




INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 12, 2020
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Clean Harbour Outreach Program (PW16054(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

In June 2016, Council approved establishment of the Clean Harbour Outreach Program (PW16054). The program consisted of two elements:

1. A study to identify opportunities for reducing the discharge of medical waste and personal care products into the harbour. This study should endeavour to determine the source of the pollutants and develop strategies for eliminating these events; and,
2. Develop a community outreach program to raise awareness of the adverse effects of sewage overflows into the harbour and the environment, the unique operations of the Hamilton combined sewage system and with an emphasis on the role homeowners can play in reducing these occurrences through their own actions at home.

INFORMATION

This report is an update to the Public Works Committee on the work attributed to the Clean Harbour Outreach Program.

1) Floatable Study

Hamilton Water staff worked with Cole Engineering Group Ltd. (Cole) to conduct a floatable waste study that consisted of the following activities:

- a. An assessment of the City's current practices and procedures with respect to control and management of floatable waste;
- b. An evaluation of the combined sewer system's operation and performance;
- c. Identification of municipal best practices in the reduction of floatable material discharge and accumulation; and,
- d. Field inspections and monitoring which included:
 - Inspections at accessible Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) outfalls;
 - Catch basin inspections in identified hotspots for use and disposal of syringes and hypodermic needles;
 - Temporary boom installations at select CSO outfalls to monitor debris accumulations, in addition to monitoring pre-existing permanent boom installations; and,
 - Inspections to determine site specific recommendations based on the unique characteristics of each CSO outfall.

The Floatable Study was finalized in 2020 with multiple non-technical and technical recommendations made to improve practices and procedures with respect to control and management of floatable waste. Staff are working to implement the following actions:

Non-Technical Actions	
Recommended Action	Status
Installation of signage at all CSO outfall locations with City contact information and Public Health warnings.	Complete as of June 2020.
Installation of signage to further educate residents about Hamilton's combined sewer system.	Educational signage at Bayfront Park will be installed by the end of August 2020.
Continue public education programming related to the reduction of floatable waste in the Harbour (e.g. Yellow Fish Road Program, Team Up to Clean Up initiative).	Implemented and ongoing.

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Implement an outreach campaign to educate the public about Hamilton's combined sewer system and the impact of non-flushable waste and litter on public infrastructure and the environment.	The 'Own Your Throne' campaign was launched in November 2018. A summary of activities and outcomes is found in section two (2) of this report.
Implement an outreach program for schools focused on syringes/sharps and their impact on the environment.	Strategies for proper syringe/sharp disposal are delivered through multiple Public Health programs such as the Community Sharps Disposal Bins, the Van Program, the Community Points Programming, and the Harm Reduction Program. Educational resources are being developed to target inappropriate syringe/sharp disposal.
Install sharps containers in washrooms at parks that have been identified as hotspots for the use and disposal of syringes/sharps.	Public Works (Parks) and Public Health Services have developed a pilot project to install Community Sharps Disposal Bins in eight (8) downtown parks. As of December 2019, containers had been installed in seven (7) parks and evaluation of the program is ongoing

Technical Actions	
Recommended Action	Status
For all CSO outfalls, develop a periodic and post-event inspection process.	In progress on track for completion in 2020.
For all CSO tanks create a tracking log for tank washes and inspection of floatable control features (baffles).	Implemented and ongoing.
Expand Hamilton Water's boom program to include four (4) new seasonal booms at the Birch, Plymouth, Ottawa and Dunn CSO outfalls and evaluate effectiveness.	Outside of the scope of this study a seasonal boom has been installed in Chedoke Creek downstream from the Main/King CSO tank outfall. Installation of the Birch, Plymouth, Ottawa and Dunn booms is underway with completion anticipated in 2020 and the performance will be evaluated in 2021.

2) Community Outreach Program

In 2016, initial steps were taken to educate residents about the Clean Harbour Program. Website content was developed, and several pages were dedicated to highlighting the program including videos, an interactive map and project updates.

The website www.hamilton.ca/CleanHarbour touches on many projects that contribute to the overall health of Hamilton Harbour. For example, the website outlines:

- The history and value of the harbour to the Hamilton community;
- The City's actions over the last 30+ years in support of Harbour restoration;
- Descriptions of operating systems;
- Actions residents can take to mitigate Harbour pollution; and,
- Project updates related to the \$340 million Woodward Upgrade Project.

In 2017, Hamilton Water initiated the development of a formal outreach and marketing campaign. The focus of the campaign was to raise awareness of the adverse effects of floatable waste in the natural environment, the City's wastewater infrastructure, and to increase knowledge of flushable versus non-flushable materials.

In November 2018, Hamilton Water launched the 'Own Your Throne' outreach and marketing campaign with the tagline "Only Flush the 3Ps - pee, poo and toilet paper." The intended goal was to motivate behavioural change to improve the following:

- Reduce the number of wastewater system repairs and maintenance costs;
- Extend the longevity of wastewater infrastructure;
- Work toward de-listing Hamilton Harbour as an Area of Concern; and,
- Help residents avoid costly personal repair bills from flooding and pipe damage on private property.

The campaign was met with instant enthusiasm from audiences. Due to its unique style and humorous tone, the campaign captured attention from all over the City and beyond. An example of one of the campaign's advertisements is attached as Appendix "A" to Report PW16054(a).

A suite of outreach strategies and tactics were utilized throughout the campaign including a dedicated webpage (www.hamilton.ca/OwnYourThrone), video creation, and various ads (digital, billboards, media).

In support of these tactics there were multiple opportunities for direct connection with residents through outreach activities. Hamilton Water staff participated in the numerous

events with direct 'Own Your Throne' messaging including: eco-fairs held at schools and public events such as the Hamilton Bulldogs Games.

Prior to the campaign's launch a pre-survey was issued. The survey asked questions relating to bathroom behaviours and awareness of the proper items to flush down the toilet. After the campaign concluded, the same survey was conducted to determine behavioural changes. All areas surveyed saw a positive behavioural change. Two striking results included a 67% increase in awareness that it costs taxpayers money every time a sewer clog needs to be fixed and a 100% increase in awareness that things flushed down your toilet can make it to Hamilton Harbour.

Based on the success and momentum of this campaign, staff are currently in the development stages of a campaign focused on proper disposal of fats, oils and greases - all of which has a direct impact on the proper function of our wastewater infrastructure.

In addition to the local success, the campaign also received two prestigious communications awards in 2019, the IABC Gold Quill Award of Merit under the Government Communication Programs category and a Gold Hermes Creative Award in the Communications/Marketing Campaign category.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report PW16054(a) - Sample 'Own Your Throne' Advertisement