

# Beavermead Campground



Presentation to Arenas, Parks and Recreation Advisory  
Board November 15, 2011

The **Planning** Partnership TCI Management Consultants Ltd. PLAN B Natural Heritage

An aerial photograph of a park area. On the left, a dark river flows. To its right is a large, dense forest. Further right, a road runs vertically, with a parking lot and some buildings visible at the bottom. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## Part 1: Cost/Benefit Analysis

Meetings with Steering Committee

Site survey

Camper and Resident Survey

Community Information Session - June 2011

Draft findings

## Part 2: Strategy Plan for Beavermead Park

# History

City has operated  
the campground  
for over 30 years



# History

1970's

- 220+ sites
- occupied the existing property, the property adjacent to PUC on the park side and part of the paved parking sites in the park
- The campsites on property adjacent to PUC were often wet due to high water table



# Background

- A Feasibility Study of Beavermead Park in 1987 by consultants Totten Sims Hubicki
- Recommendations included additional day use opportunities in the park, upgraded walkways, new children's play equipment, a pool and additional parking
- One option recommended removal of the campground in favour of other day use activities

# Background

- Council received delegations from campers who opposed elimination of camping
- Council decided that they would:
  - reduce the number of campground sites
  - add services to some of the campsites to attract seasonal campers
  - construct children's playground
  - create off-street parking



# Background

- Council removed more than ½ of the campsites
- The campground property adjacent to PUC was turned over to Green-Up for Ecology Park
- The outdoor pool was not supported and did not get constructed



# Campground Operations

- The City operated the campground through to the late 80's then contracted out the operations to the private-sector
- The park was operated successfully by a contractor for a number of years
- Over the last several years, the operations were not successful with a private sector contractor



# Today's Campground

Currently, there are 98 campsites

- 52 serviced sites (electricity and water)
- 46 unserviced sites suitable for tenting, although some campers will set up their RV's without services
- 1 site for group camping, e.g., girl guides, scouts, etc.

The City operates the campground





The City provides camping:

1. Affordable camping experience for visitors to Peterborough
2. Generate a positive economic impact

BUT....

competes with the private sector

many campers are Peterborough residents who do not necessarily contribute to the economic impact of



Maintain the Campground in the short to medium term.

Recommend a User and Economic Impact Study to determine:

- visitor characteristics
- return-on-investment

Reassess the campground operation.

An aerial photograph of a park area. On the left, a dark river flows. To its right is a large green forest. Further right, there are several sports fields, including a baseball field and a soccer field. A road runs along the right side of the image, with a residential area visible beyond it. The text 'Campground' is overlaid in large white letters, and 'YES or NO' is overlaid in smaller white letters below it. To the left of the text, 'If YES:' is written in white. Below 'If YES:', there are four lines of italicized white text asking questions about the rationale, operation, investment, and economic improvement of a campground.

# Campground

YES or NO

If YES:

*What is rationale / justification?*

*Who should operate?*

*What investment is required?*

*How can economics be improved?*

# Campground

If NO:

*What other public uses are appropriate that are compatible with the Little Lake Master Plan?*

*How can habitat be restored, while still accommodating public access?*



An aerial photograph of a park area. On the left, a dark river flows. To its right is a large green field, possibly a soccer field. Further right, there are several baseball fields with visible bases and mowed areas. A road runs along the right side of the image. In the bottom right corner, there is a large white rectangular building. The text "Survey Results, Operating Economics, and Future Operating Scenarios" is overlaid in white on the central part of the image.

# Survey Results, Operating Economics, and Future Operating Scenarios

An aerial photograph of a park area. On the left, a dark river flows. To its right is a green baseball field. Further right is a large, dense forest. To the right of the forest is a playground with various equipment. In the bottom right corner, there is a parking lot with several cars and a white rectangular structure. The text "Survey Results, Operating Economics, and Future Operating Scenarios" is overlaid in white on the lower half of the image.

# **Survey Results**, Operating Economics, and Future Operating Scenarios

# **Resident Survey**

# Response

- On-line survey
- Promoted widely throughout community
- Ran essentially all summer
- 277 responses (households)
- Everyone a chance to respond
- If randomly chosen, high level of statistical reliability
- However, may reflect those keenly interested one way or another in the operation

***Residents are clearly in favour of continuing a  
campground operation on the Beavermead  
site:***

- **most residents (96%) were very familiar** with the campground operation: over half (56%) report personal experience in camping at the facility at some point in their lives

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- approximately 70% of respondents disagreed somewhat or strongly with the statement :*“The City should convert Beavermead Campground into public parkland and restore natural environment.”* (Note that over 50% **disagreed strongly** with this statement.)
- **approximately 90% of respondents felt that the campground operation was desirable** in that it provided an affordable accommodation option for visitors to the community

***Residents are clearly in favour of continuing a campground operation on the Beavermead site:***

- 84% of the respondents agreed totally with the statement that *“even though the campground operation at Beavermead takes some waterfront away from direct use by City residents, there are still lots of opportunities for residents to access Little Lake”*

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- nearly 100 comments in the final open-ended question were to the effect that the City should continue in the campground business (35% of all respondents)

***The campground operation is widely seen as an economic generator in the community:***

- 82% of respondents agreed with the statement: *“if the economic impact created by campers at Beavermead is greater than any deficit incurred by running the campground, it is still a positive thing for the City to do”*

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- of all open-ended comments where respondents were asked what the benefit of the campground was to the City, the top response was ‘positive economic benefit and spinoff’

***Residents are clearly in favour of continued campground operation by the municipality rather than by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party:***

- nearly 75% of respondents agreed with the statement  
*“the City should continue direct operation of the Beavermead Campground”*

***Residents are clearly in favour of continued campground operation by the municipality rather than by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party:***

- nearly 75% of respondents agreed with the statement *“the City should continue direct operation of the Beavermead Campground”*
- 62% of respondents disagreed somewhat or strongly with the statement *“the City should lease out operation of the Beavermead Campground to a third-party operator”*

## **To recap, residents:**

- Regard the campground as an economic generator
- Are in favour of keeping it where it is
- Are in favour of municipality operating it

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“Restore to public parkland – get rid of squatters.”*

*“Has really gone downhill”*

*“Nothing lasts forever”*

*“Need to attract more tourists. A Great Wolf Lodge  
would be great!”*

*“Campers don’t spend money in the community – we  
shouldn’t cater to them.”*

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“Beavermead is one of Peterborough’s  
best kept secrets.”*

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“It’s a gem. In fact, I recommended attending the Peterborough Youth Triathalon over other races to some folks yesterday due to Beavermead being available and so nice to stay at.”*

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“As a sports league coordinator in the City who welcomes 200 people to stay at the Beavermead tent site every year, this natural asset is a gem. People cannot believe that they can show up, park their car and have access to all they need for the next 48 hours. The location of Beavermead allows for easy access to fields, the trail system, Ecology Park, and the waterway system. It is a unique system for our size and we should not simply maintain it, but we need to promote it further as a welcome destination for visitors.”*

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“Being able to have pizza delivered while camping is a huge bonus.”*

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“Bravo to Peterborough for giving us a  
place to escape to each summer!  
Well done and well run!”*

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“Highlights Peterborough as a nature-lover’s getaway”*

# Quotes from the Resident Survey

*“After camping at Beavermead, we made the decision to move to Peterborough.”*

# Camper Survey

# Response

- Handed out at campground
- Ran essentially all summer
- Everyone a chance to respond
- 415 responses (camper-parties)

***The campground caters to tourists,  
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- most campers (nearly 80%) are tourists to the area
- the main reason they are coming to the area (70%) is to see the attractions in Peterborough and the surrounding areas
- if Beavermead was not available as a camping option, nearly half of respondents would camp somewhere else, not in the Peterborough area

***The campground generates significant expenditure in the Peterborough economy:***

- 80% stay 2 or more nights in the campground, with most (57%) staying a weekend

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- 80% stay 2 or more nights in the campground, with most (57%) staying a weekend
- average camper party size is 4.1 persons
- not including camper fees, each camper-party spends \$66 per day in the community
- the survey respondents (415) were responsible for over \$200,000 of expenditure in the City over the summer of 2011 (again, not including campground fees)

***The campground has overall a strong and positive reputation:***

- 55% rated Beavermead as 'somewhat better' or 'much better' overall than other campgrounds

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- 55% rated Beavermead as 'somewhat better' or 'much better' overall than other campgrounds
- 'friendliness of staff' was rated as 'somewhat better' or 'much better' than other campgrounds by 75% of respondents

## ***There is some potential to increase prices:***

- 55% said that if prices were raised by 10%, they would still likely camp at Beavermead; however if prices were raised by 25%, only 14% indicated they would likely stay

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- 55% said that if prices were raised by 10%, they would still likely camp at Beavermead; however if prices were raised by 25%, only 14% indicated they would likely stay
- many indicated that if certain key improvements were made to the campground, they would be willing to see price increases
- experience elsewhere has shown that there is less resistance to price increases if it can be shown that the increase is being used to directly fund improvements to the product or service offered

## ***Key Improvements Suggested***

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- the improvements deemed by campers to be most necessary were expanded and improved washrooms and showers (30%)
- other key improvements reported as necessary included:
  - *various improvements to the site themselves (level grading, increased privacy, cleaner sites): 10%*
  - *increased amenities on the campground (laundry facilities; on-site shop for essentials; splash pad; wifi; better pump out): 8%*
  - *improved facilities for RVs: 50 amp, sewer (6%)*

## To recap, campers:

- *Are* tourists
- Spend time and significant dollars in the community
- Would be willing to pay for key improvements

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

*“A standard of quality for seasonal sites – one particular site was disgusting!”*

*“Clean dog poo on sites.”*

*“Not sure if we’ll be back due to no privacy at any sites.”*

*“Prices are really high.”*

*“Very crowded.”*

*“Overpriced for available facilities.”*

*“Where are the beavers?”*

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

*“We had a fantastic time and will come back in future.”*

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

*“John, Dave and Stephanie made this our best ever camping experience.”*

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

*“I always look forward to coming to Beavermead and all the local attractions: festivals, restaurants, shopping and beautiful parks.”*

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

*“Great location with friendly, helpful staff. With upgrades to toilet / shower facilities it would be excellent. Park should definitely be maintained as a camping facility – it’s great to have camping within walking distance of downtown.”*

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

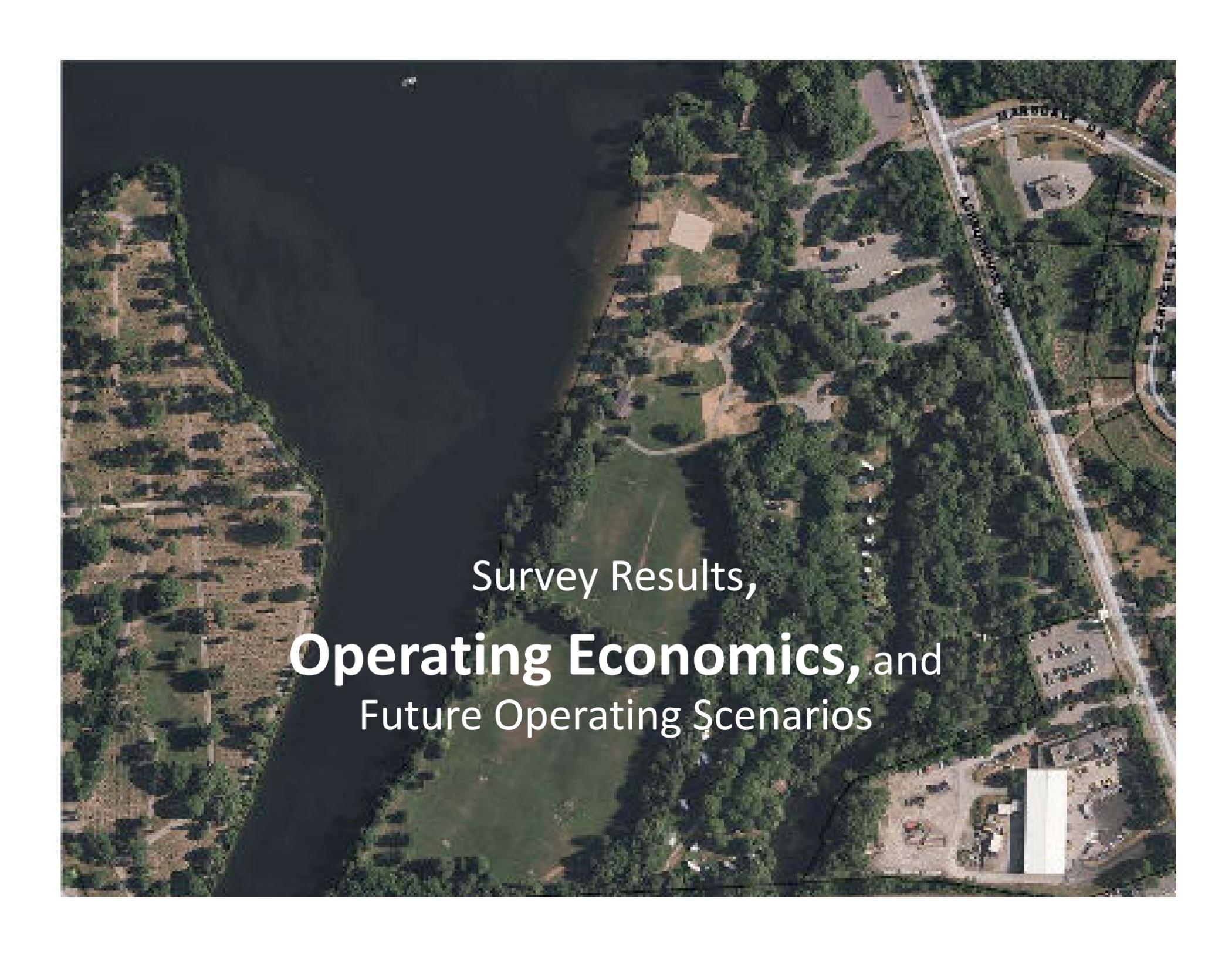
*“It fit perfectly with our desire to tour the locks and other attractions in town. Would like to have stayed longer but arrived prior to the long weekend and all space had been reserved.”*

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

*“Great location with friendly, helpful staff. With upgrades to toilet / shower facilities it would be excellent. Park should definitely be maintained as a camping facility – it’s great to have camping within walking distance of downtown.”*

# Quotes from the Camper Survey

*“We have thoroughly enjoyed our first stay at Beavermead and salute the City for its beautiful parks and trails system and lovely campground from where to experience the City.”*

An aerial photograph of a park area. On the left, a dark river flows. To its right is a green baseball field. Further right is a large, dense forest. To the right of the forest is a paved road. On the far right, there is a playground with various equipment. The text "Survey Results, Operating Economics, and Future Operating Scenarios" is overlaid in white on the image.

Survey Results,  
**Operating Economics,** and  
Future Operating Scenarios

# Capacity and Utilization

- 98 sites (46 unserviced; 52 serviced)
- May 6 – October 10 operating season (157 nights operation)
- equals 15,386 potential site-nights ( $157 \times 98$ )
- actual site nights sold: 3,518 for season
- equals 22% occupancy
- norm in industry is 40% - 50%

# **Campground Revenues, all sources, 2011 (*accruing to City – net of HST*)**

April -11	\$2,100
May-11	\$29,483
Jun-11	\$31,611
Jul-11	\$51,109
Aug-11	\$43,377
Sep-11	\$18,345
Oct-11	\$6,947
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$182,235</b>

# Campground Costs, 2011 (*costing City*)

Wages	\$131,284
Benefits	\$12,807
Light & Water	\$8,432
Purchases for Resale (cost of goods)	\$4,726
Contractual Services	\$2,414
Bank Charges	\$2,302
Cleaning Supplies	\$2,233
Telephone	\$2,091
Equipment	\$1,578
Materials	\$752
Uniforms	\$673
Marketing	\$2,044
Office Supplies	\$391
Building Maintenance	\$255

**\$182,395**

# Campground Net (2011)

Revenues	\$182,235
Direct Costs	\$182,395
Net Deficit	\$160

# Better Performance than Recent Years

- 2008: (\$41,339)
- 2009: (\$19,077)
- 2010: (\$29,842)
- 2011: (\$160)

# Economic Impact in Area (excluding camper fees)

- camper survey shows that average expenditure by camping parties per site night = \$66
- with 3,500 site nights sold, estimated total expenditure in community = **\$231,000**
- ***Note: this does NOT include what they spent at the campground***

# **Social Impact Benefits**

- Opportunity for individuals to experience nature in a 'friendly' urban setting
- Affordable vacation for families of all income ranges
- Promotion of outdoor exercise & fitness
- Opportunity to meet others
- Opportunity for family time

An aerial photograph of a park. On the left is a large, dark lake. To the right of the lake is a green baseball field with a dirt infield. Further right is a playground with various equipment. The park is surrounded by dense green trees. A road runs along the right edge of the image. The text "Survey Results, Operating Economics, and Future Operating Scenarios" is overlaid in white on the lower right portion of the image.

Survey Results,  
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- Occupancy rate increasing to 33%
- Staffing increased by 50% to accommodate increased demand
- Other costs increased by 33%

# Results – City Coffers

- Operating revenues = \$285,000
- Operating costs = \$274,000
- **Net profit = \$11,000**

# **Results – Economic Impact in Community**

- \$265,000 additional expenditure to community businesses
- Could be increased through more aggressive marketing of downtown and other City businesses to campers

# Higher Occupancies = Greater Benefit

- City profit:
  - *At 40% occupancy, \$71,000*
  - *At 50% occupancy, \$158,000*
  - *Every 1 percentage point increase in occupancy = \$8,600 profit / surplus to City*
- Economic impact to City increases commensurately

An aerial photograph of a park area. On the left is a dark river. To the right of the river are several green baseball fields and a large area of dense green trees. A road runs along the right side of the image. The word "Recommendations" is written in white text across the middle of the image.

# Recommendations

# Site

## LEGEND

	Boat Launch		Garbage and Recycling
	Dump Station		Telephone
	Office		Washroom
	Picnic Area and Overflow		Water Station
	Playground		

1. Washroom Building

2. Gatehouse

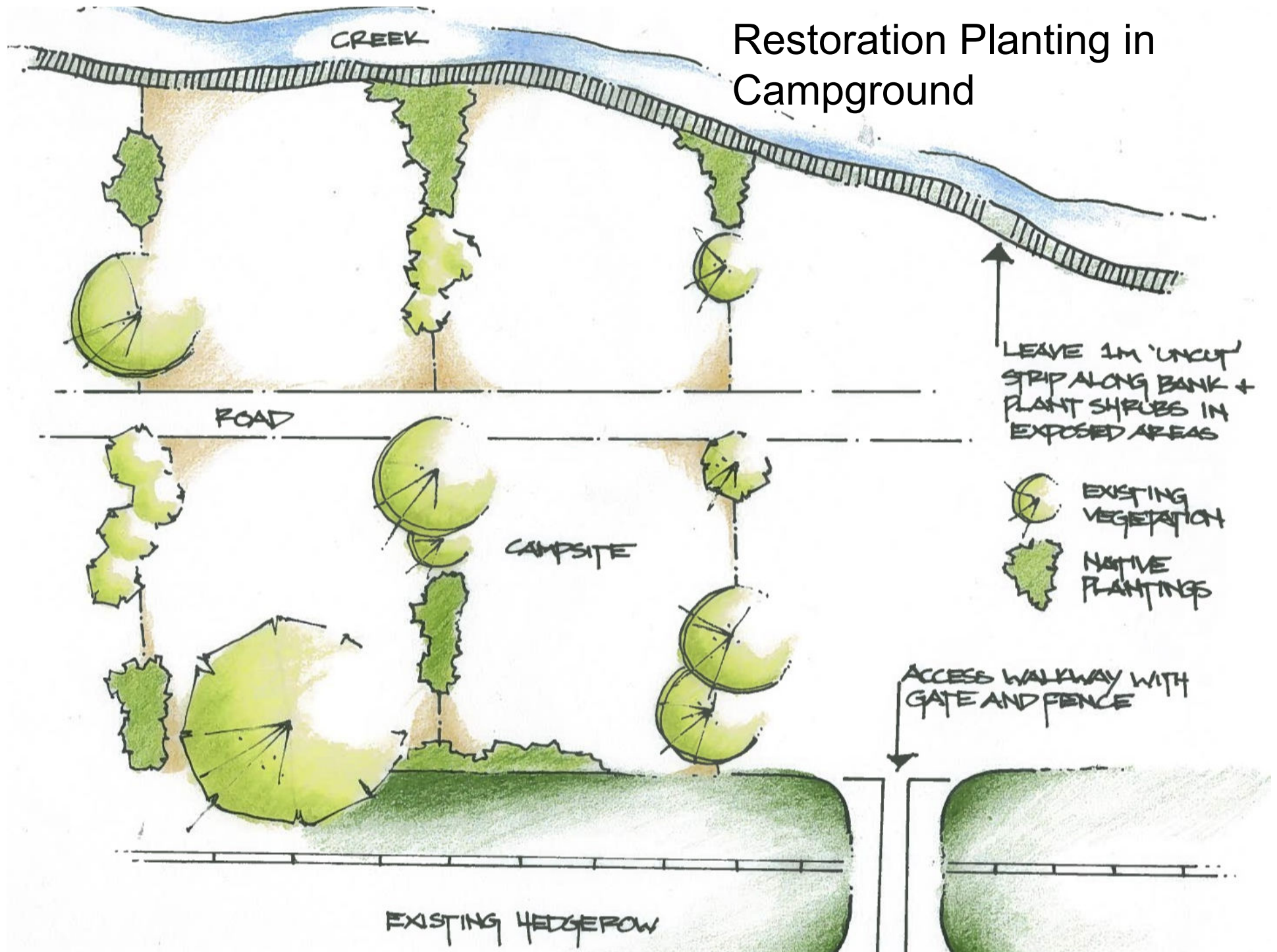
3. Servicing

4. Environmental restoration

5. Security of campsites



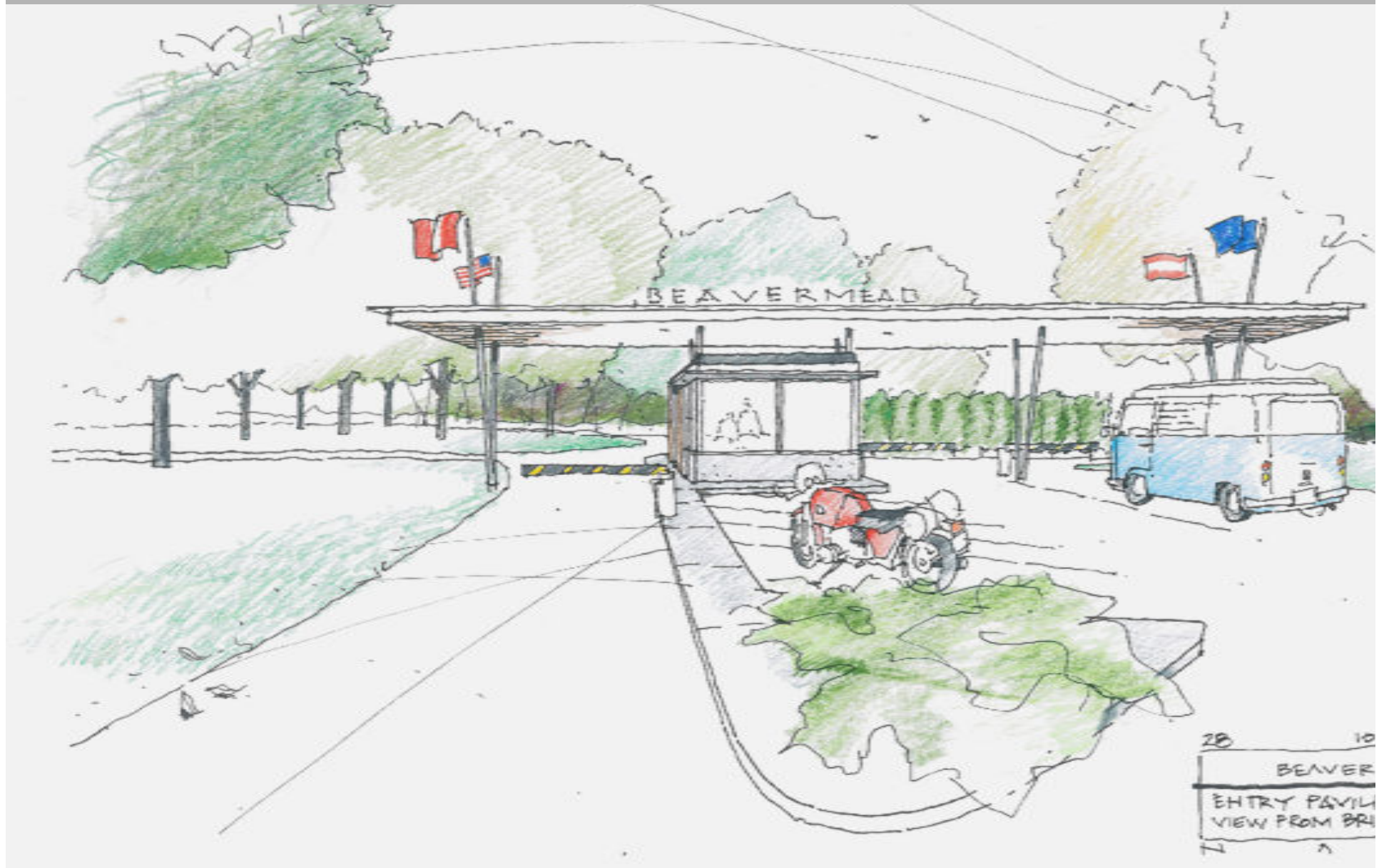
# Restoration Planting in Campground



# Entrance Gate to Campground



## Entrance Gate - view looking west into campground



# Washroom pavillion



## Washroom pavillion - view looking north



# Recommendations

## Operation

- Retain campground as municipally-run operation
- Increase prices by approximately 10%, in association with an information campaign for campers..."you asked us to..."
- Provide more serviced sites (ideally 75% of the sites) with 60 amp service

# Recommendations

## Marketing

- Implement more aggressive marketing of the campground with a budget in the order of \$10,000
- Prepare an information campaign for residents explaining why investment in the campground is taking place

## Campground Facilities

- Improve the Washroom Pavillion and the Entry Pavillion

# Recommendations

## Site Conditions

- Regrade low-lying depressions
- Consult with a certified arborist when extending hydro and water to service more sites to ensure no impact on trees
- Install a fence on the west side of the campground
- Install screen planting in selective areas to provide more privacy between campsites
- Remove buckthorn from the creek edge and replace with native species to enhance biodiversity to the water's edge and to stabilize erosion-prone areas