



CITY OF BELLEVILLE
Karen Poste, Manager
Economic and Strategic Initiatives
Report No. ECDEV 2020-33
November 9, 2020

APPROVAL BLOCK	
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To: Mayor and Members of Council

Subject: Pop-up Shop Project Summary

Recommendation:

“THAT Manager of Economic and Strategic Initiatives Report No. ECDEV 2020-33 regarding a summary of the 2019/2020 Pop-up Shop Pilot Project, be received.”

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The 2020 Pop-Ups on the Bay Project supports the themes of Culture and Recreation, Industrial and Commercial Development and Tourism and Waterfront Revitalization. Specifically, it supports the following strategic objectives:

- Promote and support the development of attractions, events, facilities and services that will draw visitors to the community
- Encourage the creation of a vibrant waterfront based on recreation and entertainment, accented with unique commercial and residential opportunities
- Plan and develop a parks system with facilities and services that promote health and wellness and address the needs of an aging population and our youth
- Support the creation of new or expanding businesses and the encouragement of entrepreneurship.

Background:

In January 2019, City Council approved a capital budget expense of \$150,000 for a two year/two phase “PopUp Shop” pilot project. The purpose of the project was to activate and populate the City’s waterfront with small business options that attract residents and visitors to this beautiful area of our City.

Preparations for Phase One of Pop-Ups on the Bay began in early 2019 with the selection of sites, an RFP for vendors and the creation of promotional materials,

including a website (popupshop.visitbelleville.ca), Facebook page, rack card and signage/banners. City staff proposed the choice of two venues to interested vendors: George St. South/Freestone Point and Victoria Park. Although it was originally envisioned that there would be two vendors at each site, the four vendors expressed a preference for clustering together on one site, making Victoria Park the only viable option. Three 9' x 12' wooden structures or 'pop-ups' were purchased for vendors and three 8' x 20' used shipping containers were purchased for site/vendor storage.

Unfortunately high water levels in the spring forced a venue change from Victoria Park to West Riverside Park and caused a delay in the original Victoria Day opening. While the West Riverside location was not affected by flooding and was close to biking trails within the City, attracting a water based vendor was difficult in this location as no access to the Bay of Quinte could be secured and the river was not deemed a suitable location for most water sports/activities.

The 2019 season of Pop-ups on the Bay launched June 7, featuring three vendors: an ice cream vendor, a bike rental vendor and one food truck serving pizza. There was great social media support for the project as well as paid radio and billboard advertising and weekly live music at the venue. Despite these efforts, resident and visitor traffic at this site was less than anticipated and two of the pop-ups reduced their hours in August. The 2019 season ended on Labour Day, September 2, 2019.

Work on Phase Two of Pop-Ups on the Bay began in early 2020. Much of the early planning involved evaluating sites according to criteria that would help the project fulfill its mandate and create a vibrant waterfront. Several sites, including Jane Forrester Park, the parking lot at 138 Front Street, and West Zwick's Park were evaluated according to some of the following criteria:

- Tourist visibility
- Foot traffic
- Trail access
- Bay access
- Flooding potential
- Access to electricity
- Access to water and toilets

The January 27, 2020 staff report (ECDEV 2020-04) recommended West Zwick's as the preferred location for the pop-ups project and it was approved by Council.

The initial site plan for West Zwick's Park, which envisioned a semi-circle of pop-up structures around a common area of picnic tables, had to be shelved in April with the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. A new site design was developed with COVID-19 precautions in mind, spacing the pop-ups at least 10 feet apart and orienting each on a

different angle to ensure there was room for people to line up and still maintain a 6 foot separation.

Staff actively identified key vendor types and recruited a number of possible vendors to encourage their participation in the project. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the project caused by COVID-19, eleven applicants submitted a 2020 Vendor RFP/Application Form, with 9 vendors successfully completing the vendor process. These vendors included 2 food trucks, 4 pop-up food retailers, 2 artisan retailers and 1 outdoor outfitter. Rent for vendors was set at \$500 for the summer, with returning vendors from 2019 being exempted from the requirement to pay rent.

Four new pop-up structures were purchased to accommodate the increased number of vendors and the three existing pop-ups were also placed on site. The decision was made to purchase different structures for phase 2, ones that would be more durable. These new structures are modified shipping containers: three 8' x 10' structures and one 8' x 12' were purchased and put in place. Each new container was customized for multi-purpose use, with double doors on one side, a serving window on the other side and a slide up door on the end. Three of the four containers were outfitted with triple sinks and hot water heaters to meet the health unit requirements for servicing food. Water and electrical service was brought to each of the pop-ups with trenching for water and power lines and the installation of posts outside each structure.

The 2020 season ran from June 18 to September 7 from 11 am to 7 pm, seven days a week. One of the vendors, Durette's Chalk Design, had to close due to illness, but after fielding many inquiries from potential vendors, JERKebago Food truck was chosen to replace the empty vendor slot. Highlights of the summer included a launch event, a Meet the Vendor event, two Full Moon Paddles, and the launch and inaugural voyage of a new line of Canadian-designed and manufactured canoes at the Pop-ups on the Bay by Venture Outfitters. Many of the vendors also stayed open during the month of September to take advantage of the weather and continued traffic in the park, but they were not required to adhere to the strict 7 day per week operating schedule.

Despite the challenges posed in year one by flooding and year two by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Pop-ups on the Bay project has seen great success, with an increase in vendor participation and a large increase in public support, engagement and earned media. While support from vendors and the public for expansion of the project is high, challenges persist, including enduring threats from high water and COVID-19, as well as site capacity issues and adequate staffing.

Financial:

The total budget for this two-year project was \$150,000. \$40,000 was allocated for Phase One, with the remaining \$110,000 for Phase Two. When all invoicing for this year has been finalized, the total project cost will be just under \$150,000. There is considerable interest in expanding the Pop-up program for 2021 and staff have

submitted a request to Council through the capital budget review process for additional funding for 2021.

It is estimated that the Pop-ups generated more than \$250,000 in economic activity locally and 15 seasonal jobs were created.

Analysis:

The 2020 Pop-ups on the Bay project was a success! Despite some significant challenges and the commitment of significant staff resources, the project supported nine businesses that would not have otherwise been able to locate on the City's waterfront to take advantage of residents and tourists. The project also provided an opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy the City's waterfront in a way that had not previously been possible. Much of the feedback from visitors was overwhelmingly positive and many came back multiple times over the summer. It proved to be a perfect "staycation" activity.

All vendors were surveyed to gauge their satisfaction with the project and the results are as follows:

- All vendors would like to return next year
- All vendors like the West Zwick's Park location
- Satisfaction with Pop-ups promotion activity was 100%
- 100% of the vendors scored the satisfaction level for the project high at 4 or 5 out of 5.
- 75% of the vendors liked the mandatory opening hours but others had suggestions for changing the hours. Staff are reviewing all comments and evaluating the need for change.

It was clear from the survey results that the vendors loved the location and the staff support they were given. Staff continue to receive inquiries about participating in the 2021 season of pop-ups from new interested applicants.

The only outcome of the project that has been very difficult to deal with is the staff time required to manage the Pop-ups. Staff from Economic Development, Parks, Operations and Recreation were involved in some or all of the following activities:

- Development, circulation, marketing, management and evaluation of the RFP process to attract potential vendors
- Development of each individual vendor lease agreement
- Site design, container design and procurement and ongoing site servicing
- Marketing, media relations, and public inquiries
- Vendor relations and communication
- Daily management and coordination with city staff, the Health Unit and other stakeholders
- Planning and implementing special events
- Reporting and documenting activities

Because of the pandemic this project was able to take advantage of the re-assignment of certain staff and two people from the recreation department were assigned to be at the pop-ups throughout the summer. These staff were an invaluable resource when it came to ensuring pandemic protocols were in place and being adhered to and they were also a great support service for the pop-up vendors. It is very unlikely the project will be able to take advantage of reassigned staff in 2021.

Management estimates that the pop-up project consumed approximately 4.5 months of full time hours from the Development/Tourism Coordinator position in Economic Development not to mention the many hours devoted to the project by staff in the Parks, Operations and Property departments in the City. Staff are now looking at ways of reducing this time commitment.

Conclusion:

This report is being provided to Council as a follow-up to the completion of the pilot project. Pop-ups on the Bay of Quinte has been very successful and there have been several requests from local residents and businesses to expand the project to include more vendors and enhance experiences that take place over the season that will create a greater waterfront attraction. Staff are in the process of developing plans for 2021 and capital budget submissions have already been prepared for Council consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



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