



July 8, 2025

City Council Committee Report

To: Mayor & Council

Fr: Stace Gander, Director of Economic Development and Tourism

Re: Keewatin Boatlift – Preliminary Feasibility Report

Recommendation:

That Council hereby receives the preliminary feasibility study prepared by LBE Group Inc. for the potential re-implementation of infrastructure to connect Winnipeg River and Lake of the Woods and identified as an action item in the 2021 Five Year Tourism and Economic Development Strategy.

Background:

The opportunity to examine the potential re-implementation of infrastructure to connect the Winnipeg River and Lake of the Woods is identified as an action in the 2021 Five Year Tourism and Economic Development Strategy. Specifically, it is listed as a priority initiative under the objective to improve lake access and boating infrastructure. The projects feasibility has also come forward as a potential project during the annual MAT budget planning sessions with Council. In 2023, Council allocated \$10,000 of MAT to conduct a prefeasibility study to assess if a lift was feasible from an engineering standpoint.

In late 2023, the City of Kenora retained LBE Group Inc. to develop a preliminary feasibility report to investigate potential lift methods that would provide access between the Winnipeg River and Lake of the Woods.

The preliminary feasibility study was received and concluded that a lift is feasible at an approximate cost of \$1M. This price should be considered preliminary and the actual cost cannot be confirmed until a detailed design and costing is conducted. Additional elements that would have to be undertaken include:

- Public engagement in an effort to understand community demand and potential revenue models;
- A detailed review of the operating model post construction which would be linked to the type of lift designed (eg: fully automated versus operator controlled);
- Engagement with the Ministry related to installation and operation of a lift in Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River System.

Budget: There is no budget impact as a result of receiving this study.

Risk Analysis: There is no risk associated with this report as it is administrative in nature and for Council's information only.

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements: n/a

Strategic Plan or other Guiding Document:

City of Kenora 2022-2027 Strategic Plan

2.1.5 Activate the City of Kenora 5-Year Tourism and Economic Development Strategy

2021 Five Year Tourism and Economic Development Strategy

1.3 Improve lake access and boating infrastructure;

6. Explore feasibility to redevelop Keewatin boatlift.