

Community Update - Bristol Pier at Norway Bay

After more than 100 years of service in harsh conditions, the Norway Bay pier is showing its age.

In the past three years, two separate engineering firms have confirmed the pier requires urgent and substantial revitalization to remain in use. The alternative is demolition and removal from the river. Initial cost estimates for both options were in the millions of dollars, which is a daunting challenge for a small municipality like Bristol.

Ignoring the problem is not an option as Bristol has legal obligations to maintain the pier or remove it. Demolition would be a drastic loss for the community with no benefits. It would also be an expensive undertaking for our ratepayers as demolition would not be financially supported through regional, provincial and federal grants. Revitalization would be a significant investment to preserve an important community asset for the next century; however, we would look to augment costs with subsidies through various grant options.

The former Bristol Council established a voluntary Advisory Committee to investigate thoughtful, data driven options for the future of the pier. This Advisory Committee consisted of:

- 9 permanent and part-time Bristol residents, one of which is Committee Chair
- Project Manager, Bristol Municipal Building Inspector
- Representative of the MRC, Economic Development team
- President, Norway Bay Municipal Association (NBMA)
- Bristol Mayor and 3 members of Council

In addition to providing solution options and advising Council, the committee has also assisted Municipal staff with 2 significant grant applications. Fortunately, several committee members have extensive experience in related fields including construction, structural and environmental engineering, project management and administration. It is truly a community effort focused on collaboration and cost-effective solutions.

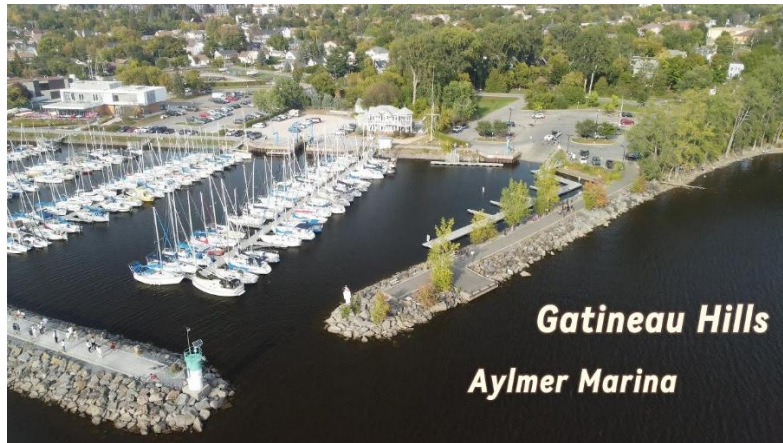
Potential solutions examined ranged from rebuilding the pier, to stabilizing it with FRP (fiber reinforced panels) to encapsulating the pier with sloped layers of rock in a process known as rock revetment or riprap. The committee advised Bristol Council to explore rock revetment as this is the most common and cost-effective solution undertaken in similar environments for protecting waterfront structures from waves, erosion and ice. And since it uses rocks as the primary material, Bristol will explore sourcing them locally and use local trades and suppliers to do the work whenever possible. The Quebec engineering firm, WSP, has been asked to provide an outline of the scope of work and cost estimates which is expected soon.

To date, all expenditures related to pier maintenance, repairs and engineering studies have been unanimously supported by the past Council and the costs have been covered within Municipal budgets. Bristol has also received two separate grants from MRC Pontiac totaling \$84,280 which covered 80% of the cost of specific aspects of this work. Further financial support for pier revitalization is critical. Grants for major projects are available, but funds are limited and the selection process is highly competitive. Local municipalities need to pay a percentage of an awarded grant; however, in some cases it is permitted to recognize "in kind" work such as staff time/salary as part of that. Grant experts have strongly advised Bristol that further engineering and environmental studies be conducted to strengthen our next grant application. The cost of these studies and Municipal share will need to be approved by Council and incorporated into future Municipal budgets.

The Municipality and Advisory Committee has also engaged a consulting firm, funded through grant monies, to assist in developing a future vision for the pier and McLellan Park. This work will include interviews with key stakeholders and engagement of residents through an online survey and public forum – dates/time to be determined and communicated.

Over the past 3 years, Bristol has actively engaged important stakeholders including all levels of government to keep them up to speed on these efforts and seek support. The feedback has been consistently positive and encouraging with elected representatives signalling that pier revitalization is among their key priorities. We are thankful for this support and optimistic about working together with all stakeholders to refurbish the pier for the next 100 years.

Stay tuned for further updates as this exciting work continues.



For illustration purposes only – the Marina in Aylmer incorporated a “rock revetment” solution as part of their redevelopment.