

Sugarloaf Marina and Public Boat Launch Dredging Project

Engagement Results

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Survey	2
Overview	
Overall Survey Observations	
In-Person Open Houses	
Overview	
Overall Open House Observations	
Summary of Survey Results by Question	

Introduction

On February 28, 2025, the City of Port Colborne launched a comprehensive public engagement campaign to collect public feedback on a proposed project to dredge at the Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch.

The campaign included:

- 1. Online Survey
- 2. Paper Survey
- 3. Drop-in style open houses

This document surveys as a summary of the results of the engagement activities.

Please note that personal information collected during this public engagement project was collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001* and will be used to help Council make decisions related to a proposed Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch dredging project in Port Colborne. The disclosure of this information is governed by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Questions related to the collection of this information may be directed to the Deputy City Clerk at 905-228-8118 or deputyclerk@portcolborne.ca

Survey

Overview

As one of the largest municipally owned and operated marinas in Ontario, Sugarloaf Marina provides 700 dock slips for both seasonal and transient boaters. Its operations include the public boat ramp that provides access to Lake Erie.

The in-water area near Sugarloaf Marina and the public boat launch is becoming shallower every year due to the accumulation of sediment, silt, and sand. To fix this issue, a dredging project is being considered to create more depth in this area. At this time, the City is asking the public for their input on the possibility of conducting dredging at the public boat launch area and marina. The survey was designed to gather feedback from residents on the proposed dredging project, including:

- If the dredging project should move forward
- How the dredging project should be funded
- Where the dredged material should be disposed of
- The future of the Sugarloaf Marina site in general

The survey was distributed online and in paper format.

The survey was launched February 28, 2025, and closed March 21, 2025. The survey was promoted through multiple channels to maximize reach and participation. These

included the City's website, social media platforms, digital advertising, and media outreach.

Paper surveys were available at City Hall, Vale Health & Wellness Centre and Port Colborne Public Library.

Residents were also invited to two drop-in style open houses, which took place March 5, 2025 from 2 to 6 p.m. and March 6, 2025 from 3 to 7 p.m.

This document summarizes results and feedback gathered from both the surveys and open houses.

Quick Facts

- 354 surveys were completed (304 online and 50 paper)
 - o City Hall: 8
 - o Port Colborne Public Library: 7
 - Vale Health and Wellness Centre: 29
 - Open houses: 6
- 529 open-field comments to analyze and categorize
- Average time to complete the survey: 8 minutes (online survey)
- Estimated completion rate: 79% (online survey)

Overall Survey Observations

Agreement that dredging is required

- 75% of respondents support the dredging project
- 81.5% of respondents find there are too many weeds getting caught in their boat propellers at the boat launch
- 51% of respondents find the boat launch is too shallow

Love of marina and waterfront areas

- 74% of respondents believe the Sugarloaf Marina provides value to Port Colborne residents
- 60% of respondents would like to see expanded services at the marina
- 73% of respondents do not support the sale of the marina or boat ramp to a
 private developer. If the data is filtered to only consider respondents who said
 they were from Port Colborne, 71% do not support selling the marina.

Concern about raising property taxes for development and funding

 80% of respondents would prefer funding for this project to come from upper levels of government Some respondents believe the costs should not be passed on to taxpayers, especially ones who do not use the marina

In-Person Open Houses

Overview

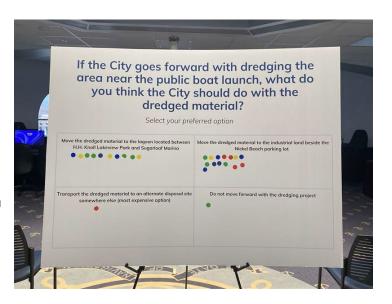
Two drop-in style in-person open houses were held at the Vale Health & Wellness Centre in the Golden Puck Room. The sessions were on:

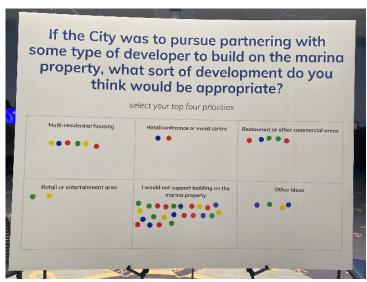
- Wednesday, March 5 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Thursday, March 6 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- A total of 94 people attended the open houses

A variety of information boards with photos and question prompts were displayed around the room, encouraging conversation and discussion with attendees.

Staff were available to answer questions about the process and potential cost of dredging. Staff also provided answers about potential development opportunities and recorded comments and suggestions from residents.

Two interactive stations were available. One board asked residents to use a sticky dot to select their preferred option for where dredged material should be disposed of. This board did not receive much interaction, demonstrating that residents are unsure of what they consider the best option.





The second interactive board asked residents to use a sticky dot to select their top four priorities if there were to be development on the marina property. The most common response was that residents do not support developing the marina property.

Overall Open House Observations

Overall, there was agreement that dredging is required for both the marina and the boat ramp, but there was a sense of reservation from some attendees.

A variety of comments and concerns were collected. These included, but were not limited to:

- Creating more shore fishing opportunities around the marina
- Dealing with weeds in the marina and boat launch area, as they are causing a problem for boat owners who can't effectively launch their boats or leave their slips
- Leaving the lagoon as-is for environmental and community use reasons
- Repairing the break wall so it can be used by residents

Summary of Survey Results by Question

Responses to survey questions are outlined below. Open-ended questions include a summary of the responses received. A full list of open-ended responses received has been posted on www.portcolborne.ca/marinadredging

Please note, staff used Microsoft CoPilot to help provide summaries and detect trends in the 529 open-ended responses received

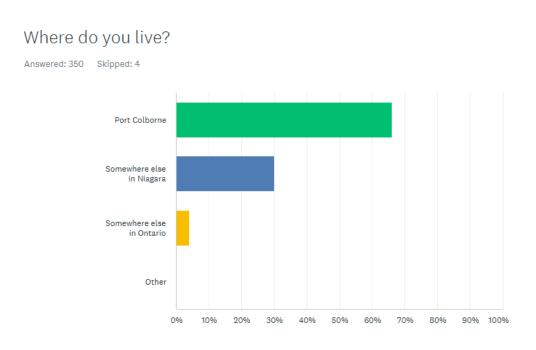
Q1. Where do you live?

Answer Choices	Responses
Port Colborne	231
Somewhere else in Niagara	106
Somewhere else in Ontario	14
Other	0
Answered	350

66% of respondents were from Port Colborne.

96% of respondents **Port Colborne or** somewhere else in

were from either Niagara.



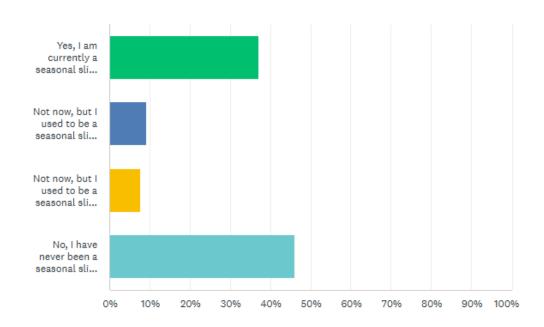
Skipped

Q2. Are you now or have you ever been a seasonal slip renter at Sugarloaf Marina?

Answers	Responses	37% of respondents
Yes, I am currently a seasonal slip renter	129	were current seasonal slip
Not now, but I used to be a seasonal slip renter within the past 5 years	32	renters at Sugarloaf
Not now, but I used to be a seasonal slip renter more than 5 years ago	27	Marina.
No, I have never been a seasonal slip Renter	160	45% of respondents
Answered Skipped	348 6	had never rented a seasonal slip at Sugarloaf Marina.

Are you now or have you ever been a seasonal slip renter at Sugarloaf Marina?

Answered: 348 Skipped: 6



Q3. If you used to be an annual boat slip holder, why are you no longer using the services at Sugarloaf Marina?

Responses
261
47
308 46

Question 3 allowed for respondents to explain their response if they did not choose "not applicable". 47 comments were received. A summary of the responses is shown below.

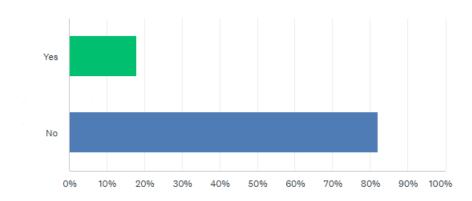
Q3 Open-Ended Response Summary			
Boat Ownership Changes	 Many respondents no longer own a boat or have sold their boat. Some have downsized to smaller boats and now use public ramps instead of marina slips. 		
Cost Concerns	 Rising costs and high slip fees are a common issue. Senior residents find the prices particularly challenging. Some respondents feel the marina offers poor value for money. 		
Service and Management Issues	 Concerns about service levels at the marina Slow gas service Locked bathrooms 		
Environmental and Maintenance Problems	 Issues with seaweed, bird poop, and zebra mussels affecting boat cleanliness and usability. Excessive weeds and shallow waters causing boats to stall or drag bottom. 		

Q4. Have you rented a temporary or transient boat slip at Sugarloaf Marina within the past five years?

Answers		Responses	000/ of many and auto	
Yes		61	82% of respondents	
No		280	have not rented a	
A	Answered	341	slip within the past	
	Skipped	13	five years.	

Have you rented a temporary or transient boat slip at Sugarloaf Marina within the past five years?

Answered: 341 Skipped: 13

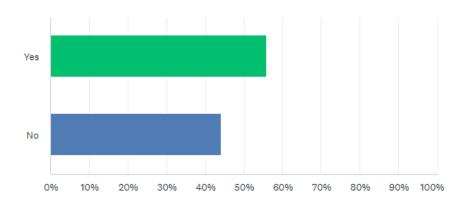


Q5. Have you launched your boat at the public boat ramp at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park in the last 5 years?

Answers	nswers Responses		ECO/ of recognitions	
Yes		196	56% of respondents	
No		164	have used the	
	Answered	349	public boat ramp in	
	Skipped	5	the last five years.	

Have you launched your boat at the public boat ramp at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park in the last 5 years?

Answered: 349 Skipped: 5

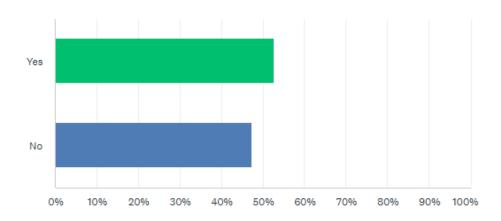


Q6. Do you have an annual parking pass at the public boat ramp?

Answers		Responses	E20/ of reen and ente	
Yes		99	53% of respondents	
No		89	hold an annual	
	Answered	188	parking pass at the	
	Skipped	166	public boat ramp.	

Do you have an annual parking pass at the public boat ramp?

Answered: 188 Skipped: 166

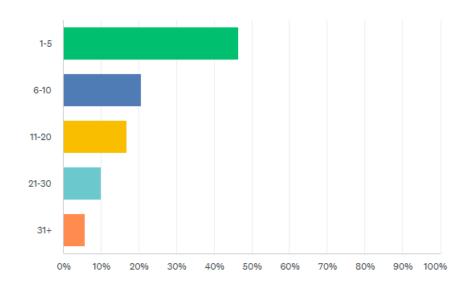


Q7. Haw many times do you estimate you use the public boat ramp in an average year?

Answers	Responses	
1-5	88	47% of respondents
6-10	39	launch their boats
11-20	32	
21-30	19	at the public boat
31+	11	launch 1-5 times a
Answered Skipped	189 165	year.

How many times do you estimate you use the public boat ramp in an average year?

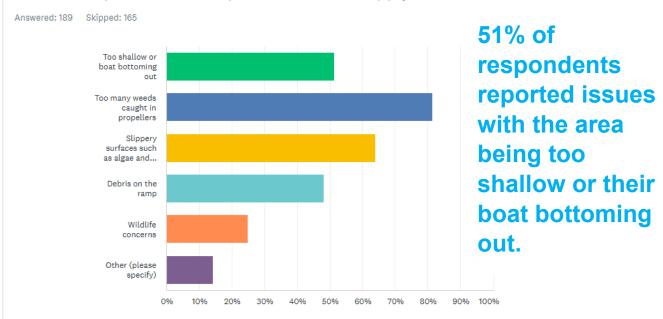
Answered: 189 Skipped: 165



Q8. Have you ever experienced any of the following challenges launching your boat at the public boat ramp? (select all that apply)

Answers	Responses	
Too shallow or boat bottoming out	97	040/ -5
Too many weeds caught in propellers	164	81% of
Slippery surfaces such as algae and slime	121	respondents reported having
Debris on the ramp	91	difficulty
Wildlife concerns	47	launching their
Other (please specify)	27	boat due to
Answered Skipped	189 165	weeds.

Have you ever experienced any of the following challenges launching your boat at the public boat ramp? (select all that apply)



Question 8 also allowed for respondents to offer "other" answers. 27 comments were received. Of those comments, 12 supported one of the options given. A summary of the remaining comments is shown below.

Q8 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Parking and Traffic	 Cars without trailers taking up parking spaces. Overflow parking issues during events. Expensive parking fees.
Boater Behaviour	 Lack of etiquette among boaters, blocking docks and ramps. Inexperienced boaters causing delays and accidents. Too many boats sitting at the dock for extended periods.
Maintenance and Management	Some respondents call for ramp attendants to expedite the process.

Q9. Do you participate in any of the following activities around the Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch area? (select all that apply)

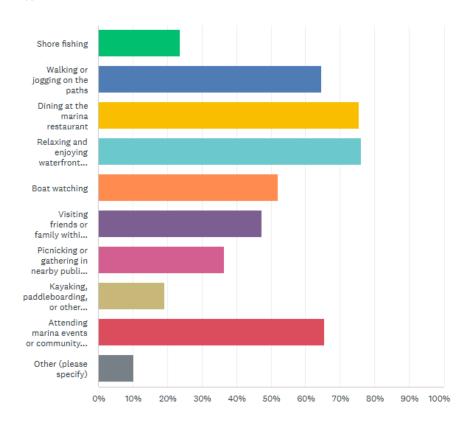
Answers	Responses
Shore fishing	74
Walking or jogging the paths	202
Dining at the marina restaurant	236
Relaxing and enjoying waterfront views	238
Boat watching	163
Visiting friends or family within the marina	148
Picnicking or gathering in nearby public spaces	114
Kayaking, paddleboarding, or other non- motorized water activities	60
Attending marina events or community gathering	205
Other (please specify)	32
Answered Skipped	313 41

65% of respondents attend community events at the marina, while 76% report they use the space to relax and enjoy waterfront views.

64% of respondents use the areas walking or jogging paths.

Do you participate in any of following activities around the Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch area? (select all that apply)

Answered: 313 Skipped: 41



Question 9 also allowed for respondents to offer "other" answers. 32 comments were received. Common responses included:

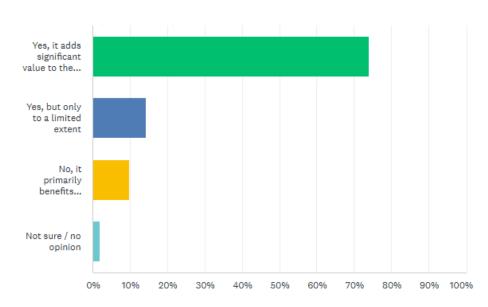
- Visiting for Canal Days
- Fishing derbies
- Working with Port Colborne Marine Auxiliary Rescue
- Attending the Sugarloaf Sailing Club
- Swimming
- Birdwatching

Q10. Do you believe Sugarloaf Marina provides value to Port Colborne residents beyond its use for boaters (i.e. scenic waterfront views, walking paths, restaurant, fishing opportunities, etc.)?

Answers Yes, it adds significant value to the	Responses	
community	239	74% of respondents
Yes, but only to a limited extent	46	believe the marina
No, it primarily benefits boaters	32	adds significant
Not sure/no opinion	6	value to the
Answered	323	community.
Skipped	31	

Do you believe Sugarloaf Marina provides value to Port Colborne residents beyond its use for boaters (i.e. scenic waterfront views, walking paths, restaurant, fishing opportunities, etc.)?

Answered: 323 Skipped: 31



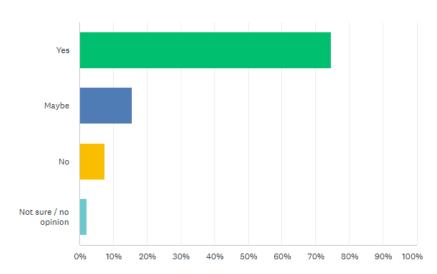
Q11. The in-water area near Sugarloaf Marina and the public boat launch is becoming shallower every year due to low lake levels and the accumulation of sediment, silt, and sand. To fix this issue, a dredging project would be required to create more depth in this area. Dredging is the process of removing sediment using specialized equipment such as excavators equipped with a bucket or suction extraction mechanisms. Would you support this project?

Answers Yes		Responses 239
Maybe		50
No		24
Not sure/no opinion		7
	Answered Skipped	320 34

75% of respondents support a dredging project at the marina and public boat launch.

The in-water area near Sugarloaf Marina and the public boat launch is becoming shallower every year due to low lake levels and the accumulation of sediment, silt, and sand. To fix this issue, a dredging project would be required to create more depth in this area. Dredging is the process of removing sediment using specialized equipment such as excavators equipped with a bucket or suction extraction mechanisms. Would you support this project?

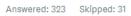
Answered: 320 Skipped: 34

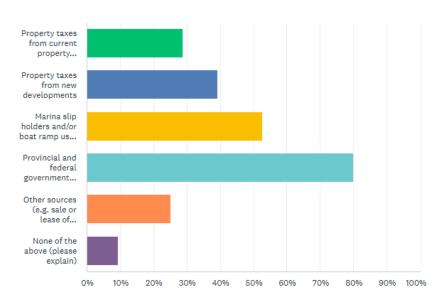


Q12. How do you think the City should pay for this project? (select all that apply)

Answers	Responses	
Property taxes from current property taxpayers	93	80% of
Property taxes from new developments	127	respondents
Marina slip holders and/or boat ramp user fees	170	would prefer to fund the
Provincial and federal government grants	258	dredging
Other sources (e.g. sale or lease of assets, investment income)	81	project with
None of the above (please explain)	30	provincial and federal grants.
Answered Skipped	323 31	

How do you think the City should pay for this project? (select all that apply)



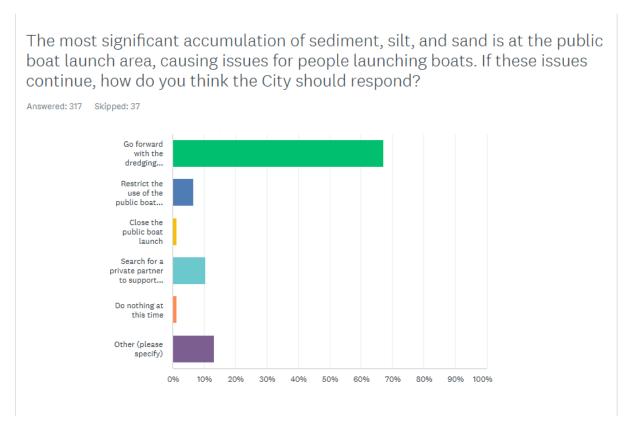


Question 12 also allowed for respondents to offer "other" answers. 30 comments were received. A summary of the responses is shown below.

Q12 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Fundraising Events	 Organize events or gatherings to raise money. Some respondents suggest using existing local events like fishing derbies and Canal Days to raise money.
Leasing and Private Investment	 Lease the marina to private operators to cover operations and maintenance costs. Consider selling the marina to a private operator.
Financial Concerns	 Some respondents noted concerns with raising taxes to support the project. Some noted concerns about raising marina fees to fund the project.

Q13. The most significant accumulation of sediment, silt, and sand is at the public boat launch area, causing issues for people launching boats. If these issues continue, how do you think the City should respond?

		Only 1% of
Answers	Responses	respondents
Go forward with the dredging project near the boat launch only	213	support
Restrict the use of the public boat launch		closing the
to boats designated for navigating shallow waters	21	public boat
Close the public boat launch	4	launch, while
Search for a private partner to support		67% agree
operating and maintaining the boat launch	33	with moving
Do nothing at this time	4	forward with
Other (please specify)	42	the dredging
Answered	317	project at the
Skipped	37	public boat
		launch.



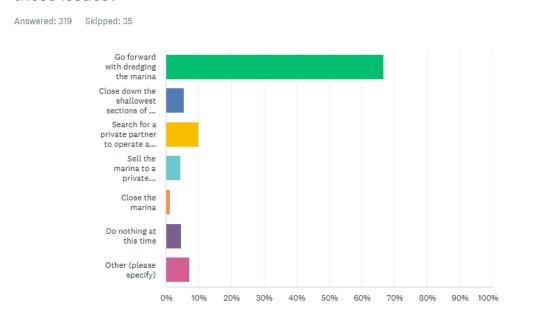
Question 13 also allowed respondents to offer "other" answers. 42 comments were received. A summary of the comments left is shown below.

Q13 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Dredging Suggestions	 Respondents suggest breaking up the dredging into small sections, beginning with critical areas. It is suggested to spread the dredging out over several years.
Relocation	Some respondents suggest relocating the public boat launch to an area that does not require dredging.

Q14. As sediment, silt and sand continue to accumulate in the rest of Sugarloaf Marina, there are other areas beyond the boat launch area that are too shallow for boaters to navigate. How do you think the City should respond to these issues?

Answers Go forward with dredging the marina	Responses 213	Only 1% of respondents
Close down the shallowest sections of the marina	18	support
Search for a private partner to operate and maintain the marina	32	closing the marina, while
Sell the marina to a private investor	14	66% agree
Close the marina	4	with moving
Do nothing at this time	15	forward with a
Other (please specify)	23	dredging
Answered Skipped	319 35	project at the marina.

As sediment, silt and sand continue to accumulate in the rest of Sugarloaf Marina, there are other areas beyond the boat launch area that are too shallow for boaters to navigate. How do you think the City should respond to these issues?



Question 14 also allowed respondents to offer "other" answers. 23 comments were received. Of these comments, many respondents suggest:

- Dredging only the necessary areas
- Purchasing the dredging equipment so the City can regularly maintain the marina
- Building dredging into the annual budget.

Many respondents also expressed concerns and questions about the funding of this project.

Q15. If the City goes forward with dredging the area near the public boat launch, what do you think the City should do with the dredged material (sediment, silt and sand collected from the water). Please rank your options.

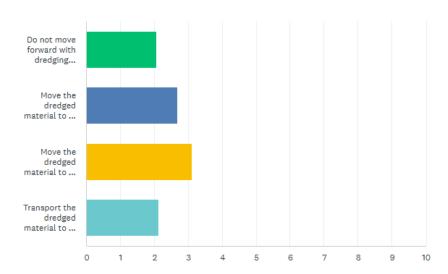
Answers	Responses Ranked #1	Responses Ranked #2	Responses Ranked #3	Responses Ranked #4
Do not move forward with the dredging project	74	30	42	159
Move the dredged material to the lagoon located between H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park and Sugarloaf Marina	71	105	90	39
Moved the dredged material to the industrial land beside the Nickel Beach parking lot	134	97	52	22
Transport the material to an alternate disposal site somewhere else (most expensive option)	26	73	121	85
Answered Skipped				305 49

Overall, respondents ranked the options in the following order:

- 1. Moved the dredged material to the industrial land beside the Nickel Beach parking lot
- 2. Move the dredged material to the lagoon located between H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park and Sugarloaf Marina
- 3. Transport the material to an alternate disposal site somewhere else (most expensive option)
- 4. Do not move forward with the dredging project

If the City goes forward with dredging the area near the public boat launch, what do you think the City should do with the dredged material (sediment, silt and sand collected from the water). Please rank your options.



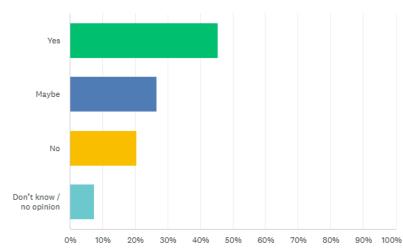


Q16. Currently, the marina operations are fully funded by fees paid by boaters and parking passes at the public boat ramp (known as a self-sustaining entity). Given the significant cost of the dredging is likely to exceed what can be covered by slip holders and launch users, would you support the City using some of the land assets on the marina property to create an income source to help pay for the dredging and future maintenance costs?

Answers	Responses	
Yes	145	45% of respondents
Maybe	85	agree with using land
No	65	assets at the marina
Don't know/no opinion	24	as an income source.
Answei Skipp		An additional 27% said maybe.

Currently, the marina operations are fully funded by fees paid by boaters and parking passes at the public boat ramp (known as a self-sustaining entity). Given the significant cost of the dredging is likely to exceed what can be covered by slip holders and launch users, would you support the City using some of the land assets on the marina property to create an income source to help pay for the dredging and future maintenance costs?

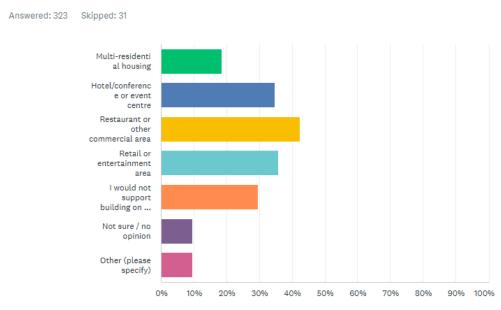




Q17. If the City was to pursue partnering with some type of developer to build on the marina property, what sort of development do you think would be appropriate? (select all that apply)

Answers Multi-residential housing	Responses 60	Results show
Hotel/conference or event centre	112	similar support fo
Restaurant or other commercial area	137	a hotel/conference
Retail or entertainment area	116	or event centre,
I would not support building on the marina property	96	restaurant or othe commercial area,
Not sure/no opinion	31	or retail or
Other (please specify)	31	entertainment
Answered Skipped	323 31	area.

If the City was to pursue partnering with some type of developer to build on the marina property, what sort of development do you think would be appropriate? (select all that apply)



Question 17 also allowed respondent to offer "other" answers. 31 comments were received. A summary of the responses is shown below.

Q17 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Commercial Establishments	 Respondents suggested coffee shops, breakfast restaurants, boating/beach/fishing supply stores, and mixed-use residential and commercial areas.
Recreational Facilities	Respondents suggested recreation facilities with amenities such as pools and pickleball, tennis or basketball courts.
Concerns and Considerations	 There was an emphasis from respondents on the importance of preserving the marina. Respondents expressed concerns about already limited parking impacting new developments. Respondents expressed concerns about losing access to the waterfront if the marina were to be sold to private developers.

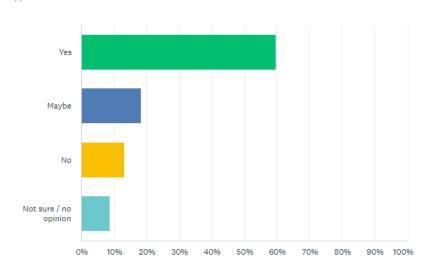
Q18. Sugarloaf Marina is not currently a full-service marina (i.e. it does not offer all the services boaters may need during a season). Do you think the marina should expand the services it offers to help bring in additional revenue to put toward operations and maintenance of the facility and the potential dredging project?

Answers	Responses
Yes	191
Maybe	59
No	42
Not sure/no opinion	28
Answered Skipped	320 34

60% of respondents think the marina should offer additional services to bring in additional revenue.

Sugarloaf Marina is not currently a full-service marina (i.e. it does not offer all the services boaters may need during a season). Do you think the marina should expand the services it offers to help bring in additional revenue to put toward operations and maintenance of the facility and the potential dredging project?



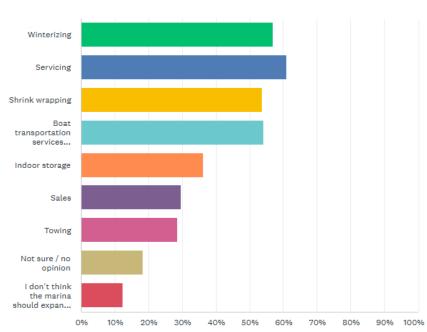


Q19. If yes, which services would you find valuable? (Select all that apply)

Answers	Responses
Winterizing	165
Servicing	177
Shrink wrapping	165
Boat transportation services (launch, haul, pick up, delivery, etc.)	157
Indoor storage	105
Sales	86
Towing	83
Not sure/no opinion	53
I don't think the marina should expand its services	36
Answered Skipped	

If yes, which services would you find valuable? (Select all that apply)



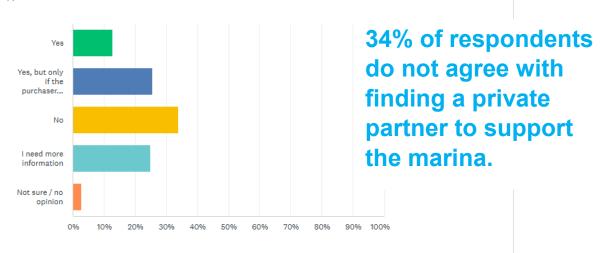


Q20. Would you support the City searching for a private partner to support the operation and maintenance of Sugarloaf Marina and the public boat launch?

Answers Yes Yes, but only if the purchaser promises to continue to operate the marina and boat	Responses 41	25% of respondents said they either need more
launch	82	information or
No	109	thought a private
I need more information	80	developer would
Not sure/no opinion	9	work as long as the
Answered	321	area continues to
Skipped	33	be a marina and public boat launch.

Would you support the City searching for a private partner to support the operation and maintenance of Sugarloaf Marina and the public boat launch?

Answered: 321 Skipped: 33

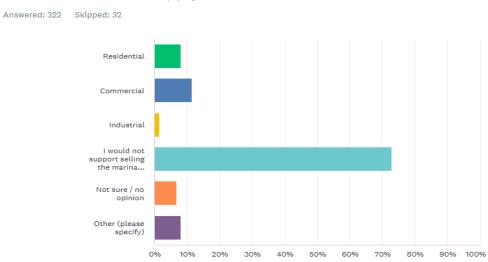


Q21. If the City was to sell the marina and boat ramp to a private developer/operator, what sort of development would you like to see in the area (select all that apply)

Answers	Responses	
Residential	26	73% of respondents
Commercial	37	do not support
Industrial	5	selling the marina
I would not support selling the marina property	235	property.
Not sure/no opinion	22	
Other (please specify)	26	
Answered	322	
Skipped	32	

If the data is filtered to only consider respondents who said they were from Port Colborne, 71% do not support selling the marina.

If the City was to sell the marina and boat ramp to a private developer/operator, what sort of development would you like to see in the area (select all that apply)



- Conditional support for selling the marina, provided it continues operating as a marina
- Support for residential development

Q22. Are there things you would like to see improved around Sugarloaf Marina? (i.e. fish cleaning station, promenade or pier for better views of the lake, additional parking, additional shoreline fishing opportunities, etc.)

Answered 155 Skipped 199

Question 22 was an open-ended question which allowed respondents to fill in comments. 155 comments were provided.

A full list of comments is available at www.portcolborne.ca/marinadredging

Overall, respondents agreed that some maintenance improvements are required at the marina. The suggestions are aimed at enhancing user experience, maintaining the marina's facilities and promoting community engagement. A summary of the comments is shown below.

O22 Open Ended Beenenge Cumment	
Facilities and Amenities Facilities and Amenities	 Many respondents suggested installing or improving fish cleaning stations. There is a strong demand for yearround washroom facilities. Respondents believe additional parking spaces are needed, especially during peak times or events. Several comments mentioned the desire for a promenade or pier to enhance lake views and provide better access for non-boaters. Some respondents made suggestions for better access points for kayaks and canoes, including areas with rubber mats or sand pads.
Maintenance and Cleanliness	 Commenters agree that the marina needs dredging to improve water quality and access. Respondents also agree that many docks are in poor condition and require repairs. Respondents suggest that regular cleaning of docks, especially to remove bird droppings and weeds, is needed.

Q22 Open-Ended Response Summary	
	 Respondents would like to see more efficient use of resources and policy adherence.
Recreational Opportunities	 Respondents request expanded shoreline fishing opportunities while preserving natural habitats. More walking trails and seating areas along the water were requested. Suggestions were made for more community activities and events, including food trucks and entertainment.

Q23. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about potential dredging at the Sugarloaf Marina and public boat launch?

Answered 116 Skipped 238

Question 23 was an open-ended question which allowed respondents to fill in comments. 116 comments were provided.

A full list of comments is available at www.portcolborne.ca/marinadredging

Overall, there is a mix of comments from respondents, with recognition of the need for dredging, but concern for increased cost to the taxpayer. Concern for losing the marina to a private developer is also mentioned. A summary of the comments is shown below.

Q23 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Financial Concerns	 Many commenters are worried about the cost of dredging and oppose raising taxes to fund the project. Suggestions include finding alternative funding methods, such as fundraising, grants or charging marina users higher fees.
Environmental Impact	 Concerns were raised about the environmental effects of dredging, particularly on local wildlife and the lagoon. Commenters would like to see the project done with environmentally safe practices and long-term impacts in mind.
Maintenance and Infrastructure	Commenters highlight the need for regular maintenance to prevent issues from escalating.
Community and Usage	 The marina is seen as a valuable asset to the community, attracting visitors and providing recreational opportunities. There are suggestions to improve facilities and services to make the marina more welcoming and accessible to everyone.
Alternative Solutions	Ideas include selling the marina to a private developer, relocating the boat

Q23 Open-Ended Response Summary	
	 ramp, or using innovative dredging methods. Some commenters propose using the dredged material for other purposes, such as creating barriers or filling in areas.