

REPORT

Council

Meeting Date: November 18, 2024

FROM: Community Services Commission

DATE: November 5, 2024

SUBJECT: **Oakville Marine Search and Rescue (OMSR) Relocation and 2 Navy Street Update**

LOCATION: 2 Navy Street and Bronte Waterfront

WARD: Ward 1 and Ward 3

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the restaurant RFP-8-2023 to lease the building at 2 Navy Street for use as a restaurant be cancelled.
2. That consultation related to the relocation of OMSR be addressed through the proposed Bronte Harbour and Waterfront Master plan that is proposed for the 2025 Budget.
3. That upon completion of the Bronte Harbour and Waterfront Master Plan, consultation on potential uses for 2 Navy Street be undertaken to confirm if a waterfront restaurant, at that location, is desirable and if so, what/if any limitations would be deemed essential to consider.
4. That staff provide a report, early in 2025, on potential temporary low to no cost activities that could be supported to create vibrancy along the Downtown Oakville Waterfront.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Oakville Marine Search and Rescue (“OMSR”) currently occupies the building at 2 Navy Street (the “Building”) for its operations.
- Council directed staff to explore a waterfront restaurant and a relocation of OMSR.
- In addition to the Bronte location, staff explored several potential locations for a waterfront restaurant with the OMSR building being the only potential location with a view to the lake on the Oakville Harbour.

- There are challenges with repurposing the Building for a restaurant (i.e. parking and building limitations).
- Staff issued an RFP (RFP-8-2023) to determine if there is a market for a restaurant in the Building and to see what type of restaurant operator would be interested in this opportunity (the “Restaurant RFP”).
- The results of the Restaurant RFP are discussed in the companion confidential report on this agenda.
- Staff reported to Council on a potential relocation of OMSR to the Metro Marine Building, and Council directed staff to investigate other relocation options and undertake public consultation on both the OMSR relocation and the future use of 2 Navy Street.
- Staff plan to undertake the requested OMSR consultation as part of the Bronte Harbour and Waterfront Master Plan that is proposed for 2025 followed by a consultation on the 2 Navy Street site.
- Staff recommend cancelling the Restaurant RFP at this stage to allow time to conduct the requested public consultation.
- Staff are proposing to refine details and report back on ideas for a low to no-cost pilot program that would test different vibrancy creating activities in the vicinity of the Oakville Harbour waterfront, in consultation with the local neighbourhood.

BACKGROUND:

OMSR Re-location Report

The Council Report entitled Oakville Marine Search and Rescue (OMSR) - Relocation to Bronte Harbour, dated June 25, 2024, sought council approval to relocate OMSR to Bronte inner harbour for the start of the 2026 boating season. The rationale for the relocation related to opportunities for efficiencies, and cost avoidance related to work that would be required to keep the OMSR operations at 2 Navy Street.

2 Navy Street Potential Restaurant

Council directed staff to explore the possibility of having a waterfront restaurant as part of the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Plan refresh. The Oakville waterfront is dominated by residential and park locations except for the two harbours, (Bronte and Oakville). A restaurant location, in Bronte, has recently been approved by Council in the former Bronte Banquet location while the ownership of the federal lands remains outstanding. A location with the Oakville Harbour area was reviewed,

however no locations, except for the OMSR building, has any potential given the conservation restrictions.

With the consideration of a relocating OMSR to Bronte and no alternative Town uses identified or planned for the Navy Street Building, staff explored the potential for a waterfront restaurant at this location.

In 2021, J.C. Williams Group was retained to undertake an analysis of the feasibility and scope of implementation for a waterfront restaurant for the Building. In 2022, staff issued an expression of interest to gauge market appeal for operating a restaurant in the Building. The expression of interest showed there was some interest in a restaurant at this location, so staff issued a request for proposals (RFP-8-2023) on September 13, 2023. The Restaurant RFP has closed, and the results are discussed in the confidential companion report on this agenda.

OMSR Re-location Report Referred Back to Staff

On July 9, 2024, the staff report on a potential move of OMSR, from the current building to the former Metro Marine Building (2508 Lakeshore Road West) in the Bronte Inner Harbour, was referred back to staff. Council direction on the referral to staff was to develop more relocation options and conduct public consultation on both the relocation of OMSR and on the future potential uses for the 2 Navy Street property.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Consideration of Alternative Sites For OMSR

Following discussion with the Ward 1 Councillors and based on feedback from delegates to the July 9 council meeting (when the relocation report was presented) it became evident that the primary concern with relocating the OMSR operation to Bronte is that it would limit options for other potential community priorities, due to the absence of a confirmed and approved Bronte Waterfront Plan. In response to these discussions, staff have proposed a Bronte Harbour and Waterfront Master Plan as part of the proposed 2025 Budget.

A report will be brought back to Council in Q1 of 2025, to confirm the project scope for the Bronte Harbour and Waterfront Plan. However, the scope is expected to consider options for connecting Bronte's waterfront (including the east pier to the inner Harbour and improving pedestrian connections from the east pier to Bronte Beach), plans for evolving the Bronte Waterfront as a year-round destination for arts, culture, heritage and recreation, a review of best uses for the Metro Marine building (and the immediately surrounding area), and a recommendation on the ideal location for OMSR operations at the Bronte Waterfront.

2 Navy Street Restaurant RFP

The intent of the Restaurant RFP was to determine if there was a real interest for a restaurant in the Building and to determine what type of restaurant potential operators believe would work in the Building. The type and style of the concept for the restaurant was left at the discretion of the respondents.

In the process of developing the Restaurant RFP and evaluating the site at 2 Navy Street, several limitations were identified:

- The Building and surrounding area are regulated by Conservation Halton due to its proximity to the water. A restaurant in the Building would need to stay within existing building footprint and not expand the total square footage. There is no opportunity for additions, but potential for renovation and minor accessory works such as a seasonal on-grade patio. Staff explored whether a permanent rooftop deck could be added to the Building, but it was not feasible without significant structural work.
- Because the Building is not very large, most of the seating for a restaurant would need to be located on a patio. Therefore, it will need to be a seasonal restaurant subject to weather conditions. Conservation Halton has confirmed a patio would be permitted at this site, provided it was temporary and removable. The boat launch and propane tank would need to be removed to make room for the patio.
- There are only 3 parking spaces available beside the Building. Accessible parking will need to take precedence. Other customers will need to park in the surrounding downtown area. A parking utilization study was conducted by R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited in July 2024 to test the availability of parking near the Building, and it found there was a very limited number of available parking spaces near the Building during peak demand times on Friday and Saturday.
- OMSR needs to maintain a presence in the Building for zoning reasons, so the radio room on the second floor would remain under the control of OMSR and not be part of the restaurant. The rest of OMSR's operations would need to be moved to another location to accommodate the restaurant. Lake Ontario Swim Team also has a structure attached to the Building for storage purposes which would remain under its control, separate from the restaurant.
- The Building is located within the Oakville Harbour Cultural Heritage Landscape. While the Building itself is not a heritage building and can be renovated, any alterations will need to go through the heritage permit process to ensure that the new design is compatible with the surrounding Cultural Heritage Landscape.

- The Building does not currently meet AODA standards for a restaurant operation, so the restaurant operator will need to renovate the Building to meet all applicable accessibility standards. The Restaurant RFP specified that the Town would not provide any capital or operating funding towards the implementation of a restaurant in the Building. The Restaurant RFP process included a mandatory site visit of the Building to understand the context, conditions and limitations of the location.

Future Use of 2 Navy Street and Public Consultation

With the Bronte Harbour Plan and a decision on re-location for OMSR, expected to extend throughout 2025. It is recommended that public consultation for the 2 Navy Street site be deferred until the completion of that study. The focus of the 2 Navy Street site consultation should confirm if a waterfront restaurant at that location is desirable and if so, what/if any limitations would be deemed essential.

Oakville Waterfront Interim Initiatives

In the interim, the public's desire for more active uses such as restaurants, retail and recreation that were expressed during the Harbours Master Plan consultation, provide an opportunity for pilot testing activities along the Oakville Waterfront, in consultation with the local community.

The low-cost introduction of select Food Truck offerings on summer weekends, non-amplified acoustic performances at the Oakville Museum site (with food and beverage); or permitted busking performances along the waterfront could provide a valuable opportunity to pilot test the kind of vibrancy that could be compatible along the Oakville waterfront area. It's recommended that staff be endorsed to further refine details for a low to no-cost pilot program as well as opportunities for neighbourhood consultation related to this recommendation. Details of this proposal should be brought to council in early 2025 for consideration of approval.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

The public will be aware of this report due to its inclusion on the public agenda. Additionally, the Restaurant RFP was a public process open to everyone. Future consultation for the Bronte Harbour and Waterfront Masterplan and any proposed pilot activities will engage the public in consultation.

(B) FINANCIAL

There are no financial impacts to the Town in cancelling the Restaurant RFP. Any future impacts related to the Bronte Harbours and Waterfront Master Plan, or an Oakville pilot program would be subject to future Council approval.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

This report was prepared jointly with staff from the Parks and Open Space, Legal and Economic Development Departments.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to be the most livable town in Canada.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

N/A

APPENDICES:

Appendix A - Location Map Showing 2 Navy Street

Appendix B - Pictures of the 2 Navy Street Building

Appendix C - OMSR - Relocation to Bronte Harbour Report (Update July 9 Council)

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