

## Request for Decision

### Closing of the Skead Designated Night Landing Site

Presented To: Community Services Committee

Presented: Monday, Mar 17, 2014

Report Date Tuesday, Mar 04, 2014

Type: Managers' Reports

### Recommendation

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approve the permanent closure of the Designated Night Landing Site located on Bell Street in Skead.

### Finance Implications

If approved, there will be a reduction in annual maintenance costs of approximately \$6,000 resulting from the closure of this site.

## Background

In the 1990's the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) authorized the development of Designated Night Landing Sites located at Capreol, Dowling, Vermillion Lake, Kukagami and Skead to allow access by the Province's air ambulance helicopters.

Responsibility for maintaining the five (5) sites was transferred to the City of Greater Sudbury in 2000. This includes ongoing inspections, grounds maintenance and repairs, replacement of cones, winter plowing and sanding. Costs associated with these sites do not qualify for any cost sharing agreements with the MOHLTC, the 2013 budget for maintaining the five sites was \$27,581.

In 2005, the night designation for the Skead Helipad was removed by the air-carrier, effectively reducing it to day-time landings only, as the ingress approach was obstructed by significant tree growth within the helicopters flight path. Emergency Services has undertaken a cost benefit analysis on the scope of work required to restore the night designation at this site. The scope of work and costs include:

Work	Cost
Removal of all trees and brush obstructing the ingress approach (clear-cut one acre with the additional removal of a number of tall mature trees)	\$10,000 est.
Replacement of reflective approach cones	\$ 4,000

### Signed By

#### Report Prepared By

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#### Recommended by the Department

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<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>
Annual Winter Maintenance	\$6,000 annually

### **Historical Call Volumes in Skead**

The City's Emergency Medical Services Division responds to forty (40) calls per year into the Skead area, of these, nine (9) are categorized as acutely ill requiring emergent transport to hospital by ambulance. Almost half of these nine (9) calls occur in the West Bay, Boland's Bay area and do not benefit from the Skead site as you do not drive by the site enroute to hospital. It is also important to note the average transport time by land Paramedics from the Skead area to the hospital for all emergent calls for the period 2012-2013 was 25 minutes.

### **Skead Landing Site Use**

The air ambulance is not a resource that can be requested by the public via 911, the helicopter will respond to an accident scene, remote area or to any designated night landing site only when requested by ambulance dispatch or Paramedics in accordance with the MOHLTC Air Ambulance Utilization Standard which looks at operational and clinical guidelines in determining the suitability of air ambulance for transport, these include:

- land ambulance requires greater than 30 minutes to arrive at the scene, or greater than 30 minutes to travel from scene to hospital
- the patient appears to require a level of care not available on the land ambulance
- the scene is not accessible by the land ambulance
- Paramedics determine the patient suffering significant illness or injury
- in making the decision to use the helicopter, Paramedics consider factors such as; patient condition, weather, response time of the helicopter (minimum 10 minutes to get airborne), and time to load at the landing site, and unload at HSN.

During daylight hours (weather permitting) the air ambulance can land, at the discretion of the pilot, anywhere there is adequate space (150' X 150') such as roads, constructions sites, open fields, parks or school yards. However, during night operations the air ambulance may only land at airports, certified heliports (HSN), and company approved designated night landing sites.

The Skead landing site has historically seen little use given the sites close proximity to the air ambulance base at the Sudbury Airport located only 7.5 km away. The close proximity of the Ornge air base makes the helicopter less desirable to expedite the transport of patients from Skead. This has resulted in poor utilization of the Skead site since assumption.

### **Information Session**

On November 14, 2013 Councillor Kilgour was briefed on the review and recommendation to close the Skead site. It was determined at that time the Councillor would host an information session for the residents providing Emergency Services the opportunity to explain the reasons for the recommended closure. The information session hosted by Councillor Kilgour was held on January 22, 2014 at the Skead Community Center and was attended by approximately 25 residents.

The session resulted in some spirited discussion with about four residents who voiced concern and one who was opposed and upset. Councillor Kilgour had the opportunity to talk with several people at the meeting; they were satisfied at the end of the night and understood the logic. The Councillor also stated that he had received an email from a resident who assured him that everyone he spoke to regarding the closure of the Skead site was OK with the closure.

## **CONCLUSION**

Closure of the site will not impact day-time utilization of the air ambulance in the Skead area if required for remote or inaccessible response when requested by land Paramedics. This site has seen no patient activity in many years due to the close proximity of the Ornge Base (airport) to Skead which is able to provide the residents of this area access to air ambulance transport if required at no cost to the City. Accessing the air ambulance at the airport is an effective alternative.

Greater Sudbury Paramedics are able to respond to the Skead area and transport to hospital in less than the thirty (30) minute threshold for air ambulance utilization, in addition, our Paramedics are able to provide an advanced level of care not available when the site was originally developed.

In those rare circumstances where Paramedics determine helicopter to be the preferred mode of transport, they can pre-alert Ornge and transport the patient to the airport to transfer care of the patient to Ornge with minimal delay in transport to hospital.

Therefore, Emergency Services recommends permanently closing the Skead designated night landing site. Accessing the air ambulance at the airport a short distance away is an effective strategy.