	\$500,000
	Total Approximate Cost	\$ 1.6M

The costs outlined above are for a basic granular road access route, parking, turn around area and boat launch ramp. Additional costs, including but not limited to the following would require further investigation, to understand the capital investment required as well as increase to the operational budget to sustain operations:

- Site servicing including electrical, gas, sanitary and storm considerations
- Ministry studies, permits and approvals such as Fish Study and or approvals from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and or Federal Navigation Protection Program. There could be other requirements and costs associated with gaining approval from the above noted agencies.
- Ongoing maintenance costs for operation of the launch, system controls; payment management and monitoring access.

Additional staffing will be required to manage and operate this facility**

Option #2 – Boat Ramp Located Closer to Road using the Existing Canal

This option explores a boat launch located closer to the road and shows an enhancement to the existing parking area for the accommodation of boat trailers and regular vehicles visiting the park. Although this option avoids construction of a long access drive it would be the more costly option to construct due to the fact that it requires dredging the entire length of the canal. Cost include opening up the end of the canal that is currently closed and stabilizing the entire shoreline on both sides of the canal to mitigate erosion and control any wake within the channel. The far west portion of the canal is currently cut off from the river channel by an earth berm which would have to be removed to allow boat access. The approval process to attain permission (local, provincial and federal levels) may be extensive. Further studies, such as a Fish Study and compensation at a 2 – 1 ratio may be required. This option could take up to two years or more to complete pending ministry approvals and required studies.

	Description of Costs Associated with Option No. 2	Approx. Cost
	Topographical Survey of the entire park	\$20,000
	Soil testing, trucking and disposal of any contaminated fill and tipping fees required for contaminated excavated materials. Clean fill will remain on site. Area to be excavated 2865 square meters to expand existing parking area and access path.	\$50,000 - \$75,000
	Labour and material to excavate, place and compact granular 'A' to expand the existing parking area including short road to new boat launch, supply and placement of parking bumpers, signage, drainage and stormwater management controls.	\$280,000
	Labour and material to supply and install rock revetment along the entire length of the channel approx. 708 LM and open up the channel at the far west end of the site.	\$3 Million
	Dredging the entire channel 250LM including erosion control measures and disposal of contaminated fill. This cost could go up or down depending on the volume and concentration of contaminated fill, tipping, trucking and disposal fees. Not including ongoing dredging required	\$1.3 Million
	Construction of concrete boat launch ramp itself with wingwalls, including permits and stamped engineering drawings	\$250,000
	Ministry Fish study. This cost is approximate and could go up or down based on Option 1 or Option 2.	\$30,000
	Ministry fees/ approvals and permits (DFO, Federal Navigation Protection Program etc.)	N/A
	Supply all labour and material for the complete installation of an on-site gated monitoring system with payment options for boaters, not including ongoing subscription and software licencing fees required	\$85,000- \$100,000
	Site servicing electrical connection and internet connection for cameras (we would need to investigate cost of meter and bringing electrical service to the site there is not one currently on site).	N/A
	Overhead lighting cameras and monitoring system	\$150,000
	Total Approximate Cost	\$ 5.1M

Additional costs, including but not limited to the following would require further investigation, to understand the capital investment required as well as increase to the operational budget to sustain operations:

- Site servicing including electrical, gas, sanitary and storm considerations
- Ministry studies, permits and approvals such as Fish Study and or approvals from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and or Federal Navigation

Protection Program. There could be other requirements and costs associated with gaining approval from the above noted agencies.

- Ongoing maintenance costs for operation of the launch, system controls and monitoring access.
- Additional staffing will be required to manage and operate this facility**

In addition to the above noted costs outlined in option 1 and option 2 Council should be aware of the following site conditions and considerations that warrant further investigation and discussions:

- Access controls and a payment system like the one installed at the marina abutting the park would need to be considered to collect fees and control access to the launch. These systems can range in price from \$85,000 to well over \$100,000 with ongoing operational costs for subscriptions, monitoring and surveillance controls.
- The park site itself is remote without any natural surveillance in the form of nearby businesses, homes or pedestrian traffic therefore the smuggling of drugs, guns, money, and other illegal activities is of high concern at this location. Human trafficking is also a concern and is evident all along the Great Lakes region but has become especially acute along the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers. Transnational and organized crime groups take advantage of areas that are not well lit nor have active surveillance through robust CCTV systems or police patrols. Police services are facing critical resource issues in maintaining adequate service levels and ability to respond adequately to emerging trends in criminality. Principles in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be followed which involve open sight lines, high intensity lighting and locking out the launch after-hours to control access. It is not advisable to leave the boat launch accessible in the dark hours or in the off season. Lighting and security in the form of locked gates as well as cameras should be considered a requirement in both options. This will require an electrical and cable service equipped with high speed internet capabilities.
- A boat launch in both options requires a significant parking area to manage vehicles and boat trailers for the users of the facility.
- The former Ranta Marina experienced problems with silting which required frequent dredging (every 5 to 10 years) and resulted in the need for aquatic weed control. In order to maintain flow and prevent silt build up dredging would be required for both options especially in Option #2. A study would need to be conducted to consider the flow rate and wave action for this location. It should also be noted that there are no longer any disposal sites that meet the requirements for dumping contaminated dredge materials whether on land or in water. In the past year, the Canadian Coast Guard conducted a study of the toxicity of materials and determined that from Amherstburg to Lake St. Clair the materials did not meet minimum standards for dumping back into the lakes. Any dredging could result in significant costs for dredging and disposal of fill as may be required.
- A permit from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is also a requirement of building this facility. The DFO may request a fish study be conducted which could take up to two years to complete depending on the sensitivity of the riverbed at this location. If it is determined that fish compensation is required as part of the

construction, it is typically two feet of compensation for every one foot of construction.

- Creating a new boat launch and possibly adding navigation buoys will require review and possibly a permit through the Federal Navigation Protection Program. Navigational buoys may be required for a new boat entrance to the waterways. Their review could take up to a year or more depending on the impact of safe navigation.
- Increased hard surfaces due to parking areas and driveways will be a consideration for stormwater management and catchment on site of any contaminants or spills of gas, oil and grease from vehicles and boats. Stormwater review of the proposed facilities should consider wastewater/ grit separators. Boats, vehicles, and trailers have oils, gas, lubricants, and cleaners that should not enter the storm water system or run directly into the Detroit River. Accidents can and will happen and the ability to clean up responsibly and prevent pollution of the river is paramount.
- Shoreline treatment must be carefully designed to address the potential of ice flow. Ice movement and density should be considered in planning the project to ensure infrastructure is not damaged in the event of ice build up during high spring water levels.
- Noted in the Archeological report that was received in December 2023, if future impacts are planned within the Canard River, a Marine Archaeological potential checklist should be completed, and a marine archaeological assessment may be required. Installing a boat ramp at this location may require this assessment.
- Stormwater runoff will be a design consideration for building a boat launch facility. In addition to site servicing costs for hydro, water and gas which are all located at the far east end of the park closest to the road. There are currently no services in the park.

In reviewing both options and considering the amount of funding required to install a boat ramp at this park given the fact that there is one for the public to use directly adjacent and abutting the site at Walter Ranta Marina, Administration does not recommend moving forward with further investigations at this time.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

The financial risks including the robust commitment of time and resources are substantial for this venture to move forward, notwithstanding the fact that we would be competing with private business that is directly abutting the park. This coupled with the fact that the park is remote offering no natural surveillance in the form of nearby businesses, homes or pedestrian traffic increases the risk and liability to the Town for the smuggling of drugs, guns, money, and other illegal activities including human trafficking which is of high concern at this location.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park has a dedicated reserve fund from a bequeathment specific to the park. As per CR20230523-004 these funds, up to \$170,000, were

approved to complete the necessary work required to assess the feasibility of a boat ramp in the park.

Further in that motion, Council directed Administration to use these funds to undertake an Archeological Assessment, geotechnical and survey work required to investigate options for the re-development of the park including planning for a potential boat launch at this location. Administration has spent just over \$31,000 on a Phase 1 and Phase 2 Archeological Assessment, soil test pits, and some minor survey work required for developing the park and performing some pre-cursor investigative work for a potential boat launch to provide council with some options.

Options 1 and 2 outlined within this report are both ventures in excess of \$1,000,000 to install a boat launch at this park. This would require other projects currently in the 5-year capital plan to be revisited and either canceled or pushed out to accommodate this project. Given the significant cost and resources required to undertake this project, coupled with the changes in boat launch fees at River Canard Yacht Club and the current list of projects underway, Town Administration would not advise moving forward at this time.

Should Council elect to proceed with this project it is also important to note that additional capital costs noted in the decision section of this report and not included in the estimated costs would need to be determined. In addition, the annual operation costs associated with staffing as well as operational and on-going maintenance costs would need to be determined and brought forward as an increase in the operating budget.


For Council's consideration, Administration has also collected rates for public boat launching around Windsor Essex including daily launch rates, season passes, and hours of operation. See **Appendix D**, this was done to provide clarity on what the annual potential revenue might be to offset operational costs. As was mentioned above ongoing operational costs associated with staffing and providing facilities for staff such as public washrooms were not captured in this report. The cost for students to work at a boat launch from May to October would be approximately \$80,000 in wages (\$16.55/hour, 7 days a week, 13 hours a day). Using the average boat launch rates for passes in order to cover the cost of only seasonal student wages alone, (not including utility or development costs), the Town would have to sell 6,154 boat launches for the season (@ \$13 each) or 534 seasonal passes (@ \$150 per). Volume of sales of boat launches is not anticipated to be at this level resulting in an operational budget increase and related increase to tax levy to support this level of service and sustain the boat ramp.

6. CONSULTATIONS:

Manager of Parks
Manager of Facilities
Windsor Port Authority
Essex Region Conservation Authority
Landmark Engineering
Director of Development Services

7. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, due to the significant financial commitment and resources required to pursue this initiative further, coupled with the fact that the Town would be in direct competition with the abutting boat launch at Ranta Marina, Administration does not recommend proceeding with the installation of a public boat launch at K. Walter Ranta Memorial Park.



Heidi Baillargeon
Director of Parks Facilities and Recreation

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Information Report for K. Walter Ranta Park Proposed Boat Ramp (1).docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Appendix A Ranta Park Original Parcels before Marina Sale.pdf- Appendix B_Ranta Boat Ramp Option 1.pdf- Appendix B_Ranta Boat Ramp Option 2.pdf- Appendix C 23-022 Ranta Park Boat Ramp Study Proposal (23Nov23).pdf- Appendix D Boat Launch Rates Windsor Essex.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 11, 2024

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



Tracy Prince



Valerie Critchley



Kevin Fox