



WEBSA

West End Beaches Stakeholders Association
1225 Lakeshore Boulevard West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M6K 3C1

July 2, 2013

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL (EXC@TORONTO.CA)

Kelly McCarthy
Committee Secretary
Executive Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Attention: Ms. McCarthy

Dear Madam:

Re: Item EX 33.14 West Channel 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games Venue Proposal

This letter is written on behalf of the West End Beaches Stakeholders Association (WEBSA), the members of which are the Argonaut Rowing Club (ARC), Boulevard Club (BC), Sunnyside Paddling Club (SPC) and Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club (TSCC).

WEST END BEACHES STAKEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION POSITION

The purpose of this letter is twofold. The first is to offer WEBSA's conditional support (detailed below) for the West Channel 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games Venue Proposal as detailed in the June 13, 2013 Parks, Recreation and Forestry Staff Report. The second purpose of this letter is to express WEBSA members' concern with the implied legacy of the proposed facility and our continued long term use of this area of the waterfront. Our concern is with details in the Conclusions that are expressed in the Staff Report, namely:

"...the West Channel Project would leave an exciting legacy for Toronto residents as the city could host more international calibre events at that site. The Project has a direct and positive impact on West Channel users who see the benefits of wave attenuation on their respective sports."...

"Finally, were Water Ski and Wakeboard to move to another municipality, not only would Toronto miss the economic benefit of hosting that event at the 2015 Games, but also it would lose the economic benefit from hosting other high calibre events in the future."

We have met with City staff several times and thank them for seeking our input into the details of this worthwhile project. In terms of the concept of the proposed wave attenuation measures, and the proposed breakwall and seawall stabilization, we are in full agreement with the proposed seawall stabilization and replacement. We are in

general agreement with the proposed breakwall changes although the details have not been definitively confirmed.

As you may be aware, the City has previously identified this area of the waterfront in the Western Beaches Waterfront Master Plan (2009) as an area for recreational and competitive **flat water sports**. For your information, flat water sports can be categorized as generally being those that don't involve motor boats (ski boats in this case) or create wake that would negatively impact other users of the watercourse. By their very nature of being flat water sports that do not generate waves, they are able to share the same body of water not to the exclusion of others.

We understand that a legacy is a requirement of the Pan/Parapan Am facilities. What we don't understand is why the City is proposing to change the legacy that arose from the significant (\$23 million) infrastructure expenditure for the 2006 IDBF World Club Crew Dragon Boat Championships. The 2006 enhancement to increase the protected flatwater has already resulted in a number of significant economic and tourism benefits through the hosting of large events each year—dragon boat championships, canoe/kayak championships and rowing races since the new breakwall was constructed. If the legacy of this worthwhile project is in fact to encourage the conflicting future use after the Games of non-flat water sports, than unfortunately, WEBSA cannot offer its support for the proposed works.

BACKGROUND

WEBSA was founded in 2005 by the users of the Western Beaches in Toronto to ensure the mutual effective use of the Western Beaches. WEBSA members are the principal organizations representing rowers, dragon boat paddlers, outrigger canoeists, kayakers, recreational canoeists, and sailors in the area—flat-water users. In fact, when the Western Beaches Watercourse was constructed to host the 2006 IDBF Championships the City Parks, Forestry and Recreation Department sought out WEBSA to form a City Advisory Committee (Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee—WBWAC) to advise on the permitting of the new watercourse.

WEBSA's objective is to work with the responsible government agencies and non-governmental organizations to focus on the needs of the people who daily use the western beaches. Members of WEBSA have a long history (over 95 years) of development and delivery of the amateur/recreational sport along this portion of the City's waterfront. In fact, some of the members are specifically located in this area of the waterfront because of the protected "flat-water" opportunities that the breakwall provides.

Unlike other types of water users, the flat water sport participants **must train inside the breakwall** along the entire 5 kilometre stretch as it provides relatively flat water that is safe to use and has proven to be an effective (usable) training ground for numerous Olympic/Paralympic and National Team athletes over the decades. We note that the flat-water users are not only National Team athletes, but also high school, competitive, recreational, masters and para-athletes.

The long-standing boathouses, clubs and organizations that use the full stretch from Ontario Place to the Humber River are an indication of the significant advantage of the adjacent protected waterway. A very high percentage of these "users" live in the neighbouring residential areas. Our clubs represent 7,000 regular water users that depend on flat water conditions for sustainability and we collectively contribute to parking and infrastructure improvements on the waterfront (at Sunnyside alone our members contribute \$2,000-3,000 per week to parking).

It is worth noting that the flat-water users are a combination of organized users (rowers, dragon boaters, canoers and kayakers supported by organized coaching and support structure), as well as casual canoers, kayakers and stand-up paddlers.

Although the flat water course (water inside the breakwall) in the Western Beaches (the only such course in the GTA) stretches 5 kilometres from Brigantine Cove at Ontario Place to the mouth of the Humber River (and an additional 3 km of rowable water is used up the Humber River to Bloor Street as well), the area in the vicinity of the Western Beaches Watercourse and Ontario Place has been identified as having the most consistently calm and predictable water (i.e. safest), and is the widest part of the course. Canoers, rowers and paddlers need the flat water course to maintain safe training practices. During the low water months, and busy sailing season, the Ontario Place area provides a valued area for paddlers and rowers with less boating traffic and low water navigational hazards.

Conclusion:

At present, we acknowledge that the revetment design proposed for the replacement of the seawall will offer wave attenuation, which is very desirable to flat-water users such as canoers, kayakers, rowers, and stand-up paddlers, and we express our support and appreciation for the proposed approach. As well, although we have not been provided with the detail, we anticipate that we will support the revetment design also proposed for the breakwall on the south side of the West channel, opposite the seawall replacement.

We wish to be clear, however, that we cannot support a legacy that changes the use of the Western Beaches Watercourse from a flat-water course to a motorized/conflicting use course.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Yours truly,



Judy Sutcliffe
Secretary, WEBSA

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Cc: Councillor Gord Perks
Councillor Mike Layton
Councillor Sarah Doucette
WEBSA members

Catherine Meade, Director, Pan/Parapan Am Capital Projects & Legacy, Parks, Forestry and Recreation