

Non-Motorized Water Craft Storage and Launch Locations – Update

Date: May 10, 2021

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Parkdale-High Park, Spadina-Fort York, Toronto-Danforth, Beaches-East York, Scarborough Southwest, Scarborough-Guildwood, Scarborough-Rouge Park

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to the March 23, 2021 Infrastructure and Environment committee request that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR):

- a) Consolidate existing opportunities and host a meeting with all Councillors with Wards along the waterfront (Wards 3, 4, 10, 14, 19, 24 and 25) to review findings, seek their input into potential storage and rental opportunities for non-motorized watercraft.
- b) Report back to the May 25, 2021 Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting on short-term and long-term opportunities in the East, Central and West waterfront.

This report describes additional actions taken by staff in April and May in addition to actions that will advance short and long-term opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

- 1. The Infrastructure and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The actions outlined in the report can be accommodated within the 2021 Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 23, 2021, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee requested the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to: a) consolidate existing opportunities and host a meeting with all Councillors with Wards along the waterfront (Wards 3, 4, 10, 14, 19, 24 and 25) to review findings, seek their input into potential storage and rental opportunities for non-motorized watercraft; b) report back to the May 25, 2021 Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting on short-term and long-term opportunities in the East, Central and West waterfront.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE20.10>

At its meeting on January 11, 2021, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee requested the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in collaboration with other divisions and agencies such as the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Ports Toronto, to identify any potential new locations across the Toronto waterfront where storage for non-motorized crafts like canoes and kayaks and paddle boards could be accommodated and operationalized in the short-term, and to report back on their findings and recommendations at the March 23, 2021 meeting of Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE19.13>

At its meeting on February 7, 2017, the Parks and Environment Committee adopted the Encouraging a Paddling and Fishing Friendly City report from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation which outlines how Toronto can become a paddle friendly city and provides information on the locations and benefits of waterfront recreational nodes that have been selected by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PE17.1>

COMMENTS

Since the report to the March 23, 2021 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, PFR staff have had additional and ongoing communication with stakeholders involved in providing storage for non-motorized watercraft on the eastern, central and western waterfront.

In March, PFR, working with Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM), enquired with the City's 28 boat clubs, marinas and yacht clubs to determine preliminary interest in expanding storage opportunities for members and non-members. Additionally, in April, PFR issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to potential proponents for Stand-Up Paddle Board & Kayak Rentals for multiple locations along the waterfront parklands. This RFP included consideration of storage space rental to be made available for public use for personal stand up paddle boards within the City's waterfront parkland areas.

Non-Motorized Water Craft Storage and Launch Locations – Update

Page 2 of 4

As requested by the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, a meeting with Councillors with wards along the waterfront is scheduled for May 13. At this meeting staff will provide information on short and long-term opportunities and seek Councillor's input into potential storage and rental opportunities for non-motorized watercraft.

Through communication with boat clubs, marinas and yacht clubs, PFR has identified locations already providing storage and additional locations interested in developing storage options. PFR will continue to work with boat clubs under license to the City, CREM and other divisions as warranted to facilitate the addition of non-motorized watercraft storage where feasible.

Short-term opportunities

To increase public awareness and facilitate finding locations offering storage, PFR is preparing to publish information to the City of Toronto website and develop a promotional plan to communicate information to the public for the upcoming paddling season.

Some boat and paddling clubs like Sunnyside Paddle have additional spaces available for the 2021 paddling season. PFR will work with boat clubs under licence with the City to share information on locations offering space to members and the public.

To further enhance recreational opportunities and access to paddling opportunities, the RFP issued by PFR in April proposed six locations, an increase of an additional two locations. The locations offered in the RFP include: Cherry Beach, the eastern & western sections of Woodbine Beach, Toronto Island, Budapest Park (western beaches) and Marie Curtis Park. Responses are scheduled for evaluation in May and awarding to successful proponents is scheduled to begin in June.

Long-term opportunities

In the response to the letter issued by PFR to boat clubs, a small number of clubs indicated an interest in increasing storage options as a subset of their membership. The circumstances and work required for each club to proceed with advancing plans are varied and will require additional consultation with PFR and CREM to confirm feasibility. Staff will begin work with interested parties toward a goal of increasing the supply of paddling and storage options on Toronto's waterfront in the coming weeks.

Background – A paddling and fishing friendly city

Since 2017 PFR has installed four waterfront recreational nodes to improve access to the waterfront for recreational water activities such as fishing, kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddle boarding. The nodes located at Humber Bay Park East, Ontario Place, Tommy Thompson Park and the Outer Harbour feature access to parking and close proximity to the waterfront. These recreation nodes complement the locations of existing paddling and canoe clubs on Toronto's waterfront.

PFR is committed to working with its partners, like TRCA, Ports Toronto and Waterfront Toronto to incorporate storage options as well as launch/recreational nodes as part of planning and design in future projects.

Through the addition of storage opportunities for the upcoming paddling season, the exploration of additional opportunities in the future and increased awareness of existing opportunities, the City of Toronto is making improvements that will make it easier for residents to enjoy their time on the water in canoes, kayaks and paddleboards.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS
