

DOBSON YACHT CLUB

Strategic Plan and Operational Goals

2008-2013

Adopted by the Annual General Meeting December 21, 2008



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Introduction to the Strategic Planning Process

A committee to make recommendations for long term planning in the Dobson Yacht Club was established in December, 2007. The planning committee will review the planning needs of the Club, consult with the membership and executive, and make recommendations on long term planning requirements. The committee considers long term (strategic) planning important for several purposes;

- To provide continuity from year to year as the executive changes
- To determine and document the critical issues facing the club
- To avoid pitfalls that could upset the process - "Knowing the history"
- To provide an outlet or opportunity for members to contribute to the planing of the club, and to set the future direction and priorities of the Club
- To document and provide clear responsibility and time frames for implementation of ideas, projects and the maintenance and development of the club (ie the executive has responsibility to oversee the implementation of the plan, but the members have responsibility to implement it - Members make it happen)

The committee's mandate is as follows;

- Assess the present rules, mission and vision of the club
- Assess the immediate and long term development goals of the club (how we achieve the vision)
- To fully involve the membership in the planning process
- To encourage the membership to take an active roll in the implementation of a Strategic Plan
- To revise and update the plan yearly.
- To monitor and report on the progress of Strategic goals

The Dobson Yacht Club

The Dobson Yacht Club sits on the western shore of the South Arm of Sydney Harbour, directly opposite the Sydney downtown area. Its location on the chart (4266) is shown as Dobsons Point, formerly known as Shingle Point. The Club is justly proud of its facilities, which are the finest and most extensive in Sydney Harbour.

The Club, with its newly renovated interior, harbourside lawn, and beautiful vista of the Sydney waterfront is also a major social centre on the Westmount shore of Sydney Harbour. We invite non-members to be our guests and to join in the various activities which take place at the Club.

The club relies heavily on the volunteer resource of its members, and has a minimum number of permanent staff. This is an important part of keeping fees and dues affordable and important to the long term success of the club.

The club currently has 170 members, and provides on-site winter storage for over 90 boats.

It is the **Vision** of the Dobson Yacht Club to be the yacht club of choice for residents and visitors to metro Cape Breton.

The primary goals (**Mission**) of the Dobson Yacht Club are to provide first class, cost effective boating facilities for its members and to promote the pastime of sailing and power boating in a friendly, family-oriented atmosphere.

Core values that are important to the club members are:

- volunteering time and personal skills to the operation and maintenance of the club, to keep fees reasonable;
- to foster fellowship and involvement of all members;
- To administer and manage all Club activities in a transparent and open fashion with respectful treatment of all;
- to be fiscally responsible, and to maintain financial stability
- to promote and foster safe recreational boating, and to stimulate an interest in seamanship, navigation and small craft handling
- to be a valuable asset to the local community

A Short History

The Dobson Yacht Club, like so many other good ideas, had a humble beginning. The year was 1953 a time of relative prosperity in Cape Breton. Sydney Steel was booming and coal was still "King". It was a time of rebuilding and hard work following the war, but it was also a time when recreation was important as a diversion from the everyday realities of life. One such diversion was Snipe racing, and the founders of the Club desired to expand opportunities for snipe racing in Sydney Harbour.

A build-up of stone ballast was dumped over the years on the Western side of Sydney Harbour, forming a crude breakwater filled in with sand and gravel. The resulting piece of property was called Shingle Point, which was owned by the Dobson family. There was safe anchorage on the Southwest side of the property that would be ideal for the snipe fleet. 1953, Shingle Point was purchased by the sailors for three thousand dollars. Twelve original members paid one hundred dollars each, plus a membership fee of twenty dollars. Some of the members fronted a loan for the balance and, in 1954, adopting the name of its benefactor, Dobson Yacht Club was born.

The original Club House was a shack from the construction site of the then-new Federal Building on Dorchester Street. In the spring of 1954, the water's edge in the southwest cove was only 9-12 metres from the clubhouse itself. At this time the old military barracks on Royal Avenue, near the Sydney City Hospital, were being sold for one dollar each with the condition that they had to be removed from the site. After purchasing one of these buildings the members separated the building in two and moved it through the

streets of Sydney down to the Cape Breton Dairy on the waterfront. The actual relocation took place by floating the structures across the harbour in September of 1955.

During the mid-fifties to mid-sixties, the Snipe Sailing Team from Dobson became a force to be reckoned with in Maritime racing circles. The team won the Provincial Snipe Championships three times, the Maritime Championship three times and the Dominion Championship once.

In 1965, Foundation Maritime was drilling for bedrock around Sydney Harbour and they needed a suitable place to build cement cribs to be used in the construction of Steel Company loading piers. The deal resulted Maritime-built docking area known as 'the camber' which would be left behind when the job was finished. This project was like a blood transfusion to Dobson. The new camber meant bigger sailboats and power boats could now use the facilities, beginning a new era in the local yachting world. This was left as a legacy to the Club and continues to serve as important wharfage.

In 1995, the new marina facilities were opened at the club. There was a decision made by the members of the day to seek funding for berthing of the club's boats, including support from Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation. The club acquired demolition rubble from the Cape Breton Hospital and the City Hospital for construction of a marina breakwater followed by the installation of finger piers. There are now berths within the sheltered confines of the Marina for forty-six boats.

A need arose in 1999 to expand the clubhouse facilities. A committee was formed and funding was sought. The members came forward with personal funding and the remainder was secured from a mortgage company.

Dobson Yacht Club is now a top venue for activities that service the local community.

Current Facilities

Clubhouse

The clubhouse has showers and laundry facilities for boaters, a renovated bar that provides service in two different areas, a new lounge area, a fully equipped galley facility, a conference/reception room, a members lounge and boardroom on the second floor, and decks both up and down for viewing the harbour and across downtown.

Dockage

Club wharves provide over 500 feet of dockage, and the newly-built breakwaters form a well-protected basin which can hold an additional sixty boats at floating docks. Available depth at low water is 9 feet. The Maximum tidal range in Sydney Harbour is 4.4 feet (1.3 metres).

Haul out Facilities

The Club operates a 20 ton travel lift that has the capacity to lift a vessel up to 50 feet in length, with a 15 foot beam and an 8 foot draft. Larger vessels can be handled by cranes rented from local contractors. Non-Members may use the Travel Lift for one-time unloading of boats from boat haulers to the water or hauling out and loading boats onto boat haulers at the Non-Member Rate. A launching ramp accommodates trailered boats and self-loading hydraulic boat transporters. A mast crane is located in the camber.

Dobson Yacht Club has the only dockside fuelling facilities in Sydney Harbour. Gasoline and diesel are available on site.

Governance Structure

The executive of the club includes a Commodore, Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore, Secretary, Treasurer and Fleet Captain and five directors.

Permanent staff includes a club manager and five bar staff. Bar staff perform other duties to assist boaters, including booking yard and boating activities and receipting fees paid by members.

There are six standing committees, membership, entertainment, house, grounds, bar and fleet captain.

A copy of the Club's constitution is available at <http://www.dobsonyachtclub.ca>

S.W.O.T. Analysis

The planning process included an examination of the environment in which the club operates, consisting of consideration of the clubs strengths, weaknesses, the opportunities and threats facing the Club.

STRENGTHS

Low dues and fees

No debt

Strong financial position

Quality facilities and equipment in generally good condition

Stable membership numbers

Only dockside fueling facility in Sydney

Diverse membership composition

Friendly, helpful and accommodating atmosphere - CB Hospitality

Great facilities for weddings and parties

Stable numbers of boats in storage and in the marina

We own our facilities (Land, buildings, docks and basin)

WEAKNESSES

Lack of young members

Onerous executive responsibilities

Member burn-out

Poor promotion of club house facilities

Limited participation of members on committees and work parties

Poor location for social events

Limited expansion opportunity due to lack of land

Large and growing physical plant (wharves, building, equipment) to maintain

OPPORTUNITIES

Good reputation as a destination for visitors

Boating activity development – flotilla cruises, courses, etc.

Promote more utilization of the club house building

Increase boat storage numbers through increased density in yard

Baby boomers retiring to Cape Breton with money

Increase level and type of services to members on a fee for service basis

THREATS

Ageing population of boaters

Very few young members

Little/if-any, population growth in area

Increasing cost to purchase, operate, and maintain a boat

Environmental restrictions

Competition from new facilities (i.e. Ben Eoin and St. Peter's marina development)

Strategies

The are four main strategies important to the Club

1. The club must remain prosperous and financially stable.

The Club has made considerable financial strides in the past few years. Through the efforts of the members, and with sound leadership, all debt has been paid and the club currently enjoys a sound fiscal position. The Club must maintain this position, and seek out ways to remain financially stable in the future. We need to develop new sources of revenue; ensure members continue to volunteer their time and skills to the club; and maintain efficient, transparent and secure accounting systems. The Club also must examine ways to increase the utilization of the facilities, particularly the spaces within the clubhouse.

2. Membership must be maintained and members must be involved in all aspects of club activities,

The Club has a current membership of 170. While the membership remains relatively stable, the membership seems to be aging. We need to recruit younger members, host activities that will expand the membership base and get all members involved in club activities.

3. Create and use best administration practices, and improve communication, transparency and information available to members.

The Dobson Yacht Club relies heavily on the volunteer efforts of members and the community. To maintain this interest in the club all aspects of the management and administration of the club must be transparent, and information must be readily available and in a format that is easily understood. The permanent staff of the club needs to be certain in their duties, which also needs to be clear to the membership.

4. Review facility requirements, including ongoing maintenance and establishing long term capital needs.

The Dobson Yacht Club takes pride in clubhouse and boating facilities, which are the finest in Sydney Harbour. The facilities require regular and ongoing maintenance, and periodic upgrading to meet the needs of the members. Identification of needed maintenance tasks will ensure the long term viability of the club and planning and prioritization of needed upgrades is important to ensure the club can deliver first class boating facilities.

Operational Plans

Strategy 1 - The Club must remain prosperous and financially stable.

	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	LEAD PERSON	COMPLETION DATE	EXPECTED OUTCOME BENEFIT
1.1.1	Increase revenue from nonmember sources	Encourage use of ATM machine	Bartenders	Review annually	10% above 2007 amount of \$269
1.1.2		Expand club rentals by targeted promotion	Manager	Review annually	Increased club use for parties, weddings, conferences, etc. (\$7350 2007)
1.2.1	Develop alternate sources of revenue	Provide courses re: boating education	Members or outside instructors	Schedule annually	More activity at club with resulting revenue. Revenue from fees.
1.2.2		Establish Friday night after work party	Board	Spring 2008 Completed	Increased bar revenue
1.3.1	Ensure continuity of accounting functions	Document current role of "auditor" and identify timing for replacement, when necessary	Treasurer	Spring 2009	To determine the timing for a replacement and who that might be.
1.3.2	Identify transportability of book-keeping system	Document all current book-keeping functions and cash controls	Treasurer Manager Bob French	Spring 2009	To ensure smooth passage of current system to next manager.
1.4.1	Develop Cash flow management plan	Create monthly cash flow budget	Treasurer Manager	Spring 2009	To ensure there is sufficient cash to meet monthly requirements

1.5.1	Investigate quarterly HST payments	Make quarterly payments on revenue rather than invoices	Manager	By June 1 2009	Pay HST on cash received rather than on Accounts Receivable. – better cash flow.
1.6.1	Establish a Club promotion plan	To market facilities for use by business and the community. This may include a brochure	Colin Jackson Manager	December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rental Revenue - Bar sales - Increased member interest in club
1.6.2	Promote club to international sailors,	Target Yacht Club websites and community websites	Manager	December 2009	Wharfage fees, bar sales, recognition
1.7.1	Review billing for clarity	Make sure items on invoices are clear to members	treasurer	Spring 2009	Invoices easier to read
1.8.1	Institute Rewards Plan for volunteer contribution	Develop procedural guidelines and plan that may include required participation and or rewards for volunteer hours. Plan to be presented to general meeting for consideration	Fleet Cap'n. and Board	December 2009	Reduced expenses for capital and maintenance. Projects. Improved membership participation and Club involvement
1.9.1	More use of work parties		Fleet captain and Yard Chair	On Going	
1.10.1	Examine Ways to increase bar sales	Events Club rentals	commodore	On going	

1.11.1	Generate interest among members for social activities	Better use of newsletter, promote club activities, happy hour	Bar Chair or Entertainment Committee Chair	On going	
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Strategy 2 - Membership must be maintained and members must be involved in all aspects of club activities.

	Item	Description	Lead Person	Completion Date	Expected Outcome
2.1.1	Membership patterns	Review membership attrition and gains, and age distribution over past years to establish trends.	Gord Sutherland	December 2009	Better knowledge to assist in widening our membership base
2.2.1	Introduce 'new' activities	New activities to appeal to retiring seniors and younger members	Chair, entertainment committee	On going	Increased membership
2.3.1	Newsletter	Re-introduce the <i>Dobson Dispatch</i> in electronic format for delivery via the Internet, as a primary means of informing and contacting the membership	Colin Jackson	April 2008 Complete	Zero cost. Improved membership participation at work parties and Club events.
2.4.1	Skills Inventory	Establish a skills inventory so membership can become more selectively involved in volunteer activities	Colin Jackson	Complete	Better membership involvement, less need for contract-out work.
2.5.1	Selective solicitation of volunteers	Solicit work party, maintenance and development activity volunteers based on members' skills	Work party chairs	On Going	Better membership involvement, less need for contract-out work.
2.6.1	Volunteer mentoring	Encourage/establish volunteer mentoring guidelines	Project volunteer	December 2010	Smooth transition of volunteer leadership and avoidance of volunteer burn-out
2.7.1	Support teams	Establish continuing support teams (succession management) to assist committee chairpersons with activities	Board of directors	December 2010	Ease the task of finding committee chairpersons Continuity

2.8.1	Create Chair, boater education		Appointed by Commodore	December 2009	More education and training programs
2.9.1	Determine need for boating education	May include; -Navigation Classes -Seamanship Classes (CPS) -Proficiency Training/certification -Vessel Inspections -Flare exercises (CCG-CCGAux – Old Flares	Chair Education Committee	December 2010	
2.10.1	Review Major Social Events	-New Years Eve Dinner and dance -Valentines Dance -Lobster Boil -Corn Boil -Whaleboat Races -Crab Bash -Fishing Boat Races -Commodores Ball - Superbowl party - Children's Xmas party - Poker Runs	Entertainment Chair	December 2010	
2.11.1	Consider Planning boating events outside Sydney Harbour	-Bras D'or Lake Cruise -Rendezvous in a good spot for a party Use website and email lists to advertise	Project volunteer	ongoing	

Strategy 3 - Create and use best administration practices, and improve communication, transparency and information available to members

	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	LEAD PERSON	COMPLETION DATE	EXPECTED OUTCOME/BENEFIT
3.1.1	Club manger, bar tenders, Officers document duties for future reference	Each staff member & Officer to complete a job description and list of duties	Job Description Committee and board of directors	Spring 2009	To assist with job evaluations and development of new job descriptions
3.1.2		Develop new job descriptions for all staff	Board and job description committee	Spring 2009	Better up-to-date job descriptions
3.2.1	Develop electronic communications with members	Collect email addresses	Manager	On Going	Basis of new electronic database
3.3.1	Update website		Colin John Troke	Ongoing yearly	Improve marketing and communication with members and potential visitors
3.4.1	Establish process for review & update of strategic plan	Define committee's responsibilities including evaluation of goals	Committee	Oct. Meeting yearly	To better define the role of the planning committee
3.5.1	Reduce executive member burn-out	Encourage a more managerial role for chairpersons and executive	Board	Spring 2009	Improve longevity of executive in office. Promote more member involvement
3.6.1	Investigate UPS for computers	Provide better protection and back up for computers	Gord Sutherland	Complete	

Strategy 4 – Review facility requirements, including ongoing maintenance, and establishing long term capital needs.

	Items	Description	Lead Person	Completion Date	Expected Outcome
4.1.1	Identify, prioritize and plan maintenance activities		Building and Yard chair and Fleet Captain	Yearly starting December 2009	Maintenance Plan
4.2.1	Examine possibilities for increasing boat storage capacity, including review of equipment and technologies that may increase boat storage density		Yard Chair	On going	
4.3.1	Ensure club appearance is maintained and that noise is minimized		Yard Chair	On going	
4.4.1	Examine Building Security	Examine processes around filling ATM, deposits, key control - new cameras	House Chair	On going Camera, key control complete	

4.5.1	Electrical outlets on finger piers	Shorting out with high tides And winds	Qualified volunteers	August 2009	Integrity of electrical current
4.6.1	Finger pier lights	Ineffective cost To maintain	Qualified Volunteers	November 2009	Cost effective Solar panel lights
4.7.1	Power outlets on the North side of property	Amperage insufficient for growing demand	Qualified Volunteers	August 2009	Sufficient Amperage For members current needs
4.8.1	Finger Pier Walkway Arms	Bent out of shape, Encrusted with rust, evidence Of weakening, Safety concern	Qualified Volunteers	May 2011	Replaced With new arms

	Items	Description	Lead Person	Completion Date	Expected Outcome
4.9.1	Wharf on Southside of club, 59 & 60	Area dropped approximately 2ft. due to settling of supporting stone	Volunteers	Summer/08 Complete	Wharf raised and reinforced with pressure-treated 6 by 6s & Stone
4.10.1	Camber area improvements	Steel tiebacks on the north wall are totally eroded, impairing the support to that wall	Volunteers	Fall 2009	Re-enforced tiebacks by welding steel rods, creating full wall support.

4.11.1	Install Armorstone on Shoreline on north side of club property	Erosion to shoreline, caused by ice high winds and high tides	Volunteer with tendered contractor	Summer 2010	Shoreline re-enforced with more armor stone
4.12.1	More fresh water supply to the north side of the property	Insufficient waterlines and taps to best serve the members on the north side of the property	Volunteers	Fall 2009	Another waterline with several taps, which now serve that side of the property
4.13.1	Sewage disposal/Pump out	Boaters do not have access to sewage disposal at our club	Volunteers with tendered contractor	Summer 2011	Sewage disposal tank and pump installed for boating community
4.14.1	Waste Oil	No present waste oil disposal on club property	Volunteers with tendered contractor	Summer 2010	Waste oil tank installed
4.15.1	Increase winter boat storage capacity	Proposed plan to increase winter, boat storage space	Volunteers with tendered contractor	Pending the future needs of the club	Bulldoze south side of club to make way for more winter storage, which would generate more revenue
4.16.1	Review fuel location	May be best located with pumpout and waste oil station, if installed	Fleet Captain	2010	

	Item	Description	Lead Person	Completion Date	Expected Outcome
4.17.1	Lounge Flooring	Carpet is worn, odorous, and unsightly ,so needs to be replaced	Volunteers	Summer 2008 Complete	Replace with new carpets and new tiles.
4.18.1	Do feasibility study on possible upgrade the Big Lounge	The big lounge is not large enough to accommodate, for the ever growing number of functions we cater to	Volunteer with tendered contractor	2010	Add another 12 x 70 feet to existing lounge area, with a frost wall in place.
4.19.1	Develop heat management plan	Examine possibility of separate furnaces, zones, setback thermostats and temperature controls	Tom Meagher	Fall 2009	
4.20.1	Plan for municipal sewer connection		Project volunteer	2012	Be prepared when municipality runs sewer in area

Consideration for Additions to 2009 plan:

WiFi for Club Property

Roof over mast rack or other protection from elements

Club Safety Plan

Repair shed for boat maintenance

Integration of long term financial planning

Present Strategic Plan to staff and solicit their ideas