



Staff Report

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Date: February 11, 2025
To: Anthony Haddad, City Manager
From: Scott Boyko, Public Works Manager

File No: 6240-01

Subject: Beach Accessibility Report & Mobi-Mats

Staff Recommendation

THAT Council receive into the record the report dated February 11, 2025, titled "Beach Accessibility Report & Mobi Mats";

AND THAT Council approve the purchase of additional Mobi-mats and Chairs for \$30,000 to be funded from the Gaming Reserve;

AND THAT the 2025-2029 Financial Plan be amended accordingly.

Strategic priority objective

Vision: Penticton is a connected, resilient and healthy waterfront city focused on safety, livability and vibrancy.

Culture: We are committed to open communication, integrity, and professionalism to build public trust through excellence in all that we do. We embrace modernization, innovation and adaptability to meet the evolving needs of our community, fostering a culture of engagement and purpose.

Livable & Accessible: The City of Penticton will proactively plan for deliberate growth, focusing on creating an inclusive, healthy, and vibrant community.

Background

In 2024, multiple residents in Penticton nominated the City for a national contest called Accessing Paradise which resulted in the donation of 150ft of Mobi-mat, 4 decks, and 2 chairs, to be deployed to enhance beach accessibility for the community. The feedback on the deployment of this asset at Sudbury beach was extremely well received.

At the October 15, 2024 Regular Council Meeting, Council received the City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 Annual Progress report and Council inquired about the possibility of expanding the Mobi-mat program in the City, through the following resolution:

302/2024

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council direct staff to find out the costs of Mobi-Mats that could be purchased and installed for the 2025 spring and summer season.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

This report brings forward the requested information, as well as a summary of the current accessibility features in both Okanagan and Skaha Lake beach fronts.

Current Features:

The City of Penticton currently has a number of beaches on each lake that have varying levels of accessible access as outlined below:

Okanagan Lake Beach

- Near Power Street, a wheelchair accessible ramp goes from the main walkway down to a platform which includes a firepit and an accessible picnic table.
- West of Lakawanna Park, a wheelchair accessible ramp goes from the walkway and leads down to a concrete walking path that goes to the water's edge, but does not reach the water, and also has picnic tables.
- Just east of Riverside Drive, a wheelchair accessible ramp goes from the main walkway down to a platform with a picnic table.



Okanagan Lake Park (east of the Lakeside Resort)

- East of the Lakeside Resort, there is a wheelchair accessible concrete ramp to the beach, near the dog park. The ramp will be extended closer to the water's edge in 2025 and was approved as part of the Dog Park Upgrades as shown in Appendix A.

Skaha Lake Park

- Near the concession stands at the center of the park, there is a wheelchair accessible concrete ramp which leads to a concrete platform with two accessible tables.

Sudbury Beach

- Sudbury Beach is now home to a Mobi-mat and two Mobi-chairs that provides improved accessibility into the lake. The mat is located on the east side of Sudbury Beach. It is seasonal in the spring and summer and is currently closed for the season. The mats are accessible during regular summer beach hours and the Mobi-Chairs are available on a first-come, first-serve basis from the SUP Glow stand from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. during summer.

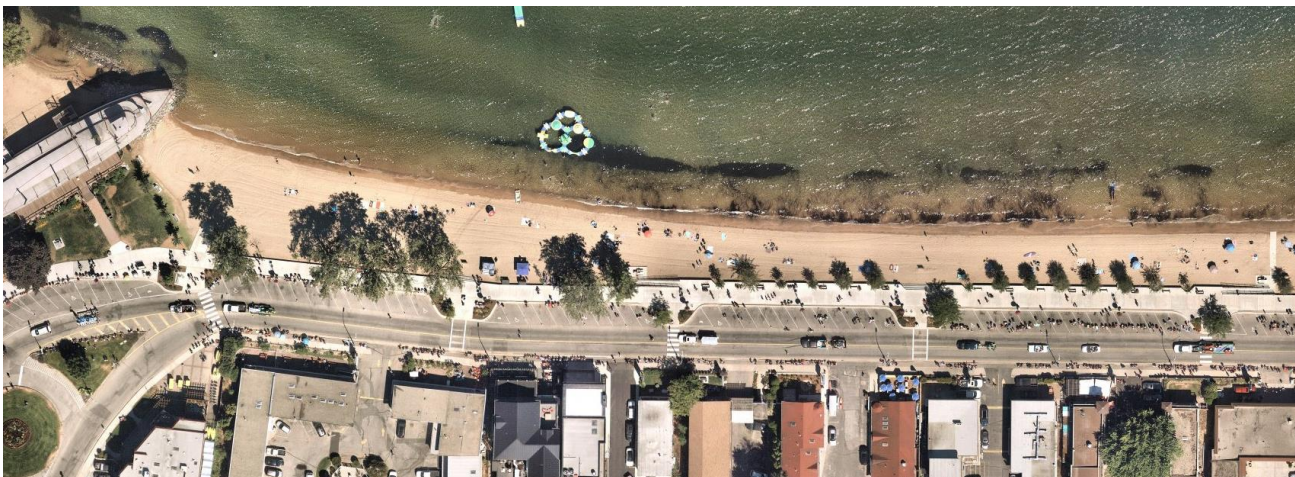


Expansion of Mobi-mats:

The recent addition of the Mobi-mats and chairs at the Sudbury beach location proved to be well received by the community, and the partnership with Glow SUP Adventures Inc. to facilitate the opportunity of the chairs was critical to the success of the addition. The versatility of the Mobi-mats to be deployed quickly and easily, combined with their ability to move to alternate locations based on demand, need, or operational changes is also a positive feature of the Mobi-mats.

In response to Council's direction, staff have been exploring the potential to purchase additional Mobi-mats and chairs, and to determine an appropriate location to deploy them if purchased. The estimated cost to purchase the required equipment (both the mat and the chairs, similar to the Sudbury arrangement) is \$30,000.

In terms of where the equipment could be deployed, staff reviewed a number of opportunities and felt that enhancing the existing walkway and ramp on the west side of Okanagan beach would be both strategic and cost effective. This location would allow for existing accessibilities amenities to be co-located and enhance the user experience, as well as provides the potential for partnering with vendors in the area that could support managing the chairs on a day-to-day basis.



Staff did also consider if more permanent infrastructure should be considered instead of the expansion of the Mobi-mats and chairs. However, permanent infrastructure costs are significantly higher, do not provide the flexibility to change sites, can involve significant environmental permitting, are subject to erosion due to

wave action, and do not provide the accessible connection further into the water as can be facilitated by a Mobi-mat.

Increasing beach accessibility in the City of Penticton aligns with City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026, particularly the guiding principles and vision statement: *“The City of Penticton is committed to ensuring that residents of all abilities have equal and independent access to municipal services and aims to remove barriers to continually improve the accessibility of our community, ensuring that all residents and visitors alike experience the same quality of life throughout all seasons”.*

The City of Penticton will be undertaking a community-based beach accessibility assessment with grant funding received from BC Healthy Communities in 2025. This assessment will provide further information as to the impact of Mobi-Mats and will likely identify other opportunities to improve accessibility at the various beaches. Without knowing what other recommendations may flow from this assessment, it is hard to predict if there will be other, higher priority items, that the Accessibility Committee and subsequently Council may wish to see completed. However, the mats and chairs can be easily re-deployed to another location should the assessment recommend doing so, so staff are comfortable proceeding in advance of completing the assessment.

This topic was discussed with the Accessibility Committee at their January 21, 2025 meeting. No accessibility barriers or concerns were raised, the proposed expansion of the assets was well received, and Committee passed the following resolution:

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the “Beach Accessibility Report & Mobi Mats”;
AND THAT the Accessibility Committee recommend to Council the purchase of additional Mobi-mats and Chairs for \$30,000 to be funded from the Gaming Reserve
AND THAT the 2025-2029 Financial Plan be amended accordingly.

Financial implication

The proposed costs to purchase an additional Mobi-mat, decking, and the two chairs is estimated at \$30,000.

Staff recommend that the purchase be funded through the Gaming Reserve. As of Dec 31, 2023 the Gaming Reserve had a balance of \$1.7M.

Analysis

The success of the Mobi-mats and chairs at Sudbury Beach in the summer of 2024 highlighted a great opportunity to further expand the accessibility of the City’s beaches. Purchasing additional equipment with the chairs will allow the City to offer enhanced beach accessibility to another area of the City’s water front for the Spring and Summer of 2025, and beyond. This will have a positive effect not only on the community members of Penticton, but on tourists and visitors. The City heard feedback from visitors last summer and the positive impact that the Mobi-Mats had on them.

While Staff and Committee are recommending that the City proceed now with purchasing the mat and chair for deployment in the 2025 season, staff do note the timing of the upcoming accessibility assessment, and the possibility of other higher priority items being identified that would also desire funding. As a result, staff have provided an alternate recommendation for Council’s consideration to defer the purchase until conclusion of the assessment..

Alternate recommendations

THAT the expansion of the Mobi Mats and chairs be deferred until the beach accessibility assessment is completed in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

SBoyko

Scott Boyko
Public Works Manager

Attachment A: Okanagan Park Walkway Extension

Concurrence

General Manager/ Director KD	Director of Finance and Administration AMC	City Manager AH
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