

Aug 9- GIC Speech

Just Another Pipe Dream?

Based on a Hamilton Spectator article, Dated July 22, 2017 MP Bob Bratina and Catherine McKenna, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, looked out over Hamilton Harbour after the \$32.9-million announcement.

The first stage of the massive Randle Reef encapsulation project was hampered by record high water levels this summer. The Randle Reef Contaminated Sediment Remediation Project will cost \$138.9 million, over three stages, and is scheduled for completion in 2022.

Climate change is forcing municipalities around the world to come up with sustainable solutions which properly address the new challenges of rainwater management. The notion of overhauling and separating the sewage system is a major discussion point in the overall conversation of how climate change is affecting the way municipalities and business/home owners handle the challenges of excessive rainfall and flooding

According to Wikipedia -

- A **combined sewer** is a sewage collection system of pipes and tunnels designed to also collect surface runoff. This type of gravity sewer design is no longer used in building new communities (because current design separates sanitary sewers from runoff), but many older cities continue to operate combined sewers.^[1]
- Combined sewers can cause serious water pollution problems during **combined sewer overflow (CSO)** events when wet weather flows exceed the sewage treatment plant capacity. The discharges contain human and industrial waste causing contamination, illnesses and harm to the eco-system.^[2]
- In 2009 the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment adopted a Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent including national standards that all relate to mitigating combined sewer overflows.

A change is proposed to replace the sewers along the LRT alignment within the exclusion zone with sewers that are "like for like". Paul Johnson is "pitching for consolidation" in an effort to save \$35 million ,but in actual fact with all the proposed development that is to occur those pipes will have to be upsized anyway, which may not be considered "like for like". So once again Hamilton is sacrificing quality and what makes sense because of cost. I thought we learned our lesson from the Stadium? This City is missing an opportunity to make an important change to its antiquated stormwater management system.

The proposed LRT is located within the Spencer Creek and Hamilton Harbor Watersheds. Currently, the existing combined sewer network is discharging to multiple combined sewer overflows (CSO). There are also known flooding issues within and adjacent to the proposed

LRT alignment, as acknowledged in the Stormwater Management Report Additionally, from the information provided in the City of Hamilton Request for Proposal.

In the last decade the City has experienced a number of storms severe enough to cause basement flooding due to sewer backup—in some cases affecting thousands of residents. In addition to the huge amount of sewage dumped into the harbor this spring. There is a need and desire to develop feasible flooding solutions that would provide widespread relief at a higher level of service.”

From 2005 to 2015 Hamilton has spent well over \$ 5 million in ‘Compassionate grants” due to flooding issues which will continue to increase due to climate change and the continued use of a consolidated sewer system.

This spring we experienced record breaking rain that overloaded the treatment plant causing untreated and partially treated sewage to spill into Red Hill creek. The amount of waste that was dumped into the harbour equalled 1,314 Olympic sized swimming pools or 547 million toilet flushes. This pollution is also evident with the closure of many area beaches. Hamilton exceeded the provincial standards set for "total suspended solids and is at the top of the list when it comes to releasing the most untreated sewage into the water.

The waste treatment plant upgrade will cost hundreds of millions of dollars which is needed but will not alleviate the current situation.

Given that the City is undertaking the complicated and expensive process of replacing sewers, it is overlooking a significant environmental and public health benefit to the LRT Project by not separating the sewer system where the benefits realized would include:

- Eliminating combined sewer overflow which, in turn, helps to prevent pollution
- Mitigates the problem of flooding by increasing capacity
- Allows stormwater to be used as a resource
- Optimizes performance of the waste water treatment plant (WWTP)
- In the long term, the efficiency and longevity of a separated system will pay for itself (Return On Investment)

Catherine McKenna had tears in her eyes believing that once the Randle Reef cleanup was complete she could swim in the Harbour. Consolidation of sewer pipes with stormwater should not be an option as this practice stopped over 50 years ago. This is simply not a repair this is a complete replacement and should follow current practices and not past mistakes.

Approximately 71% of those supporting the LRT were doing so because of environmental reasons. Those who are concerned about clean air should also care about our water.

Carol Lazich(Ward 1 Resident/ Business Owner)