



**Subject: Sugarloaf Marina 2021 Rates Report**

**To: Council**

**From: Corporate Services Department**

Report Number: 2021-56

Meeting Date: February 22, 2021

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**Recommendation:**

That Corporate Services Department Report 2021-56 be received; and

That the recommendations regarding rates and fees as outlined in Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D to Corporate Services Report 2021-56 be approved.

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council regarding the 2021 rates at Sugarloaf Marina.

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**Background:**

Sugarloaf Marina has been Port Colborne's municipal marina since 1989 and has overseen many changes throughout the years. Recently, the marina has experienced several issues including high water levels and storm surges as well as staffing and COVID-19 challenges. The marina is at the stage where capital improvements will be required in the upcoming years due to the age and conditions of the docks, environmental changes as well as the trends within the boating industry. In 2020, The City of Port Colborne (The City) retained Sierra Planning and Management to commence a Strategic Plan (The Plan) for Sugarloaf Marina. The Plan is still in development and will be presented to City Council for comment and input at the second Council meeting in April. Staff have received and reviewed early excerpts of an initial draft. The Plan will address numerous items including Sugarloaf Marina's rates and rate structure. Ultimately this will mean increasing rates to fund future marina projects and capital improvements that will benefit the marina customer base. These projects include

the fuel dock upgrades, improved Wi-Fi internet services, shower floor improvements and annual hydro pedestal replacement. By increasing rates, Sugarloaf Marina can manage projects and capital improvements more efficiently and work towards becoming a highly functioning, self-sustaining entity within the City.

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## **Discussion:**

The Strategic Plan compared Sugarloaf Marina's rates with other marinas (both municipal and private, as well as Canadian and American) and has determined that the rates are low and that the rate system is complex. Each dock has a fixed price instead of a price per foot rate, which is the case for most marinas. The Plan will recommend continued communication and dialogue with the boating community regarding fees and the experience the Marina provides boaters. The Plan will continue moving the marina fees to a policy-supported fee structure that balances the budget while providing value to the boating community. To support this, a comprehensive user fee study is being developed by Sugarloaf Marina. Initial recommendations include that a certain per foot rate be implemented in 2022. Recognizing this work is still on-going and any change to the rate structure itself will require time to consider and communicate if approved, the fee structure for 2021 has not been changed but staff propose a modest fee increase as an initial step to move the fee structure to a more comparable rate. The proposed rate increase for seasonal docks is higher than originally planned during the budget process because Marina Staff are aware of dock and fuel pump damages from winter storms that were not part of the 2021 budget. With the budget set for 2021, the additional funding resulting from increased rates will be reinvested in the Marina to help meet customers' expectations.

Staff recognize that a gradual, yet continuous rate increase will allow the marina to reach market comparisons sooner, while also striving to achieve customer retentions. The marina customers and staff will also benefit from a comprehensive user fee study by transitioning to a simplified model based on a per foot cost basis.

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## **Financial Implications:**

Staff identify that an increase in rates will assist in allowing the marina to work towards becoming self-sustaining, capture some losses from operating through COVID-19, and be able to allocate funds for future capital improvements. Staff also recognize that a percentage increase will offset any potential reduction in seasonal boaters for 2021.

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**Public Engagement:**

As part of the Strategic Plan, Sugarloaf Marina customers were emailed a survey and the results of the survey will be presented in the Strategic Plan.

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**Conclusion:**

The approval of Sugarloaf Marina's 2021 rates will result in dock fees more comparable to other marinas. By approving the rate increase in 2021, it will reduce the percentage of rate increases over the next 4 seasons. The approval will allow Sugarloaf Marina to use the current rate structure for 2021 and implement an improved, easier to understand rate structure in 2022 based on a per foot model.

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**Appendices:**

- a. Seasonal Dock Rates
- b. Storage and Boat Yard Rates
- c. Transient and Boat Ramp Rates
- d. Pavilion Rental Rates

Respectfully submitted,

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**Report Approval:**

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.