

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Spanish, a 670-person town on the north shore of Lake Huron, has gained widespread recognition for its sizable 125-slip marina over the past 20 years. The North Channel area of Lake Huron attracts boaters from southern and northern Ontario as well as the Midwestern United States since it is regarded as the "number one freshwater sailing area in the world." The Spanish Marina has been primarily focused on Canadian, close-to-home visitors, allocating most of its slots to seasonal boaters in the Greater Sudbury and the Algoma region, whereas nearby marinas expressly cater to the higher yield US market.

The Town Council of Spanish recently showed interest in placing more of an emphasis on marketing its marina to the community of transient boaters from the US. The Town has outlined several goals in considering improved/expanded service to the transient boater market, including:

1. To make it easier for the Town to draw and host transient boats from the North Channel;
2. Protect and expand public access;
3. Promote, defend, and preserve public greenspace;
4. Ensure that the marina extension will contribute to these goals.

The goals of the study are to:

1. Analyze opportunities, threats, strengths, weaknesses, and the strategic position of the Spanish Marina within the group of North Channel marinas;
2. Examine the feasibility of expanding or reconfiguring docks to accommodate a greater number of high-yield transient marine users to achieve an increase of tourism receipts; and
3. Provide recommendations that increase waterfront access and use among residents.

This study prepares the groundwork for dock engineering and installation.

There are several factors of change in the macro-environment. These include a need for all northern Ontario regions to work towards increasing tourist yield in order to meet Destination Northern Ontario's goal of 10% growth in tourism receipts for the region; a high growth of transients with larger vessels, particularly those measuring 35' to 40' in the North Channel; and the expansion of smart technology to automate marinas and boost efficiency. Further drivers of change include the fact that smaller boats, specifically those under 25 feet, are being trailered at higher rates as environmental regulations restrict marina dredging expansions, and that there is a sizable demand for cultural and ecologically enriching experiences among voyages with the expanding market of transient retirees.

Fuel service, proximity to other marinas, dining and shopping options, variety in recreational activities, technological connections, and, with an increasing awareness of

) the environmental impact of tourism - environmental standards and regulations - are key success factors for marinas in the North Channel.

Many of these are achieved naturally in Spanish. Its position, proximity to numerous other marinas, local Indigenous communities, and biological features of its River are all factors that contribute to its long-term benefits. Since location cannot be modified, these are strong assets. Its main flaws include the great distance between the marina and the downtown, which makes it difficult to extract value, the lack of services, and the inability to accommodate larger transient vessels. Other flaws in the marina's management include an excessive number of berths reserved for low-yield seasonal boaters and a lack of control over the charging of fees for parking and other services.

This proposal concludes that the Spanish Marina could not have expanded past the breakwater structure already in place and that it would have been impossible to build docks on the marina's west or east sides. In the case of the former, the unfeasibility is due to long break-even horizons not acceptable to the Town and in the case of the later, due to water quality and dredging which would be ongoing and causing of a large cost.

Instead, this plan recommends rearranging the marina within the existing break wall and implementing new management strategies to increase value capture that make use of technology, draw on Indigenous culture, and take into account the Spanish River's significance in terms of climate change resilience.

The following are the recommendations that flowed from the report:

1. Replace Pier 5 with dockage to serve 40' boats on both sides and 50-amp service and Pier 4 with 40' dockage to further increase capacity for transient boats, and, subject to engineering design and assessment,
2. Coordinate pricing with nearby marinas,
3. Modify marina slip-holder agreements to maximise the use of limited space, seek environmental certification, charge slip fees per foot of boat (instead of giving 5 free feet when boat sizes are smaller than their occupied docks), and allocating more transient and less seasonal docks,
4. Accommodate up to two food trucks through an RFP process,
5. Establish a small gallery of arts and crafts in the Spanish Marina,
6. Use a GEM Electric Low Speed Vehicle and Turo to close the transportation gap between the Marina and the Spanish Downtown,
7. Establish a Waterfront Micro-Event Committee to organise events all summer long,
8. Purchase Kayak and Binoculars for Rent to Highlight the Biological Importance of the Spanish River,
9. Encourage Public-Private Collaboration for Inflatable Splash Park,
10. Improve Parking Management with Technology and Pricing, and
11. Assess feasibility of expanding Capacity for Accommodations for Transients.

The entire cost of the plan is \$1,297,400, which includes donations from the municipal government in Spanish, the federal government through Fednor, and the provincial

I)

government through NOHFC. To the best of our knowledge, the majority of expenses might be divided so that the towns' net cost contribution would be close to 33%.

To achieve the aforementioned goals, this strategy comprises implementation strategies for marketing, operations, HR reconfiguration, and environmental management.

This strategy will have an annual incremental economic impact of between \$713,027.15 and \$1,183,083.75 dollars. That amounts to an extra \$2,000 per resident of Spanish, in addition to the current impact. Later, a balanced scorecard technique is recommended for evaluating important performance indicators.

)