

Staff Report to Council

Title: Pier Safety Update

Report Number: Parks & Facilities-2024-27

Director: Community Services

Manager: Parks & Facilities

Meeting Date:

Wednesday, November 27, 2024

Date to be considered by Council:

Wednesday, November 27, 2024

Recommendation:

That Council approves the closure of both the North and South Piers annually from November 1st to April 1st to mitigate safety risks to staff and public.

Executive Summary:

Throughout 2024, Staff have been working to fulfill the recommendations outlined in the Pier Safety Report. In addition to these updates, Staff is seeking approval from Council for both the north and the south piers to be closed annually from November 1st to April 1st. This requested mitigation is to reduce staff risk that is inherent when working on the piers during winter months.

Strategic Priorities:

C.13-Protect people, property and the environment from the effects of dangerous conditions caused by people and nature

Financial Considerations:

No financial cost to close piers.

Council approved \$92,000 as part of the 2024 budget deliberations for improvements to the piers and Station Beach.

Policy:

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Context and Background Information:

The 2024 Pier Safety Report identified several recommendations for the safety of patrons on or around the Piers located at Station Beach.

Council approved \$92,000 to commence the recommendations identified in the report. Staff were able to complete the “high” priority items and started on the “medium” priority items.

Below is a list of the approved recommendations and status and costing:

Item	Budgeted	Status	Actual
High: New ladder installation	Year 1 \$39,000- \$46,000	10 pilot project ladders were installed. Significant damage has occurred during the year and staff have reached out to the supplier to determine if the Kincardine Piers are a viable solution for the continuation of this model of ladder.	\$41,620
High: Lifesaving stations be increased from 2 to 4 on each pier High: Enhanced access signs to the piers the depict no jumping from the piers High: Enhanced signage to reflect risks and 911 address High: No swimming area identified south of the pier from 100 metres to 200 metres	\$8,000-\$10,000	All lifesaving stations were contracted out for completion. Staff purchased red ring buoy cases that have been installed along with signage. Signage at entrance of the Piers as well as painted on the surface of the piers. 911 language depicted on signs Signs directly on Station Beach have been installed.	\$8,361 \$6,024 \$5,806 (total signage)
High: Paint perimeter of the piers yellow	\$600-\$1,000	Completed inhouse with the assistance of Infrastructure and Development	Staff Time Only
Medium: Pedestrian gate design and installation at the piers	\$25,000- \$50,000	Not included in the 2024 budget.	\$0

Medium: Parking pilot project for 2024 and additional directional signs identifying parking locations based on patron usage.	\$5,000-\$9,000	Paused due to conflicting priorities that arose early in the spring. This project would have been confusing to patrons if implemented through the summer. Staff will install signs and infrastructure either late winter 2024 or early spring 2025 pending weather and capacity. Involves on-going conversations with Kincardine Marina with a strategic plan.	
Medium: Remove the existing large blue chairs in the no-swim zone	\$0	Completed in-house by Community Services staff.	Staff Time Only
Medium: Install mitigations to reduce members of the public from parking in the assigned Emergency Parking locations	\$5,000-\$8,000	Gates have been purchased and will be installed in late 2024	\$4,000 (awaiting invoice)
Medium: Consider a volunteer supported Beach Patrol (ambassador) program for a one-year trial in collaboration with other community partners.	\$1,500-\$3,000	Developed the Beach Blazer program as a trial. Staff will be reviewing this program in 2025 and will be considering an education partnership between aquatic staff and CEMC with staging area occurring in the parking lot at Station Beach.	\$722

To date, staff have spent approximately \$66,533 of the \$92,000 budget.

Although the Pier Safety Report recommended that “Both Piers remain open year-round with appropriate signage and education”, staff have identified health and safety concern about being able to appropriately able to access the lifesaving equipment for inspection and repair/replacement if it is damaged/stolen during the winter months. This concern was recently discussed at the Joint Health and Safety Committee. The committee confirmed that working on the piers during the winter months places staff in a hazardous situation and placing staff in a precarious situation to repair equipment during inclement weather should not be attempted.

One of the items raised regarding local use of the piers was raised by the Pier Safety Ad hoc Committee to keep the piers open was for the purposes of recreational usage by the surfing community. These athletes participate in the sport well into the winter season and beyond.

It is not staff's intent to prevent surfing at Station Beach, but rather to confirm that during the winter weather surfers' access to the water/waves is to be from the waterfront and note the hazard of not being able to maintain lifesaving equipment on the piers during the winter season. Staff can appreciate the fact that this will be an inconvenience.

With our existing operations, staff cannot guarantee that all safety equipment can be maintained and available if needed due to reduced access to the piers during inclement weather. This uncertainty can lead to increased safety risks for the public using the piers and notifying the public of the hazard reduces potential for exposure to litigation.

If approved, Staff will work with Emergency Services in developing a gating system that ensures access during emergency situations should they arise.

Enforcement of patrons who choose to go on the piers after they have been closed will be difficult to administer. By-law Enforcement can do patrols of the area from time to time and would be able to issue a fine under the Public Nuisance By-law "k) be in a public place which has been closed or deemed by the Municipality not be occupied for any reason whatsoever,".

Consultation Overview:

Staff have contacted staff at other lakefront municipalities who have piers to determine if their piers remain open or closed all year. Depending on access to the piers, each community is unique in whether their piers are closed during winter while others remain open if they have staff housed close to the pier location to monitor them.

Origin:

Pier Safety Report 2024

Concerns with employee safety while working on the piers.

Implementation Considerations:

Impact to shoulder tourism of surfers coming to the community to access the waters.

Risk Analysis:

Potential for harm or possible loss of life if safety equipment is not inspected and maintained on a regular basis.

Attachments: None

Prepared by: Jayne K. Jagelewski, Director of Community Services

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