

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Attn.: David Ulirich, Executive Director
177 North State Street, Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois,
USA
60601



From the Office
of the Mayor

Re: Small Cities Sustainability Practices Award

Dear Mr. Ulirich,

Please find enclosed our submittal for the Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award.

Goderich has always depended on the waterfront for its economic vitality since it's founding in 1827 to the present day. We have used the waterfront to provide a social environment where everyone can participate in recreational activities. The environmental preservation of the area has been our focus for the past 40 years.

Although we are a town of 7500 with slow population growth we still have large ambitions to improve the quality of life for our citizens and the waterfront is of primary importance in achieving that goal. We have patiently undertaken our waterfront's transformation from a neglected industrial site with one small stony beach to the present active industrial and recreational harbour, three swimming beaches, one with lifeguards, a partially restored abandoned Canadian Pacific Rail Station and three kilometres of hiking boardwalk and trails.


In the 1800's water travel was Goderich's link to urban North America. Rail connected the port with Toronto in the late 1800's, short-cutting the long trip through the Great Lakes. The waterfront by 1930 was becoming crowded with industrialization. A more unattractive landscape could not be imagined. A 100-foot high green scarp provided a stark environmental contrast and buffer to the community above the bluffs. The Depression and abandonment of the oil company led to a pause in Goderich's importance as a commercial destination.

Since 1967 planning and building for protection and restoration of the lakefront, harbour front and riverfront have adapted the water and its edge to create three recreational beaches and active salt mine, grain elevators and an industrial harbour receiving ocean going ships and a recreational marina.

We propose to use the \$5000 grant award, to support our Environmental Education Program as part of our Blue Flag initiative. New signage will describe the local flora and fauna and activities will be created to entertain and educate the children while they are enjoying the beach. There will be a variety of the activities for different age groups. A few ideas the committee has come up with are self-guided tours, poster contests, colouring books, "what animals live here" info, dune grass protect, etc. Signs, posters and brochures will be used to get this information to the public.

We are a very small community to be in this category but we are creative in our projects and use every opportunity to utilize available grants and any income to promote best practices to ensure triple bottom line aspects in economic vitality, social equity and environmental stewardship for our citizens.

The waterfront redevelopment that is detailed in the accompanying document shows how with various levels of government, area industries and private citizens a long-term vision can be accomplished to lead to a unique combination of an industrial/recreational harbour and public recreational access. Simultaneously we have lake freighters filling with grain or salt while people are swimming, boating, wind surfing and learning about preservation of our environment through our Blue Flag program.

Yours truly,

Deb Shewfelt
Mayor

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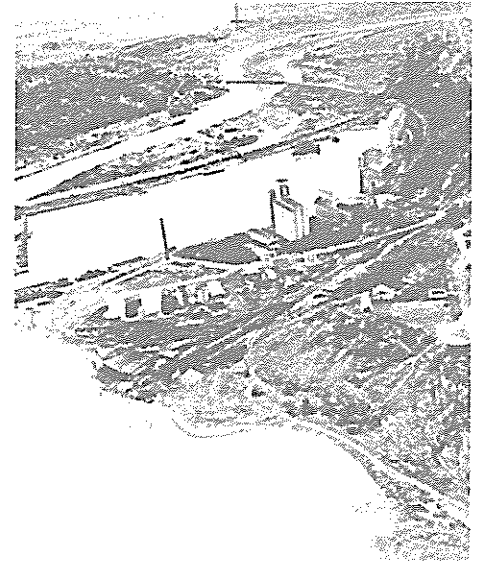
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative/ Small Cities
Sustainability Practices Awards Submission June 29, 2007

Sewage Treatment

In 1965 we did not have a pollution plant and the town water and sewage went untreated directly into Lake Huron. In 1967 the new pollution plant was operational but due to the combined sewers, during heavy rains, by-passes occurred with untreated and partially treated sewage entering Lake Huron.

A program of separating these sewers was begun to eliminate this problem. It has taken until 2007 and \$20 million to complete the project. We did smoke testing of all properties to identify illegal hook ups of roof drainage, and catch basins. These connections have been eliminated and all cross connections in the sewer system have had backflow preventors installed. In addition overflow tanks have been installed at the pollution plant to store excessive run off for later treatment. Over the years the plant has been upgraded to the point that we have eliminated by-passes into the lake and the plant has 150% capacity to allow for future growth. The industry and recreational facilities located at the main beach were on 9 septic tanks. In 2005 a new sewage system and pumping station was been installed to eliminate all the private systems at the Main Beach. (we have eliminated all sewage by-passes to the lake)

Goderich Harbour 1940



Oil Storage Tanks, Piles of Coal very little beach

Soil and Bank Erosion

Years of being hammered by waves and scouring by littoral drift left a scarp on the south half of the lakefront. The silt is deposited on the lake floor, damaging habitat. The scarp erosion threatened private properties on the bluff top.



To correct this problem we undertook a project to protect the toe scouring by creating a man made beach by pumping 300,000 M3 of sand from the harbour dredging project to the shore and protecting the works with various rock structures. The banks were re-graded to proper angles and re-vegetated.

With a small tax base supported by 7500 persons and a few industries, Goderich has had to be innovative in its approach to funding waterfront development. The water's edge frames three-quarters of the Town limits. Its restoration following a century of exploitation is a significant undertaking of time and money.

The railways suffered competition with trucking and deactivated its waterfront lines in the 1980's. This was both an economic setback and a golden opportunity to open up the waterfront to other activities.

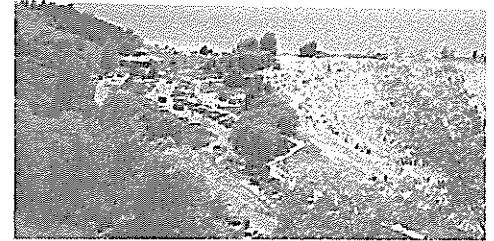
Our vision was to create an attractive, connected recreation space along our 4 miles of river, harbour and lakefront that would become an event space and destination for travellers. The river, harbour and lake would be connected by trails.

The first of three master plans for the waterfront was published in 1981, the culmination of a year of planning. It was an ambitious plan that included a chain of bluff top parks connected by trails to a commercialized new harbour for industry and recreational boating. This Waterfront Parks Master Plan set goals high. Council of the

day was realistic and until a windfall, they would apply the \$2.5m plan as they could afford. In 1985 with federal funding, the fortunate need to dredge the harbour and a motivated community, the 1981 vision of a continuous recreation waterfront was coming to fruition.

In 1995 the last 400 metres of boardwalk was installed to complete the entire lakefront linkage. The former rail line and Menesetung Bridge became a rails-to-trails initiative paid for by community groups and individuals, and a key link between the riverfront and lakefront. The beach remains a summer attraction with hiking trails expanding the tourism to the shoulder seasons.

In 2004 the Main Beach Master Plan, called for removal of the septic tanks, installation of a sewage system and rebuilding of the food concession booth, new fully accessible public washrooms and new playground equipment and landscaping. This last piece of the beach development was completed early in the spring of 2007.



Harbour Purchase



In 1999 the Town formed a Port Authority to purchase the harbour and lands from the Federal Government. The charges to the users were lowered from \$3 million to \$2 million per year and of that \$175,000 comes back to the Town for lakefront improvements and the balance goes into reserves for infrastructure improvements and a continuing source of funding.

Conclusion

The past 40 years have seen us go from a neglected, polluted waterfront to an economically viable industrial and recreational harbour, three swimming beaches, an environmentally stable lake bank and no polluted water being discharged into Lake Huron.