

Communication Update

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

Committee Date: September 23, 2026

Subject/Report No.: Hamilton Pier (Lake Ontario side) – Open for public use

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 5

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Signature:



The purpose of this Communication Update is to advise Council.

Summary

This Communication Update provides Council with an update that the public are now able to access to the Lake Ontario side of the Hamilton Pier at the Lift Bridge in Ward 5.

Background

In 2022, staff were directed to begin negotiations to allow the city to take on daily operations for public access to the pier, after stewardship of the lands changed within federal agencies, and the public access was closed off.

Staff have been working on implementing the direction of Report PW24061, which gave authority to enter into necessary agreements with the Federal agencies to permit the public use of the pier, as had historically been the case. Three agreements were required based on the stewardship of the Federal lands to the various Federal agencies. The majority of the pier lands are under the stewardship of the Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA). The lands around lift bridge and leading to the pier are under the stewardship of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), and a small portion of the pier lies with Transport Canada (TC).

Details

Parks staff will be the section responsible for the daily opening and closing of the gates to indicate that the public is welcome on the pier. The gates will be opened first thing in the morning, and close at dusk. The pier will also be closed during high wind, water, or storm events, as the conditions on the pier can become slippery and wave force can be strong, pushing water over the pier and making conditions unsafe. Staff ask that the public respect the closures, as well as exercise caution when out on the pier as conditions can change quickly. Additionally, the pier footing can be uneven, with possible tripping hazards and debris on the surface from wave action, so users are cautioned that they should take care when walking out on the pier, even under good weather conditions.

The pier will be closed from October 31 to May 1 yearly. During the period of open access, the open hours will coincide with opening and closing of the washroom adjacent, which typically is opened at 8 a.m. and closed at 9:30 p.m.

The public will notice that there are no railings installed along the pier, which was part of the original plan outlined in Report PW24061. Unfortunately, staff are unable to install these in the timelines required, as they are custom fabrication items and the current project budget is insufficient to complete the work. Staff have included a detail sheet for consideration in 2027 to fund this work, should funding be found and approved in the 2027 budget.

Leading to the pier, the public will travel on an existing asphalt path that will have temporary construction barriers in place. This is to prevent public access to the grass and natural lands on either side, which have been found to contain lead and is considered not safe for public use. City staff will be working with PSPC on a long-term solution to address the contamination in the area, so that the temporary fencing can be removed. Until that time, the public is asked to respect the fencing and stay within the permitted areas for public access.

Next Steps

Staff will submit a budget detail sheet for consideration in 2027 for additional improvements to the pier area. The public access to the pier will start on September 23, 2026.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

N/A