

Outer Harbour Sailing Federation
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By email

Infrastructure and Environment Committee
City of Toronto
email: iec@toronto.ca

Re: IE22.2 Non-Motorized Craft Launch and Storage Locations

Committee Members:

The Outer Harbour is a very busy area with a great number and variety of non-motorised and motorised watercraft based there. There are on-the-water restrictions for all vessels within the jurisdiction of the Port of Toronto. There is also a lack of knowledge of and lack of enforcement of those restrictions. There is no required knowledge of those restrictions or of any right-of-way rules for operators of human powered vessels (canoes, kayaks, SUP, rowing shells, dragon boats and rowboats).

Toronto's Outer Harbour (OH) is approximately 2.8km by 0.9km at its widest, is less than half the size of the main part of Toronto's Inner Harbour and has an estimated 8,000 recreational water sport enthusiasts based there.

The Outer Harbour Sailing Federation and others based there.

- The Outer Harbour Sailing Federation (OHSF), established 1971, includes nine Not-For-Profit water sports clubs with leases for land bases on the Outer Harbour. We have 2,000 members, about 95% of memberships are for non-motorised (no engine) vessels. The remaining 5% are auxiliary sailing vessels.
- The OHSF clubs include rowing (Hanlan Boat Club), windsurfing (Toronto Windsurfing Club) and sailing, with some of the clubs including members with canoes, kayaks and Stand-Up Paddleboards (SUP).

- The Toronto Windsurfing Club, located on a sandy area set back from the east end of Cherry Beach, launch their windsurfers and SUP from the shallow waters at the beach. Seven clubs are further east, where they also lease water area for docks and for a mooring field. The Aquatic Park Sailing Club, located on the Leslie Street Spit, also has a land base and a dedicated mooring field with a lease with TRCA.
- OHSF clubs are open to all. Membership ranges from \$110.00/year for non-boat owner membership to \$440/year for boat owner membership (plus other costs dependent on vessel size). Some clubs have fleets of vessels for shared use for non-owners. The clubs offer beginner lessons for adults and a water sports day camp for children 7 to 17years-old, beginning at \$180. per week for half-days. About one-third of the camp participants pay no fees. They are referrals from Toronto community organizations for children whose families could not otherwise send them to such a camp. These no-fare opportunities are subsidized by contributions from our OHSF clubs and other grants and donations.
- The Outer Harbour semi-protected area is perfect for beginning sailors and provides a safe haven for windsurfers and boarders. Windsurfers and kite boarders need a gradual sloping, sandy area for launching as they can't easily launch from docks.
- The Outer Harbour Dragon Boat Club, not part of the OHSF, has 400 members.
- Other groups based at Cherry Beach (not formalized groups and not OHSF members) include kiteboarders (estimated at 350), Open Water Swimmers (550) as well as public beach goers who bring their own canoes, kayaks, SUP and kiteboards, wingers and sailboards to launch off Cherry Beach.
- The city has recently granted a 3-year lease for a SUP and kayak rental business at the east end of the Cherry Beach parking lot.
- The Outer Harbour Marina (OHM), operated by Ports Toronto, with 650 slips, is a full-service marina. OHM has tenants, such as the Freedom Boat Club, a shared-use powerboat franchise, with eight (8) members for each of their approximately 15 powerboats based at OHM, and can be booked multiple times per day. (The difference between an auxiliary sailing vessel and powerboats: my own boat, a 38ft long sailing catamaran, weight 10,000lbs, has two 15hp auxiliary engines, with a maximum speed under power of 14km per hour. A typical powerboat, the Searay SPX 210, one of the models for shared use with the Freedom Boat Club franchise based at

the Outer Harbour Marina, 21ft. long, weight 3,334lbs, 150hp outboard engine, accelerates from 0 to 45km/hr in 4.8seconds, maximum speed of 80km per hour.).

- There are charter boats based at OHM that may have multiple outings per day and charter boats from other locations visit the OH.
- Vessels based at other locations along the Toronto Waterfront frequently visit the Outer Harbour and the marina fuel dock.

Safety

- With ever increasing numbers of water sport enthusiasts in the Outer Harbour, many of them beginners, safety is a pressing issue. The OHSF established a water safety committee that includes OHSF members, as well as representatives of swimmers, kiteboarders and dragon boaters. Our objective is to develop an information and education package describing the safety needs for all OH water users, filling gaps in the Federal and local Right-Of-Way rules that do not have recommendations for collision avoidance between human powered and wind powered non-motorised vessels and to educate water users in on-the-water etiquette.
- Motor vessel operators do not respect speed limits in the Outer Harbour. There are no official postings for speed limits, though the limits are 5knots (9km/hr) within 150metres from shore and 10knots (19km/hr) further from shore. There is no official posting as to where those speed limits apply and no posting as to the jurisdiction boundary of Toronto Harbour. Jet skis/Personal Water Craft and powerboats regularly exceed the speed limit in the Outer Harbour creating a speed and a wake hazard for rowers and paddlers as well as causing shoreline erosion on Tommy Thompson nature park.
- Standard Right-of-Way (ROW) rules, published in Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide, do not include guidelines for ROW between human powered and wind powered vessels.
- Right-of-Way rules change when entering the Eastern Gap navigation approach channel, the defining western boundary of the Outer Harbour plus there are special rules for navigation in Toronto's Inner Harbour.
- There is no requirement for knowledge of ROW rules for non-motorised craft operators either federally or locally.
- There is no requirement for knowledge of restrictions in the Toronto Harbour for non-motorized vessels.

- The Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC) test does not include Ports Toronto navigation restrictions.
- The operator of any motorized vessel within the jurisdiction of the Port of Toronto is required to obtain a Ports Toronto Powered Vessel Operator Permit, taking a test that includes local restrictions. Due to lack of enforcement resources, many motor vessel operators do not obtain it.
- The Metro Toronto Marine Unit budget has been cut to just two boats on the water to patrol from Etobicoke through Scarborough, they are under-funded with no ability to adequately patrol such a vast area. With the many thousands of swimmers and boaters on and in the water within the Metro Police Marine Unit patrolled area, only two patrol craft on the water at one time is inadequate.

Location of proposed Paddle Centre

The Facebook Group, Toronto Paddlers, Ed Hore posting, June 3, 2021, 11:09am, shows a satellite view of the east end of the Outer Harbour, with a red marker showing a suggested location for a new Toronto Paddle Centre.

- That location includes the site of illegal raves, homeless tent camps and what is known as 'Frolicking Trails' an area known for illicit activities that need bylaw enforcement.
- The location is very close to the water lease mooring field (since 1971) of the OHSF Toronto Multihull Cruising Club. The boats visible on the image are on swing moorings – they swing in the wind, so any change in wind changes the location of the boats attached to the moorings. Each boat is attached to a float with lines about 8metres long, a recommended practice.
- The dominant west to southwest summer wind funnels into the OH and it is common for paddlers and SUP to get hung up on the boats and mooring lines, as they do not realize the boats are not stationary. A greater distance from the mooring field than shown should be planned, as well as an agreement that paddlers do not enter that dedicated area for their own safety.
- Any boats launched from that location paddling west will be crossing an area of intense use by a swirling mix of vessels on every heading: Jet skis, powerboats and sailboats, windsurfers, wingers and kiteboarders and rowers and paddlers.

Recommendations:

We support expanding access to Lake Ontario by non-motorised and auxiliary sailing vessel operators; however, the Outer Harbour is a small and busy eco-system. As such we recommend:

- The Infrastructure and Environment Committee study water usage patterns and congestion in the Outer Harbour before adding new users or building new infrastructure.
- Ensure OH water users are educated in ROW rules and local restrictions and on-the-water etiquette with all the water users they may encounter.
- Consider the Toronto Windsurfing Club's proposal, presented to City staff Spring, 2021, to expand its lease near the east end of Cherry Beach to enable more windsurfers and SUPs to join, to learn about their sport and to store their equipment at this desirable location.

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