

Formal Presentation to the Public Works Committee, September 20, 2021

By Bob Maton, President of the Ancaster Village Heritage Community, Inc.

Re: Old Dundas Road Sewage Pumping Station (HC005) Emergency Overflow to Ancaster Creek Feasibility Study (PW14107(a)) (Ward 12)

Thank you for the opportunity to present our comments and questions to the Public Works Committee regarding the proposal to pump overflow sanitary effluent into Ancaster Creek from the Sewage Pumping Station located on the flood plain on Old Dundas Road.

This author is President of the Ancaster Village Heritage Community Inc. (AVHC). AVHC is a growing and vibrant neighbourhood association, having more than 100 members and 803 members on our Facebook page, drawn from all of Ancaster. Our mission is to actively work to improve the quality of life of Ancaster residents in areas of preservation of our heritage stock, planning and development, and traffic mitigation.

First, I would like to thank Public Works staff for their recommendation against approval of the proposed sewage overflow pipe into Ancaster Creek.

AVHC fully endorses this recommendation, and acknowledges that staff considers the measure unnecessary because of the City commitment to undertake “EA recommended capital improvements and inflow and infiltration reductions in the sanitary sewer system”. Having said this, however, we do question the report linkage of the remediating of the sanitary sewers to the 100-year storm event basement flood protection expected in the future.¹ It is our understanding that in Ancaster, sanitary sewers and storm sewers are independent systems, thus a high hydraulic grade line in the storm system does not imply the same condition in the sanitary system.

With regard to the reported flooded basements in the low-lying areas we ask the following questions:

Are these basements currently being flooded as a result of high hydraulic grade lines in the storm sewers or in the sanitary sewers?

If they are being flooded by the sanitary sewers, what is causing the high hydraulic grade lines? Is it surface storm drainage being directed improperly into the sanitary system under significant rainfall events?

Is it rising ground water tables following rainfall events infiltrating into the sanitary system?

Is it the over-intensification of the drainage shed including that along Wilson Street from Rousseaux to west of Halson?

Is it a combination of all or some of the above?

Staff anticipates that renovations and upgrades of the Wastewater Pumping Station, along with the other measures mentioned, will cope with both present and future sewage and water runoff

¹ From the Hamilton Public Works staff report: “Old Dundas Road Sewage Pumping Station (HC005) Emergency Overflow to Ancaster Creek Feasibility Study (PW14107(a)) (Ward 12)”. Submitted by Mark Bainbridge, Director, Water and Wastewater Planning and Capital Public Works Department, August 11, 2021.

loads in the valley out to 20-30 years. It is our understanding that multiple dwellings were built on the flood plain below the escarpment in recent years without adequate measures in place to deal with runoff flooding and waste disposal, and consequently these residents have been plagued by flooding of their basements by sewage and runoff. But we are not clear and thus are requiring clarification as to what the real source of basement flooding is.

I won't go into detail about the anticipated environmental and water resource consequences of sewage disposal into Ancaster Creek. These are well-covered in the documents associated with the staff report, and I expect other presenters and delegations will discuss these issues.

The technical issues appear to be complex, but need to be clearly identified further. We understand that the Old Dundas Road Wastewater Pump Station takes sewage collected from Wilson Street extending from Rousseaux Street to west of Halson Street on the escarpment immediately above the flood plain. Flows from side streets located on the north side of Wilson flow to a trunk main on the Rail Trail. This pipe was rehabilitated and coated a year ago. From there the Rail Trail effluent travels into the trunk main on Rousseaux Street to Filman Road, avoiding the descent into the pumping station below Wilson Street. The Pumping Station, having received effluent from Wilson Street to beyond Halson, pumps it back up the hill and into the same trunk main on Rousseaux Street, from where it ultimately flows to the Woodward Waste Treatment Plant.

Our concern is that plans have been presented publicly, and have gone through pre-application consultation, to build a 172-unit, seven-storey Amica retirement development right at the corner of Rousseaux and Wilson Streets, overlooking the valley below.

Further, plans for a 5.5 storey, 129-unit condominium development with 14,000 square feet of commercial space, to be located at the corner of Academy and Wilson Streets, were presented to the Kiwanis Club and to the Councillor's Advisory Council two years ago. We understand that these plans are moving forward, but that the height of this latter development may have increased to 7 storeys since then, which of course would add a significant number of units. In addition to all of these units are the numerous other upcoming commercial and residential developments on Wilson Street to beyond Halson Street.

Although formal permit applications have not been submitted, these plans are clearly mooted, and as we understand it they are within the catchment area of the Wastewater Pumping Station in the valley below. If so, they will add considerable waste effluent, from at least 300-400 residential units and 14,000 sq ft of commercial space to the pipe into the Waste Pumping Station on Old Dundas Road. In addition to all of this, as mentioned, are the numerous other upcoming commercial and residential developments along Wilson Street from Rousseaux to west of Halson.

We must ask, is the Pumping Station to be prepared for this eventuality of significantly increased load? What will be the overall consequences of these developments on sanitary effluent into the Old Dundas Road pipeline and Pumping Station? And what plans are there to mitigate the potential harm caused to the basement properties of those people dwelling close to the Pumping Station, and to the environment, if these developments are executed? Finally, who is footing the bill for this pumping station upgrade, taxpayers or those developers who will submit development applications on Wilson Street to beyond Halson Street?

Once again, thank you to Mark Bainbridge and Public Works staff for their decision to recommend against the waste pipe into Ancaster Creek, and I hope that the Committee will agree with staff and recommend this course of action to Council.

Bob Maton, PhD, President, Ancaster Village Heritage Community

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