



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 15, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan and Committee (BOH19012) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

In 2015, due to growing public concern about the abundance of ticks in specific naturalized areas within the City of Hamilton, Public Health Services and various City Departments and Divisions met to develop a tick strategy to help protect the public's exposure to ticks and tick-borne diseases. During the early stages of the plan being developed the cross-departmental working group aimed to create a plan summarizing the best practices for the management of ticks on private and public property.

On September 7, 2018, Public Health Services issued an Information Update on Public Education for Lyme Disease and Tick Awareness in the City of Hamilton, detailing that the Hamilton Tick Management Committee was planning to explore options for tick control, best practices to reduce the risk of tick-borne disease in Hamilton, and to work together to develop a Tick Management Plan for the City of Hamilton.

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.

The Tick Management Committee met regularly through the balance of 2018. As the group explored tick control strategies, fewer options for tick control through habitat management and property protection were identified as 'best practices'. An Information Report, Integrated Pest Management Best Practices Including the Use of Acaricides to Mitigate Tick Populations (BOH18019), found best practices and the scientific research around tick management is still evolving. A review of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency pesticide registry and Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change found few acaricides are available for use and suitable pesticides have limitations making the use of acaricides a less effective control measure.

The Tick Management Committee explored controlling ticks through habitat management, biological controls, reduction in hosts and host targeted chemical controls. Through consultation with Curtis Russell, PhD, Senior Program Specialist, Enteric, Zoonotic and Vector-Borne Diseases Unit Communicable Diseases, of Public Health Ontario, the Working Group was informed that although some municipalities are employing habitat management strategies, these methods are not yet proven effective and may be costly with little-to-no benefit. Dr. Russell met with the Tick Management Committee and stressed that the best strategies to reduce risk and prevent tick borne illness involve public education and information using consistent messaging around risk, prevention, avoidance, tick identification, as well as tick removal tips combined with risk-based information advising people when they should seek medical attention.

On March 19, 2018, Hamilton Public Health Services announced to the Board of Health and to the public that the city of Hamilton had a significant portion of the municipal jurisdiction identified as an "estimated risk area for Lyme Disease". The Tick Management Committee refocused with the intent of creating a plan that was education-centred around risk and reducing risk levels for the public. The Working Group formalized its membership and created a Terms of Reference, to not only develop a City Tick Management Plan but also continue to work together to communicate changes in risk, share tick surveillance data within the city and to share information/resources with each other.

Relevant Consultation

The cross-departmental Tick Management Committee consists of membership from the following City Departments and Divisions:

- Healthy Environments Division and Epidemiology, Wellness, and Communicable Disease Control Division, Public Health Services;
- Geographic Information System, Corporate Services;
- Corporate Communications Team representing Public Health Services and/or any other department as desired by the department itself;
- Municipal Law Enforcement;
- Landscape Architectural Services with Public Works;

**SUBJECT: City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan and Committee (BOH19012)
(City Wide) - Page 3 of 4**

- Planning Division of Planning and Economic Development Department;
- Risk Management, Corporate Services;
- Health, Safety and Wellness;
- Parks and Cemeteries Section of Public Works;
- Roads and Maintenance of Public Works;
- Infrastructure Planning section of Growth Management; and,
- Forestry and Horticulture section of Public Works.

In addition to the collaborators above, the following key stakeholders were included in final development of the City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan:

- Royal Botanical Gardens;
- Binbrook Conservation Area under Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority; and,
- Hamilton Conservation Authority.

Outcomes

Public Health Services led a City cross-departmental Committee, creating the City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan (Appendix “A”). The City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan focused on public education and prevention through host awareness and included the following key messages:

- Ticks: What are they, where they are more likely to be found, which ones could transmit diseases;
- Tick-Borne Diseases: Types of tick-borne diseases, signs and symptoms;
- Tick Bite Prevention: Checking yourself, your family and your pets after spending time outdoors, or in heavily wooded areas with tall grasses, how to do a proper tick check, wearing suitable clothing and personal protective measures like applying DEET and/or Icaridan;
- Tick Removal: Simple instructions on tick removal and what not to do;
- Signs and Symptoms: What to watch for after a tick bite and when to seek medical attention; and,
- Property Owners: Ways to reduce the presence of ticks to make the habitat unattractive, inhospitable, and/or inaccessible to host animals.

With the City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan complete and distributed to the Working Group members, the focus is now having bi-annual meetings with the Tick Management Committee and key stakeholders to share current surveillance information and tick and Lyme Disease resources (Appendix “B”). The most recent resource to be shared with the Tick Management Committee and key stakeholders was the outdoor tick warning signage (Appendix “C”) that will be beneficial to be posted at trail heads, or naturalized areas that are heavily wooded with tall grass where ticks are more likely to be found.

**SUBJECT: City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan and Committee (BOH19012)
(City Wide) - Page 4 of 4**

As the risk of Lyme disease changes, the Health Hazard & Vector Borne Disease Program will continue monitoring public education to ensure that an increase in local risk is matched with an increase in public education and awareness.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report BOH19012: City of Hamilton Tick Management Plan

Appendix “B” to Report BOH19012: Tick Resources

Appendix “C” to Report BOH19012: Outdoor Tick Signage