





Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 15, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Support for Large Scale Volunteer Clean-up events Update (PW23032) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Rob Wagner (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5379
SUBMITTED BY:	Cynthia Graham Acting Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Angela Storey Director, Waste Management Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Public Works Committee at its meeting of March 20, 2023 approved the following: “That City staff report back to the May 15, 2023 meeting of the Public Works Committee on what would be needed to ensure that the City staff can fully support waste pickup for large community clean-ups including the need for safety and equipment training.”

INFORMATION

Neighbourhood clean-ups of all sizes are supported through the Team Up to Clean Up and Adopt-a-Park programs. Volunteer clean-ups are coordinated on the City’s side by the Clean & Green Coordinator that is part of the Business Programs Section of the Environmental Services Division. The Clean & Green Coordinator’s primary focus is on volunteer coordination, including registration, provision of supplies and arranging the removal of waste collected. It is understood that volunteers are the lifeblood of our

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.

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program and the group is committed to providing volunteers with needed support every step of the way.

Large Events

At the Public Works Committee meeting on March 20, 2023 a delegate highlighted issues they have when coordinating support for larger scale (> 150 volunteers) clean-ups that generally occur on the weekend. As per the process, volunteers looking to utilize the Team Up to Clean Up or Adopt-a-Park program can register through the online intake form found on the City of Hamilton Website. To account for coordination of supplies, volunteers are asked to register their event at least two weeks prior the event date.

As part of the registration process, participants are asked for the following:

- Registrant name and contact information
- Type of registration (one-time event or ongoing)
- Proposed clean-up date, time, and location
- Number of participants
- Supplies required
- After clean-up waste removal method: bring identifiable orange bags home for set out with regular waste on collection day, take their waste and approval waiver to a Community Recycling Centre or request a scheduled pick up by City staff responsible for the asset (i.e. Parks, Roadway Maintenance or Waste Collections)

A scheduled pick-up is often coordinated when a volunteer group is unable to look after the removal of collected items and bags themselves. In the event of a scheduled pick-up, the Clean & Green Coordinator communicates internally with the asset owner in Public Works prior to the event to advise them of their duties related to the pick-up of the volunteer collected waste.

The asset owner (Parks, Roadway Maintenance, Waste Collections) will ensure the dispatch of staff as required to remove the waste at a time following the end of the clean-up and prior to the end of the work shift. From time to time, depending on the date and time of day the clean-up ends, availability of staff and vehicles and the nature of the collected items, the waste may not be collected until the next working day.

One impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was the cancellation followed by a slow return to volunteer clean-ups. In the meantime, organizational structures changed and staff working on the team turned over. This resulted in a gap in the coordination and delivery of some of the services provided, including ensuring staff resources were available to complete scheduled pick-ups of waste following volunteer clean-ups, especially where a

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large number of pick up locations were needed in the same small timeframe (i.e mid-late afternoon on a weekend). Staff who work from 5:30 am to 1:30 pm were assigned to collect waste for clean ups that didn't conclude until after their shift ended. Staff would add the collection to their next days' schedule, however where larger piles of waste was left it had the opportunity to "grow" overnight with non-volunteer collected waste added to the pile.

Solution

As staff gear up for the busy volunteer led clean-up season, procedures have been reviewed and enhanced to ensure waste collected at volunteer clean up events is removed in a timely manner. Coordination efforts between all groups have been confirmed and strong communication is now included so that both volunteer coordinators and staff are all aware of the specifics and can support the larger clean ups. Divisions have agreed to assist each other on clean-up tasks as required. This may require approving overtime for staff outside of their regularly scheduled shift however staff will work well in advance with volunteer coordinators of larger events to ensure dates, times, locations, etc. are clear and accessible for waste removal as applicable to minimize budgetary impacts. Any pressures related to the program will be reported via the annual Clean and Green Hamilton Strategy Communication Update.

As seen in Table 1 of Report PW23032, there was a decrease in the number of Team Up to Clean Up events during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the "large" clean up category and the number of events requiring a scheduled collection. In 2020 there were only eight small events coordinated due to pandemic restrictions, but events began to come back on board in 2021 and 2022. The team is looking forward to working with volunteer clean-up coordinators as the interest in the program begins to return to pre-pandemic levels this year.

Table 1 – Team Up to Clean Up Statistics (2019, 2021/2022 and YTD 2023)

Team Up to Clean Up Statistics				
		2019	2021/22 Average	2023 YTD
Number of Events		164	123	83
Events Requiring Collection	Yes	95	34.5	35
	No	69	88.5	48
Total Volunteers		7749	4007	8267
Average Number of Volunteers per event		47.25	32.90	99.67
Number of Events > or = 150 Volunteers		11	9	24

Health and Safety Training

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As seen in the motion from the March 20, 2023 Public Works Committee Meeting, Staff have been asked to ensure safety training is made available to volunteers for their clean-up events. The current safety training protocol includes the provision of a Volunteer Manual that lists Health & Safety instructions and information. The instructions and information includes:

- Visit the cleanup location before your cleanup date to look for possible hazards.
- Arrange for adult supervision if you have youth volunteers.
- Make sure volunteers are safe during the event.
- Wear a safety vest or bright clothing so volunteers can find you easily in an emergency.
- Have all volunteers work in pairs or small groups.
- Ensure all volunteers wear work gloves and closed toe shoes.
- Have young volunteers ask an adult first if they are unsure about picking up a piece of litter.
- Remind volunteers to wash hands before eating and at the end of the day.
- Keep sunscreen and insect repellent on hand.
- Make sure all volunteers drink water and keep hydrated.
- Suspend the cleanup during bad weather (fog, thunder, and lightning)

There will be an addition to the list above that emphasizes that volunteers should only collect litter that they can safely collect and carry to the collection point. Large items, such as bulk items, should be left and reported for City of Hamilton staff to collect.

Group leaders are provided with gloves for every volunteer as well as garbage pickers. Safety tips are communicated to the volunteer groups and a phone number is provided if hazardous items are spotted (such as hypodermic needles, syringes, broken glass, animal carcasses, biohazards). Volunteer registrants acknowledge and confirm that they have read and understand the safety information provided and agree to share it with event participants.

Through this information report staff consider the matter respecting support for large scale clean-up events as complete and can be removed from the Public Works Committee Outstanding Business List.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A