

Dear Mayor O'Mara and Council,

November 1, 2022

Thank you for circulating the October, 2022 Lake Temagami Waste Management proposal, and for involving the Temagami Lakes Association (TLA) and others in discussions about how to modernize the system. The service is one of the most important to lake residents and health of the lake, among the various services provided by the municipality.

I understand from the October document that the current proposal is to:

1. Establish scheduled daytime hours of access to the Waste Transfer Station (summer hours 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Sunday; reduced days off-season);
2. Restrict access by physically shuttling the various bins (4 + bins) daily between the landing and the Briggs Waste Disposal Site-WDS (on the access road). Outside of scheduled hours, there will be no bins at the Waste Transfer Station.
3. By summer, move the Waste Transfer Station to an area currently designated for contractor parking. Continue to shuttle bins daily from that location.

Other steps include improved signage, purchase and operation of a garbage compactor (mobile or stationary), designating a space where people can leave unwanted items for reuse by others, and managing the collection and diversion of electronic waste and hazardous waste (details to be determined). The Municipality also proposes to hire new municipal staff to manage the operation, instead of tendering a contract (which expires in April, 2023).

The proposal addresses a number of the concerns raised since the Working Group was formed last spring. Thank you for making adjustments. Unfortunately, the TLA cannot support the proposal to shuttle bins daily back and forth between the landing and the Briggs WDS, for two reasons:

1. The risk is high that garbage will be left at the empty site outside of scheduled hours, and therefore attract bears and become messy. Attempting to stop dumping outside of scheduled hours in the more remote contractor parking area will add cost and is unlikely to be effective.
2. Shuttling 4 + bins daily between the landing and the Briggs WDS is a permanent cost in gas and wear and tear on vehicles, and a poor use of staff time. Overtime pay or extra staff hours would be needed to shuttle **and** have the facility open the full 8 hours proposed. Reducing access to less than 8 hours a day while bins are shuttled would only add to the risk of improper dumping. A truck with 4 + bins shuttling daily on the Access Road is also potentially a traffic hazard and insurance risk for the Municipality, especially during the height of summer.

**Is there a better option?** The TLA would likely support a variation on an option considered earlier by the Working Group, as follows:

- Fence in the Waste Transfer Station at its current location, restricted with a combination/touch pad lock;

- Limit the current station to residential garbage and Blue Box recycling only;
- Make the combination of the lock on the residential station available to all rate payers, for use after scheduled hours as needed. Such an arrangement is not unlike what large apartment buildings do for waste transfer stations in the lower level of apartment buildings in cities. Providing ratepayers with as-needed access to a locked facility for residential waste only reduces the risk of dumping and maintains service levels at little additional cost to lake residents or camp operators.
- Add a garbage barrel near the put-in area to allow casual visitors to dispose of small quantities of waste outside of scheduled hours, to be emptied daily by staff;
- Move collection of all construction waste (including scrap metal, wood, shingles, etc.) to the contractor's area, and restrict access with a locked fence. Note: according to the September 21, 2022 waste audit commissioned by the Municipality, more than 50% of the waste volume handled at the current Waste Transfer Station is commercial waste. Separation of residential and commercial waste collection sites may significantly reduce congestion at docks and improve monitoring of waste volume and tipping fees.
- Encourage licensed contractors to use the Briggs WDS for construction waste, through a discounted tipping fee. All users, including Lake residents, would be required to access the construction waste site during scheduled hours only, making it easier to monitor and collect tipping fees equally from all users;
- A residential Waste Transfer Station with 8 hours of staffed service, and controlled, rate payer access after scheduled hours, could be managed with one FTE plus weekends in the summer. Such a position might be easier to fill, and to retain, and be a more interesting job than shuttling bins daily. Staff responsibilities could include public education and monitoring on a variety of lake related issues such as waste diversion, invasive species, fishing gear, and use of the docks. It would also make more effective use of the small serviced "office" building at the landing.
- Implement other features of the current proposal (collection of electronic waste and more convenient diversion of hazardous waste, a reuse depot).

The plan described above would provide a higher level of control than the current system, without provoking widespread dumping outside the collection area or leaving construction waste bins open to abuse and liability. It is also likely to be much less expensive compared to the shuttle option, both in terms of operating costs, environmental costs and capital expenditures.

More generally, research on waste management in Ontario suggests that diverting organic waste has more scope to extend the life of the Briggs WDS than any other change under consideration. Consequently, we encourage the Municipality to continue working with the Camps, the TFN and Lake residents to divert more organic waste from the Briggs WDS. This can be done by continuing the municipal pilot of subsidies for small electric composters, and encouraging Lake residents to do their own backyard composting of easily composted items (the potato peel variety). Camps may be in a position to separate more of their kitchen waste into organics that can be easily composted on their own property from the oils and bones that

require more treatment or placement in the residential stream. In the medium term, a mid scale “cooking” composting system could be installed at the Briggs WDS.

Note too that as of July, 2023, the Government of Ontario will implement a “producer responsibility regulation” for the Blue Box Program (requiring manufacturers to pay for recycling). Municipalities will no longer have any direct responsibility for Blue Box items (see attached schedule from the MoE). Before modernizing the Waste Transfer Station, it would be helpful to know when the Municipality will transition to the new system and what plans it will put in place then to support recycling by Lake residents. Anecdotally, the diversion rate at the current waste transfer station for cardboard and plastic/glass seems to be good, suggesting that many residents have already become responsible Blue Box users (there is no hard data on this component in the recent waste audit).

Finally, the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) is doing stellar work with municipalities on waste management issues, and may be able to assist. Dave Gordon is the key point of contact on all waste and blue box issues at AMO. He can be reached at: [dgordon@amo.on.ca](mailto:dgordon@amo.on.ca).

I would be happy to answer any questions about the above, by phone/email or as an unregistered participant in a Council meeting.

Sincerely,

Daniel Buckles  
TLA Representative to the Waste Management Working Group