



External Briefing Note

GEORGINA

Subject: Closure of Public Water Taps

To: Mayor and Council

From: Rob Flindall, Director Operations and Infrastructure

Date: September 22, 2021

Briefing:

The Town currently owns and maintains four public water taps to supply Town water to the public. The four taps can be found in the following locations:

1. Boyer Road (west of Pine Post Road)
2. Kennedy Road (North of Metro Road)
3. High Street (North of Burke Street)
4. Sibbald Point Provincial Park (Park Road and Black River Road)

The intent of these taps, when originally installed many years ago, was to provide the public access to potable water for residents that had not yet connected to the municipal drinking water distribution system, and to provide access to treated water for residents living in rural areas. The Town has not charged any fee for the supply of this water. There are currently no operable meters on these stations to determine usage and there is no surveillance at these sites to verify who is using these taps and for what purpose.

The Town also owns and operates one bulk water-filling station for commercial vehicles (tankers). The bulk water-filling station, located at the Environmental Services yard on Civic Centre Road, allows for automated, 24-hour access to potable water. Commercial users are required to purchase this water through a pay-for-use system accessed with a pre-paid PIN number card. The bulk water-filling station is fully protected with backflow prevention devices.

Cross-Contamination Risk

Recently, there have been numerous reports made by residents and Town Staff regarding commercial vehicles such as landscaping companies using the public water taps. These companies are connecting large commercial water tanks with volumes of 1-4 cubic metres (330 gallons – 1320 gallons). This presents a potential hazard to the public system through cross-contamination due to fertilizers and

possibly pesticides that may be in the equipment connected to the public tap. The connection of any type of commercial equipment without approved backflow prevention devices is prohibited by the Town By-law 2007-0132 (PUT-1).

To manage the Town's exposure to risk by having unmonitored stations and the potential for contamination of the water supply, and the loss of revenue from commercial vehicles using these taps instead of the pay-for-use bulk station available, staff will be closing these four public taps.

Notice to Public

Signage will be provided at each of the public water taps for one week prior to the closure. Residents will have the option to purchase bulk water-filling accounts, similar to a commercial hauler. Alternatively, potable water can be provided by numerous commercial water-haulers and retailers.

Options Evaluation

Staff recognize that some residents may still rely on these public water taps for supply of treated water. However, the provision of water from the municipal distribution is governed by the current combined Water/Sewer User Rates. Water is not provided free-of charge to any other users of the municipal system.

Interviews of users of the public water taps conducted by staff indicates that most users of the taps are on private well systems and prefer to use the treated municipal water to their own well water. This may be because the wells are unreliable, or for taste-odour issues common with water from shallow dug wells. However, these users are taking large volumes of water in large tanks, often in excess of 1 cubic metre volume free of charge. The current combined Water/Sewer rate is \$5.36 per cubic metre and the capital cost recovery charge is \$18.57 per quarter.

Staff will further investigate the use of water taps within the Town and bring a report back to Council for consideration at a later date with options available using an alternate model.

Attached:

1. Map of Public Water Tap Locations
2. Photos of existing public water taps
3. Photos of Large Volume Users