



Subject: Sugarloaf Marina and Public Boat Launch Dredging Public Engagement Update

To: Council

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Number: 2025-93

Meeting Date: April 22, 2025

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Officer Report 2025-93 be received; and

That Council direct staff to continue gathering cost estimates for the disposal of dredged material from the area closest to the public boat launch, with two potential disposal sites under consideration: the lagoon area at Sugarloaf Marina, and the industrial land adjacent the Nickel Beach parking lot.

Purpose:

This report provides Council with a comprehensive summary of public engagement activities and feedback gathered between February 28 and March 21, 2025, regarding potential dredging at the Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch in H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park.

It also recommends that Council direct staff to continue gathering cost estimates for the disposal of the dredged material from the area closest to the public boat launch, with two potential disposal sites under consideration: the lagoon area at Sugarloaf Marina, and the industrial land adjacent the Nickel Beach parking lot.

Background:

On February 25, 2025, Council considered report 2025-12 regarding a potential dredging project at the Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch in H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park. The report also included a proposed community engagement plan aimed at

gathering feedback from the public about the potential dredging project. At that meeting, Council requested that staff report back with a summary of results received from the public during the month of April. This report provides a summary of the engagement activities and feedback received from the public between February 28 and March 21, 2025.

Overall, the engagement plan aimed to gather feedback from the community through a brief online and paper-based survey, and two drop-in style open houses. It sought input from the community about potential dredging at the marina and public boat launch area, the appropriate location to dispose of the dredged material, how the project should be funded, and the future of the marina site in general.

To ensure Port Colborne residents and other users of the Sugarloaf Marina were aware of the opportunity to provide feedback in a way that worked best for them. The plan included:

1. Online survey
2. Paper survey
3. In-person open houses

The detailed results and findings from each of these activities are provided in Appendix A of this report. In the interest of transparency, a full list of open-ended responses received in both the online and paper surveys will be posted on www.portcolborne.ca/marinadredging

Discussion:

Public engagement activities related to the potential dredging project at the marina and boat launch began on February 28, 2025.

Quick stats about the engagement activities to date:

- 354 surveys were completed (304 online and 50 paper)
 - 529 open-field comments to analyze and categorize
 - Average time to complete the survey: 8 minutes (online survey)
 - Estimated completion rate: 79%
- 94 people attended the in-person open houses

Detailed results from the survey and a summary of feedback collected during the open houses is available in Appendix A of this report.

Overall, feedback received indicates strong public support for dredging at the Port Colborne boat launch, with 75% of survey respondents supporting a dredging project. There is also a clear appreciation for the marina and waterfront, with 74% of

respondents agreeing that Sugarloaf Marina provides value to the community, and 60% expressing interest in expanded services at the marina. 73% of respondents oppose selling the marina and boat ramp to a private developer. Concerns about funding are evident, as 80% of respondents prefer that financial support come from upper levels of government rather than through increased local property taxes. Using the land assets at the Marina to support funding the proposed dredging project was supported by 45% of survey respondents, with an 27% of respondents indicating they would “maybe” support using the land assets to support funding.

The survey also identified 81.5% of survey respondents reporting excessive weed growth interfering with boat propellers and 51% identifying the water as too shallow to safely launch their vessels.

Over the past year, staff have completed preliminary studies to estimate the volume of dredged material that would need to be removed from the area near the public boat launch and Sugarloaf Marina. Additional investigation work was completed to determine:

- a) Preliminary costs for dredging
- b) Requirements for testing and handling of the material that would need to be removed from the area
- c) Potential locations that can receive the removed material
- d) Alternative designs to minimize project costs

At the February 25, 2025 Council meeting, Council directed staff to proceed with identifying the costs of various design options to determine the most suitable location for the disposal of dredged material. At this time, this work is ongoing and staff recommend continuing the work to gather cost estimates for the disposal of the dredged material from the two areas closest to the public boat launch. with two potential disposal sites under consideration:

- a) The lagoon area at Sugarloaf Marina
- b) The industrial land adjacent the Nickel Beach parking lot

Internal Consultations:

Discussions regarding the dredging of Sugarloaf Marina have involved staff from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Public Works, Recreation, Financial Services and Economic Development.

Financial Implications:

This report does not recommend any additional investments or financial approvals, at this time.

Staff will return to Council with additional costing and a proposed funding strategy for options to dredge at the public boat launch area and the remainder of Sugarloaf Marina in the coming months.

Public Engagement:

This report provides a detailed summary of the public engagement campaign aimed at gathering feedback from residents about potential dredging at the Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch area. It includes results received between February 28, 2025 and March 21, 2025.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Environment and Climate Change
 - Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Increased Housing Options
 - Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure
-

Conclusion:

Public feedback gathered through surveys and open houses demonstrates community support for moving forward with a dredging project at the public boat launch in H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park and at Sugarloaf Marina. Residents value the marina and waterfront amenities, and the majority support both the dredging initiative and keeping the marina under public ownership. However, there is clear concern about the financial implications for local taxpayers, with a strong preference for funding support from upper levels of government.

In light of this, staff recommend that Council continue efforts to gather detailed cost estimates for the safe and efficient disposal of dredged material, focusing on the two proposed disposal locations: the lagoon area at Sugarloaf Marina and the industrial land adjacent to the Nickel Beach parking lot. This continued work will support informed

decision-making as the City progresses with planning and evaluating the feasibility of this important waterfront improvement project.

Appendices:

- a. Sugarloaf Marina and Public Boat Launch Dredging Public Engagement Results
- b. Sugarloaf Marina and Public Boat Launch Dredging Presentation

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Boles, CPA, CA, MBA
Chief Administrative Officer
905-228-8018
Bryan.Boles@portcolborne.ca

Jasmine Peazel-Graham
Manager, Corporate Communications
905-228-8067
Jasmine.Peazel-Graham@portcolborne.ca

Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.