

Report to Council

Report Title:	25th Walkerton Water Commemoration and Heritage Water Garden Rehabilitation		
Prepared By:	Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator; Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer; and Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services		
Department:	Economic Development, Parks and Recreation		
Date:	November 26, 2024		
Report Number:	ED2024-03	File Number:	C11ED
Attachments:	N/A		

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby approves Report Number ED2024-03 - 25th Walkerton Water Commemoration and Heritage Water Garden Rehabilitation, prepared by Chrstine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator, Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer and Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services and in so doing approves plans related to a 25th Walkerton Water commemorative event and supports plans for the rehabilitation of the Heritage Water Garden pending 2025 budget approval.

Report:

Background:

The 25th anniversary of the Walkerton water contamination event is a significant milestone for Brockton's history. It is important to continue to honour the legacy of those who were impacted by the E. coli outbreak while also reflecting on all that Brockton has accomplished in the past 25 years. We cannot lose sight of why efforts to maintain safe drinking water are so important and we can take pride in how our contributions have benefited thousands across the province. May 2025 marks the 25th anniversary and we propose to organize a commemorative event in the Heritage Water Garden that will share our support and condolences to those affected, while also communicating how it is possible for a community to overcome adversity and achieve great success despite the challenges that a community may face.

The Heritage Water Garden was established at the intersection of Yonge and First Streets in Walkerton in 2002. This park contains numerous gardens, pathways and benches, and a large memorial fountain to commemorate those affected by the water contamination. It is important this park be maintained to a high standard as it provides a place of quiet reflection for residents and visitors and serves as a public monument to a significant chapter in Brockton's history.

After consultations with the municipality's horticulturalist and the volunteers who work diligently every year to maintain the gardens, it has been determined that Heritage Water Garden should undergo a rehabilitation

in 2025, in advance of the 25th anniversary. Any approved revitalization plan should consider the sustainability of the park for the next five to 10 years as the ability of aging volunteers to support this work will be limited. To shift from the idea of using additional staff resources to creating a space that requires less maintenance is more practical for the long-term and consistent with recommendations in the Master Recreation Plan while still ensuring beautification and maintenance are upheld appropriately for the significance of this park.

Analysis:

As we thoughtfully and carefully consider the pending 25th anniversary, some planning steps towards park updates and a commemorative event have been initiated by staff to ensure we continue to honour those who were impacted, recognize the resilience of the community of Walkerton and highlight the achievements Brockton has spearheaded in safe drinking water across Ontario.

As such staff have applied for the addition of an Ontario Heritage Trust plaque. A ceremony including a public unveiling of the heritage plaque with dignitaries with a service promoting how Walkerton had a direct impact on source water protection practices and the overall safety of municipal drinking water in the Province, combined with a formal re-opening of the revitalized park is in the project plans for May pending any additional Council input in this regard.

The ceremony will also acknowledge the legacy fund that was created to help students within the Brockton community pursue a career in clean water management. The goal of the fund is to encourage youth to continue in the footsteps of Brockton's achievements and lead communities to better water management.

Proposed short-term plan for the Heritage Water Garden for 2025:

- Add an Ontario Heritage Trust plaque next to the existing donor wall
- Clean up and replace donor wall signage
- Remove remnants of pergolas and reroute electrical hookup to donor wall
- Clean up edging on walkways
- Maintain light fixtures
- Clean fountain stone with inscription
- Restore all benches
- Move two to four planters from downtown to be located close to the donor wall to add colour to the park in the spring

Proposed long-term plan for 2026 and beyond:

- Replace all gardens with large planters. Purchasing large, self-watering planters will modernize the park and reduce the amount of watering and maintenance. Smaller, raised beds will appeal to older volunteers and allow them to continue their rewarding work for many years to come. These would also help with the recruitment of new volunteers.
- Consideration of sculptures and artistry to garden areas
- Replace light posts and fixtures

Brockton has shown incredible resilience over the past 25 years. This has always been a tight-knit community and since 2000, the care and bond our residents have for each other and the community has only strengthened. People choose to make their home in Brockton because they know it's a supportive community where residents look out for one another.

We would propose at this time that this commemoration occur on May 9th, 2025 dependant on further Provincial approval of the historic plaque and input from Provincial dignitaries related to that date. This will be accompanied by a progressive communications plan leading up to and surrounding this commemoration.

We bring this forward for Council's information and seek any additional input related to plans for this important commemoration.

Strategic Action Plan Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

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| • Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance | N/A |

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

Monies are included in the 2026 budget for the updates proposed and will be discussed further during budget deliberations.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

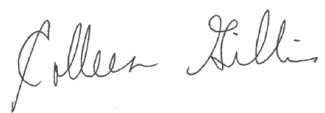
Respectfully Submitted by:



Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Colleen Gillis". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services