



CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Strategic Initiatives Division

TO:	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 15, 2020
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Review of Problems Associated with Increased Visitors to Waterfalls (PED18011(a)) (Ward 13) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 13
PREPARED BY:	Marty Hazell (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4588
SUBMITTED BY:	Marty Hazell Director, Strategic Initiatives Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the multi-disciplinary working group, approved by City Council on March 27, 2019 to investigate the negative impacts to the Greensville and Dundas neighbourhoods associated with the increase in visitors to Webster and Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak, continue to meet and report back to the Planning Committee in 2020 following the completion of a comprehensive traffic management plan for this area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In addition to establishing a multi-disciplinary working group to investigate the negative impacts to the Greensville and Dundas neighbourhoods associated with the increase in visitors to Webster and Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak, City Council on April 10, 2019, approved a Special Enforcement Area pilot utilizing increased fines (\$200 early payment/\$250 set penalty) and increased enforcement.

While the Special Enforcement Area pilot resulted in noticeable improvements during the Spring and Summer months, the Greensville and Dundas neighbourhoods continue to experience serious negative impacts during peak weekends during the late Fall as

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**SUBJECT: Review of Problems Associated with Increased Visitors to Waterfalls
(PED18011(a)) (Ward 13) - Page 2 of 4**

the viewing of fall colours has become an unofficial event with the influence of social media sites promoting the area.

As a result, the working group has agreed that it needs to continue meeting regularly throughout the Winter months while a special event traffic management plan is being conducted, and staff discuss with the Hamilton Police Service the feasibility of creating a towing program for illegally parked vehicles for this area.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial/Staffing/Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

City Council, at its March 27, 2019 meeting, approved the following motion by Councillor Arlene VanderBeek:

“WHEREAS, Hamilton has been promoted as “The Waterfall Capital of the World” and annual visitors to Webster and Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak continue to increase (84,000 in 2016 not including annual pass holders or unpaid visitors);

WHEREAS, the increased visitors to Webster and Tews 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; and,
- 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 Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak have had no deterrent effect whatsoever;

WHEREAS, increased visitors to Webster and Tews 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,

SUBJECT: Review of Problems Associated with Increased Visitors to Waterfalls (PED18011(a)) (Ward 13) - Page 3 of 4

WHEREAS, regular rescue calls for “risk takers” at Webster and Tews 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 Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak;
- (b) That the Hamilton Conservation Authority, the Hamilton Police Service, EMS, Traffic, Parking, By-law, and CN Railway and any other required staff/agency be requested to participate in the review; and,
- (c) That staff, in consultation with the Ward 13 Councillor, be directed to review the problems associated with the increase in visitors to Webster and Tews Falls as well as the Dundas Peak, and report back to the Planning Committee with potential solutions, prior to the 2020 budget process.”

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Representatives of the Hamilton Conservation Authority, Hamilton Police Service, and CN Railway, as well as staff from Public Works (Traffic), Planning and Economic Development (Parking, Tourism and Culture, Municipal Law Enforcement) Healthy and Safe Communities (Fire, EMS) and Corporate Communications have been involved in the on-going review of the problems associated with increased visitors to the Waterfalls in Ward 13. Councillor Arlene VanderBeek has attended all these meetings.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

The multi-disciplinary working group, chaired by the Director of Strategic Initiatives, Planning and Economic Development Department, met on at least 9 occasions in 2019, to discuss and address the various issues associated with increased visitors to Webster and Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak.

One immediate and significant improvement was the creation of a Special Enforcement Area pilot program from March 15 to November 15, approved by City Council on April

SUBJECT: Review of Problems Associated with Increased Visitors to Waterfalls (PED18011(a)) (Ward 13) - Page 4 of 4

10, 2019, utilizing an increased fine structure (\$200 early payment/\$250 set penalty) and increased enforcement.

Additional enforcement officers were assigned to this area between April and November and almost 1000 parking tickets were issued as an effort to curb ongoing illegal parking behaviour and to encourage visitors to park at Christie Lake Conservation Area and use the Hamilton Conservation Authority's shuttle bus. The value of tickets issued was approximately \$195 K and the additional parking enforcements costs including overtime was approximately \$65 K.

While the Special Enforcement Area pilot resulted in noticeable improvements in the residential areas during the Spring and Summer months, the Greensville and Dundas neighbourhoods continue to experience serious negative impacts during peak weekends during the late Fall when social media heavily promotes this area for viewing the Fall colours.

While staff were directed to report back "*... to the Planning Committee with potential solutions, prior to the 2020 budget process*", further work is required to comprehensively address the problems associated with increased visitors to Webster and Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak.

The working group has agreed that it needs to continue meeting regularly throughout the Winter months while a special event traffic management plan is being conducted by Public Works and staff investigate the feasibility of creating a towing program for illegally parked vehicles in this area.

Staff will continue to work with Councillor Arlene VanderBeek on the many problems associated with increased visitors to Webster and Tews Falls and the Dundas Peak, and will report back to Planning Committee once comprehensive recommendations are formulated.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Consideration to could be given at this time to making the Special Enforcement Area pilot a permanent program, but this would not be done in the context of an overall traffic management plan for the area.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

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