



## Council-In-Committee Meeting – September 09, 2025

Subject: Update - Port Dover Beach Buoys  
Report Number: CDS-25-026  
Division: Community and Development Services  
Department: Administration  
Ward: All Wards  
Purpose: For Decision

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### Recommendation(s):

That Staff Report CDS-25-026 “Update - Port Dover Beach Buoys” be received as information; and That staff be directed to maintain status quo regarding the Schedule 1 limits for the Port Dover Beach Buoys; and

That staff install swim markers to further enhance the confines of the Schedule 1 limits.

### Executive Summary:

On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, OPS 24-22 “Request to Review Boating Restrictions for Port Dover Beach” staff report was presented to Council with the following resolutions:

“That staff be authorized to take the necessary steps to review and if supported by stakeholders, make a formal application to remove the Vessel Operation Restriction Regulation Schedule 1 designation for the Port Dover Beach: and

Further that in consultation with Transport Canada replace the Schedule 1 designation with a Schedule 2 designation for the Port Dover beach.”

### Discussions:

Following the direction of Council, a public survey was made available on the Engage Norfolk site from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 to May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 to seek public feedback on a possible change to the boating restriction area at Port Dover beach. The following questions were asked:

1. Do you support the proposed change from a Schedule 1 restriction (no vessels allowed) to a Schedule 2 restriction (non-motorized vessels allowed)? Yes/No
2. Do you currently anchor your boat at Port Dover beach? Yes/No
3. Do you currently kayak, canoe, or paddleboard at Port Dover beach? Yes/No
4. Do you support a change in the location of buoys at Port Dover beach? Yes/No

5. If a change is made to buoy placement, which map do you prefer?
  - a. Map 1 – present location of buoys
  - b. Map 2 - example of expanded (width) area of location of buoys
  - c. Map 3 – example of further expanded (length and width) area of location of buoys
  - d. Map 4 – example of further reduced (width) area of location of buoys

Results of the survey indicated that 2.2 thousand folks visited the site with 364 participants completing the survey. Additionally, attendees of the public engagement who filled out a paper copy results were added to this survey.

### **Survey Findings:**

Map 1 – Present location of buoys (69 responses)

Map 2 – Expanded width area (43 responses)

Map 3 – Expanded length & width (111 responses)

Map 4 – Reduced width area (141 responses)

Print ads were also placed in the Norfolk & Tillsonburg News and Port Dover Maple Leaf. A media release was sent out April 21<sup>st</sup>, as well as social media posts and the Norfolk County website was updated.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, a public engagement meeting was held at the Port Dover Community Centre with 25 participants, with 5 adjacent beach property owners being in attendance. Also, a 6<sup>th</sup> adjacent beach property owner reached out to staff to discuss this matter at a later date.

Concerns that were highlighted by property owners were:

- Non-motorized vessels with swimmers in the same area; concern of the possibility of kayakers / paddles / windsurfers / windsurf foilers hitting someone swimming; Sea-Doo's coming up to beach within the same area as swimmers
- Liability issues in regard to owning property where boats and swimmers would be in same area
- Concern of boats being anchored on private beach
- Concern of numerous boats anchoring together spending the day in same location; continual loud music has been an issue
- Excess garbage thrown off boats; creating potential hazards

Throughout the process staff have gained information showing the adjacent property owners and the general public have a difference of opinions on buoy locations. As a result, staff feel the present Schedule 1 and the present location of beach buoys remain the same.

Staff were also approached by a Port Dover resident who also had suggested a modified and combined restricted area, having one area as a Schedule 1 designation

for swimmers and a designated area to the west designated as Schedule 2 for non-motorized vessels.

Staff feel any changes will lead to future concerns with the public and/or private beach owners and with this being the case will side with the adjacent beach property owners in keeping Schedule 1 in place to alleviate liability concerns. Staff have also learned that swim markers/buoys can be installed within the confines of the existing Schedule 1 buoys. There were concerns expressed by the public that the limits of the restricted area were difficult to see at times. This would help to ensure the safety of swimmers and beachgoers by increasing visibility of the swim area.

Moving forward the defined area will be clearly signed as Schedule 1 on the buoys visible from beach as well as lake side.

#### **Financial Services Comments:**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations within this report. Buoy replacement and signage costs to support the current Schedule 1 designation can be accommodated through existing budget allocations and may result in periodic one-time operating requests.

#### **Interdepartmental Implications:**

N/A

#### **Consultation(s):**

Operations staff had consultations with representatives from Transport Canada, local Dover residents and Port Dover beach owners.

#### **Strategic Plan Linkage:**

Sustaining Norfolk - Creating a sustainable community and a positive legacy

#### **Attachment(s):**

- 4 maps that were included survey

#### **Approval:**

Approved By:  
Al Meneses, Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared and Reviewed By:  
Bill Cridland, General Manager, Community and Development Services