



INFORMATION REPORT

Meeting Date: 2022-06-27

Title: Pedestrian Overpass Update -June

Prepared By: Blake Poole

Department: Facilities

Report Number: Public Works-2022-008

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive this report on the Dryden Pedestrian Overpass for information purposes.

Background:

This report is presented to provide an update to Council on information pertaining to the Pedestrian Overpass.

December/2021

Council received a report presented by Roger Nesbitt on December 13/2021 concerning the Pedestrian Overpass. The report provided information on Structural Inspections, Staff Time Cleaning and Minor Maintenance, Elevators, Public and Staff Safety and Municipal Liability (including the Sheltered and Heated Unsupervised Space and Stairs) and Utility Costs.

The report also provided action items and recommendations on the operation of the Pedestrian Overpass.

At that time the report was presented on December 13th a resolution was passed that stated the following:

THAT Council authorizes a service level reduction for the Pedestrian Overpass which will result in the closure of the facility between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. each

day of the week as a temporary/trial action to reduce incidents of concern impacting the health and safety of City employees and the public.

Council also asked for follow up reports on how this resolution has worked and to provide updates on the Pedestrian Overpass.

March/2022

Council received a further updated report in March providing further information on the status of the Pedestrian Overpass.

Staff have implemented the closure of the Pedestrian Overpass with Automatic Locks from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The time has been adjusted by 15 minutes in the morning to accommodate requests from residents who use the Overpass at approximate 6:00 a.m.

A portable washroom was also set up at the South tower. In addition, needle dispensers were installed.

The elevator in the Pedestrian Overpass was also broken down for a period of time in January and February. Issues appeared to be reduced during this time.

However, the Pedestrian Overpass is starting to develop issues again during the time when staff go to clean the premises.

The following have taken place in the last week and a half. The police were called for each incident and a Health and Safety Near Miss report was filed each day.

Incidents February/March:

February 24/2022 5:50 p.m.- Individual sitting on floor of elevator, not responding to questions, alcohol present, police called, cleaned up 7 empty alcohol containers

February 25/2022 5:50 p.m. - Individual sleeping on window ledge in cold area, alcohol present, nodded yes when asked if cold and intoxicated, Police flagged down as were passing by

March 01/2022 6:00 p.m. Group (4 individuals) drinking in Vestibule, asked to leave but became hostile to staff, 2 individuals doing drugs in elevator, OPP called

March 02/2022 5:45 p.m.- Individual sitting in elevator, alcohol present, Individual unresponsive after short time. OPP called; OPP called ambulance as individual unresponsive

March 03/2022 5:50 p.m. - 2 individuals lying on floor in elevator, Alcohol Present, OPP called

March 04/2022 – semi unresponsive person in unheated portion of skywalk, alcohol present, OPP called

Staff have had recent conversations with the OPP detachment. Discussions with OPP have included the following commitment:

A focused patrol has been put in place for the pedestrian overpass with the following information:

- Patrols will be assigned and conducted daily throughout both day and night shifts.
- Priority calls for service pending, 1715 and 1815 will be mandatory patrol times, amended if needed.
- All notable action will be captured in a brief summary report and referenced to calls for service or enforcement action.
- Statistical analysis on focused patrol action will be reviewed and provided if necessary.

Staff met with the OPP Community Engagement Officer on March 08/2022 to review re-occurring issues and to create a protocol for OPP officers to assist in ensuring the safety of City staff and community members during the hours of closure, with the eventual and common goal being a reduction in calls for service and safe workspace for employees.

Discussion:

Incidents March/April:

March 14/2022 – Individual Intoxicated Sleeping in Skywalk. OPP called

March 20/2022 – Individual Intoxicated in Pedestrian Overpass. OPP called

March 24/2022 – Unconscious individual in Skywalk. OPP Called

March 25/2022 – Individual refused to leave building after closure. OPP called

March 27/2022 – Unconscious individual in Elevator. OPP called

March 29/2022 2:00 p.m. – While performing monthly inspection found open containers of Mouthwash. Employees also found 5 individuals drinking in foyer in Elevator. OPP called.

March 29/2022 6:55 p.m. - Individual lying on floor in elevator. Asked to leave but did not seem to understand. Alcohol Present, 911 called. Removed by OPP and Ambulance

April 01/2022 7:10 p.m. - Individual sleeping on window ledge. Appeared intoxicated. Refused to Leave and swore at staff. 911 Called. Individual removed by OPP Officers

The focused patrol by OPP has helped reduce the number of incidents requiring a call to 911 by employees over the last 2 and a half months (April – June). The OPP patrols and showing up around the time the skywalk was closing also deterred loiterers.

The warmer weather could also be a factor on the reduced number of calls.

Staff will continue to monitor the Pedestrian Skywalk for the safety of City of Dryden Employees and Residents.

Staff are looking at potentially opening the Pedestrian Overpass 24/7 again at least for the summer if the number of incidents remain low and vandalism remains at a low level.