



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Corporate Assets and Strategic Planning

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 15, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Identified Tobogganing Locations on City Property (PW15086(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Jennifer DiDomenico 905-546-2424, Extension 5596 Lugene Donelson 905-546-2424, Extension 2199
SUBMITTED BY:	Robert Norman, BLA, OALA, CSLA Director, Strategic Planning Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the General Manager of Public Works or his designate be authorized and directed to continue the pilot tobogganing program into the 2016-2017 winter season;
- (b) That the 2016-2017 tobogganing pilot include Garth Street Reservoir, Chedoke Golf Course (Martin Course, Hole #10- Tee) and Kings Forest Golf Course (Hole #1 – Tee);
- (c) That Waterdown Memorial Park be added to the 2016-2017 tobogganing pilot subject to construction completion of the park prior to the 2016-2017 winter season; and,
- (d) That the estimated cost of \$70,400 to continue with the pilot for the 2016-2017 winter season be funded first from any Parks, Water and Facilities division surplus, then Public Works departmental surplus if required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request Council to consider an extension to the tobogganing pilot for the 2016-2017 winter season. At its meeting on December 9, 2015 Council approved the implementation of a pilot program where tobogganing was allowable on specified sites. The pilot included four hills that were deemed to be 'approved' for tobogganing use and were signed accordingly. These sites were the Garth Street Reservoir, Chedoke Golf Course (Martin Course – Hole #1) and two hills at the Kings Forest Golf Course (Hole #1 – Tee & Hole #9 – below the green). Each of the

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

**SUBJECT: Identified Tobogganing Locations on City Property
(PW15086b) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 7**

hills were cleared of moveable obstructions and accident prevention measures, such as snow fences and hay bales, were put in place. The hills were inspected three times a week (Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday) and on school snow days, to ensure no new obstructions were on the hills and if so, actions to remedy were taken. The 2015-2016 pilot season began on December 18th, 2015 and ran until March 31st, 2016 (three weeks beyond the initial twelve week pilot, due to late expectation of snowfall). This winter season proved to be milder than usual, with little snow fall, a great amount of rain and higher temperatures. There were very few days throughout the season where accumulated snow was present and therefore did not make for useful tobogganing weather. Due to this fact, staff are recommending the pilot be extended into the 2016-2017 winter season to better evaluate the changing weather demands on staff time and resources to provide this tobogganing service.

The following changes would be made for the second season of this pilot:

- Remove King's Forest Golf Course (Hole #9 – Below the Green) due to site configuration concerns
- Replace Hole #1, Martin Course at Chedoke Golf Course with Hole #10, Martin Course site due to site configuration concerns
- Add Waterdown Memorial Park as an additional tobogganing location since construction at this site is expected to be complete prior to the start of the second pilot season
- Second Season to begin the last day of school before the Winter Break (Friday, December 23rd, 2016) and extend to the end of March 2017 (two weeks longer than was originally planned in the initial pilot)

Signs will be posted at each of the sites to provide safety information on safe tobogganing practices in order to mitigate the inherent risks associated with tobogganing. The implementation and inspection of these locations throughout the winter season is budgeted to cost \$12,000 per hill plus additional plowing and salting costs necessary to make the Chedoke and King's Forest Golf Courses accessible for vehicle traffic, estimated at \$11,200 per hill for a 14 week season. The 2015-2016 pilot costs were within the estimated budget however, staff would like to test these projections under differing weather conditions to ensure that the budget is accurate. Staff will report back after the 2016-2017 winter season with pilot results for Committee to determine feasibility and desire to continue to provide tobogganing sites.

Alternatives for Consideration- See Page 6

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: \$70,400 will support the setup and ongoing site inspection requirements for the four (4) tobogganing hills as well as costs to make the sites accessible for vehicle parking (\$12,000 per hill and \$11,200 per each Golf Course to create

access). If approved, this will be funded primarily from Public Works' Divisional Surplus. Should sufficient funds not be available, the Department Surplus will be utilized. There will be no increase to the current budget to implement this second season pilot.

Staffing: Staff will inspect the designated sites where tobogganing is permitted through the second pilot period. Current staff levels are sufficient enough to monitor four (4) hills throughout the estimated fourteen (14) week winter season. If additional sites are added or service levels changed for the pilot program, current staff levels will be exhausted and additional funding will be required for contracted services to maintain the inspection levels identified herein.

Legal: City owned or occupied lands are subject to the Occupier's Liability Act which requires certain levels of maintenance and safety. The recommended approach to designated hills, as well as the appropriate signing of other City lands where tobogganing is occurring, are steps designed to limit potential liability. The Parks By-law allows permissive signing for the purpose of allowing tobogganing, so no amendment is required for hills that may be designated under the recommendations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In February 2015, City Council gave staff the following direction:

That the Manager of Risk Management coordinate, together with the City Solicitor, staff of the Public Works Department or other affected departments, a review of the options available to the City in respect of tobogganing on City property, including the feasibility of the City of Hamilton designating tobogganing areas within the community, and report back to the General Issues Committee.

Staff from the Finance & Corporate Services Department reported back to General Issues Committee on November 4, 2015. Staff advised they are actively moving forward to sign hills or areas where tobogganing is, or may be occurring, with warning and/or prohibition notices as appropriate, advising that these areas are not prepared or maintained as permitted tobogganing areas for public use.

A motion was brought forward at the same meeting requesting staff to report back to General Issues Committee before the end of 2015 with identified tobogganing sites for the 2015-2016 winter season and maintained specifically for tobogganing use.

In December 2015, City Council gave staff the following direction:

That the General Manager of Public Works or his designate be authorized and directed to implement a pilot program to identify tobogganing sites for the 2015-2016 season, whereas the Garth Street Reservoir, Kings Forest Golf Course (Hole #1 – Tee and Hole #9 – below the Green) and the Chedoke Golf Course (Martin Course, Hole #1) as further described will be the piloted sites.

**SUBJECT: Identified Tobogganing Locations on City Property
(PW15086b) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 7**

On December 18, 2015 the pilot program began and the four identified tobogganing hills were available for public use. Staff had prepared the site with temporary hazard mitigation (hay bales, snow fences and removal of existing hazards), signage with safety information, and began performing site inspections three times a week.

Original pilot parameters had set the pilot to end after twelve (12) weeks, but due to late season expected snow fall, inspections of the designated hills continued for three additional weeks until March 31st, 2016. Throughout the pilot there were no accidents formally reported to the City of Hamilton or directly the City's Risk Management division.

Only two general inquiries were made to the customer contact centre regarding tobogganing, one relating to the location of the approved hills and the other to report damage to a tobogganing sign. An information link was uploaded to the City website with safety information and identified the designated hill locations as approved by Council. From December to March there were 3,118 views from 2,755 devices of this page.

The hill inspections were completed three times a week, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, in anticipation of a greater number of hill users on the weekend when school is closed. The inspections resulted in the removal of snow jumps, clearing garbage, removing broken sled pieces and ensuring signs were always visible.

Costs

Council approved \$64,400 from the Tax Stabilization Reserve for the implementation of the pilot. Of that, \$60,253 was utilized for the preparation, inspection, risk mitigation, snow plowing and end of season dismantling costs for all four hill locations. The original estimate per hill was \$12,000 per site plus snow plowing, with the exception of King Forest Golf Course where costs were estimated at \$18,000 for both hills. Should the second season be approved, the estimated cost per hill will remain \$12,000 per site plus additional plowing costs.

In addition to the \$12,000 allocated per site, additional work was necessary at the Garth Street Reservoir to make the site, which primarily functions as a water reservoir, suitable for tobogganing. Hamilton Water implemented major improvements to the site for this secondary function, which included the removal of a drainage ditch, installation of 75 metres of drainage pipe, lowering of catch basins, grading modifications to base of hill and removal of vegetation to reduce risk of injury. Hamilton Water expended \$137,000 (taxes included) to complete this work and address the site conditions related to its use as a tobogganing location. The alternative option would have been to cordon off this hill and prohibit public access. In light of Council's direction to identify this entire site as a tobogganing location for public use, the improvements to the site were made in conjunction with the pilot.

**SUBJECT: Identified Tobogganing Locations on City Property
(PW15086b) (City Wide) - Page 5 of 7**

Site Recommendation

Throughout the 2015-2016 season staff had the opportunity to visit each of the piloted sites. Staff recommend to remove Hole #9 at King's Forest Golf Course and replace it with Hole #1, and with Hole #10 at Chedoke Golf Course. Each of these original locations raised safety concerns as the configuration of these hills is not conducive to safe tobogganing; the hills are wide at top and narrow at the bottom posing a risk of collision for tobogganers.

In February 2016, in response to Council direction, staff reported it was not feasible to include Waterdown Memorial Park as a designated tobogganing site in the 2015-2016 pilot season, primarily due to the fact that it was under construction. Staff recommend to include Waterdown Memorial Park for evaluation throughout the second season pilot.

Throughout the initial pilot, staff identified additional items to consider when evaluating the feasibility of a tobogganing site and will update the site evaluation criteria.

Extension of the Pilot

The major factor in staff's recommendation to extend the pilot is due to less than ideal weather conditions for tobogganing. The 2015-2016 winter season was unseasonably warm, had an exorbitant amount of rainfall and fewer days of snow than the previous year. Hamilton lacked snow accumulation for a consistent tobogganing pilot season to be evaluated effectively. A summary of year over year temperatures, snow and rain fall demonstrates this initial pilot season was less than ideal for tobogganing and did not provide an accurate measure of pilot feasibility. A summary of weather data from December 18th and March 31st for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 is below for comparison purposes.

Table 1- Historical Weather Results (Tobogganing Season – 104 days)

	2014-2015	2015-2016
Days it snowed	42 days	31 days
Total snowfall (cm)	123 cm	72.6 cm
Total rainfall (mm)	66.2 mm	264.3 mm
Average Temperature (Celsius)	-2.4 degrees	3.3 degrees
Days below zero degrees Celsius	66 days	32 days
Obtained from Environment and Climate Change Canada		

Due to the weather conditions staff was unable to gather sufficient information to determine if designated tobogganing sites should be permanent service within the City of Hamilton or not. Staff is recommending to extend the pilot to evaluate how all

aspects of a typical winter may affect the required service levels of this program, that the 2015-2016 may have not presented.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

City of Hamilton By-Law 01-219 – To Manage and Regulate Municipal Parks

City of Hamilton Parks By-Law 01-219, states: “No person shall downhill ski, toboggan, snowboard, ski bob or sled in any area park unless otherwise posted to allow same.” If recommendation (a) of this report is accepted, the implementation of signage at these sites will be critical to ensuring users are not in violation of this By-Law. Tobogganing activity that contravenes the By-Law at other, City of Hamilton parks, may be subject to enforcement.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The following City Departments / Divisions have been consulted regarding the hill assessment and location selections:

- City Manager’s Office: Legal Services
- Public Works Department: Hamilton Water, Environmental Services, Corporate Assets and Strategic Planning
- Corporate Services Department: Risk Management, Finance & Administration

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

In review of the 2015-2016 pilot and consultation with Risk Management, Environmental Services, Hamilton Water, Legal Services and Corporate Assets & Strategic Planning staff is recommending, due to the milder winter season, that the pilot be extended one further winter season. This extension will allow staff to evaluate the potential change in resources required with differing weather conditions or if an offering of formal tobogganing program is a productive use of resources, given the weather’s unpredictability.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Alternative #1

Should Committee not approve the recommendations set forth herein, then tobogganing at City Parks would continue to be governed by the Parks By-Law which indicates tobogganing is prohibited and enforcement measures can be taken. Staff do not recommend this alternative.

Alternative #2

Should Committee not approve the recommendations set forth herein, and choose to immediately implement designated tobogganing runs as a permanent service, a dedicated budget enhancement would be required, in addition to potential staffing

implications depending on the number of approved hills. Due to the lack of historical information, Staff do not recommend this alternative at this time as full analysis cannot be completed.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A