



Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

# Rockport Strategic Plan Update and Community Transportation Strategy

Draft

# Table of Contents

|            |   |           |
|------------|---|-----------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Introduction</b>                                     | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1        | Background .....  | 1         |
| 1.1.1      | The Land Use Planning Context .....                     | 1         |
| 1.1.2      | The Zoning Context .....                                | 3         |
| 1.1.3      | The Transportation Network Context.....                 | 5         |
| 1.2        | Purpose .....   | 6         |
| 1.2.1      | Public Consultation .....                               | 8         |
| 1.3        | 2005 Rockport Strategic Plan.....                       | 9         |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Transportation Analysis</b>                          | <b>11</b> |
| 2.1        | Summary of Observations.....                            | 12        |
| 2.1.1      | Pedestrians Crossing the Thousand Islands Parkway ..... | 12        |
| 2.1.2      | Cycling Activity in Rockport.....                       | 16        |
| 2.1.3      | Boat launch activity .....                              | 18        |
| 2.1.4      | Coach Buses.....  | 20        |
| 2.1.5      | Pedestrian Activity in the Village Core.....            | 22        |
| 2.1.6      | Traffic on Front Street.....                            | 25        |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Challenges and Opportunities</b>                     | <b>28</b> |
| 3.1        | Public Boat Ramp .....                                  | 28        |
| 3.1.1      | Challenges .....  | 28        |
| 3.1.2      | Opportunities .....                                     | 30        |
| 3.2        | Parking.....  | 32        |
| 3.2.1      | Challenges .....  | 32        |
| 3.2.2      | Opportunities .....                                     | 33        |
| 3.3        | Delineating Public and Private Space.....               | 34        |
| 3.3.1      | Challenges .....  | 34        |

## Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

### Rockport Strategic Plan Update and Community Transportation Strategy - Draft

October 2020 – 19-1499



|            |  |           |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 3.3.2      | Opportunities .....  | 34        |
| 3.4        | Pedestrian Safety .....                                    | 35        |
| 3.4.1      | Challenges .....   | 35        |
| 3.4.2      | Opportunities .....  | 36        |
| 3.5        | Sewage Treatment .....                                     | 36        |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Land Use Concept</b>                                    | <b>37</b> |
| 4.1        | Recommendations for Area A: Thousand Islands Parkway ..... | 39        |
| 4.1.1      | Area A, Recommendation 1: Public Parking .....             | 40        |
| 4.1.2      | Area A, Recommendation 2: Pedestrian Crossing .....        | 42        |
| 4.2        | Recommendations for Area B: Rockport Village Core .....    | 43        |
| 4.2.1      | Area B: Public Boat Ramp.....                              | 44        |
| 4.2.2      | Area B: Parking.....                                       | 51        |
| 4.2.3      | Area B: Delineating Public and Private Space .....         | 55        |
| 4.2.4      | Area B: Pedestrian Safety.....                             | 57        |
| 4.3        | Additional Recommendations.....                            | 60        |
| 4.3.1      | Create a Monitoring Plan .....                             | 60        |
| 4.3.2      | Amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law .....    | 60        |
| 4.3.3      | Sewage Treatment Limitations .....                         | 61        |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Implementation Plan</b>                                 | <b>62</b> |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Conclusion</b>  | <b>64</b> |

**Figures**

Figure 1: Schedule B3 – Land Use Designations for Rockport ..... 2

Figure 2: Adaptation of Zoning Schedule E, Ward 3 Shoreline..... 5

Figure 3: Study Area ..... 7

Figure 4: Camera Positions ..... 11

Figure 5: Pedestrian Crossing Locations on the Thousand Islands Parkway ..... 12

Figure 6: Pedestrians Crossing the Parkway at Escott Rockport Road ..... 13

Figure 7: Signalized Pedestrian Crossing ..... 15

Figure 8: Boat Trailers Interfering with Cyclists..... 17

Figure 9: Cyclists Stopped on Roadway ..... 17

Figure 10: Pedestrians Blocking Boat Launch ..... 18

Figure 11: Boat Trailer on Private Property ..... 19

Figure 12: Public Boat Launch Activity (15-minute intervals) ..... 20

Figure 13: Parked Coach Buses (15-minute intervals)..... 21

Figure 14: Coach Bus Parking Issues ..... 22

Figure 15: Pedestrian Activity in the Village Core ..... 23

Figure 16: Key Pedestrian Crossing Locations and Various Land Uses..... 24

Figure 17: Traffic Volumes - Front Street, opposite Escott Rockport Road (15-  
minutes) ..... 25

Figure 18: Traffic Volumes - Front Street, opposite Burtch's Lane (15-minutes)..... 26

Figure 19: Traffic on Front Street Summary ..... 27

Figure 20: Land Survey Dimensions of the Public Boat Ramp ..... 29

Figure 21: Public Right-of-Way Used for Private Parking ..... 31

Figure 22: Existing Public Parking ..... 32

Figure 23: Private Parking in the Village Core..... 33

Figure 24: Examples of Low Fencing and Vegetation as Physical Barriers ..... 35

Figure 25: Area A and Area B ..... 38

Figure 26: Trucks with Boat Trailers parked on Front Street..... 40

Figure 27: Area A, Recommendation 1 – Public Parking ..... 41

Figure 28: Area A, Recommendation 2 – Pedestrian Crossing ..... 42

Figure 29: Area B, Recommendation 1 – Boat Trailer Queue ..... 45

Figure 30: Area B, Recommendation 2 – Boat Ramp Delineation (left), Overlaid on  
the Land Survey (right)..... 46

Figure 31: Area B, Recommendations 2 and 3 – Boat Ramp Improvements ..... 47



Figure 32: Area B, Recommendation 4 – Bus Parking Lot Access ..... 48

Figure 33: Area B, Recommendations 5a through 5c – Pedestrian Improvements .... 49

Figure 34: Example of a Tactile Unit Paver ..... 50

Figure 35: Existing versus Proposed On-Street Public Parking ..... 52

Figure 36: Parking in front of the Customs Dock, Existing versus Proposed ..... 53

Figure 37: Existing versus Proposed Entry/Exit Points for the Private, Unpaved  
Parking Lot..... 53

Figure 38: Area B, Recommendation 7 – Single Access Point for Private Parking  
Lot..... 54

Figure 39: Area B, Recommendation 8 – Public Realm Beautification..... 55

Figure 40: Area B, Recommendation 9 – Customs Dock Parkette Concept ..... 56

Figure 41: Area B, Recommendation 10 - Speed Cushions for Traffic-Calming ..... 57

Figure 42: Examples of Speed Cushions ..... 58

Figure 43: Recommended Locations of Speed Cushions..... 59

**Tables**

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Table 1: Permitted Uses by Zone ..... 4

Table 2: Pedestrian Crossing Volumes Summary ..... 14

Table 3: Cycling Activity in Rockport..... 16

Table 4: Boat Launch Activity Summary – 12-hour totals ..... 20

Table 5: Coach Bus Observations Summary – 12 hour ..... 22

Table 6: Front Street Traffic Volumes over 12 hours..... 26

Table 7: Implementation Plan for Short and Long Term Recommendations..... 63

**Appendices**

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A      What We Heard – Public Consultation Summaries

B      Detailed Traffic Count Data

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Situated directly on Ontario’s Saint Lawrence River and in the heart of the Thousand Islands, the picturesque village of Rockport continues to have great potential to be a wonderful place to live and visit. Yet, issues that stem primarily from vehicular traffic congestion and lack of parking management, as initially outlined in the 2005 Strategic Plan, continue to compromise the functioning of Rockport, particularly in its village core.

With the success of the local tourist businesses and the growing demand for additional parking facilities, there have been impacts to the overall character of Rockport as a rural village. As such, it is important that any efforts to improve the issues faced in the village strike the best balance between supporting Rockport’s local economy while maintaining its village feel and character.

The Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands (Township) completed a Strategic Plan in 2005, however it lacked formal status and implementation. The Township’s Official Plan (O.P.) and Transportation Master Plan/Active Transportation Plan (T.M.P. /A.T.P.) were updated in 2018 and 2019 respectively, and there is a need to review and update the 2005 Strategic Plan to effectively align with these plans.

This updated Strategic Plan will serve as a tool to identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement or intervention in Rockport, based on a collective vision for its future.

#### 1.1.1 The Land Use Planning Context

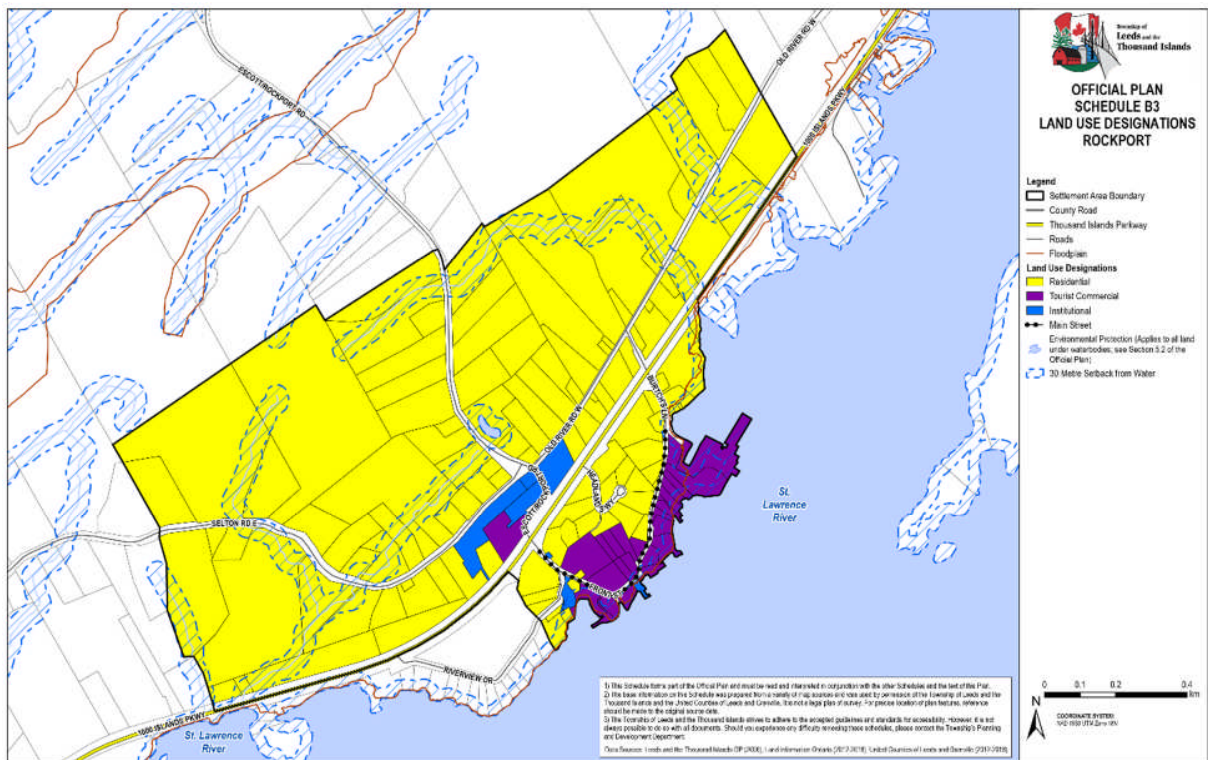
The Township’s 2018 O.P. developed a vision statement for Rockport as “the heart of the Thousand Islands and a tourist destination, which aims to enhance its public realm and support walkability in the core while celebrating and protecting its natural heritage”. The goals established in the O.P. include the following:

- (a) Encourage recreation- and tourist-based commercial development such as accommodations, restaurants, specialty shops, boat repair service shops and outfitters;
- (b) Provide the services and infrastructure needed to support increased eco-tourism and tourism such as wayfinding tools, signage from main transportation

- corridors, information kiosks, appropriately located public parking areas, public washrooms and bike racks;
- (c) Reduce traffic congestion within the Settlement Area boundary of Rockport, and promote the development of a village square with commercial uses; and,
- (d) Promote a diversity of housing options in Rockport subject to appropriate servicing.

Rockport is predominantly residential in nature, with tourist commercial uses along the waterfront on Front Street. Schedule B3 of the O.P. (**Figure 1**) shows that most of the land north of the Thousand Islands Parkway is residential, with a small pocket of institutional and commercial uses located along Escott Rockport Road. There are more residential parcels along the south side of the Thousand Islands Parkway, with some residential parcels along Riverview Drive, Front Street, and Burtch’s Lane.

**Figure 1: Schedule B3 – Land Use Designations for Rockport**



The land uses along the Saint Lawrence River are designated as Tourist Commercial, with the exception of two parcels of land that are designated as Institutional (the Rockport Customs Dock and the public boat ramp). These uses are located on both sides

of Front Street, with the majority of them located on the southern side and along the waterfront edge.

In the O.P., Rockport is designated as a Rural Settlement Area and is therefore a place identified as a focus for growth. Tourist-based commercial development is a goal of the O.P. to support the high profile of Rockport as a tourist destination, with visions of enhancing the public realm experience and supporting walkability in the core. While the necessary services and infrastructure must be in place to support the continued increase in tourism, it is important to the community that the village character of the area be preserved. However, the community has noted that public and private spaces in the village core are not easily differentiated by many tourists who visit, often resulting in tourists trespassing on private property. Given that Front Street is designated in the O.P. as a ‘Main Street’ between the Thousand Islands Parkway in the west and Burtch’s Lane in the east, it is therefore important to understand how private properties on Front Street could be better protected, without diminishing efforts made to improve the public realm in the process.

### 1.1.2 The Zoning Context

According to Zoning Schedule E (Ward 3 – Shoreline) of Zoning By-Law 07-079 (“Zoning By-law”), the land use zones within the village boundary of Rockport include:

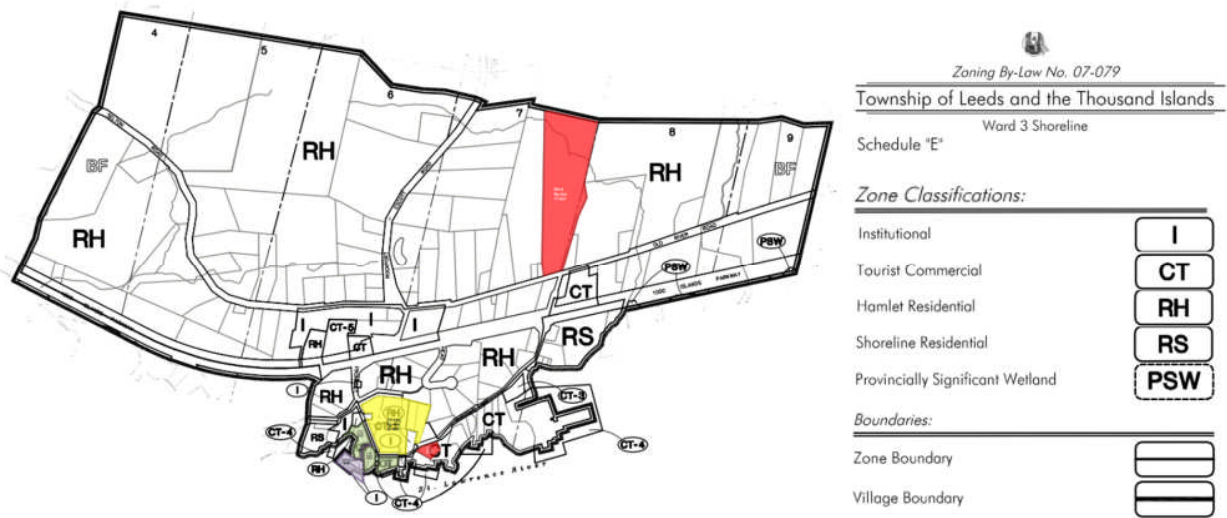
- Tourist Commercial (CT);
- Hamlet Residential (RH);
- Shoreline Residential (RS); and,
- Institutional (I).

**Table 1** provides the permitted uses in these zones, and Schedule E is shown in **Figure 2**.

**Table 1: Permitted Uses by Zone**

| <b>Zone</b>   | <b>Permitted Uses</b>  |
|---|--|
| CT, I   | accessory dwelling or an accessory dwelling unit; cemetery; clinic; club, private; community centre; day care centre; fairground; fire hall; group home; group home, correctional; hospital; library; marine facility; municipal office; museum; nursing home; office; park; parking area/lot; place of worship; police station; retreat area; school; seasonal camp; and retirement residence.          |
| CT-(h)<br>Symbolized in green in Fig. 2                 | uses permitted in accordance with the CT zone, subject to Site Plan Control.   |
| CT-1(h)<br>Symbolized in yellow in Fig. 2               | a gasoline retail facility is permitted, subject to Site Plan Control.   |
| CT-3  | a houseboat rental business comprised of seven boats and a single detached dwelling.   |
| CT-4  | a marina, a marine facility and uses permitted under Section 16 (Flood Plain Zones) shall be permitted (conservation use, excluding buildings; agricultural use, excluding buildings; forestry use, excluding buildings; marine facility; parks, excluding buildings; passive outdoor recreation, excluding buildings; uses accessory to a residential use located on the same lot, excluding buildings) |
| CT-19<br>The smaller parcel symbolized in red in Fig. 2 | notwithstanding other permitted uses in the CT zone, living accommodation is permitted in the second storey of the existing detached garage.   |
| CT-27-h<br>Symbolized in purple in Fig. 2               | 190.5m <sup>2</sup> dock for the Commercial Boat Line that owns the subject property and adjacent properties, subject to Site Plan Control.  |
| RH  | boarding house; duplex dwelling; group home; marine facility; semi-detached dwelling; single detached dwelling   |
| RS  | group home; marine facility; single detached dwelling; sleeping cabin  |

**Figure 2: Adaptation of Zoning Schedule E, Ward 3 Shoreline**



**1.1.3 The Transportation Network Context**

The vision of the T.M.P. /A.T.P. is “to promote leadership and community partnerships that make the Township a healthy, prosperous, and sustainable community, with Active Transportation as a key component of a safe, accessible, integrated transportation system linking where we live, work, and play”. T.M.P. /A.T.P. goals that will help to address the O.P. goals listed above include:

- (a) Fostering a vibrant economy that supports area businesses through an expanded tourist industry;
- (b) Encouraging healthier lifestyles within the community by increasing the opportunity for active transportation;
- (c) Decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the reliance on motor vehicles;
- (d) Improving accessibility for individuals of all ages, levels, and abilities; and,
- (e) Improving safety for all modes of travel by adopting a Complete Streets approach to future transportation projects.

The existing transportation network contains several local Township roads, which are split by the Thousand Islands Parkway. The Parkway is a high-speed, 80 km/h roadway, with the Waterfront Trail, a physically separated multi-use pathway, to the north.



The Township roads are generally narrow, with a substandard and irregular pavement width and irregular right-of-way width. There are no pedestrian or cycling facilities on Township roads, except for a small portion of sidewalk in the village core. The village also lacks clearly defined public and private spaces which leads to conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, passenger vehicles, trucks with boat trailers, and coach buses.

The Thousand Islands, including Rockport, is a popular tourist destination from Spring through Fall. There is a high number of passenger vehicles, trucks with boat trailers, coach buses, pedestrians, and cyclists within Rockport during the tourist season. There are conflicts between these different users due to the lack of delineation of the public and private spaces, in addition to the lack of pedestrian and cycling facilities and an inadequate road width.

One of the goals of this study is to reduce the conflicts between the different users of the transportation network and improve the accessibility and safety for individuals of all ages, levels, and abilities by adopting a Complete Streets approach.

## 1.2 Purpose

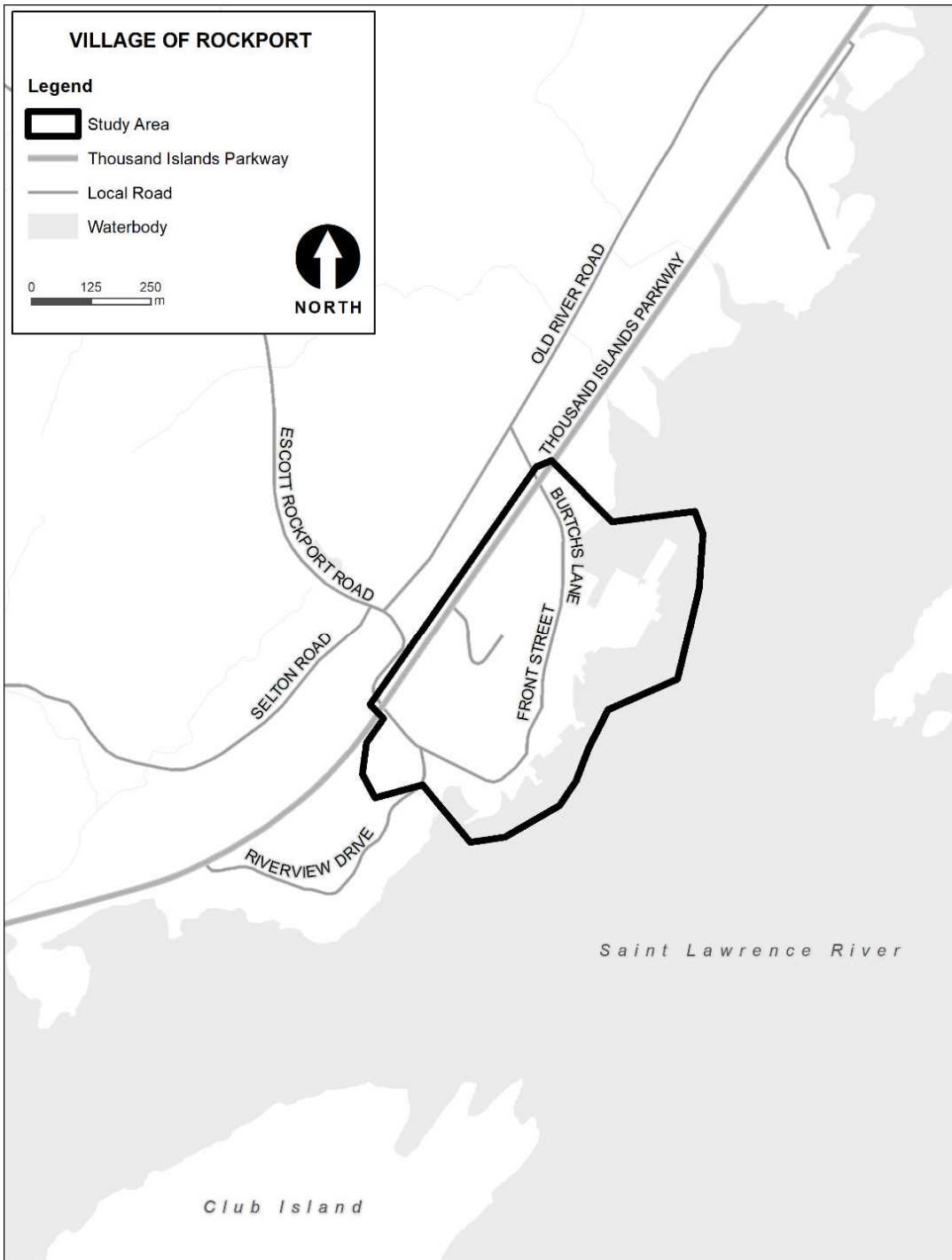
The purpose of this study was to complete a review and update of the 2005 Rockport Strategic Plan and develop a Community Transportation Strategy (C.T.S.), to establish a vision and strategy for future land use and development in Rockport. Short- and long-term options and recommendations were developed with regard to the right-of-way configuration and traffic congestion relief, particularly on Front Street, for its safe use by buses, passenger vehicles, trucks and boat trailers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

To meet these objectives, the project team:

- Performed a land use review, zoning assessment, and transportation analysis;
- Held multiple consultation sessions with the public and stakeholder focus groups (see Section 1.2.1);
- Provided recommendations regarding both the delineation of public and private space and the operation of the public boat ramp; and,
- Identified the future land use pattern and transportation network, including active transportation opportunities.

The study area, shown in **Figure 3**, is bound by the Thousand Islands Parkway and the Saint Lawrence River.

**Figure 3: Study Area**





## Public Consultation

A number of consultation events (“Public Information Centres”, or “P.I.C.s”) were held in order for the project team to receive input from community members and stakeholders. All P.I.C.s took place at the Rockport Recreation Centre. Over the course of the study, individuals who were unable to attend the P.I.C.s were also welcome to offer feedback to the Township, via email or through the Township website. See **Appendix A** for consultation summaries.

The first P.I.C. took place on October 24, 2019 from 6 P.M. to 8 P.M., following small focus group meetings that occurred earlier in the day. The purpose of the P.I.C. was to gather input from the public on opportunities and issues in the village, and to get an understanding of their vision for the future of Rockport. The session started with a brief presentation to introduce the project and outline the evening’s objectives and activities. Following the presentation, there was a brief question period, and then attendees were invited to participate in two activity stations designed to generate input with regard to the community vision for Rockport.

The second P.I.C. took place on December 12, 2019 from 6 P.M. to 8 P.M. The purpose of the second P.I.C. was to review two concepts for the Rockport Strategic Plan/Community Transportation Strategy and receive feedback to inform the preparation of a preferred concept. The session began with a presentation to provide a summary of the information gathered as part of the transportation assessment and the two proposed concepts for Rockport. There was a brief question and answer period part way through the presentation to clarify elements of the transportation analysis, and a longer question and answer period following the presentation. Members of the public and stakeholders were also invited to provide additional written feedback on the concepts printed on large boards, on comment forms, and through email.

A third P.I.C. took place on March 12, 2020 from 6 P.M. to 8 P.M. The purpose of the third P.I.C. was to present and review a revised concept plan for the Rockport Strategic Plan/Community Transportation Strategy and receive feedback that informed the refinements to the final preferred concept. The third P.I.C. began with a presentation that detailed the elements of the revised concept plan, which was developed based on in-person and online feedback received during the second P.I.C. until the end of a commenting period which lasted until January 15, 2020. Following the presentation, a

question-and-comment period was held to give attendees the opportunity to provide feedback. Attendees were also invited to provide additional written feedback on the revised concept printed on large boards, on comment forms, and through email until March 26, 2020.

Additional focus group meetings were held (online) in May 2020 to inform further refinements to the concept.

### 1.3 2005 Rockport Strategic Plan

The 2005 Strategic Plan for Rockport provided direction on how Rockport could continue to serve as a tourist destination, while preserving its small rural character. It also recognized that Rockport is the location of several high profile tourist businesses, and as a result, the seasonal influx of tourist buses and private vehicular traffic impacts the functioning of Rockport as a rural village. The challenges of excessive traffic congestion and greater parking requirements, maintaining the small rural feel, and accommodating tourist commercial services were apparent in 2005, and they continue to be pressing issues today. The purpose of this Strategic Plan was, therefore, to identify whether there were strategies to address these issues and achieve a better balance between the local community and its tourist economy.

The plan identified two primary issues: (1) high volume and frequency of vehicular traffic (bus and personal vehicles), which were causing traffic congestion in the village core during the tourist season, and (2) parking, for which the demand has continued to increase since 2005. The number of vehicles parking along Front Street and in areas that could be better used to improve the public realm was excessive and detracted from the quaint nature of Rockport. In combination, these two issues directly imposed on the safe and comfortable movement of pedestrians and limited the overall main street experience of the town, as the streetscape was, and continues to be, dominated by vehicular traffic.

A further issue that the 2005 Strategic Plan identified was related to sewage treatment. Rockport is serviced by private wells and septic systems, which limits how much additional development can be accommodated. The Plan identified non-intensive uses such as clothes and souvenir shops as potential uses, as they do not place additional burdens on existing septic systems. However, any meaningful growth in the form of

residential or commercial uses, such as restaurants, would require land area for the expansion of, or new private services.

The 2005 Strategic Plan identified four opportunities:

- 1) Retain the status quo but make improvements to the overall organization of Rockport;
- 2) Provide a bus turn-around for passenger drop off and pick up, with bus parking located outside of the town;
- 3) Exclude buses from entering the village core and using a passenger shuttle service as the alternative; and,
- 4) Provide a one-way route for buses to drop off and pick up passengers, but bus parking would be removed from the village core.

The Strategic Plan outlined these identified issues and opportunities, provided options to address them, and gave recommendations to the Township and the community to consider when moving forward.

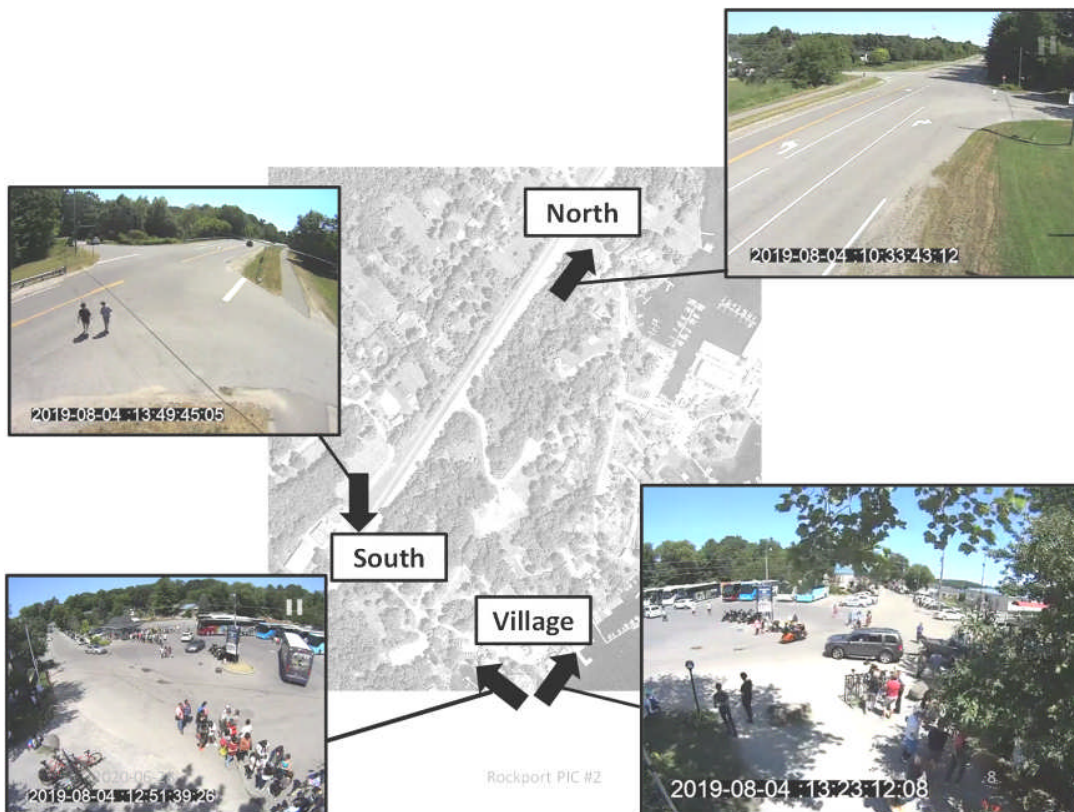
## 2.0 Transportation Analysis

The purpose of the transportation analysis was to quantify the volume of traffic on Front Street, review the traffic circulation on Front Street, and review the interaction with the public boat ramp, parking areas, and pedestrian and cyclist traffic.

Four (4) cameras were used to observe traffic operations on Saturday August 3, Sunday August 4, and Wednesday August 7, 2019. These days were selected to represent a busy tourist weekend (the August 2019 long weekend, Civic Holiday), as well as a typical summer weekday.

Two cameras were located on the Thousand Islands Parkway (at Escott Rockport Road and Burtch’s Lane, respectively), and the other two were located near the boat launch facing north-east and north-west. **Figure 4** illustrates the camera positions.

**Figure 4: Camera Positions**



The cameras recorded video from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. for each of the three days. The videos were used to count passenger cars, coach buses, boat trailers, cyclists, and pedestrians and summarize them in 15-minute intervals. The observations are illustrated and summarized below. **Appendix B** contains more detailed traffic count data.

**2.1 Summary of Observations**

**2.1.1 Pedestrians Crossing the Thousand Islands Parkway**

**Figure 5** illustrates the pedestrian crossing locations on the Thousand Islands Parkway, and **Figure 6** illustrates some of the sample video footage collected at Escott Rockport Road.

**Figure 5: Pedestrian Crossing Locations on the Thousand Islands Parkway**





**Figure 6: Pedestrians Crossing the Parkway at Escott Rockport Road**



These pedestrian crossings are neither controlled nor formal. The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC)'s *Pedestrian Crossing Control Guide (2012)* provides guidance on when a formal, controlled crossing should be provided. The warrant process uses pedestrian volumes and vehicle volumes.

Pedestrian volume is converted to "Equivalent Adult Units" (E.A.U.s) to account for pedestrian age and physical ability as follows:

- Adults: 1.0 E.A.U.
- Unaccompanied children 12 years old or younger: 2.0 E.A.U.
- Seniors 65 years old or older: 1.5 E.A.U.
- Pedestrians with physical impairments: 2.0 E.A.U.

The threshold for a pedestrian warrant is 1,500 vehicles per day and 15 E.A.U. per hour for the peak seven (7) hour period.

**Table 2** summarizes the number of pedestrians that were observed to cross the parkway and the total traffic observed on the parkway. Seniors were assumed to represent 50% of pedestrian volumes.

Over 12 hours of observations, up to 4,080 vehicles were observed on the parkway, and up to 254 pedestrians were observed to cross the parkway at the Escott Rockport Road intersection. The busiest seven hours were selected and the E.A.U. was calculated.

Based on these volumes, a pedestrian crossing was warranted at the Escott Rockport Road intersection but not the Burtch's Lane intersection.

**Table 2: Pedestrian Crossing Volumes Summary**

| Access              | Volume  | Sat.<br>Aug. 3 | Sun.<br>Aug. 4 | Wed.<br>Aug. 7 |
|---------------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Burtch's Lane       | Total traffic on parkway (12 hr.)   | 3,590          | 4,080          | 2,515          |
| Burtch's Lane       | Pedestrians crossing parkway (12 hr.)   | 30             | 25             | 20             |
| Burtch's Lane       | Pedestrians crossing parkway (hourly average during peak 7 hours)             | 4              | 4              | 3              |
| Burtch's Lane       | Equivalent Adult Units (E.A.U.)(seniors >= 65 are counted as 1.5 adults)(50%) | 5              | 5              | 4              |
| Burtch's Lane       | Pedestrian crossing warranted (>15 E.A.U./hr.)                                | No             | No             | No             |
| Escott Rockport Rd. | Total traffic on parkway (12 hr.)   | 3,590          | 4,080          | 2,515          |
| Escott Rockport Rd. | Pedestrians crossing parkway (12 hr.)   | 100            | 254            | 13             |
| Escott Rockport Rd. | Pedestrians crossing parkway (hourly average during peak 7 hours)             | 12             | 28             | 3              |
| Escott Rockport Rd. | Equivalent Adult Units (E.A.U.)(seniors >= 65 are counted as 1.5 adults)(50%) | 15             | 35             | 4              |
| Escott Rockport Rd. | Pedestrian crossing warranted (>15 E.A.U./hr.)                                | Yes            | Yes            | No             |

Given the location on the Thousand Islands Parkway, a signalized pedestrian crossing using a traffic control signal head is recommended. This will be more familiar to rural drivers and tourists who may not be familiar with pedestrian crossing control devices.

**Figure 7** illustrates a signalized pedestrian crossing on Prince of Wales Drive in Ottawa, which has a posted speed of 80 km/h typically and 60 km/h at the signalized pedestrian crossing. This crossing uses a typical traffic control signal head.

**Figure 7: Signalized Pedestrian Crossing**

*Location: Greenbelt Pathway on Prince of Wales Drive, Ottawa*

Reducing the posted speed limit to 60 km/h is also recommended to accommodate the signalized pedestrian crossing. Despite the reduced posted speed, some vehicles may still travel at 100 km/h. There are horizontal and vertical curves southwest of Rockport, and therefore a second signal may be required southwest of Rockport to provide adequate stopping distance for a vehicle travelling above the speed limit. A sightline review should be performed prior to designing and installing the pedestrian crossing control.

It should also be noted that:

- Some pedestrians may not be comfortable crossing the road without a signalized pedestrian crossing; the pedestrian crossing volumes may increase if a signalized pedestrian crossing is installed (further justifying it);
- The pedestrian crossing volumes do not include cyclists. If cyclists were included a pedestrian crossing would be marginally warranted at Burtch's Lane based on the Sunday observations (68 cyclists were counted as noted in the next section); and,



- The Burtch’s Lane intersection is a natural location to have a second signalized pedestrian crossing to allow for a complete loop of Front Street for pedestrians and cyclists.

2.1.2 **Cycling Activity in Rockport**

**Table 3** summarizes the cycling activity observed at the intersections of the Thousand Islands Parkway and Escott Rockport Road/Burtch’s Lane/Front Street. There were up to 70 cyclists observed over a 12-hour period and up to 18 cyclists counted during a single 15-minute period. Many of the cyclists were observed to travel in groups.

**Figure 8** illustrates a case where boat trailers were observed to queue on the shoulder facing southbound, north of the Cornwall's Pub. This would create conflict for cyclists (and pedestrians) on Front Street between the parkway and Cornwall’s Pub. Cyclists risk hitting the open door of a parked vehicle or being hit by vehicles in the opposing direction.

**Figure 9** was provided by the Rockport Resident’s Delegation and shows cyclists stopped on the roadway. It appears they are stopped because they do not feel safe continuing due to oncoming traffic in their lane.

These conflicts are due to the narrow roadway and vehicles stopped on the roadway, which reduce the available space for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Table 3: Cycling Activity in Rockport**

| Measurement  | Sat.<br>Aug. 3 | Sun.<br>Aug. 4 | Wed.<br>Aug. 7 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| In + out of village at Burtch’s Lane, 12-hour total        | 24             | 68             | 4              |
| In + out of village at Burtch’s Lane, peak 15 mins.        | 5              | 10             | 2              |
| In + out of village at Escott Rockport Road, 12-hour total | 70             | 82             | 2              |
| In + out of village at Escott Rockport Road, peak 15 mins. | 18             | 16             | 2              |

Figure 8: Boat Trailers Interfering with Cyclists



Figure 9: Cyclists Stopped on Roadway



Source: Rockport Resident's Delegation letter

## 2.1.3

**Boat launch activity**

The boat launch is located in the core of the village and it is surrounded by the Cornwall's Pub, the Island View Restaurant, the boat line's parking lot, and one of the boat line's docks. This location means that there is a constant stream of pedestrians, cyclists, passenger vehicles, and coach buses conflicting with boat launch operations.

The boat launch is very important to the local residents for both recreation and work, and therefore it was important to observe the boat launch and understand the number of vehicles using the boat launch, and the queuing requirements.

**Figure 10** and **Figure 11** illustrate a few of the issues observed in the videos such as pedestrians blocking the boat launch and trucks with boat trailers queuing on private property.

**Figure 10: Pedestrians Blocking Boat Launch**





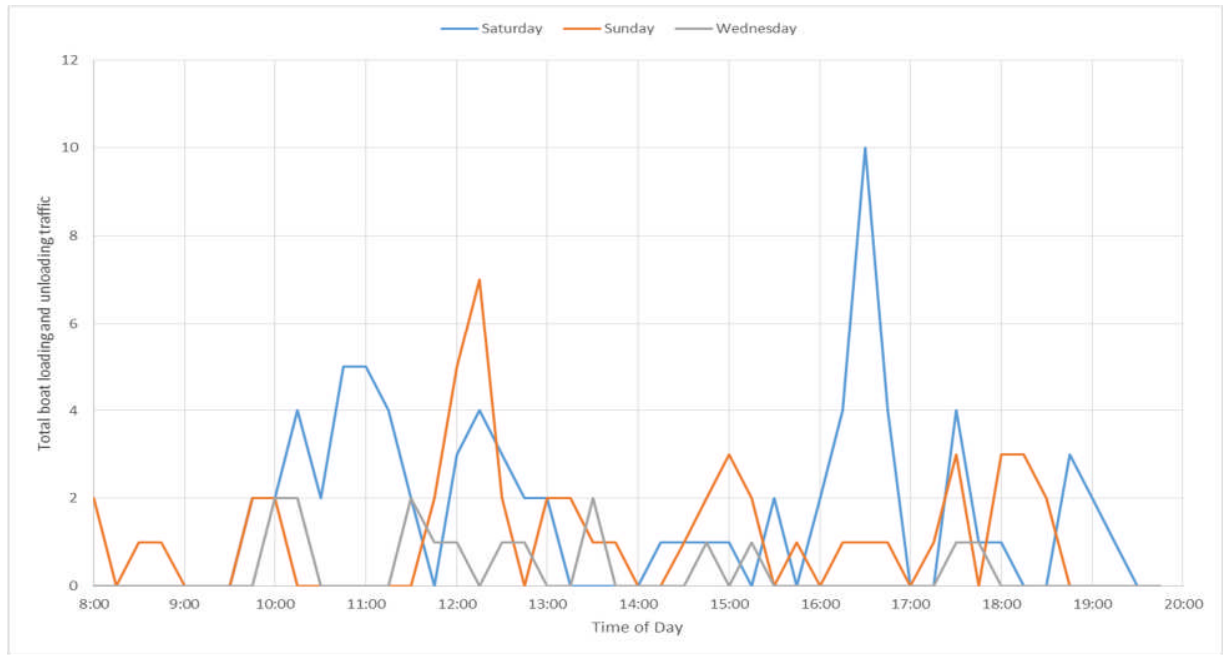
**Figure 11: Boat Trailer on Private Property**



**Figure 12** illustrates the boat launch activity over 12 hours, and **Table 4** summarizes the observations. Saturday was the busiest day at the boat launch, with 40 boats launched or retrieved. A maximum of three (3) boat trailers were queued at a time.

Trucks with boat trailers were observed to enter the village at Escott Rockport Road or Burtch's Lane. Many vehicles entering via Escott Rockport Road used private property to align themselves with the boat launch. Vehicles entering via Burtch's Lane used the Township road allowance to align themselves with the boat launch.

**Figure 12: Public Boat Launch Activity (15-minute intervals)**



**Table 4: Boat Launch Activity Summary – 12-hour totals**

| Observation                         | Sat. Aug. 3 | Sun. Aug. 4 | Wed. Aug. 7 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Boats launched                      | 22          | 10          | 6           |
| Boats retrieved                     | 18          | 17          | 0           |
| <b>Total launched and retrieved</b> | <b>40</b>   | <b>27</b>   | <b>6</b>    |
| Max number of boat trailers queued  | 3           | 2           | 2           |

**2.1.4 Coach Buses**

**Figure 13** and **Table 5** summarize the coach bus parking activity over a 12-hour period from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. Some buses parked while others left for refueling, cleaning, etc. and returned later to pick up passengers.

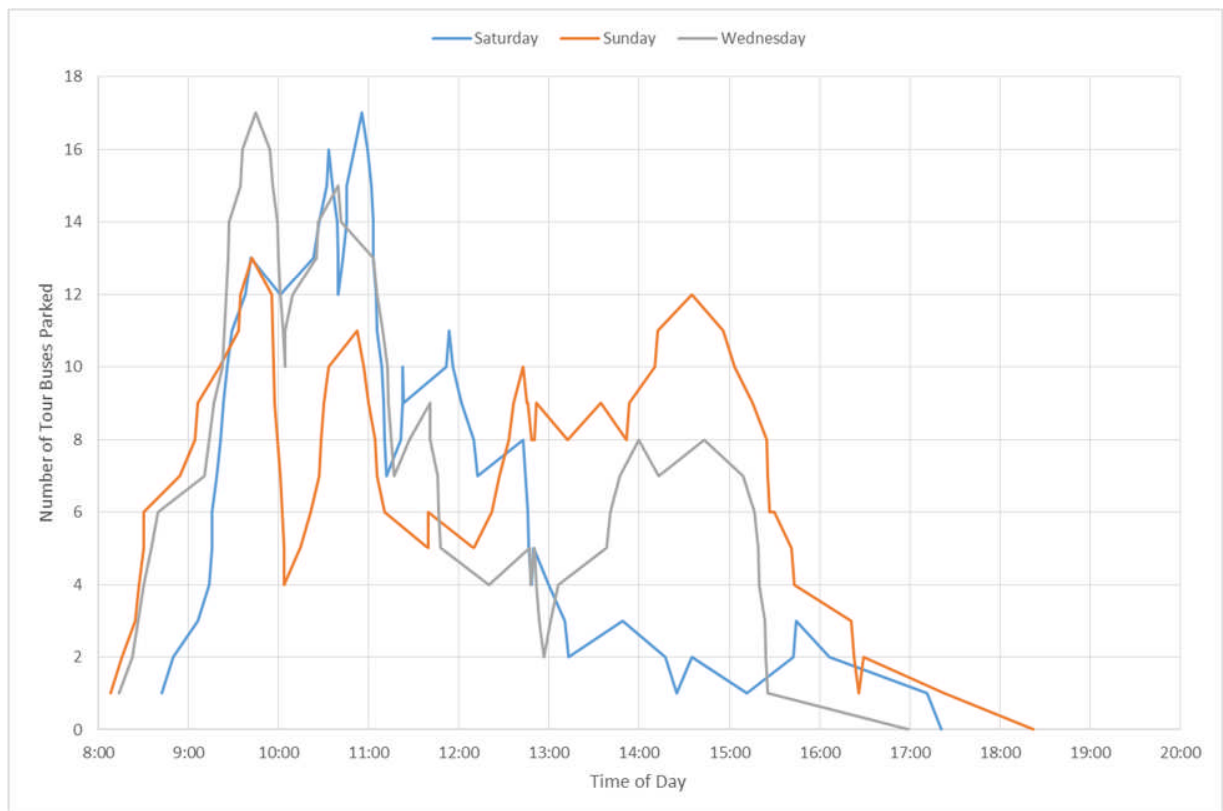
The majority of coach bus traffic occurred between 9 A.M. and 3 P.M. The busiest period was on Wednesday with up to 17 buses parked, eight (8) buses arriving during a 15-minute window, and 11 buses arriving during a single hour. Saturday and Sunday were slightly less busy. There were no buses observed after 6:30 P.M.



Coach buses were observed to make wide turns in and out of the parking lot. These turns were completed slowly among the other traffic and pedestrians in the area. The lack of defined entry and exit locations for the coach bus parking lot resulted in disorganization for vehicles and pedestrians.

**Figure 14** illustrates two coach buses entering the parking lot at the same time using different entry locations, which results in them blocking each other. Two trucks with boat trailers parked on or straddling private property are also visible, which likely create conflict for coach buses and other vehicles.

**Figure 13: Parked Coach Buses (15-minute intervals)**



**Table 5: Coach Bus Observations Summary – 12 hour**

| Observation                                     | Sat.<br>Aug. 3 | Sun.<br>Aug. 4 | Wed.<br>Aug. 7 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Max number of coach buses parked                | 17             | 13             | 17             |
| Daily coach buses trips (in and out of village) | 58             | 58             | 62             |
| Coach buses in/out via Burtch’s Lane            | 1              | 2              | 2              |
| Peak 15 minute period total inbound             | 6              | 5              | 8              |
| Peak 15 minute period total outbound            | 6              | 6              | 7              |
| Peak hour total inbound                         | 12             | 8              | 10             |
| Peak hour total outbound                        | 13             | 8              | 11             |

**Figure 14: Coach Bus Parking Issues**



**2.1.5 Pedestrian Activity in the Village Core**

**Figure 15** illustrates the pedestrian activity in the village core. Pedestrians were observed to queue for the ticket booth in the middle of the parking lot and cross Front



Street at a number of different locations. Few pedestrians had regard for vehicle traffic in the area or boat launch operations, which raises obvious safety concerns and has traffic flow implications for other road users and parking lot operations.

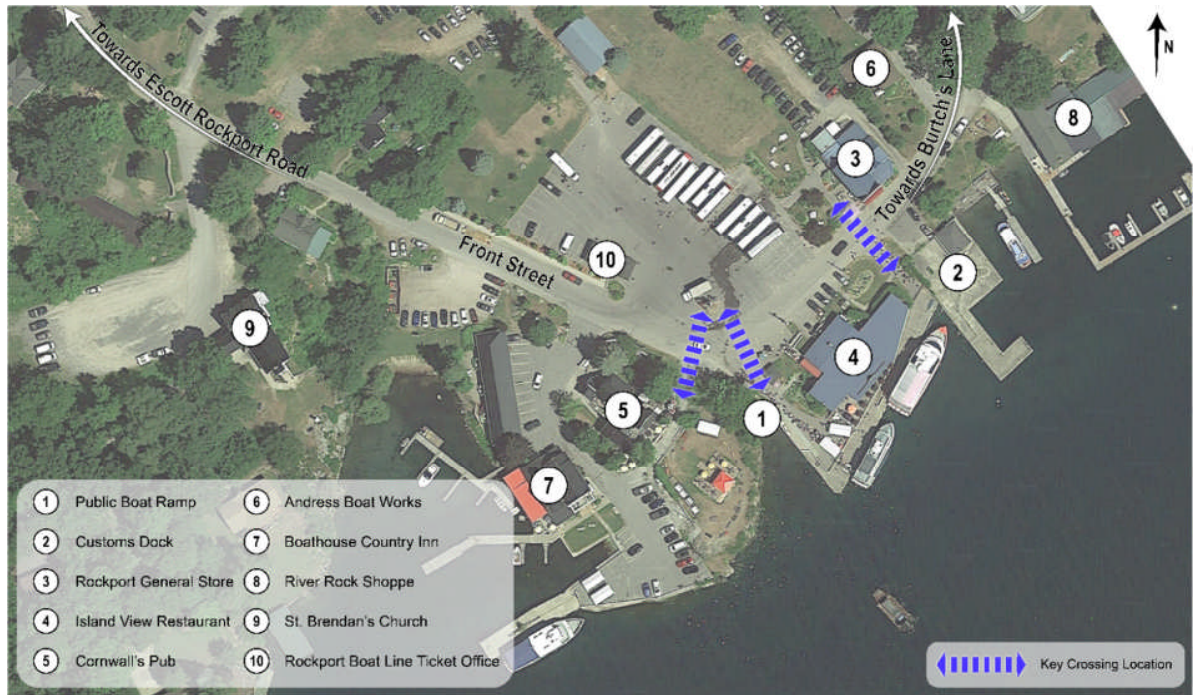
**Figure 15: Pedestrian Activity in the Village Core**



**Figure 16** illustrates key pedestrian crossing locations and the various land uses in the area. The majority of crossings occurred between the ticket office/the parked coach buses, Cornwall’s Pub, the Island View Restaurant, and the Rockport General Store.



**Figure 16: Key Pedestrian Crossing Locations and Various Land Uses**



While it is difficult to accurately count the number of pedestrians, it is reasonable to assume that each of the coach buses carried approximately 30 to 45 people. Over a 12-hour period, there were 29 to 31 coach buses observed on each of the three days, and therefore there could have been approximately 870 to 1,395 pedestrians in the village core over the 12-hour period on each of the three days of observations.

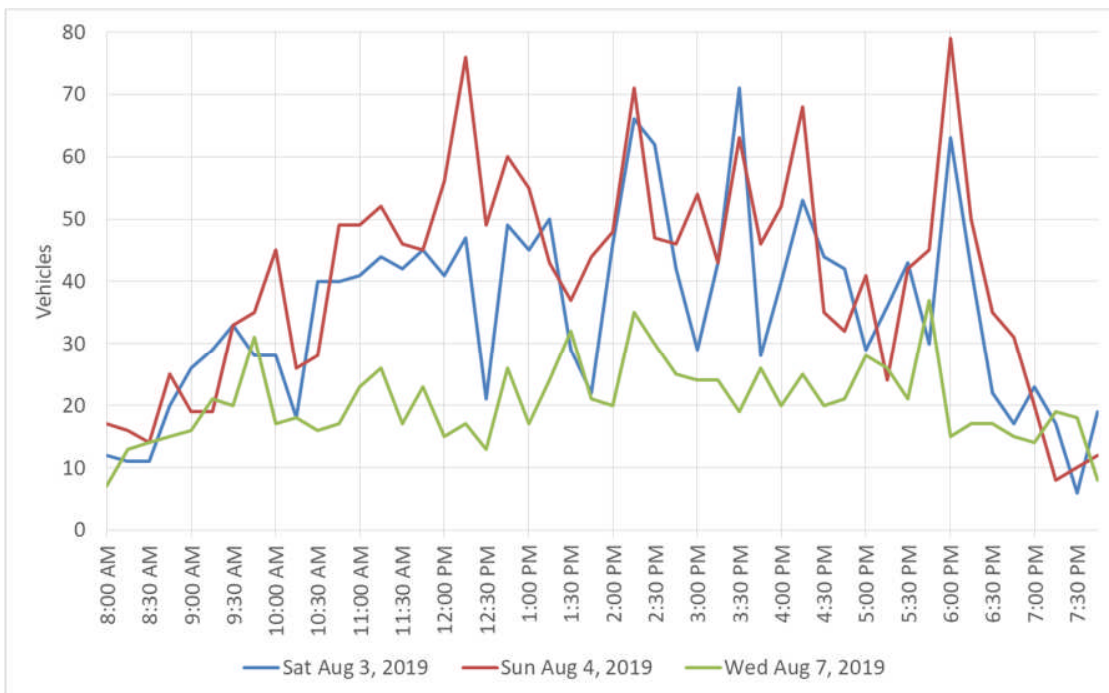
Many of these pedestrians crossed Front Street at least two times (if not more), and therefore the number of pedestrian crossings could have been 1,740 to 2,790 over 12 hours for each of the three days. This is higher than the vehicle traffic observed for the same section of road.

There were also hundreds of passenger vehicles that parked on the hill north of the coach bus parking lot, with each vehicle likely having 2 to 4 passengers, and each crossing Front Street two times, if not more. The total number of pedestrian crossings is likely 2,000 to 3,000 or more over 12 hours. Suffice to say that there was significant pedestrian activity observed in the village core that often caused issues for other vehicles and boat launch operations.

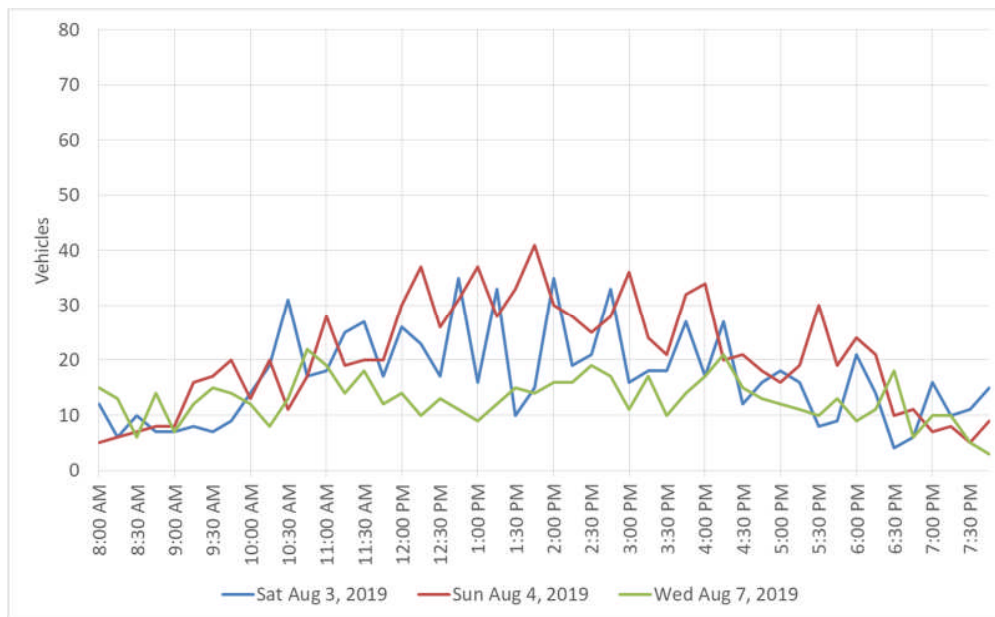
2.1.6 Traffic on Front Street

**Figure 17** and **Figure 18** illustrate the total traffic volumes in both directions for Front Street, opposite Escott Rockport Road and opposite Burtch’s Lane, respectively. The traffic volumes were observed to remain generally consistent between 10 A.M. and 6 P.M. with fluctuations throughout the day.

**Figure 17: Traffic Volumes - Front Street, opposite Escott Rockport Road (15-minutes)**



**Figure 18: Traffic Volumes - Front Street, opposite Burtch's Lane (15-minutes)**



**Table 6** summarizes the Front Street traffic volumes over 12 hours. The highest traffic volumes were observed on Sunday with 1,940 vehicles entering and exiting the village at Escott Rockport Road over 12 hours. The traffic volumes on Saturday and Wednesday were 13% to 49% lower than Sunday, respectively, for the same location. Traffic volumes are significantly reduced at the General Store and further east/north on Front Street.

**Table 6: Front Street Traffic Volumes over 12 hours**

| Location                                | Direction      | Sat., Aug. 3 | Sun., Aug. 4 | Wed., Aug. 7 |
|---|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Front St., opposite Burtch’s Ln.        | Into Village   | 392          | 500          | 293          |
| Front St., opposite Burtch’s Ln.        | Out of Village | 424          | 494          | 323          |
| Front St., opposite Burtch’s Ln.        | Total          | 816          | 994          | 616          |
| Front St., in front of General Store    | Eastbound      | 616          | 590          | 348          |
| Front St., in front of General Store    | Westbound      | 319          | 403          | 213          |
| Front St., in front of General Store    | Total          | 935          | 993          | 561          |
| Front St., opposite Escott Rockport Rd. | Into Village   | 916          | 970          | 533          |
| Front St., opposite Escott Rockport Rd. | Out of Village | 769          | 975          | 450          |
| Front St., opposite Escott Rockport Rd. | Total          | 1,685        | 1,940        | 983          |

**Figure 19** illustrates the total, two-way traffic volumes on Front Street for three major locations: A – south of the parkway, opposite Burch’s Lane, B – east of the General Store, and C – between the General Store and Escott Rockport Road.

Overall, location C - between the General Store and Escott Rockport Rock – had significantly higher volumes than locations A and B. It appears the majority of this traffic is due to tourist activity as observed by the buses and passenger vehicles in the boat line’s parking lot.

**Figure 19: Traffic on Front Street Summary**



It should be noted that traffic volumes at location C - between the General Store and Escott Rockport Road - are higher than the recommended capacity for a Local roadway, which is approximately 1,000 vehicles per day based on Transportation Association of Canada (T.A.C.) guidelines for local roadways.

The Township could implement measures to reduce conflicts and better accommodate road users and traffic volumes by creating a clear delineation of: pedestrian crossing areas; public and private space; parking lot entry and exit locations; and designated queuing areas for the boat launch.



## 3.0 Challenges and Opportunities

According to input received from stakeholders and members of the public, the primary challenge in Rockport is the increased traffic volume on Front Street during the tourist season (typically from mid-Spring to mid-Fall). The capacity of Front Street is a challenge, when there is an increased volume of private vehicles entering the village core.

Private vehicles enter the core for many reasons, which include:

- Vehicles trailing their boats to the public boat ramp to load them into the water;
- Coach buses that enter the village core to allow their tour passengers to embark or disembark from a privately-owned parking lot;
- Those seeking public parking for more direct access to local businesses; and,
- Those taking a leisurely drive down Front Street to enjoy the village and the waterfront.

During the business operating hours in tourist season, large groups of pedestrians are often in the village core, occupying the public right-of-way (including the paved travelled surface), impacting vehicular mobility, and encroaching on private property. These challenges are particularly prevalent in the boat launch area and near the bus parking lot.

The following subsections highlight key challenges and opportunities associated with accessing the public boat ramp, seeking public and private parking in the village core, delineating public and private space for both vehicles and pedestrians, and pedestrian safety.

### 3.1 Public Boat Ramp

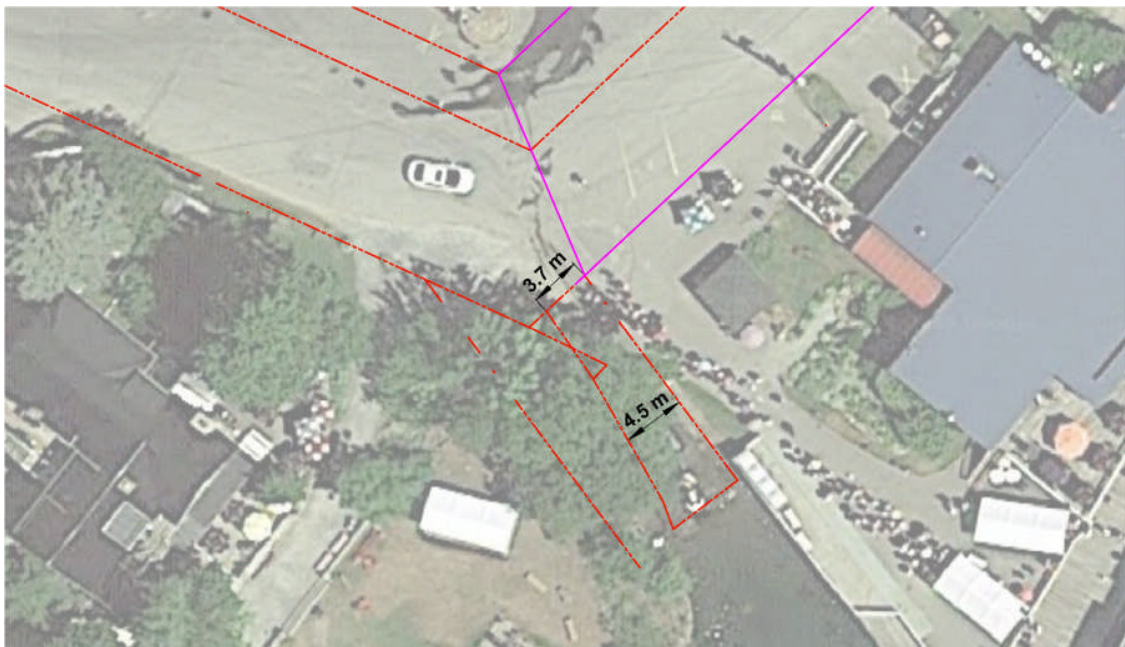
#### 3.1.1 Challenges

The public boat ramp is located on Front Street, adjacent to tourist commercial land uses that attract visitors to the area. According to input received from the community, this boat launch is vital and remains open longer than other boat launches in the area, since it freezes later in the season than others in the region.

While waiting to use the public boat ramp, vehicles were observed to queue along the west portion of Front Street in the southbound direction. With no design strategies to guarantee that these vehicles do not obstruct private driveways, they block access points and contribute to vehicular congestion on Front Street.

According to the land survey that was supplied by the Township (**Figure 20**), the public right-of-way at the ramp is narrow (3.7 metres wide at the edge of the public right-of-way, and 4.5 metres wide near the boat ramp itself) and has an irregular lot configuration that makes it difficult for the space to sufficiently accommodate a range of boat trailer lengths or types.

**Figure 20: Land Survey Dimensions of the Public Boat Ramp**



Further, without on-the-ground guidance (i.e., directive pavement markings and/or signage) to help vehicles with boat trailers manoeuvre onto the boat ramp, it has been noted by the operators of the adjacent business that their private land is being encroached upon.

The frequency and location of coach buses picking up and dropping off their passengers during business operating hours also impacts vehicular access to the public boat ramp. The entry/exit point for the bus parking lot is almost directly across from the public boat ramp, which results in coach buses and vehicles with boat trailers needing to carefully

navigate each other in the space. Pedestrians also freely cross Front Street to either access the businesses on the waterfront or embark a parked coach bus. With no safety measures (e.g., crosswalks, stop signs, yield signs) in place, and with the public boat ramp's location adjacent to the tourist commercial land uses, pedestrians obstruct vehicular access to the public boat ramp. Given that it is difficult for vehicle users to navigate around these pedestrians, these challenges further aggravate vehicular congestion at the south end of Front Street.

Finally, there are challenges associated with the quality of the public boat ramp. The community has observed that the ramp is in poor condition, and it requires an upgrade and/or revitalization. In addition, with no weight or size limit for the boat ramp, boat ramp users have expressed concern that the lack of regulations on boat ramp usage could take a toll on its physical integrity over time.

### 3.1.2 Opportunities

To resolve the conflicts that arise from the close interface of the public boat launch and the private docking area associated with the tourism uses, design interventions may be implemented to help prevent the encroachment of vehicles on private property. These may include directive pavement markings, signage, and/or low fencing.

With regard to the interactions between coach buses and vehicles with boat trailers, efforts should be made to reduce points of conflict.

With regard to the public boat launch, the addition of street markings (i.e., painted white lines) and signage on the southeast area of Front Street could indicate the appropriate area for boat trailers to queue. Such design interventions could help to prevent vehicle users from queuing for the boat ramp on the west end of Front Street, which blocks access driveways. This could also reduce interactions between vehicles queuing, coach buses, and pedestrians crossing Front Street toward the private boat dock.

Currently, a portion of the public right-of-way is being used as private parking, with no visual or physical distinction between them. If this land is reclaimed by the Township, this portion of the public right-of-way would be wide enough to accommodate a designated queuing area for the public boat launch, while continuing to allow vehicles

to travel along Front Street. **Figure 21** illustrates the presence of private parking spots within the public right-of-way.

**Figure 21: Public Right-of-Way Used for Private Parking**



To enhance pedestrian safety around the public boat ramp, there is an opportunity to add traffic-calming measures, such as crosswalks, to Front Street. Front Street could also be equipped with speed cushions, road markings, signage, low fencing, curbing, and/or designated pedestrian pathways that would help pedestrians safely navigate the area (please refer to Section 3.4 for additional design treatments that enhance pedestrian safety).

Finally, with regard to boat ramp quality, there is an opportunity to upgrade and improve the boat ramp in its current location, as it is a highly valued asset to the community. Council has approved upgrades to the ramp, which have been delayed due to current budget considerations. The boat ramp could also be better regulated through implementing size or weight restrictions and adding summer staff during peak periods to assist with queueing.



## 3.2 Parking

### 3.2.1 Challenges

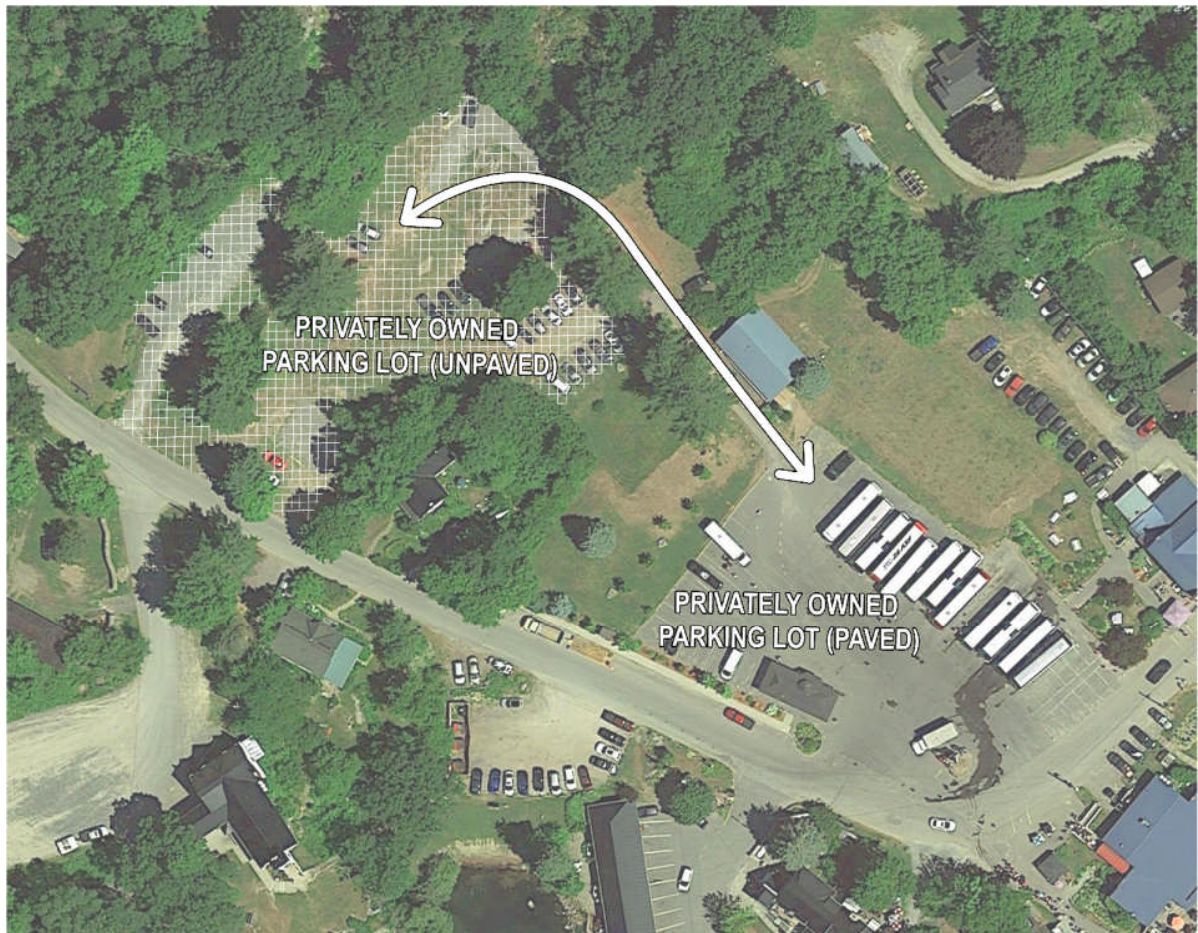
The community has expressed the desire for additional public parking in Rockport, as there are limited on-street parking spaces available. Currently, there are only nine (9) on-street public parking spots on Front Street (**Figure 22**, left image), with parking spots in front of the Customs Dock that are underutilized (**Figure 22**, right image).

**Figure 22: Existing Public Parking**



In absence of parking regulations (e.g., "no parking" signage) or sufficient on-street public parking spaces, vehicles park on both sides of Front Street (as first observed and noted in the 2005 Strategic Plan). As a result, the traversable area of the street is narrowed.

**Figure 23: Private Parking in the Village Core**



There is an unpaved, privately owned parking lot associated with tourism commercial uses in the village, which is adjacent to a residential dwelling on Front Street. The parking lot extends behind the residential dwelling and connects to the bus parking lot, which is paved (**Figure 23**). Based on input received from the community, the activities of coach buses (passenger pick-ups/drop-offs, idling, beeping noises associated with reversing) negatively impact the quietness and serenity that typically characterize the village outside of tourist season.

### 3.2.2 Opportunities

There is an opportunity to increase public parking in Rockport. The Township is pursuing the development of a public parking lot north of the Parkway. Given that it would not be directly in the village core, this parking lot would offer an alternative to vehicle users

who would otherwise seek parking directly in the village core which adds to vehicular congestion. This site is also conveniently located within walking distance of the village core and the Rockport Community Hall.

Opportunities to improve the existing private parking in the village core include making the entry and exit points more visually distinguishable (e.g., with fencing, signage, etc.).

Community members have expressed interest in identifying an alternative location for coach bus parking outside of the village core. Identifying a suitable location for an off-site coach bus parking lot is not within the scope of this study, but it may be considered by the Township.

### 3.3 Delineating Public and Private Space

#### 3.3.1 Challenges

Community members have expressed concern related to several instances of tourists accessing private property. Community members believe this is due to:

- A lack of active supervision of tourists by local tourism business operators;
- A lack of visual (e.g., signage, pavement markings) and/or physical (e.g., low fencing, sidewalks, curbing) delineation between public and private property; and/or,
- A lack of areas designated for pedestrian activity and enjoyment.

#### 3.3.2 Opportunities

Design strategies that help to visually and physically demarcate public and private space, such as low fencing (**Figure 24**, left image) and/or signage, could be implemented. Beautification measures, such as the incorporation of planters (**Figure 24**, right image) or benches, can also help to delineate the space by acting as a physical barrier.



**Figure 24: Examples of Low Fencing and Vegetation as Physical Barriers**



The Township may want to have the fencing custom-designed to better fit the historic character of the village. Please refer to Sections 4.2.1.5 and 4.2.3.1 for recommendations on locations in the village for low fencing and vegetation barriers, respectively.

There is an additional opportunity to clearly designate areas where people are welcome to enjoy the village on public property, out of the path of vehicular circulation. The former Customs Dock is a public space, which is a suitable location for some additional public amenities (e.g., street furniture, shade structures).

**3.4 Pedestrian Safety**

**3.4.1 Challenges**

The vehicular speed limit on Front Street has been cited by the community as a challenge in Rockport. While there is a posted speed limit of 25 km/h, the community has suggested that it is not sufficiently obeyed. With no physical traffic-calming measures in place to encourage drivers to self-regulate their speeds, pedestrian safety on Front Street is at greater risk.

As discussed in Section 2.1.1, pedestrians frequently cross the Thousand Islands Parkway, and there are no measures in place to allow them to cross safely.

### 3.4.2 Opportunities

There is an opportunity to add traffic-calming measures to both the Parkway and Front Street and consider a reduced speed area on the Parkway. Front Street could be equipped with crosswalks at locations where many pedestrians attempt to cross, and speed cushions could also be implemented to help slow down vehicular traffic along the waterfront.

As indicated in Section 2.1.1, a signalized pedestrian crosswalk is warranted to cross the Thousand Islands Parkway at the western access to Front Street.

### 3.5 Sewage Treatment

The 2005 Strategic Plan cited sewage treatment as an issue for Rockport and recommended that a feasibility and cost benefit analysis be undertaken for a package sewage treatment facility, which was beyond the scope of this study.



## 4.0 Land Use Concept

In consideration of the background analysis, the goals for Rockport identified in the O.P. and the T.M.P. /A.T.P., and input received from community members, the vision for Rockport is ***an enhanced public realm that maintains and enhances the village's relationships to the water and its peaceful, historic character.***

In order to achieve this vision, identified objectives include:

1. Making the public realm more pedestrian-friendly and supporting safer shared use of roadways;
2. Reducing traffic congestion;
3. Enhancing public access to the water;
4. Enhancing the public realm through the use of high quality materials that have regard for the heritage character of the village; and,
5. Supporting a vibrant local economy.

To meet these objectives, a number of recommendations are provided for the Township. The recommendations are categorized into two sub-areas (see **Figure 25** on the following page):

**Area A:** The intersection of the Thousand Islands Parkway intersection and Front Street/Escott Rockport Road.

**Area B:** The south end of Front Street, which includes the public boat launch, the bus parking lot, and the highest concentration of tourist commercial land uses.

Further details on the specific recommendations for Areas A and B are provided in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this report, respectively. Recommendations for Area A begin under Section 4.1.1 on page 40.

Figure 25: Area A and Area B





4.1 Recommendations for Area A: Thousand Islands Parkway



## 4.1.1

**Area A, Recommendation 1: Public Parking**

**Opportunity:** The St. Lawrence Parks Commission owns a piece of land located north of the Parkway that could be developed into a public parking lot. The land is currently used as an unofficial parking area for vehicles and boat trailers.

**Recommendation:** The Township should continue to advance discussions with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission to obtain approvals to lease the land north of the Thousand Islands Parkway to develop a parking lot north of the Parkway for use by the public.

Contractors working on island properties were observed parking in public parking spaces in the village for long periods of time, which is not the intended use of these parking spaces. Boat trailers were also observed to park on the side of the road in the village core, in some instances, which contributes to the congestion that the residents experience. **Figure 26** illustrates one such example which was captured on July 20, 2019.

**Figure 26: Trucks with Boat Trailers parked on Front Street**



A public parking lot should be created for contractors, boat trailers, and members of the public to use for longer-duration parking needs. In addition, there should be



enforcement of on-street parking regulations, which will free the public parking spaces in the village for short term use.

**Figure 27: Area A, Recommendation 1 – Public Parking**





## 4.1.2

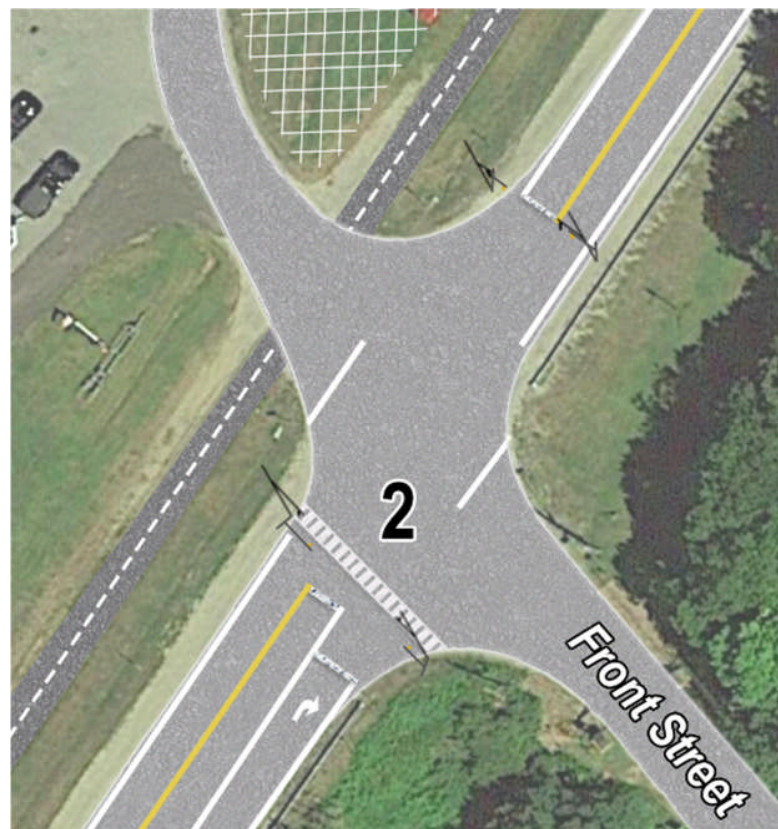
**Area A, Recommendation 2: Pedestrian Crossing**

**Opportunity:** Traffic-calming measures can be added to the Parkway.

**Recommendations:** Add a signalized crosswalk and vehicular traffic lights for eastbound and westbound traffic on the Parkway, to create a safer environment for pedestrians at Front Street/Escott Rockport Road. Some residents expressed an interest in another crosswalk at Burtch's Lane, therefore it is recommended that pedestrian crosswalks be considered for both of these locations.

Reducing the speed limit on the Parkway is recommended in conjunction with the pedestrian crossings. The Township should consult with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission to reduce the speed limit on the Parkway from 80 km/h to 60 km/h, in vicinity of Burtch's Lane/Front Street (east entrance) and Escott Rockport Road/Front Street (west entrance).

**Figure 28: Area A, Recommendation 2 – Pedestrian Crossing**



4.2 Recommendations for Area B: Rockport Village Core



Recommendations for Area B begin under Section 4.2.1 on the following page.

## 4.2.1 Area B: Public Boat Ramp

### 4.2.1.1 Area B, Recommendation 1: Boat Trailer Queue

**Opportunity:** Direct vehicles with boat trailers to safely queue for the boat ramp in designated spaces.

**Recommendations:** There should be a designated space for boat launch queuing to occur. Informal boat launch queues were observed west of the boat launch, but these queues were not controlled. Many vehicles used private property to reorient themselves up the hill, before they reversed into the boat launch.

It is recommended that a boat launch queue area be created east of the boat launch, between the boat launch and the General Store. This area of land is currently owned by the Township and is directly adjacent to the large parking area for the Rockport Boatline. This orientation is recommended as it allows vehicles to drive up the hill and reverse straight into the boat launch.

Compared with the existing informal queuing area west of the boat launch, the proposed queue area east of the boat launch retains the existing on-street public parking spaces, reduces the likelihood of vehicles driving on private property while reversing, and reduces potential conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and coach buses travelling down the hill from the parkway.

Opportunities to retain and formalize the existing southbound queuing area were evaluated. The reasons the westbound option was selected as the preferred option include the following:

- The straight-reverse manoeuvre of a boat trailer onto the ramp is simpler;
- Fewer conflicts are anticipated between pedestrians/tourists and reversing boat trailers;
- There would be no opportunity for vehicles with boat trailers to block access to driveways along the west portion of Front Street;
- The westbound queue will require vehicles with boat trailers to access Front Street from the east entrance, which would reduce conflicts with buses and those accessing the private parking lot; and,
- A greater number of public on-street parking spaces would be preserved.



The boat queuing area can be accommodated by reclaiming the existing public right-of-way, which is currently being used as private parking. The queuing area can be delineated with painted lines, which will indicate the space available to accommodate one or two boat trailers. In addition to street markings, signage at the front of the queue will help to orient the public.

The Township should incorporate appropriate signage to direct vehicles with boat trailers to the east entrance to Front Street to access the westbound queuing area for the public boat ramp. Signage will be required on the Parkway and at both entrances to the village (Burtch's Lane/Front Street, and Escott Rockport Road/Front Street), to direct those travelling with a boat to use the east entrance (Burtch's Lane/Front Street).

It is also recommended that the Township disseminate information about the boat ramp queue on their website, in the Township office, and at tourism outlets.

**Figure 29: Area B, Recommendation 1 – Boat Trailer Queue**



## 4.2.1.2

**Area B, Recommendation 2: Delineation of the Boat Ramp**

**Opportunity:** Prevent the encroachment of vehicles onto private property when reversing onto the public boat ramp.

**Recommendation:** Delineate the narrow public right-of-way from private property adjacent to the public boat ramp using pavement markings. This will help to direct vehicles and boat trailers to access the boat ramp without encroaching on private property.

**Figure 30: Area B, Recommendation 2 – Boat Ramp Delineation (left), Overlaid on the Land Survey (right)**





## 4.2.1.3

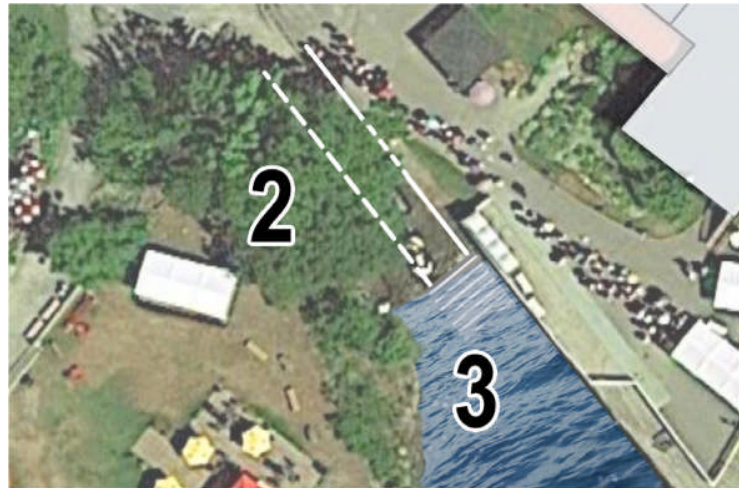
**Area B, Recommendation 3: Boat Ramp Improvements**

**Opportunity:** The boat ramp can be upgraded and improved.

**Recommendations:** Invest in improvements to the boat ramp, which is currently deteriorating. To help retain its long term functionality, adopt appropriate regulations regarding to the usage of the public boat ramp (e.g., access times and weight limits) that can be communicated to the public with on-site signage and on the Township website.

In order to provide water access to a greater variety of vehicles/boats, the Township should consider acquiring land for a second (or alternative) public boat ramp and develop it to accommodate larger craft (e.g., contractors' barges).

**Figure 31: Area B, Recommendations 2 and 3 – Boat Ramp Improvements**



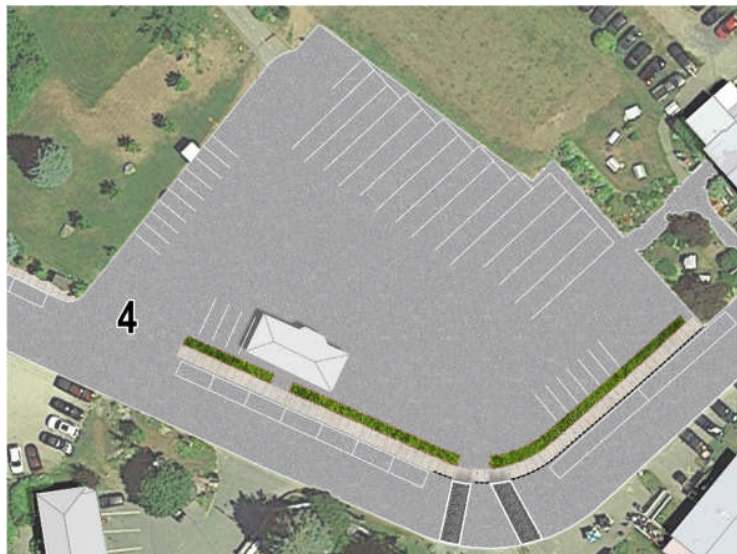
**Area B, Recommendation 4: Bus Parking Lot**

**Opportunity:** Reduce the impact of the coach buses on the village.

**Recommendations:** There is currently no defined access point to the existing private parking area. Buses enter the parking area at the south corner of the lot in close proximity to where pedestrians are crossing, and where vehicles are queueing for the boat ramp. Access to the bus parking lot should be relocated to a single entry/exit point on western frontage onto Front Street. This relocation would reduce interactions between coach buses, pedestrians, and those using the boat launch.

The access point should be designed for the vehicles using the access; excessively large accesses encourage higher turning speeds and result in wasted space, and they increase the exposure of pedestrians to moving vehicles. The removal of a portion of the existing sidewalk and three public parking spaces would accommodate the recommended relocation. The existing access point, which is located near the boat launch, should be closed off by using barrier curbing and extending the existing sidewalk.

**Figure 32: Area B, Recommendation 4 – Bus Parking Lot Access**



It has also been identified by the public that enforcement of the Township's idling by-law is needed in the village core to address the idling of coach buses.

To further reduce challenges associated with coach buses entering the village, the Township may consider partnering with the local business operator to develop an alternate coach bus and public parking lot that would be outside of the village core.

## 4.2.1.5

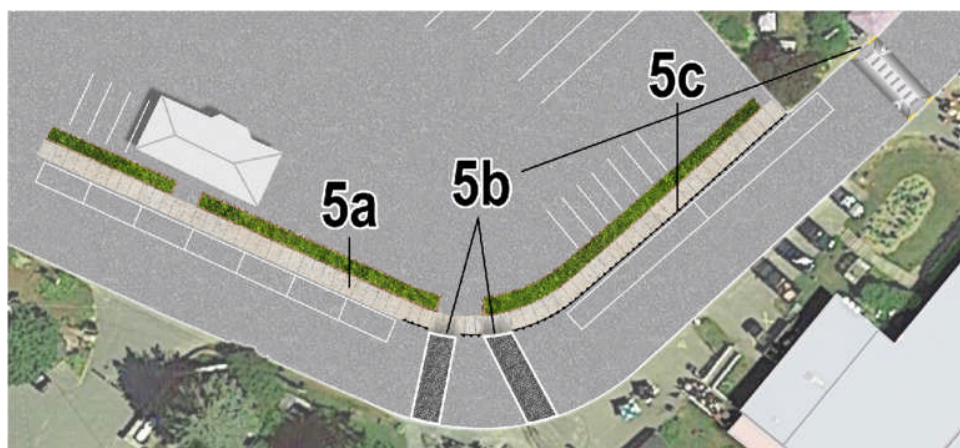
### Area B, Recommendations 5a through 5c: Pedestrian Improvements

**Opportunity:** Safety measures can be added to Front Street to help pedestrians safely navigate through the village core.

**Recommendations:** Portions of the public right-of-way on Front Street are currently being occupied by the bus parking lot. The Township should reclaim the public right-of-way to accommodate the extension of a sidewalk adjacent to the westbound queuing area for the public boat ramp (**Figure 33, 5a**). The delineation of this pedestrian area encourages pedestrians to avoid walking onto Front Street, which was a noted issue.

Visitors who disembark from coach buses and make their way to the sidewalk will be guided to three crosswalks (**Figure 33, 5b**). It is recommended that low level decorative fencing (**Figure 33, 5c**) be located along the southern edge of the parking area to separate pedestrians from the boat ramp queuing area and prevent pedestrians from haphazardly crossing Front Street by consolidating crossing to key areas, which will be easier for motorists to anticipate. The fencing style chosen by the Township should complement the heritage character of the village (please refer to Section 3.3.2 for an example of low fencing).

**Figure 33: Area B, Recommendations 5a through 5c – Pedestrian Improvements**



The pedestrian crossings are recommended at three strategic locations, one on either side of the boat launch, and a third in front of the Rockport General Store.

Near the boat launch, crossings composed of pavers (**Figure 34**) are recommended to help tactilely and visually delineate them, and to signal to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian area. Traffic speeds in this area should not be a significant concern, given the curve in the road at this location.

**Figure 34: Example of a Tactile Unit Paver**



These two crosswalks should not be raised, as the up-and-down motion over the raised crosswalk is discouraged for vehicles reversing with a trailer at the boat launch. Creating a larger raised area (e.g. a raised intersection) would remove the up-and-down motion while reversing; however, it would complicate parking manoeuvres and pedestrian movements. For this reason tactile unit pavers are recommended.

The third pedestrian crosswalk is to be located between the Customs Dock and the General Store. This location is ideal for a raised pedestrian crossing, which will help to reduce the speed of traffic entering the area.

To enable the smooth flow of pedestrians, traffic, and those accessing the boat launch in the village core, the Township should consider hiring part-time seasonal staff to facilitate safe movement by directing vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

## 4.2.2 Area B: Parking

### 4.2.2.1 Area B, Recommendation 6: On-street Parking

**Opportunity:** Preserve on-street parking spaces.

**Recommendation:** There are currently nine (9) on-street public parking spaces on Front Street (60 metres and 6 metres per space), which border the bus parking lot (**Figure 35**, top image). Three (3) of the nine (9) spaces are proposed to be removed to accommodate the new single access point for the bus parking lot (**Figure 35**, bottom image).

These three (3) spaces are recommended to be relocated to where the current bus parking access is located, which will also provide space for an additional on-street parking space, resulting in ten (10) total spaces. The recommended length for the parking spaces is six (6) metres, which is the industry standard.

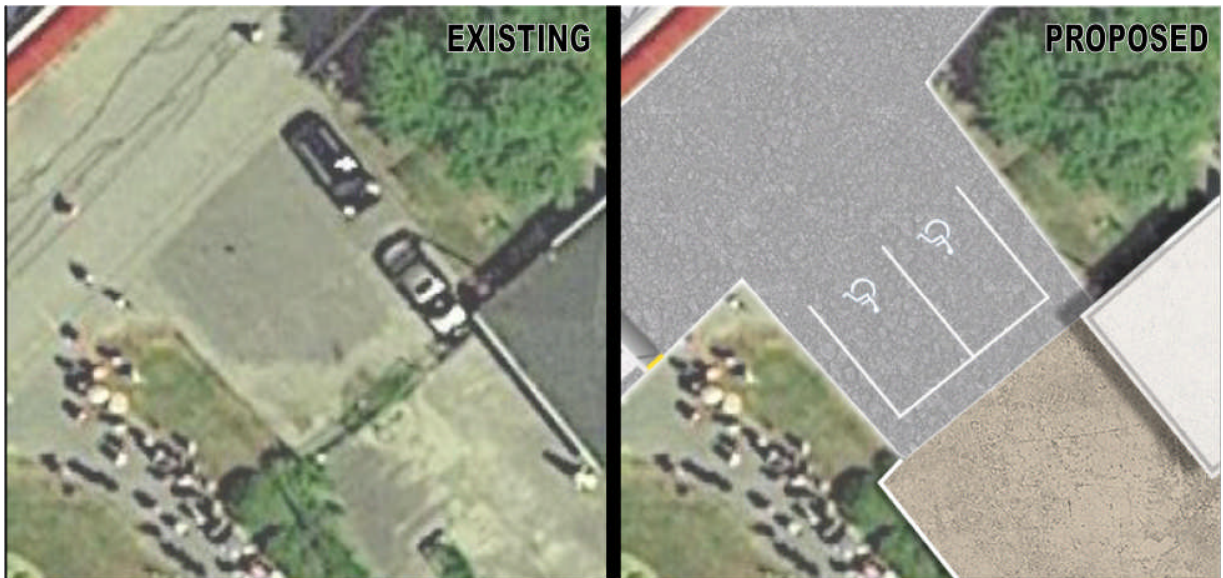


**Figure 35: Existing versus Proposed On-Street Public Parking**



In addition to the on-street parking spaces beside the bus staging lot, there are also underutilized parking spots directly in front of the Customs Dock (**Figure 36**, left image). Two accessible parking spots are proposed to replace these standard parking spots (**Figure 36**, right image).

**Figure 36: Parking in front of the Customs Dock, Existing versus Proposed**



4.2.2.2 Area B, Recommendation 7: Private Parking Lot Access

**Opportunity:** Reduce the amount of vehicles entering the village core.

**Figure 37: Existing versus Proposed Entry/Exit Points for the Private, Unpaved Parking Lot**



**Recommendation:** To improve vehicular circulation in the village core and reduce the length of pedestrian conflicts with vehicles, signage should be added to the western village entrance (Escott Rockport Road/Front Street) to direct customers of the existing



business to the appropriate parking lot, which is accessed shortly upon entering the village (**Figure 38**).

As shown in **Figure 37**, this access point, should be used as both an entry and exit point to the existing parking lot, to reduce the amount of vehicles approaching the boat ramp and pedestrian area (**Figure 37**, right image). The second exit point from the parking area located north of the existing residence should be closed and consolidated with the access point shown as 7 on **Figure 38** to reduce the impacts of vehicles using this parking area on the existing residential use.

In addition, there should be internal pedestrian circulation routes in the private parking area to direct users to the ticket office and crosswalks, as recommended. These circulation routes will further reduce the potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on Front Street.

**Figure 38: Area B, Recommendation 7 – Single Access Point for Private Parking Lot**



### 4.2.3 Area B: Delineating Public and Private Space

#### 4.2.3.1 Area B, Recommendation 8: Public Realm Beautification

**Opportunity:** Not only can beautification of the public realm add aesthetic appeal, but by acting as physical barriers, beautification measures (e.g., planters, landscaping, benches) can help delineate public and private property.

**Recommendation:** Landscaping (or planters) along the inner edge of the sidewalk will physically and visually delineate the public sidewalk from the private bus parking lot (**Figure 39**). By indicating the areas that are public, it will help tourists to identify the areas that are not (i.e., a private residential property).

Should trespassing issues persist, the Township may also choose to implement signage to provide further direction to visitors. Local businesses should also work with Tour Operators to ensure that, before passengers disembark the coach buses, there is communication and understanding among tour groups with regard to the areas that are publicly accessible and those that are private property.

Please refer to Section 3.3.2 for an example of landscaping as a physical barrier.

**Figure 39: Area B, Recommendation 8 – Public Realm Beautification**





### Area B, Recommendation 9: Waterfront Customs Dock Parkette

**Opportunity:** Areas can be designated for people to sit comfortably and safely in the core, out of the way of vehicular circulation.

**Recommendation:** The O.P. designates the waterfront Customs Dock as Institutional, and preliminary work has been undertaken to conceptualize the waterfront asset as public parkette.

**Figure 40: Area B, Recommendation 9 – Customs Dock Parkette Concept**



The conceptual image above (**Figure 40**, right image) was provided to Dillon Consulting during the consultation process.

This project should continue to move forward, due to the dock's strategic location in proximity to local businesses and the absence of other public waterfront amenities in the village.

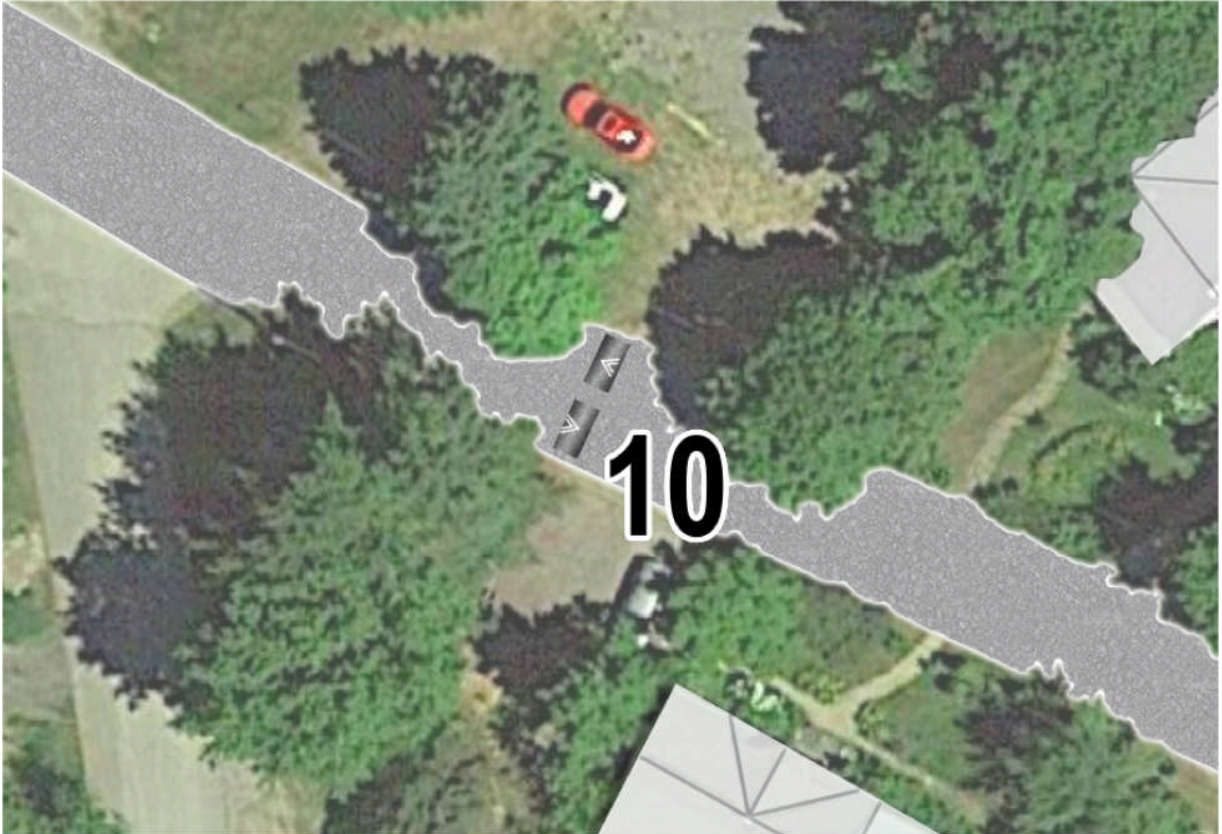
As a low-cost pilot project, the Township may consider providing removable pedestrian amenities, such as benches, tables, patio umbrellas, garbage facilities, and planters. This may help to identify potential options and preferred uses of the space. Two accessible parking spaces could also be provided in front of the customs dock.

## 4.2.4

**Area B: Pedestrian Safety**

**Opportunity:** Traffic-calming measures can be added to Front Street.

**Figure 41: Area B, Recommendation 10 - Speed Cushions for Traffic-Calming**



**Recommendation:** Community members have expressed concern regarding the speed of vehicles travelling through the village. As a traffic calming measure, speed cushions are recommended in strategic locations on Front Street (**Figure 43**). Speed cushions are similar to speed bumps, but they are larger and more appropriate for a public roadway (**Figure 42**).

**Figure 42: Examples of Speed Cushions<sup>1</sup>**



Speed cushions are effective at reducing speeds for all vehicle types and traffic levels, and they do so without narrowing the roadway or relying on friction from opposing traffic that may not exist at all times of the day. Narrowing the roadway is not advisable, given the road is already narrow and given size of vehicles using Front Street (large trailers, coach buses, boat trailers) and the number of vehicles during the peak tourist seasons.

Speed cushions can be designed to avoid impacting drainage, pedestrians, or cyclists on the side of the road. They can also be designed with cut-outs for emergency vehicles that have a wider wheel base, so their response times are not impacted.

Speed cushions are recommended to be spaced a few hundred metres apart. Given the recommending spacing of these speed cushions, five are recommended in total.

Additionally, it is recommended that signage and/or pavement markings are added to signify that Front Street is a shared roadway, to promote safer interactions among all travel modes.

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<sup>1</sup> Left image: Drdul, R. (n.d.). Asphalt speed cushions 1 [Image]. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons  
Right image: Drdul, R. (n.d.). Bus at speed cushion [Image]. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons



Figure 43: Recommended Locations of Speed Cushions





### 4.3 Additional Recommendations

Listed below are additional recommendations to help guide the implementation of the land use concept:

#### 4.3.1 Create a Monitoring Plan

To support the implementation of the Strategic Plan and C.T.S., the Township should **prepare a monitoring plan and assign responsibility to key departments** (e.g., Planning Department, Treasury Department, By-Law Enforcement) to track and evaluate progress.

#### 4.3.2 Amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law

Many of the concerns expressed by community members over the course of the project were in regards to vehicles (i.e., coach buses) accessing the village for parking. There is a general acknowledgement that many of the existing issues cannot be addressed through the application of new planning regulations, however there is interest in ensuring that existing issues are not exacerbated. As such, based on the background context of the O.P. and Zoning By-Law outlined in Sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 respectively, the following amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law are recommended:

***It is recommended that the Official Plan is amended to require a transportation impact study (T.I.S.)*** for the development of lands designated Tourist Commercial.

Broadly speaking, the purpose of the T.I.S. would be to evaluate the consistency of the proposed development's transportation characteristics with the Township's goals and policies. More specifically, the T.I.S. should identify trip generation (cars, trucks, cyclists, and pedestrians), proposed access points, traffic control measures, circulation, vehicle parking demand, vehicle parking supply, bicycle parking supply, bicycle parking demand, safety, etc. The T.I.S. would also enable negotiations between the Township and developers about sharing the costs of transportation network modifications beyond those on the site.

The Township may wish to consider developing T.I.S. Guidelines or ratify those of another jurisdiction. This would assist developers and consultants with submitting T.I.S. reports that meet the Township's expectations.

In the Zoning By-law, a permitted use in CT zones is a parking area/lot. Section 2.130 of the Zoning By-law defines a Parking Area as “an area or structure other than a street used or intended to be used for the temporary storage of motor vehicles and includes a private garage or carport, aisles and parking spaces”, and section 2.132 defines a Parking Lot as “any parking area other than a parking garage or parking area accessory to a permitted use on the same lot, used for the temporary storage of parking of motor vehicles for hire and gain but does not include the sale of new or used vehicles or the storing of impounded or wrecked vehicles”. In consideration of these definitions, **it is recommended that the Tourist Commercial Zone of the Zoning By-law be amended** to only permit parking lots/areas that are accessory to a primary use.

#### 4.3.3 Sewage Treatment Limitations

**Consult the local community with regard to the future of residential and commercial land uses in the village core.** As stated in Section 1.1.1, the vision for Rockport is to be “the heart of the Thousand Islands and a tourist destination, which aims to enhance its public realm and support walkability in the core while celebrating and protecting its natural heritage”. To achieve this vision, the land along the waterfront, with the exception of the Customs Dock and the public boat ramp, has been designated entirely as Tourist Commercial in the O.P. Permitted uses in the Tourist Commercial designation include “multi-residential uses associated with a tourist commercial use” (O.P. policy 4 under Section 5.8.2.2 titled “Commercial Designations in the Settlement Areas”). However, given that Rockport has been identified as a Settlement Area for densification (see O.P. Sections 5.8 titled “Settlement Areas” and 5.8.1.3 titled “Rockport and Ivy Lea”), future expenditures to accommodate this growth may not be financially feasible (e.g., issues related to the installation of new pipes and other infrastructure in the rocky terrain) for the Rockport community. In addition, all existing services are private, which means that creating a larger system to support multiple users would require responsibility agreements.

If commercial and residential densification is a priority for the village core of Rockport, it is recommended that the Tourist Commercial designation in the O.P. be amended to have the developer **undertake a cost benefit and feasibility study** for a package sewage treatment facility, as a prerequisite for allowing the development of additional tourist commercial and/or residential uses.

## 5.0 Implementation Plan

For this Strategic Plan and C.T.S., the short-term recommendations include interventions that have been identified by the community as high priority, as they are the most impactful actions to address the immediate challenges. Many of these short-term recommendations are also among the easiest to implement and are of typically low cost to the Township. The Township may begin to implement short-term recommendations immediately, with the intent to complete all short-term recommendations within five years of finalizing and approving the Strategic Plan and C.T.S.

Long-term recommendations are interventions that may not be as easily or quickly implemented and are intended to be undertaken over a longer period of time (5-10 years).

The short- and long-term recommendations for the Strategic Plan and C.T.S. are outlined in **Table 7** on the following page.

**Table 7: Implementation Plan for Short and Long Term Recommendations**

| <b>Intervention</b>  | <b>Year 1 to Year 5</b> | <b>Year 5 +</b> |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Develop a public parking lot north of the Parkway  | ✓                       | -               |
| Add a signalized crosswalk on the Parkway  | ✓                       | -               |
| Reduce the speed limit on the Parkway  | ✓                       | -               |
| Formalize a westbound boat trail queue   | ✓                       | -               |
| Delineate the boat ramp right-of-way   | ✓                       | -               |
| Improve the boat ramp  | ✓                       | -               |
| Adopt regulations for boat ramp usage  | ✓                       | -               |
| Develop a second (or alternative) public boat ramp   | -                       | ✓               |
| Relocate the access point for the bus parking lot  | ✓                       | -               |
| Improve enforcement of idling by-laws  | ✓                       | -               |
| Develop a coach bus parking lot outside of the village core  | -                       | ✓               |
| Add a sidewalk, fencing, and crosswalks in strategic areas on Front Street   | ✓                       | -               |
| Hire part-time seasonal staff to facilitate safe movement near the boat ramp by directing vehicular and pedestrian traffic | ✓                       | -               |
| Reconfigure on-street parking spaces   | ✓                       | -               |
| Add signage to direct relevant visitors into the private parking area  | ✓                       | -               |
| Install landscaping or planters in designated areas to help delineate public/private space                                 | ✓                       | -               |
| Develop the Customs Dock as a public parkette, and initiate a pilot project to use the Customs Dock as a public space      | ✓                       | -               |
| Install speed cushions in designated areas   | ✓                       | -               |
| Install signage and/or add pavement markings to designate Front Street as a shared roadway                                 | ✓                       | -               |
| Create a monitoring plan to track and evaluate progress in implementing the Strategic Plan and C.T.S.                      | ✓                       | -               |
| Amend the O.P. and Zoning By-law as indicated  | ✓                       | -               |
| Consult community members in regard to the future densification of Rockport  | -                       | ✓               |

**Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands**

Rockport Strategic Plan Update and Community Transportation  
Strategy - Draft

October 2020 – 19-1499





## 6.0 Conclusion

The updated Strategic Plan and C.T.S. is intended to provide a strategy for future land use and development in Rockport that will work towards achieving a vision for its future. The vision, which emerged through valuable public consultation, is to create an enhanced public realm that maintains and enhances the village's relationships to the water and its peaceful, historic character.

The short- and long-term recommendations described herein offer a land use concept and mobility strategy to address ongoing issues and work towards achieving that vision. While the Strategic Plan and C.T.S. are intended to guide the strategic steps to be undertaken by the Township, success will be dependent on ongoing communication and cooperation with the Rockport community and local business operators.

## **Appendix A**

### **What We Heard – Public Consultation Summaries**

## **Appendix B**

### **Detailed Traffic Count Data**