CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

Public Health Committee: March 17, 2025

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR T. HWANG……

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR N. NANN…….…….…….....

Black Soot Residue Sampling and Testing in Wards 3 and 4

WHEREAS, Wards 3 and 4 residents have raised concerns about their mental and physiological health due to black soot residue deposits on their residential properties; and on city properties, facilities and assets such as local parks and play structures;

WHEREAS, children and pets are coming in contact with this black soot residue when playing outside, putting them at risk of exposure through inhalation, absorption, and ingestion, and acting as vectors by inadvertently bringing the residue indoors;

WHEREAS, the black soot residue is affecting residents' enjoyment of their properties because they must clean their outdoor furniture before every use, keep their windows closed at all times to prevent the residue from entering their homes, and clean indoor surfaces like carpets, window sills and counters when the residue gets inside;

WHEREAS, the black soot residue is affecting residents’ enjoyment of City properties and assets;

WHEREAS, the residents of Hamilton reported the black soot residue to the environmental pollution regulator (Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)), who in turn, in some cases, took samples of the residue and tested these;

WHEREAS, Wards 3 and 4 are receiving an increasing number of complaints, therefore referring an increasing number of complaints to MECP, but with no improvement to quality of life for residents nor indication from MECP that they are addressing the issue, and this gap in MECP’s response to the issue is why we need Public Health to intervene;

WHEREAS, soot is usually black carbon. It is a component of fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5). It comes from the incomplete combustion of wood and fossil fuels (a process that also creates carbon dioxide (CO2), carbon monoxide (CO), and volatile organic compounds). Black carbon warms the atmosphere because it is very good at absorbing light. It warms the air and surfaces in regions where it is concentrated and can cause weather patterns and ecosystem cycles to change. Even though black

carbon can stay in the atmosphere from days to weeks, it has significant direct and indirect impacts on the climate, snow and ice, agriculture, and human health;

WHEREAS, according to Health Canada, fine particulate matter is associated with negative health outcomes, including eye, nose, throat and lung irritation, decreased lung function, and aggravated lung and heart conditions, and according to a 2024 study of airborne nanoparticles in Toronto and Montreal by Marshall Lloyd et al., “long-term exposure to outdoor ultrafine particles was associated with increased risk of mortality;”

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton has no regulatory authority over pollution but does have a public health responsibility; and

WHEREAS, investigating and addressing, within municipal jurisdiction, the health impacts of this black soot residue aligns with this Term of Council’s priority 2 of “Safe and Thriving Neighbourhoods,” including vibrant parks, recreation, and public spaces.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

(a) That Public Health Services' staff be directed to work with a third-party vendor to develop a feasibility study with options to perform particulate matter (black soot) residue sampling and testing in Wards 3 and 4 in the city of Hamilton, and report back to the Public Health Sub-Committee in Q2 2025;

(b) That all costs associated with the development of the feasibility study outlined in recommendation (a), be funded equally from the Ward 3 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309300 ($5,000) and the Ward 4 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309400 ($5,000); at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed $10,000; and

(c) That the Director, Healthy Environments Division, Public Health Services, or designate, be authorized and directed to execute any required agreement(s) and ancillary documents, with such terms and conditions in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.