

Poupore Road West Turnaround – Lake Wanapitei Access

Presented To:	City Council
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Type:	Correspondence for Information Only
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Recommended by:	General Manager of Growth and Infrastructure

Report Summary

This report provides information regarding the assessment process that was undertaken to restrict access to Lake Wanapitei from the Poupore Road West turnaround and the framework that will be used for public consultation to assist staff in developing recommendations for seasonal access to the lake.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to operational matters and has no direct connection to the Community Energy & Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

The community engagement strategy described in this report will be carried out within the existing approved budget and staffing resources.

Background

At the January 11, 2022 City Council meeting, a [petition](#) was submitted asking for the access to Lake Wanapitei from the Poupore Road West turnaround to be restored for motorized vehicles. This petition was submitted in response to the steps taken by the City in response to a [petition](#) submitted at the May 11, 2021 City Council meeting which asked for this access point to be closed due to ongoing concerns with parked vehicles.

Also at the January 11, 2022 City Council meeting, Resolution CC2022-01 was carried. This resolution stated:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to present a report to City Council by the end of the first quarter of 2022, for information only, fully describing the investigation and assessment process which led to the closure of the Poupore West turnaround and what impact this new petition may have on it;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to present a COVID-safe public consultation process for the people of Skead, and the users of Lake Wanapitei to assist staff in developing recommendations for seasonal access to Lake Wanapitei.

Poupore Road West is rural road located in Skead. At the westerly end of the road is a peninsula that is used as turnaround area by large vehicles. This peninsula has historically been used as an unofficial boat launch. Figures 1, 2 and 3 below show the location of turnaround and images of the turnaround.

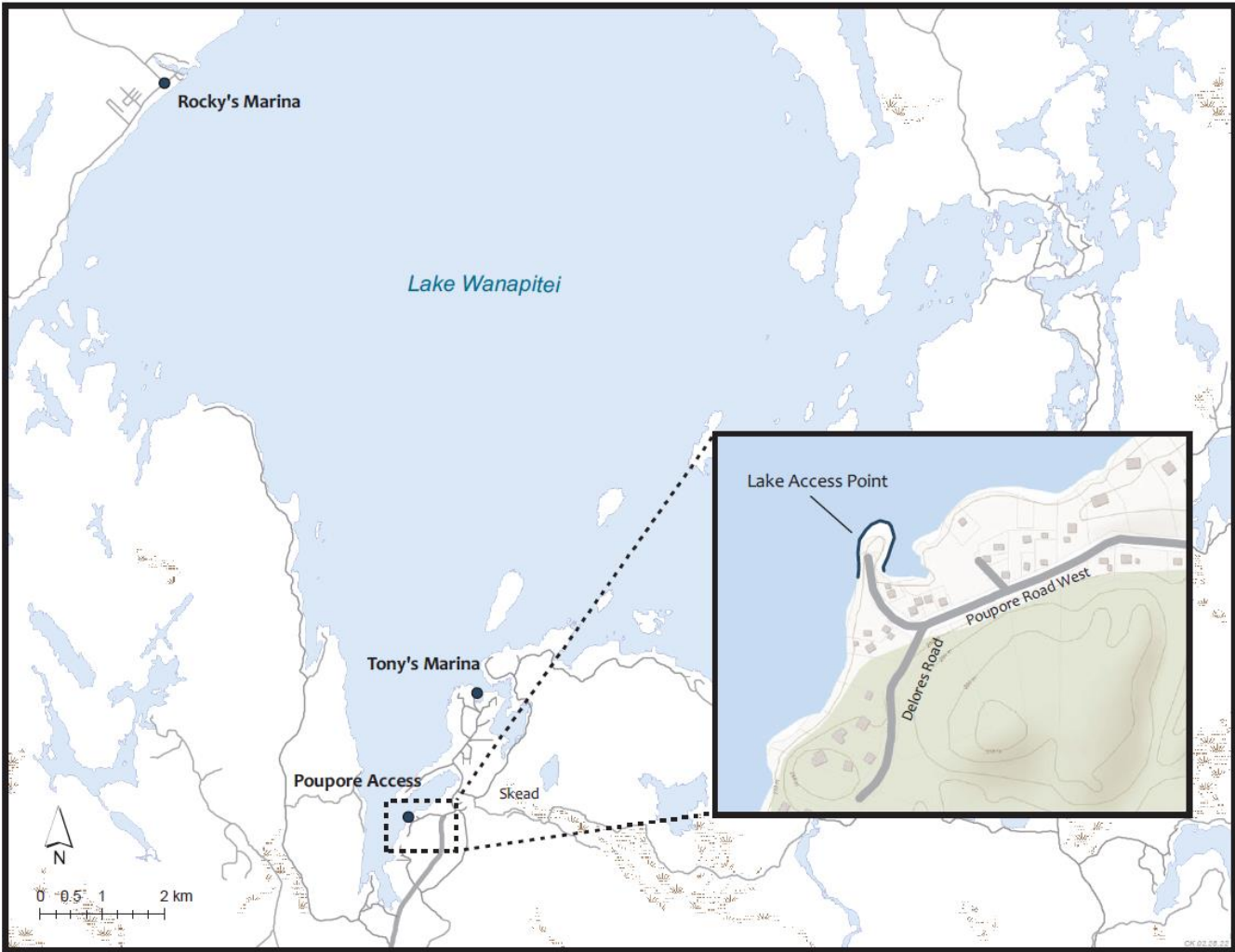


Figure 1: Location Map



Figure 2: Poupore Road West Turnaround – Facing North



Figure 3: Poupore Road West Turnaround – Facing South

The City had previously taken steps to address parking concerns related to the unofficial boat launch. In 2011, residents of Delores Street expressed concerns with users of the unofficial public boat launch parking their vehicles and trailers on Delores Street while using their boats on Lake Wanapitei. With vehicles parked on both sides of the road, it was difficult for residents and emergency vehicles to access the homes on Delores Street. As a result of these concerns, parking was restricted on the entire length of Delores Street.

Current Provision and Service Level of Municipal Boat Launches

The City of Greater Sudbury maintains boat launches at select lakes throughout the community. Boat launches are intended for day use and access by recreational boats. Some boat launches are utilized by residents with water access only seasonal properties. The following locations are the maintained boat launches which are promoted on the City's website:

- Tower Road (Skead)
- Ella Lake Park (Capreol)
- Kalmo Beach (Val Caron)
- Laurentian Beach (Val Caron)
- Whitewater Park (Azilda)
- Wahnapiatae Community Center (Wahnapiatae)
- Ramsey Lake Road (Sudbury)
- Simon Lake Park (Walden)
- Long Lake / Moxam Landing Road (Walden)
- Long Lake / Kantola Road (Walden)
- Centennial Park (Whitefish)

Parks Services provides seasonal maintenance of the boat launches above. Approved activity levels of the City boat launches include:

- Weekly garbage pick up
- Seasonal installation and removal of docking systems (where applicable)
- Grass trimming every 3 to 4 weeks (where applicable)
- Grading of parking areas as required
- Deployment and weekly cleaning of portable washroom unit (by third party)

Boat launches are maintained during the period of May through the Thanksgiving weekend. There are no approved activity levels for off season maintenance of boat launches to facilitate access for ice fishing huts. Ice fishing activities on local lakes aren't sanctioned or supported through municipal budgets.

The Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan did not provide a recommended provision level nor policy guidelines for boat launches. Generally speaking, these amenities were developed prior to amalgamation and have continued to be maintained by Parks Services.

Prior to the establishment of new boat launches, it is recommended that criteria be developed on what lakes warrant public access in the form of a boat launch. Specific site selection criteria and design guidelines should also be developed for those lakes where it is determined a public boat launch is required/justified. These site selection criteria and design guidelines would be based on best practices from other communities and with community input. Criteria and guidelines would form part of a report to Council for review and approval.

Tower Road Boat Launch Information

There is an existing boat launch at the Tower Road parkland. The area is passive in nature and has been used mostly for waterfront enjoyment by patrons. While recognized as a boat launch, the site is not conducive for launching of large watercraft due to the topography and layout of the site. There is also limited parking available on site for trucks and trailers. There is no longer a docking system on site to facilitate launching. Staff have received input from community members that this area of Wanapitei Lake experiences strong currents and subject to pressure cracks in the winter.

Analysis

The petition submitted on May 11, 2021 petition asked for Council to:

Close public access to the turnaround at the end of Poupore Road West in Skead, after the last driveway on that road and ensure it is securely blocked with either a guard rail, fence and gate or concrete barriers.

Also ensure that appropriate space is left for snow removal and snow removal equipment at the end of Poupore Road West once public access is eliminated.

In order to determine a course of action, an internal staff working group from By-Law Services, Legal Services, Leisure Services, Roads Operations and Transportation and Innovation Support reviewed the request. Several items were verified through the review process:

- The land for the turnaround is not designated as parkland.
- The land for the turnaround had been transferred to the former Town of Nickel Centre to be used as a school bus turnaround area.
- The turnaround is maintained year round as a road.
- Consistent parking enforcement is challenging due to the remote location of the turnaround, the limited availability of officers on evenings and weekends and the need to prioritize complaints received.
- Two commercially operated boat launches (Tony's Marina and Rocky's Marina) exist on Lake Wanapitei and are available for use by the public.
- Greater Sudbury Police Services, Fire Services and Paramedic Services were consulted and all three services indicated that they do not utilize this unofficial boat launch and there are suitable alternate locations if needed.
- The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario's Roadside Design Manual recommends that water bodies within the clear zone of a roadway with a normal water level depth of one metre or more be shielded with a vehicle barrier system. The clear zone is the area beyond the edge of the travelled portion of a roadway that may be used by an errant vehicle.

Based on the review completed by the internal staff working group, it was determined to be appropriate to restrict access to the lake at the Poupore Road West turnaround.

Transportation and Innovation Support staff then reviewed options to prevent vehicles from entering the lake. The two options considered were a steel beam guide rail system and a landscape option which utilized boulders and trees. Although landscaping is not typically used as a vehicle barrier system, staff determined it would be appropriate in this location due to low probability of a vehicle will approaching the area at a high rate of speed because of the narrow road leading to the area and the very low volume of vehicles who utilize this remote turnaround.

In July 2021, staff hosted a virtual consultation session with the lead petitioner, area residents, Councillor Jakubo and the Mayor's office. At this meeting, the two options to limit access to the lake were presented. Area residents preferred the landscaped option as it continued to allow non-motorized access to the lake. Based on this feedback, staff sourced labour and materials to implement the plan.

In early December 2021, 29 boulders were placed around the perimeter of the turnaround. The total cost for the purchase, delivery and placement of the boulders was approximately \$3,500 and was funded from the Guide Post Placement or Replacement operating account.

Shortly after the boulders were installed, other area residents expressed concerns with the installation of the boulders and the limited options available to bring ice huts onto Lake Wanapitei in the area of the turnaround as well as the restricted summer access for launching of boats. These residents also advised Councillor Jakubo and Mayor Bigger that a petition requesting access be restored at Lake Wanapitei had been prepared and was being circulated for support. At the direction of Mayor Bigger, boulders were partially removed from the western edge of the turnaround in order to allow access for ice huts to Lake Wanapitei for this winter season while additional public consultation was being planned.

Next Steps

As previously noted, Resolution CC2022-01 directs staff to present a COVID-safe public consultation process for the people of Skead, and the users of Lake Wanapitei to assist staff in developing recommendations for seasonal access to Lake Wanapitei.

When contemplating, establishing, and constructing new boat launch facilities, staff note the following site selection and design criteria that should be considered:

- Boat launches should be ideally located on properties with sufficient distances from abutting properties.
- Access to boat launch properties should have entrances and exits with proper sight lines from roadways.
- Adequate off-road parking is a key consideration. Larger lakes will require more off-road parking with parking stalls designed for truck and trailer systems.
- Docking systems should be included as a minimum standard to facilitate the launching and loading of boats and to ease congestion.
- A concrete pad and ramping system is the preferred design for lake access.
- Low level park lighting should be incorporated as budgets allow to enhance user safety and from a crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) perspective.
- Where lakes are already serviced by existing commercial or private boat launches, a municipal boat launch should not be considered.
- Consultation and permission from regulatory authorities such as Conservation Sudbury, Department of Ocean and Fisheries and Ministry of Environment may be required.

Summary of Community Engagement Process

While focusing on the need for engagement related to the Poupore Road West unofficial boat launch, staff anticipate the community engagement process will result in a standard approach for consulting about this type of service. These types of amenities are often subject to differing opinions from residents in direct proximity to the proposed site and those from the community at large. A consistent approach to community engagement is required to ensure a fair and transparent process for all parties.

As previously noted, when contemplating, establishing, and constructing new boat launch facilities, there are a number of site selection and design considerations as well as existing municipal policies to consider. These considerations have informed the engagement strategy for to develop recommendations for seasonal access to Lake Wanapitei.

Approach:

A two-phased engagement approach has been developed to obtain feedback from the community regarding the unofficial boat launch on Poupore Road West.

Early and continued engagement will emphasize collaboration, while maintaining open lines of communication between residents and the City. Staff expect the process to enable a continuous exchange of information that ensures residents are involved throughout the process. A promotion and marketing plan will ensure broad awareness and information about this work, including education on existing municipal financial, planning, recreational and environmental policies that may influence the outcome.

Phase 1 of the engagement process will collect resident opinions, ideas and perspectives about the current locations of a boat launches in Skead. The survey will gather general ideas and feedback, as well as reasons for use, frequency of use, time of year, demographic information, existing amenities and other questions. This will identify key themes that will be used to develop a second phase of engagement.

Phase 2 will include a more detailed survey, based on themes identified in Phase 1, to identify potential locations based on community feedback and City site selection and design considerations, as well as existing municipal financial, planning, recreational and environmental policies. This phase would also include feedback on site selection criteria and design guidelines to be developed.

The input will help inform staff recommendations to Council on the Poupore Road West options.

Tactics:

Engagement will be achieved mainly through digital channels including virtual meetings, surveys and social media while project updates and additional information will be available on Over To You, the City's engagement portal. Progress and results from the public engagement will be shared regularly to ensure residents and stakeholders are well informed every step of the way and feel value in taking the time to provide their input. As milestones or updates occur, notifications will be sent out to residents who have signed up for notifications.

Meetings/Communication with Stakeholders

Staff will contact stakeholders based in Skead, including private businesses, neighbourhood associations and recreation groups, via email and virtual meetings to share information about the project and obtain feedback.

Online Presence

A comprehensive page on the City's engagement portal, Over To You, will be developed and updated as the process moves forward.

This input will be shared with the overall community through the regular media and social media channels.

Virtual Public Meetings

Public meetings will provide a venue for residents and stakeholders to discuss the project with staff, ask questions and discuss ideas. Meetings will be held virtually, in person or in hybrid form, based on COVID-19 restrictions in place during that time.

Information Sharing

City digital boards will be used to share information in addition to social media, public service

announcements, mailouts and emails to stakeholders. Additionally, local businesses and social media groups will be contacted to help share engagement opportunities. Other paid and in-kind advertising opportunities will also be leveraged.

Timing of Community Engagement Process

Leisure Services and Communications and Community Engagement are the leads for the community engagement process, with support from other divisions as required. Leisure Services has several key projects planned for 2022, many of which include community engagement activities. These projects include the following:

- Lionel E. Lalonde Therapeutic Pool
- Outdoor Court Revitalization – (5 tennis complexes to be completed in 2022)
- ICIP Covid Resiliency Projects (Bell Park and Fielding Memorial Park)
- Lively/Walden Recreation Infrastructure Improvements – community engagement process has been initiated to gather input on how to invest the funding received as a result of the disposition of Meatbird Lake Park
- Playground Revitalization Phase 3 – anticipating revitalizing 14 sites in 2022 (pending confirmation of funding)
- Parks LED lighting retrofit at Regional Parks and trails
- Minnow Lake Boardwalk renovations
- St. Joseph's Parking Lot (Bell Park) improvements

Due to the significance of these key projects, staff anticipate completing phase 1 of the described community engagement process in Q3 and Q4 of 2022, with Phase 2 taking place in 2023.

Should Council want to advance Phase 2 consultation and/or the development of boat launch site selection criteria and guidelines, 2 to 3 of the above noted projects would need to be cancelled or deferred.

Winter Access from Poupore Road West

As noted previously in the report, a portion of the boulders at the Poupore Road West turnaround were removed at the direction of Mayor Bigger in order to allow ice huts to access Lake Wanapitei while additional community engagement was being planned. It is staff's intention to reinstate the boulders this spring and to continue to provide winter access for ice huts at this location until the community engagement process is completed.

Resources Cited

City of Greater Sudbury, City Council Meeting Resolutions, January 11, 2022, Accessed online: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=43078>

City of Greater Sudbury, Parking Restrictions – Various Street, August 31, 2011, Accessed online: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=22655>

City of Greater Sudbury, Petition – Close Boat Launch on Poupore Road West in Skead, May 13, 2021, Accessed online: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=40042>

City of Greater Sudbury, Petition – Restoring Public access to Lake Wahnapiatae on Poupore Road West, Skead, January 11, 2022, Accessed online: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=43201>

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