

The Hamilton Spectator  
Day: Saturday Date: 3/13/2010  
Section: Local Page: A3 Edition: MET  
Dateline:

## **Awash with a ripple effect**

### **New membrane system will mean harbour is cleaner**

Emma Reilly The Hamilton Spectator

City staff say upgrading Hamilton's wastewater treatment plant will have a billion-dollar impact on the region.

The \$700 million upgrade to the Woodward Avenue Wastewater Treatment plant will not only help the environment, but will also offer economic and social benefits, said Jim Harnum, the city's senior director of Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure.

Yesterday, the provincial and federal governments announced they are each contributing \$100 million to the project.

The upgrades to the Woodward Avenue Wastewater Treatment plant will boost the plant's capacity from 409 million litres a day to 500 million litres a day. The facility is currently operating at about 85 per cent capacity.

Without the expansion, the city says it won't be able to accommodate future development. The upgrades are so important to Hamilton's future that city council floated the possibility of a development freeze if the upper levels of government didn't provide the \$200-million.

The upgrades will have a ripple effect on several areas of the city.

Jim Hudson, the executive director of the Bay Area Restoration Council, called the investment "the biggest piece left in the jigsaw puzzle of cleaning up the harbour."

"It's going to do a lot to improve the level of phosphorous in the harbour, which of course has implications for algae," he said. Phosphorus encourages algae growth.

John Baird, Canada's Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, who made the announcement with Brad Duguid, Ontario Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, said, "This, in many respects, is not an infrastructure investment, it's not an environmental investment, it's a morality investment.

"It's just morally wrong to be dumping what amounts to secondary raw sewage into Hamilton Harbour and Lake Ontario."

Delisting the harbour as a pollution hot spot is also expected to help boost shipping and combat the stigma that keeps businesses away from Hamilton.

Finally, the expansion will also help the city manage storms and wet weather, which will prevent

flooding in the lower city. Flooding has cost the city millions of dollars in repairs and compensation cheques to residents.

"It's not just an environmental solution," Harnum said. "It's also an economic solution, which then helps us solve some of our social problems here as well."

[ereilly@thespec.com](mailto:ereilly@thespec.com)

905-526-2452

## WASTEWATER FACTS AND QUESTIONS

What the wastewater treatment plant upgrade means for Hamilton

- \* Less flooding and sewer backups in the lower city during storms.
- \* Helps delist the harbour as a Great Lakes pollution hot spot.
- \* Gives the plant more capacity to accommodate new growth and development.
- \* New jobs created for construction work.

What will the money be used for?

- \* A new membrane filtration system that will remove an extra 6,800 kilograms of contaminant from the water each day and allow the plant to process more sewage.
- \* A new chlorination tank with a bigger capacity.
- \* New discharge pipe that will send clean water into Red Hill Creek.
- \* Electrical updates that will modernize the system and give the plant capacity to power the upgrades.

Pollutants entering the harbour before and after the upgrade (measured in kg/per day)

Ammonia: 2,971, reduced to 1,000 by 2014

Phosphorus: 207 today reduced to 74

Suspended solids: 6,918 to 1,488

**Caption:** Photo: Ron Albertson, the Hamilton Spectator  
Hamilton's wastewater treatment plant. Upgrades will improve quality of water discharge.

Photo: Ron Albertson, the Hamilton Spectator  
Federal cabinet minister John Baird, left, and Ontario cabinet minister Brad Duguid, were in Hamilton to announce funding.

**Keywords:** News