



CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION
Corporate Services – Environment Section

TO: Chair and Members of the Community and Corporate Services Committee
SUBJECT: Clean Air Plan & 2006 Smog Summit

Report Number: CORPSERV-5/06 Report Date: April 10, 2006
Author(s): Fleur Storace-Hogan Date to Committee: May 9, 2006
Telephone: 905-335-7600 Ext. 7580 Date to Council: May 23, 2006
Ward(s) Affected: 1 2 3 4 5 6 All File Number(s): 210-05-04

APPROVALS: Department Head General Manager City Manager

To be completed by the Clerks Department

Committee Disposition & Comments
Council Disposition & Comments
01- Approved 02 - Not Approved 03 - As Amended 04 - Referred 05 - Deferred 06 - Received & Filed 07 - Withdrawn

1.0 RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council adopt the Clean Air Plan, replacing the Halton Public Sector Smog Response Plan first adopted in 2000.

THAT a member of Council be authorized to attend the 7th annual Smog Summit being held in Toronto on June 7th and 8th, 2006 and sign the Toronto and Region Inter-governmental Declaration on Clean Air on June 7th on behalf of the City of Burlington.

THAT a member of Council participate in the air quality sampling exercise to take place in Burlington a week prior to the Smog Summit as part of the 2006 Smog Summit activities/events.

2.0 PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is twofold:

- 1) To provide information regarding the activities planned for the 2006 Smog Summit; and
- 2) To explain the need to replace the current *Halton Public Sector Smog Response Plan* with the new *Clean Air Plan*.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Smog Summit

The first Smog Summit was held in June 2000 as a result of a report released by the Toronto Medical Officer of Health entitled *Air Pollution Burden of Illness in Toronto*. The author stated that 1,000 Toronto residents died prematurely each year due to poor air quality. Members of the GTA-Clean Air Council have helped organize smog summits annually ever since.

The GTA-Clean Air Council (GTA-CAC) is a working group consisting of all levels of government that promote the reduction of air pollution emissions and increased awareness of regional air quality issues in the GTA. The GTA-CAC members meet monthly and the City of Burlington is an active participant.

Since 2002, a City of Burlington councillor has attended the annual Smog Summit and signed the *Toronto and Region Inter-governmental Declaration on Clean Air*, demonstrating the City's commitment to air quality issues. Staff provided an update of the City's ongoing clean air initiatives in February 2006 (CORPSERV-1/06, CC-28-06).

The 2006 Smog Summit will once again take place on Clean Air Day, June 7, 2006. Clean Air Day was proclaimed by the Government of Canada in 1999 to increase public awareness and action on clean air and climate change. Other dates of importance that week are World Environment Day (June 5), Canadian Environment Week (June 4-10), Commuter Challenge Week (June 4-10), and Bike Week (June 3-10). City staff members are proposing to celebrate this important week by asking staff and the community to participate in the Commuter Challenge, offering free Burlington Transit on Clean Air Day, setting up a display at a community facility and participating in the Smog Summit.

Clean Air Plan

In 1999, the Halton Public Sector Smog Response Committee (later renamed Halton Partners for Clean Air) was formed due to a growing concern regarding the health and environmental impacts of smog. The 12-member public sector organization included representation from Halton Region, area municipalities, hydro utilities, local school boards, and Conservation Halton. The committee identified joint actions that could be carried out to minimize the partners' impact on smog and produced the *Halton Public Sector Smog Response Plan*¹. All partners, including Burlington City Council, endorsed the plan in 2000 (D&I-1/00, CD-21-00).

¹ Halton Partners for Clean Air. 2001. A *Halton Public Sector Smog Response Plan*. Available at http://www.halton.ca/health/programs/healthyenvir/healthyenvir_PDFs/Smog%20Plan%202001.pdf

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That same year a city staff team, called the Air Quality Initiatives Committee, was formed to implement the plan. Members included the Environmental Coordinator, the Health and Safety Coordinator, and representatives from Engineering, Finance, Fire, Building, Roads and Parks Maintenance, Traffic and Transit, and Parks and Recreation.

The first year of implementation was wet and cool with only three smog advisories each lasting a day. In 2001 and 2002, there were 20 and 18 smog days respectively. With more smog days came an increasing challenge for staff to maintain services in fewer days. Such difficulty prompted city staff to investigate alternative, less polluting fuel options such as bio-diesel. Between May and September 2003, bio-diesel was piloted for off road unlicensed vehicles allowing city maintenance operations to continue during smog advisories. This has been the practice ever since.

In 2003, Halton Partners for Clean Air realized that in order for the partnership to continue its influence, leadership needed to be broadened beyond the public sector. The committee decided to expand its mandate to include roles for the private sector, community/consumer groups and provincial ministries. The new terms of reference was adopted by Burlington City Council in 2004 (D&I-1/04, CD-5-04).

Historically, the *Halton Public Sector Smog Response Plan* focussed on actions that public sector agencies could employ to reduce their impact on air quality when the Ministry of the Environment issued a smog advisory. Due to the significant number of smog advisories in 2005, there were discussions on shifting the focus of the plan to longer term, more permanent actions to reduce air pollutants. This resulted in the change from *Smog Response Plan* to *Clean Air Plan*.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan

The City's participation in intergovernmental, business and community initiatives such as the *Clean Air Plan* and the 2006 Smog Summit correspond with the long and short-term goals of the strategic plan, *Future Focus VI ... Pillars for Success*.

Long Term Goal Statement – Liveable Community #2

- The City will be a leader in making a high level of environmental performance one of the primary goals of its policies, programs and operations, and in the actions of its citizens, to provide the highest quality of life for all.

Short-term goals

- Burlington will maintain a corporate awareness of environmental improvement in all its daily operations.
- The City will enhance the quality of air, land, water and the City's natural heritage.
- The City will increase citizen and business awareness and participation in improving the environment.

Strategy

- Seek environmentally friendly opportunities in City operations and services that are planned and implemented in a responsible manner.
- Participate in municipal and/or other programs designed to improve air, land, water quality and the natural heritage.

4.0 DISCUSSION:

2006 Smog Summit

The theme of the 2006 Smog Summit is “The Role of Partnerships for Clean Air.” The scope of the summit will be broadened outside the GTA with the goal of identifying the status of air pollution reduction commitments and highlighting best practices in improving air quality and addressing climate change, both in the U.S. and Canada.

Proposed events or activities for the 2006 Smog Summit currently include:

- An updated www.smogsummit.org website providing online registration, a list of planned activities and a contact person for any inquiries regarding Smog Summit events.
- A public component including:
 - An essay contest open to grade 5 students across the GTA to “Tell Us Your Air Pollution Solution.” Winners will be announced at the Fresh Air Fair on June 4th and the first place winner will also read their essay at the Smog Summit on June 7th. A travelling exhibit of the essay contest is also proposed for the summer at city halls across the GTA.
 - The Fresh Air Fair, a public event catered to families with small children, will take place on June 4th (11:00am-3:00pm) in Toronto’s Dundas Square. A DVD will be created at the fair and presented at the Smog Summit on June 7th.
- A political and media activity to help promote the Smog Summit and to focus attention on the importance of joint actions to address local air quality issues.
 - Politicians from across the GTA can choose to participate in an air quality sampling exercise within their municipality a week or two before the Summit (i.e. near a school, hospital, park, and/or a major intersection). Air quality samples will be taken to demonstrate that air pollution is a GTA-wide issue.
 - A technical briefing with the media on June 6th will highlight the results of the air quality sampling exercise.
- The Smog Summit:
 - Political representatives from all levels of government within the GTA will gather in Toronto at City Hall on June 7th to publicly sign the *Toronto and Region Inter-governmental Declaration on Clean Air*, to report on progress made since last year’s summit, and to announce new initiatives for government action to reduce smog. This year’s joint actions are summarized in Appendix A. A video highlighting events at the Fresh Air Fair will also be viewed at the Summit.
 - The Best Practices Exchange will begin after signing the declaration on the 7th and conclude on the 8th.
 - A gala is planned for the evening of June 7th at the Royal Ontario Museum.
- A summary of the 2006 Smog Summit events will be presented at the 2nd annual provincial Shared Air Summit on June 26th.

Clean Air Plan

On March 23, 2006, Halton Partners for Clean Air members approved the *Clean Air Plan* (Appendix B) and agreed to bring it back to their respective councils, boards, etc. for formal endorsement.

The purpose of the *Clean Air Plan* continues to be the same as the previous *Smog Response Plan*. That is, to:

- Increase the level of awareness about air pollution within all sectors in Halton;
- Recognize our collective role in the cause of air pollution;
- Increase our understanding of the impact of poor air quality on the environment and our health; and,
- Promote actions that can be taken to achieve improved air quality throughout the year and specifically on smog advisory days.

The *Clean Air Plan* is targeted to the public and private sectors and individuals in the community. It begins with a brief background about Halton Partners for Clean Air followed by the health and economic impacts of smog. The main components of smog are then identified and described. Next, Ontario's air quality monitoring system is explained followed by projects that are underway to improve local air quality data. The *Clean Air Plan* also includes two sections that can be stand alone units; the first section is for employers and employees (public and private sectors) and the second section is for community members and individuals. Employers are asked to develop clean air plans and to disseminate the information to their employees. Suggestions are included in a checklist format to facilitate this process, highlighting short and long-term goals that employers and employees can achieve to reduce their impact on air quality. Community members are also asked to develop personal clean air plans, with a checklist of suggested actions included. The goal is to incorporate proactive measures to reduce overall emissions throughout the year and not just reactionary steps that are only taken on smog days.

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS:

There is no cost to participate in the 2006 Smog Summit, other than travel to Toronto. Printing costs for the *Clean Air Plan* will be covered in the 2006 current budget for the Environment Section. The consideration of new actions to reduce the city's impact on local air quality will be reviewed by staff through a cost/benefit analysis and dealt with through the annual budgetary process if necessary.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS:

The term 'smog' is used to describe a mixture of pollutants, primarily made up of ground level ozone (O₃) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Other major precursors include sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), carbon monoxide (CO) and ammonia (NH₃). Elevated levels of this mixture deteriorate air quality, impacting human and ecological health and the economy.

Approximately 55 per cent of ozone and particulate matter measured in southern Ontario are transboundary and attributed to the long-range transport of these pollutants and their precursors from the United States. In some areas along the northern shores of Lake Erie, the eastern shores of Lake Huron, and the extreme southwest parts of the province along the US border, this figure is about 90 per cent. Despite this large contribution from our neighbours, local emission problems are still present within Ontario. For example, during a smog episode in the GTA,

approximately half of the PM_{2.5} emissions are from human activity in Ontario^{2,3}. This shows that we all need to take action to reduce smog precursors. Doing so will not only be beneficial for Ontarians but also for residents of Quebec, upper New York state, Vermont and New Hampshire, who are the recipients of Ontario's pollution.

7.0 COMMUNICATION MATTERS:

Environment staff will work with Halton Partners for Clean Air to raise awareness of the *Clean Air Plan* to staff, businesses and the community. Staff will also provide a link for the Smog Summit on the Environment page of the City's website.

8.0 CONCLUSION:

Adopting the *Clean Air Plan* and the city's involvement in the 2006 Smog Summit will ensure that air quality issues remain at the forefront of discussions. Actions that can be taken to reduce smog precursors will be beneficial to everyone living in our airshed.

Respectfully submitted,

Fleur Storace-Hogan
Environmental Projects

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Appendices:

A: Intergovernmental Declaration on Clean Air (draft summary)
B: Clean Air Plan

Staff / Others Consulted:

Name	Telephone
Air Quality Initiatives Team	
Environmental Management Team	
Energy Management Team	
Sustainable Development Committee	
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² Ontario Ministry of the Environment. 2005. *Smog Alert Response: A municipal guide to action*. Available at <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/5093e.pdf>

³Yap, D., N. Reid, G. De Brou, and R. Bloxam. June 2005. *Transboundary Air Pollution in Ontario*. Ministry of the Environment. <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/techdocs/5158e.pdf>

Notifications:

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Special Instructions:

Consent agenda

Appendix A: Preliminary Summary of Action Items for the 2006 *Toronto and Region Intergovernmental Declaration on Clean Air*

On June 8th, 2006, elected officials from municipalities across the GTA, and the provincial and federal governments, will gather in Toronto to sign the 2006 *Toronto and Region Intergovernmental Declaration on Clean Air*. A copy of last year's declaration is available on the GTA Clean Air Partnership website at <http://www.smogsummit.org>.

The following is a draft summary of preliminary actions under consideration by the GTA Clean Air Council to be incorporated into this year's declaration. The final copy of the declaration will be presented at the 2006 Smog Summit.

GTA Clean Air Council Action Items:

Recognizing the health impacts associated with smog and extreme heat, research existing municipal heat-health alert systems with the goal of eventually developing a system to provide advanced warning to at risk individuals in the GTA.

Research methods to facilitate the development of renewable energy projects in the GTA.

Promote low cost energy efficiency options with short payback periods for commercial buildings and recreational facilities.

Encourage actions that can be taken to reduce childhood exposure to air pollutants on board school buses while improving air quality.

Research actions that municipal partners are taking to reduce emissions associated with off-road equipment and heavy-duty vehicles.

Support green buildings by researching existing programs, policies and standards in municipalities in and around the GTA.