

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
 RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
 RAPPORT

File/ Réf. 42-98-0014

DATE 6 October 2000

TO/ DEST. Co-ordinator
 Planning & Environment Committee

FROM/ EXP. Commissioner, Planning & Development Approvals

SUBJECT/ OBJET **STATUS UPDATE ON PETRIE ISLAND**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

At the 26 September 2000 meeting of Planning & Environment Committee, Councillor van den Ham requested an update on the current status of Petrie Island. This report outlines the current use of Petrie Island, while touching on related issues and possible plans for its future use.

BACKGROUND

The Region purchased Petrie Island in 1983 for two main reasons. Acquiring valuable open space along the Ottawa River waterfront adjacent to a growing Orléans provided unique recreational opportunities for City residents. Its acquisition also afforded an opportunity to protect important natural habitat and the diverse wildlife populations supported by that habitat. Since then, Petrie Island has also been identified as a possible location for an Ottawa River bridge crossing. Existing uses of the island include hiking trails, a sand extraction business, a residence, a private business and some limited fishing, swimming and boating by the general public. Additional uses that have been proposed for Petrie Island include: a marina, an expanded public beach, a more extensive trail system and a canoe/ kayak club.

Regional Official Plan Policies

The Region's Official Plan designates Petrie Island as *Waterfront Open Space* and *Significant Wetlands South and East of the Canadian Shield*. These designations provide for the following uses:

1. Reflecting the public ownership of the island, open space and open air recreation uses are intended for the portions designated Waterfront Open Space.
2. A large portion of the eastern end of the island falls within the Significant Wetland designation. Protection of the natural environment is intended by this designation, for Petrie Island is an important habitat for wildlife and diverse plant species. The Ministry of Natural Resources has identified Petrie Island as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI).

Policy 9.5.9 of the Official Plan specifically protects the approaches required for the proposed Cumberland-Angers bridge crossing of the Ottawa River. This location at Petrie Island is one of the few options for a new bridge in the eastern part of the City. Various alignments are possible for the bridge as it crosses Petrie Island as a northern extension of Trim Road. Environmental assessment work will commence once there is an agreement between Québec and Ontario on the alternative locations for a bridge.

With respect to Ottawa River water quality, the Region's Surface Water Quality branch completed sampling work this past summer. Results of that survey reveal that bacterial E. coli counts often exceeded the recommended level for human health concerns, which means public swimming should not be encouraged. Although signs are posted to indicate no swimming, some public swimming does occur at present.

When the Island was purchased, the Region entered into a lease with Roger Grandmaitre Ltd. to continue the sand extraction operation on the east side of the island. Current arrangements are to renew the lease on an annual basis each March. Under the terms of the lease the Region receives a royalty based on the tonnage extracted, which for the current year is estimated to be approximately 60,000 tons.

DISCUSSION

Environmental inventory work of the island was completed in 1999, providing a comprehensive database for future management decisions affecting Petrie Island. Regional features of interest identified by the consultant include an extensive hackberry bush with an understory of ostrich ferns, and a stand of hemlock trees on the adjacent mainland. The consultant also noted that there appeared to be declining use of the island by waterfowl.

At the same time, an interpretive trail system was developed for the island that included a link to the mainland and a trail extension continuing along the Ottawa River shoreline. One interesting proposal from this work is a proposed secondary trail on the main part of Petrie Island that would loop southerly

from the existing trail and require a footbridge to link back with the north-east portion of the island. Proper design of this new trail (location and materials) would have to be acceptable from an environmental and interpretative perspective. This secondary trail loop is considered a future undertaking, to be part of future plans for Petrie Island once the east end bridge has been decided.

Recently, some users of Petrie Island have proposed to Cumberland Council that the sand extraction business be shifted further east, thereby making available more sandy beach areas for general public use. Although unintended, this proposal would have the effect of encouraging additional swimming activity, and it raises serious property management issues such as security, public safety and municipal liability. These considerations, together with the human health concerns of poor water quality, suggest that this proposal should be discouraged at this time. Continuation of the sand extraction business is considered an appropriate interim use for this portion of Petrie Island.

CONSULTATION

Since this is a status report in response to an inquiry, there was no public consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

Future use of Petrie Island hinges on the proposed Ottawa River bridge crossing. Until this issue is decided, the preferred interim management approach is to limit the use of Petrie Island to existing uses. For the sand extraction business, this would involve renewing the existing lease on a year-to-year basis. Water quality/ human health issues suggest that public swimming should be discouraged as much as possible. Certainly, no new beach areas should be made available for the general public use.

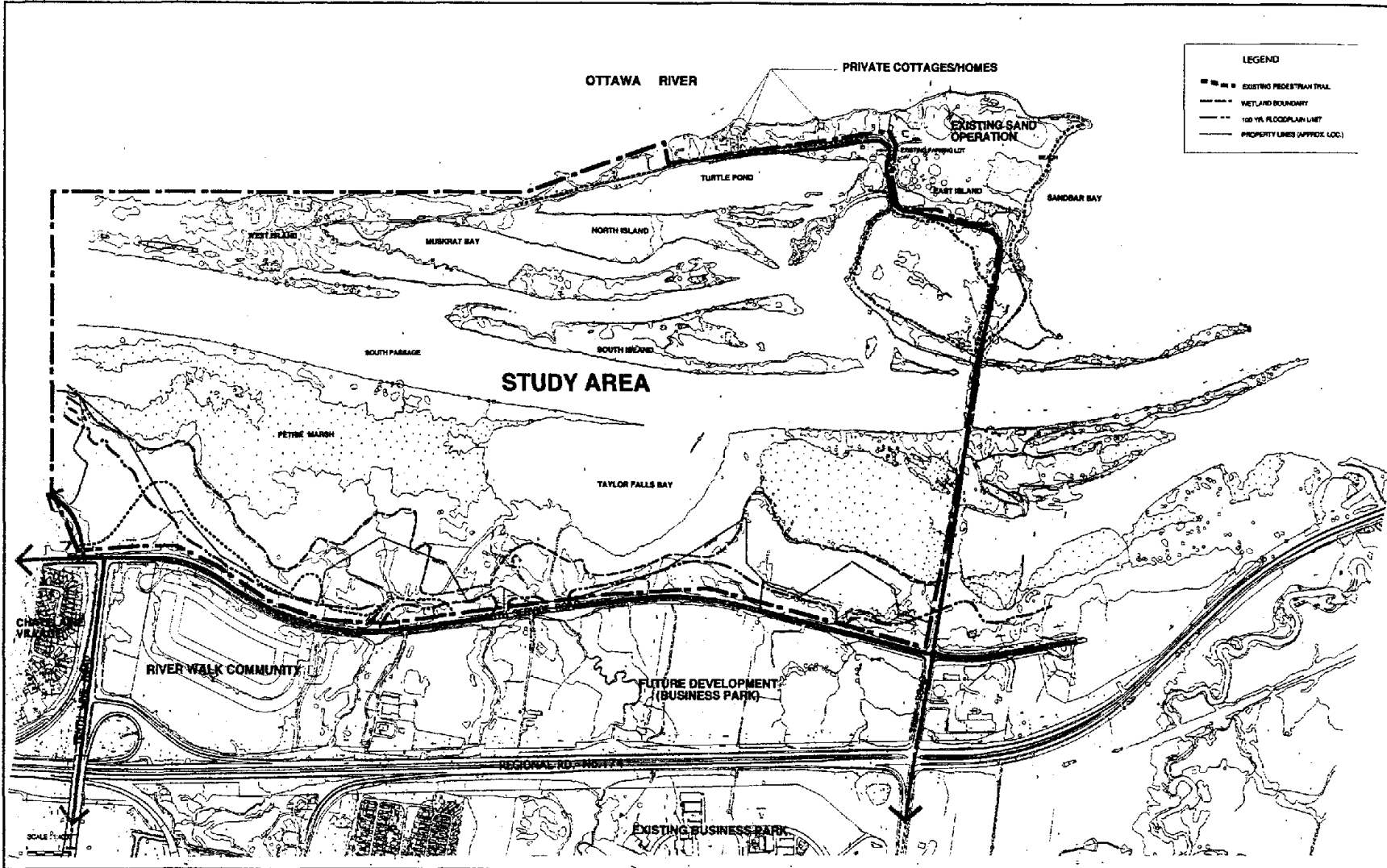
Once the bridge location has been decided, work should proceed on preparation of a Master Plan for Petrie Island. This project would be part of the new City's future work program, to be undertaken with the participation of the local community and other interested groups.

Approved by

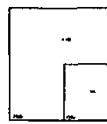
N. Tunnacliffe, MCIP, RPP

Attachment:

Annex A ~ Plan of Petrie Island.



TRAIL ALIGNMENT CONCEPTS
 Petrie Islands Trail System
 City Of Cumberland



**SITE AND CONTEXT
 (EXISTING CONDITIONS)**

DATE: _____ DRAWN BY: _____
 PROJECT NO.: _____ CHECK BY: _____

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