CORK – A VISION

THE FUTURE

Sailing is a dynamic sport. Advances in boat design and construction are constant. The desire of sailors to try new and more extreme forms is a hallmark of the sport. Nowhere are these aspects more pronounced than in competitive sailing.

Sailing's development is analogous to that undergone in snow ski racing. The last 25 years have seen competitive skiing retain, and refine, classic events such as downhill and slalom, but add such new events as moguls, aerials and snowboards. Sailing events such as America's Cup have already changed dramatically from conventional hulls racing out in the ocean to foil-borne catamarans flying about San Francisco Harbor at 50 mph for the excitement of thousands of onlookers.

Looking even 10 years into the future, you might see a parallel transformation of the CORK events. The conventional hull, single person Laser class will still be present in great numbers, as befits the most numerous class of boat in the world. The Optimist "pram", or a very similar boat, will also be participating in great quantity as the boat suited to sailors' first competitive regattas. However, the other classes present will be dominated by fast, edgy boats such as skiffs that skim across the water or even foil-borne boats that rise above the waves. Racing formats can put boats into confined boxes right along shorelines. Sailboards and kiteboards will be there zipping around conventional race courses but also participating in slalom courses and speed trials before a cheering crowd. Accessibility will be a feature of CORK facilities and docks as sailing returns to the Paralympics and events such as the Mobility Cup come to CORK. More and more sailors will come to Kingston not just to compete at CORK but also to train before the event on Kingston waters.

CORK

CORK is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the development of competitive sailing in Canada by hosting annual events and national, continental and world championships.

CORK attracts sailors from across the country and around the world to compete in the dependably great sailing conditions of Kingston waters. The close proximity of race courses to the harbour advantages Kingston over many other major sailing venues. With approximately 1,400 sailors and coaches coming to CORK each year (more in major championship years), CORK provides an economic benefit to Kingston of $2.2 M annually, and up to $5.5 M in championship years. CORK also provides significant national and international exposure of Kingston as a positive, healthy and sustainable experience.

The wind, waves, current and topography that make Kingston a great sailing venue and the "fresh water sailing capital of the world" are enduring natural conditions. The facilities ashore are equally important, but are not naturally enduring. If facilities are not suitable to hosting events, sailors will simply go elsewhere, to the detriment of CORK and Kingston.

FACILITIES

For the last 40 years, CORK and Kingston have been riding on the legacy of work done for the 1976 Olympics. Today, the building is old and expensive to maintain. What is less obvious is that CORK has prospered to the point of outgrowing many of the outdoor facilities.

Ramps. Two 20-foot wide concrete ramps and two small floating ramps do not handle 350 boats well. It leads to traffic jams and significant delays. For launches, problems are eased somewhat by phased launches of fleets, but it is a greater problem with the return of the fleets, to the point of a safety situation when a sudden squall or lightning creates an imperative to get all boats (and sailors) off the water rapidly. Other sailing centres hosting major competitions have solved this problem by incorporating large ramp areas, such as seen in these pictures.

Kiel, Germany

Medemblik, Netherlands

Aarhus, Denmark

Weymouth, UK

Green Space Boat Storage. The current space used (100,000 sq ft) is just sufficient, but only so long as the square footage is free from trees and power lines that tangle with boat masts. Also, roads (and particularly fire routes) that run between boat storage areas and ramps bring sailors and vehicles into frustrating and potentially harmful conflict.

Crane. Keel boats in the 22-30-foot range are increasingly a part of the CORK schedule, but require a crane to lift them from their cradles to the water and back again. The capacity of the current POH crane is 1.5 tons, which is borderline sufficient for some classes but insufficient for others, such that an expensive and time-limited mobile crane must be brought in. The result is that crane capacity is preventing some keel boat classes that want to come to Kingston to race from doing so.

Types of Boats. As already mentioned, CORK will increasingly feature extreme boats such as skiffs, multi-hulls, foil-borne, sailboards and kiteboards – high speed and exciting but very awkward tacking out of an enclosed harbour. Skiffs are very prone to tipping over if not facing the wind while on the ramps, so they require a wide ramp in order to "crab" down to the water. Kiteboards need 25 metres of grass extending back from the launch area to be able to lay out the kite and shrouds (control lines), and should have open space of 40 metres for safe launching and landing

A SAILING CENTRE

This paper is oriented to pointing out some factors and options particular to CORK and its operations. At the same time, the increasing number of sailors and coaches coming to CORK to train in advance of an event and the presence of the International Sailing Centre of Excellence Kingston campaign beg the question of a "complete service" sailing centre that would provide both training and competition under a single organization. There is nothing contained in this

submission that would preclude such a combination and indeed, it makes great sense. Equally important, depending on the configuration chosen, the facilities could provide partnerships with other water-based organisations (Canoe/Paddle, scuba diving, Power Squadron, long distance/lake swimming and a multitude of other entities), activity-based (Boys and Girls club, Youth at Risk programs, exercise programs, yoga,), schoolboard (environmental and water safety training), and University/College(water studies, engineering, biology, marine life). A common use pavilion with change areas, showers and equipment storage could encourage such multi-activity use. Even the winter freezing of the harbour presents the opportunity for a fresh variant of aquatic activities with ice boating, parasailing and skating.