



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Environmental Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 8, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Spray Pad Operating Season Review (PW16073) (City Wide) (<i>Outstanding Business List Item</i>)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Andrea McDonald (905) 546-2424, Extension 2738
SUBMITTED BY:	Craig Murdoch, B. Sc. Director Environmental Services Division
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division, Parks & Cemeteries Section amend the operating season for City of Hamilton spray pads to an earlier opening date beginning the last week in May in 2017, or activate subject to a Stage 1 Heat Advisory, whichever is earlier;
- (b) That costs associated with the increased service level in the amount of \$87,300 be referred to the 2017 Operating Budget process;
- (c) That the Outstanding Business List Item identified as “Opening of Splash Pads” be considered complete and removed from the Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 8th, 2016, Council approved the following motion:

That Public Works staff report back on the feasibility of using forecasted temperatures at or approaching the Stage 1 Heat Advisory as the new policy for opening City wide splash pads to the Public Works Committee.

The City of Hamilton (City) operates 62 spray pads located throughout the City, as shown on Appendix “A” attached to Report PW16073. The current Council approved service level for activating the majority of the spray pads for the summer season is June 20th, 2016 after schools are closed for the summer season. There are 6 (six) locations in City wide level parks that open up to 2 (two) weeks earlier.

Parks staff surveyed other Ontario municipalities to determine what could be considered best practices in Southern Ontario. It was found that there is not a consistent approach

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to the activation dates of spray pads; however, the majority activate anywhere between mid-May to mid-June. Many of the municipalities surveyed do activate their spray pads as a result of hot weather temperatures as observed this year.

Staff recognizes spring heat advisory alerts are now an increasingly common occurrence, and recommend increasing the level of service for spray pad amenities in order to be responsive to a heat advisory. The recommendation is to open spray pads earlier in 2017 subject to Council approval and additional operating funding. To implement this, and if approved, spray pads will be readied for use by the last week in May or activated subject to a Stage 1 Heat Advisory, whichever is earlier.

A City of Hamilton Stage 1 Heat Advisory is triggered when temperatures are forecast for 31°C or more with a 40°C humidex or more. The first heat advisories for the past 6 years in the City are as follows:

2016	June 18
2015	July 17
2014	July 1
2013	July 14
2012	June 19
2011	May 30

It should be noted that historical weather patterns frequently have daily temperatures at 31°C in late May and early June, but may not qualify as a Stage 1 Heat advisory due to the absence of humidity.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

If approved, there will be a financial impact to the operating budget of \$87,300 annually. A summary of the additional costs for an expanded operating season are detailed in the table below:

Operating Impact Summary

	# Pads	Current Season	Proposed Season	Additional Service	Additional cost/week/pad	Total cost
City Wide Parks	6	13 weeks	15 weeks	2 weeks	\$370	\$ 4,400
All other locations	56	11 weeks	15 weeks	4 weeks	\$370	\$82,900
Annual Impact of full implementation of service enhancement						\$87,300

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Staffing: No staffing level implications related to the report recommendations.

Legal: No legal implications related to the report recommendations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton has historically opened its spray pads in late June which corresponded with the onset of hot summer weather and the start of elementary school summer holidays. A smaller group of spray pads were opened up to 2 (two) weeks earlier in City wide parks to allow for events and spray pad access if desired. This program timing has been satisfactory to residents, subject to historical cool spring temperatures. However, with fluctuations in seasonal weather, resulting in hot springtime temperatures, the community and Council have requested spray pads open earlier. Additionally, a later opening season was historically requested by the Hamilton School Boards to reduce the risk of students coming to class wet. This has been addressed with the replacement of mechanical activators with electronic ones so that use of the spray pads during the day can be restricted to afternoons/evenings while school is still in session.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Not Applicable

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board

Recreation Division, Community and Emergency Services

Public Health Services-Environmental Health

HEAT Response Plan

No comments or concerns were received from the relevant consultation noted above, regarding extending the operating season for spray pads in 2017.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Spray Pad Provision Rate

The City of Hamilton has invested significant capital and operational dollars into providing a high level of service to residents for spray pad amenities. Relative to other municipalities, the City of Hamilton provides the greatest number of spray pads per capita of any other municipality we surveyed. The Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Sports Field Provision Plan - November 2011, received by Council, recommended a provision rate of 1 (one) Spray Pad per every 1,100 children. The City is currently meeting this provision ratio rate with 62 spray pad amenities in the City and, two new spray pads proposed in Ward 9 for 2017. For additional information related to other municipal provision ratios see Appendix "B" attached to Report PW16073.

It is this large inventory that does not currently allow staff the flexibility for an unplanned response to unseasonably hot weather in the spring due to limited staff resources. By

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amending the policy and standard, staff will coordinate and prepare for an earlier opening in 2017.

Existing Levels of Service - Spray Pad Opening and Closing Dates (2016)

City wide level parks with Spray Pads are prioritized and open up to 2 (two) weeks earlier than all other locations. These sites include the following:

Village Green Park	Week of June 13th – Week of September 5 th
Pier 4	Week of June 13th – Week of September 5 th
Gage Park	Week of June 13th – Week of September 5 th
Dundas Driving Park	Week of June 13th – Week of September 5 th
Waterdown Memorial	Week of June 13th – Week of September 5 th
Winona Park	Week of June 13th – Week of September 5 th
All other locations	Week of June 20th – Week of September 5 th

Standard Hours of Operation

All water systems are controlled by an electronic timer set for standard hours of operation (10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.); systems are also equipped with activation sensors limiting operation to real time demand thus enhancing water conservation. Note that during significant heat events, the hours of operation may be extended at some locations.

Proposed Opening Spray Pads Earlier 2017

It is feasible for staff to modify the spray pad opening schedule to support an earlier start to the season. It is recommended that all spray pad facilities be opened the last week of May or at a Stage 1 Heat Advisory, whichever is earlier. This recommendation is subject to Council support of the additional operational funds required to support this extension to the program.

Work to open the spray pads will need to commence 1 (one) month earlier to ensure that the plumbing, electrical, concrete, asphalt and mechanical components are operational. To a degree, this will be subject to the winter weather as cold weather and freezing may impact staff ability to complete start up work.

It is recommended that the spray pad closing date remain the week following September Labour Day weekend. The standard hours of operation are not recommended to change.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not Applicable

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” - Spray Pad Inventory

Appendix “B” - Ontario Municipalities Survey for Spray Pads