



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members Board of Health
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	April 20, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Suitability of Bayfront Beach as a Public Beach BOH16008(a) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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## Council Direction:

On March 21, 2016 following the closing of Bayfront Park Beach to swimming and in response to report BOH16008 - Suitability of Bayfront Beach as a Public Beach (Item 5.2), the Board of Health directed the following;

“That staff be directed to provide the Board of Health with a presentation on the outcome of the study on the Suitability of Bayfront Beach as a Public Beach, in the fall of 2016.”

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Health with a presentation regarding the findings of the study being completed regarding the investigations into water quality at Bayfront Park Beach.

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*OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.*

*OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.*

*OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.*

**Information:**

AECOM consultants were retained by Public Works to investigate the issues behind the water quality concerns and problems that have resulted in an increase in the number of beach closures at Bayfront Park Beach. In February 2016, shortly after initiation of the study, Public Health Services advised Public Works Environmental Services Division that, "Bayfront Beach should be closed until action is taken to improve the water quality." Report BOH16008 - Suitability of Bayfront Beach as a Public Beach reported on the closure by Public Health Services. Environmental Services staff took immediate action and the beach has since been closed to swimming.

The purpose of AECOM's study is to investigate the issues behind the water quality concerns at Bayfront Beach, to review similar conditions and strategies in other jurisdictions, and to develop and evaluate strategies in consultation with stakeholders and specialists. Key stakeholders in the study include:

- Healthy Environments Division, Public Health Services
- Parks and Cemeteries, Public Works
- Waterfront Development Office, Public Works (study lead)
- Hamilton Waterfront Trust (study project manager)
- Environment Canada
- Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Office
- Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC)

The study scope includes:

- Collection of available data on ambient water quality in Hamilton Harbour and Bayfront Beach, as well as sources of contaminants into the Harbour.
- A literature review and compilation of findings of previous studies.
- A subject matter specialist workshop to help identify potential remedial options.
- A public participation program to obtain opinions from the public with regard to the perceived importance of the beach.
- Option development refined through consultation with the City and subject matter specialists, and input gained through public consultation.

The findings of the AECOM study are that the water quality at Bayfront Beach will not become suitable for use as a swimming area without an intervention to improve the water quality. The intervention(s) should mitigate the following factors that are adversely affecting the water quality at Bayfront Beach:

- Physical Characteristics of the beach, such as beach slope, sand moisture and grain size, and water circulation near the beach.
- Sources of pollution near the beach (waterfowl faeces) and within the general watershed of Hamilton Harbour.
- The occurrence of cyanobacteria blooms.

An assessment of the options and costs to mitigate the aforementioned factors is in progress and will be reported to Public Works Committee with recommendations. It is anticipated that the assessment will recommend to start with low cost interventions that are reasonably expected to have the most likelihood of improving water quality, via monitoring implementation of the intervention and water quality. The potential options to improve the water quality are mentioned in the presentation to this report.

Prior to reopening Bayfront Beach for public use, action to improve the water quality needs to be implemented and a consistent improvement in water quality needs to be verified. Due to the factors affecting water quality and the times of the year at which they occur, this may require a full swimming season of implementation and monitoring.

#### **Next Steps:**

It is staff's intention to finalize the recommended strategy(s) for Bayfront Park beach in spring 2017, in consultation with key stakeholders, and report back to Public Works Committee with recommendations on how to proceed.