LAKE CHAMPLAIN COMMUNITY SAILING CENTER
LAKE ACCESS FOR ALL
WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Goal:
The Lake Access for All: Waterfront Redevelopment campaign seeks to completely overhaul our current waterfront, creating the infrastructure necessary for safe harbor and programmatic growth. A universally accessible education pier (i.e., accessible by wheelchair users and visitors with any other mobility impairments), safe launch site, deep-water basin and hoists will improve functionality, boost safety, expand access, and increase programmatic impact.

Usage:
The Community Sailing Center, founded in 1994, provides access to Lake Champlain for over 8,000 Vermonters and visitors annually. From May through early October our programming is in full swing. Concurrent programs include:

- Floating Classrooms – STEM education for 3-5th graders from five counties, serving over 2,000 students each year;
- LeaderShip – education for troubled youth, focusing on positive growth for close to 1,000 youth annually;
- Adaptive Watersports – in collaboration with Vermont Adaptive, we use adapted boats to get youth and adults with cognitive and physical disabilities out on the lake;
- Youth camps – sailing, paddling and multi-adventure camps, this summer serving 60+ campers daily;
- Adult sailing and paddling lessons for over 350 people each year;
- Sailboat, kayak, canoe, and paddle board rentals; and
- University of Vermont, Northern Vermont High School Sailing Teams call CSC their home.

Additionally, the Community Sailing Center serves as public access to Lake Champlain for small
boat sailors and for kayakers, canoers, and paddle boarders.

Eliminating barriers:
Public boat launches in Vermont are paid for by boat owners/fisherman through license fees and specific use taxes and are off limits to the general public. Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department annually reminds us that fishing access areas are for launching and retrieving motorboats – activities that are not compatible with small craft launch due to dangers posed by motors. In Burlington, the launch at Perkins Pier and at the Coast Guard ramp are primarily used by motorboats making them hazardous to small sailboats and paddle craft. Thus, ours is the only launch ramp available to the general public.

CSC, located on the waterfront with parkland to the North, public parks and a fishing pier to the south, offers a protected space for non-motorized craft to put in, sail/paddle from, and take out. Public parking, in addition to our own parking lot, increase accessibility. The design of our building and waterfront allows trailered boats to pull through the boatyard, launch using either the hoist or the ramp seen in the designs and exit the boatyard through the building. The design also allows expedited launching of more than one boat at a time, which is our current limit. By improving our waterfront capacity, we increase the number of people who can launch, enjoy the lake, and reap the many benefits of time on the water.

Designed for the future:
• The 50’ wide ramp is designed to provide direct access from the boatyard into the lake, allowing safe launch of multiple boats, eliminating the bottlenecks we currently experience during concurrent programs, decreasing risk of harm to the children, youth and adults who launch boats and paddle craft, and improves overall access to the lake for the public.
• The structural wall and wave attenuator on the north end of the launch ramp creates safer conditions by decreasing/eliminating waves while boats are being launched.

1 Howard Weiss-Tisman, Who Should Have Access to VT Boat Ramps?, Rutland Herald Online, 10/30/18
2 Don’t Swim at Boat Launch Sites, Bennington Banner, 6/18/20
• The permanent pier with universally accessible walkway will facilitate ease of access by people with mobility impairments and decrease their risk of harm boarding and disembarking from boats. This walkway will connect with the sections of Atlas dock that we already own and additional sections that will be purchased. Combined, this system will connect the land to the lake, accommodate increased traffic and allow expansion of our experiential learning programs. A large section level with the boatyard will be used as an outdoor classroom.

• The deep-water basin and hoists will expedite keelboat launch, increase access to the lake for larger teaching vessels and racing sailboats, improve access for our adaptive boats, and allow CSC to better care for our fleet by decreasing exposure to storms, invasive species and waves created by passing boats. This feature will allow CSC to host local, regional, and/or national sailing competitions, providing a boost to the Vermont tourism economy.

Together, these elements will create a safe harbor for all.

We will increase access to the lake for small watercraft, provide a safe launch site for multiple boats at once, create a site for outdoor learning, improve lake access for people with disabilities, and establish a keelboat launch that currently doesn’t exist in Burlington. This safe harbor will positively impact the health and safety of Lake Champlain, the vitality of Vermont’s tourism economy, and the community.

QUESTIONS?
Please contact:

Mike Quaid, CSC Project Manager,
mike@communitysailingcenter.org | 518-817-9485

Owen Milne, Executive Director
owen@communitysailingcenter.org | 802-864-2499

www.lakeaccessforall.org
communitysailingcenter.org
I am pleased to support the Community Sailing Center’s Waterfront Redevelopment project, which will continue the transformation of the Burlington waterfront.

The Burlington waterfront has undergone dramatic changes in the last two decades that have created new economic opportunities, including the transformation of Waterfront Park, the renovated Bike Path, the new Burlington Marina, and the Skate Park. Since 1994 the Community Sailing Center (CSC) has focused on providing lake access to community members who traditionally face barriers to water-based recreation and education. By offering non-profit programming that engages students, troubled teens, and people with disabilities, as well as scholarships for services (camps, lessons, rentals) CSC continues to fulfill their mission of encouraging and celebrating responsible use and long-term stewardship of Lake Champlain by fostering educational and recreational opportunities for all members of our community, regardless of age, gender, race, physical ability, or financial means.

CSC’s Waterfront Redevelopment project will not only increase the safety of children and adults accessing the lake through CSC, it will also allow the Sailing Center to expand its vital programming. CSC serves more than 8,000 residents and visitors annually with an array of programming that reaches all facets of the community. Floating Classrooms provide lake-based, experiential STEM education to 2,000+ students each year. LeaderShip annually offers close to 1,000 teens opportunities to develop resilience and a growth mindset, to exercise self-control, and to cultivate gratitude in themselves and amongst their peers. Adaptive Watersports removes barriers to outdoor education and recreation faced by people with diverse physical and cognitive disabilities. CSC’s newest program, the Diversity Access Initiative, creates long-term access to summer camps for children who are black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), overcoming generational social, cultural, and ethnic barriers to lake-based recreation. Over 100 community-based partner organizations and schools ensure that CSC reaches those residents that are most in need of assistance. It is also notable that CSC earns revenue to offset much of the cost of these non-profit programs by also offering youth summer camps, adult sailing lessons, boat rentals, venue rentals and winter boat storage.

The City of Burlington is pleased to pledge full support for this vital waterfront project. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the Community Sailing Center as programming expands through the completion of this project.

Sincerely,

Miro Weinberger
Mayor
June 14, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC) is pleased to support the Community Sailing Center’s Waterfront Redevelopment project. This project is included in our Regional Priorities List as we recognize its importance to the community, both through the creation of access to the lake, and through the development of new tourism opportunities.

This project, on the campus that includes the Community Sailing Center’s Net-Zero Sailing Education building, will complement waterfront development that has taken place over the last two decades. The Community Sailing Center (CSC) bridges the gap between the community and the lake by making lake-based education and recreation accessible to all residents of Chittenden County regardless of age, gender, race, physical ability, or the means to pay. Earned revenue from vital services to the community (camps, lessons, rentals, venue rentals and winter boat storage) offsets the cost of non-profit programming which addresses the barriers to lake access for children of color, students, at-risk teens and people with disabilities.  CSC’s Waterfront Redevelopment project will both increase the safety of children and adults accessing the lake through CSC and enable expansion of these important programs. Additionally, upon completion of this project CSC will be poised to host sailing regattas. These events will bring visitors who will access hotel rooms, restaurants, and services throughout the community and attractions throughout the state. The most consistent wind on Lake Champlain coincides with the economic ‘down time’ between Labor Day and peak leaf season. Regattas at this time of year have the potential to greatly impact tourism, and will introduce visitors to our beautiful state, our precious lake, and the good people who live here.

The Vermont Convention Bureau indicates that a two-day event that draws 100 people is likely to generate approximately $32,000 in tourism revenue. Coupled with improving lake access for small boaters and kayakers, the Burlington waterfront will become even more of a destination than it is presently.

We hope you will recognize the many and varied impacts of the Community Sailing Center’s Waterfront Redevelopment project. This project is truly transformational. It will stimulate economic growth while promoting positive environmental and social impact to the communities connected to Lake Champlain.

Sincerely,

Frank Cioffi

President, GBIC