



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Planning Committee
<b>DATE:</b>	January 16, 2018
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Review of Problems Associated with Increased Visitors to Waterfalls (PED18011) (Wards 6, 9, 13, 14 and 15)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	(Wards 6, 9, 13,14 and 15)
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Marty Hazell (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4588
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Marty Hazell Director, Strategic Initiatives Planning and Economic Development Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

On April 12, 2017, City Council approved General Issues Committee Report 17-008, resulting in approval of the following:

“WHEREAS, Hamilton has been promoted as “*The Waterfall Capital of the World*” and annual visitors to Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak continue to increase (84K in 2016, not including annual pass holders or unpaid visitors);

WHEREAS, the increased visitors to Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak are wreaking havoc on Greensville and Dundas neighbourhoods with serious negative impacts including, but not limited to:

- traffic and parking issues for local residents such as gridlock on local streets, visitors blocking roadways and blocking resident’s driveways;
- nuisance issues such as littering and picnicking on resident’s lawns;
- emergency vehicle access impacts for residents

WHEREAS, measures to combat overcrowding such as the installation of “*No Parking*” signs, extra staff and proactive by-law enforcement on weekends, and the implementation of fees for visitors to Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak have had no deterrent effect whatsoever;

WHEREAS, increased visitors to Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak are also having negative effects on the environment including damage from littering and trampled ecosystems, as well as safety issues for people on the narrow trails; and

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WHEREAS, regular rescue calls for “*risk takers*” at Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak is a concern for emergency service providers (i.e. fire, police and paramedics).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That City staff be directed to form a multi-disciplinary working group to conduct a comprehensive, multi-faceted investigation of public safety and the negative impacts to the Greensville and Dundas neighbourhoods associated with the increase in visitors to Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak;
- (b) That the Hamilton Conservation Authority, the Hamilton Police Service, EMS, Traffic, Parking, By-law Services, and CN Railway and any other required staff / agency be requested to participate in the review;
- (c) That staff be directed to report back to the three area Councillors and the General Issues Committee, no later than September 2017, with potential solutions to the problems associated with the increase in visitors to Webster and Tew Falls.”

**Information:**

As directed, a multi-disciplinary working group was formed, consisting of representatives from Planning and Economic Development (General Manager’s Office, Tourism and Culture, Licensing and By-Law Services), Public Works, Legal Services, the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA), CN Railway, and the Hamilton Police Service.

The working group met 11 times, from May 1, 2017 to September 11, 2017, to discuss the many issues and concerns associated with increased visitors to Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak. Since the closure of the decades-old trail on private property in September 2016, which connected Webster and Tew Falls, new safety concerns have arisen as visitors are forced onto narrow municipal streets with no sidewalks to use to access the two waterfalls. Webster Falls, Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak are maintained by the HCA. This working group also liaised with Councillor Tom Jackson, who formed a group to address safety issues at Albion Falls, which is owned by the City of Hamilton. Councillor Conley met with Public Works staff on-site at Devils Punchbowl, which is maintained by the City of Hamilton and the HCA, to assess safety issues and signage.

Attached as Appendix “A” to this report is a listing of the many items discussed and addressed by the working group. One of the most frequently discussed issues was parking violations / enforcement around the various waterfalls. To address parking violations in the neighbourhoods around the various waterfalls, Parking Control Officers were scheduled to work in this area every weekend throughout the spring, summer and early fall of 2017. Approximately 3,580 parking violation tags were issued and the

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associated revenue more than off-set the cost of the staff overtime. In addition, the effectiveness of parking regulations was reviewed and changes to the regulations were made and / or additional signage was installed where deemed necessary. Also, the HPS assisted by parking a service decoy vehicle in strategic areas to deter people from parking illegally. Press releases were also used, on several occasions, to reinforce key messaging of safety for visitors reminding them to remain on trails and that By-law staff will be enforcing no parking / stopping areas on residential streets.

While many minor changes associated with the items listed in Appendix “A” were addressed by the working group in consultation with the affected Ward Councillors, the most significant and impactful change was the HCA initiative to pilot a weekend shuttle bus operation. The shuttle bus operation transported people from Misener’s on Highway 5 to the Spencer Gorge Conservation Area, to Webster and Tew Falls and the Dundas Peak, in an effort to decrease on-street parking, reduce traffic congestion and improve safety in the areas around the falls. The shuttle ran from May 13, 2017 until October 29, 2017. While the HCA is currently evaluating the pilot, it is known that the shuttle operation was successful in diverting over 16K vehicles away from the residential neighbourhoods, with the enforcement of no parking / stopping within the area being key to deter visitors from parking on streets in the immediate area. By-law enforcement of unauthorized “pop-up” parking lots was also fundamental to move people and vehicles out of the area. Staff will be able to report back on this matter further, in early 2018, once the HCA has completed a comprehensive pilot evaluation and has reported to their Board on a possible future operation. HCA staff noted that they have received several emails from residents thanking them for returning their area back to a more peaceful and liveable place on weekends with the shuttle operations and HCA parking lots closed.

Staff have apprised Councillors Vanderbeek, Partridge and Pasuta of the information contained in this report and will continue to consult with them as necessary in preparation for next spring.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix “A” – Waterfall Working Group Outstanding Business List

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