



Hamilton

**City of Hamilton - Hamilton Water**  
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April 8, 2020

Dear Beach Blvd. Area Resident,

### **Re: High Water Levels – Sanitary Sewer Flooding & Directing Basement Floodwaters**

In recent years, the levels of Lake Ontario during the Spring and early Summer have set records. This season we are witnessing higher than normal levels, consistent with this recent trend.

In preparation for higher than normal Lake Ontario levels, we're writing to request that if you have a sump pump or are planning to pump basement floodwaters into a basement sink, drain or laundry tub, that you stop this action.

**ENSURE THAT YOU REDIRECT ALL BASEMENT FLOODWATER  
TO THE ROADWAY**

### **Why is this Important?**

Those that pump into a basement sink or laundry tub add excess water into the sanitary sewer system. The sanitary sewer is much smaller than the storm sewers and cannot take this volume of floodwaters.

Water that you flush down your toilet, rinse down your sinks, tubs, clothes washers and dishwashers go into the sanitary sewer system where it is then pumped to the treatment facility to undergo costly physical and biological treatment. If residents direct the floodwaters from their homes into the sanitary sewer system through a sink or laundry tub it could:

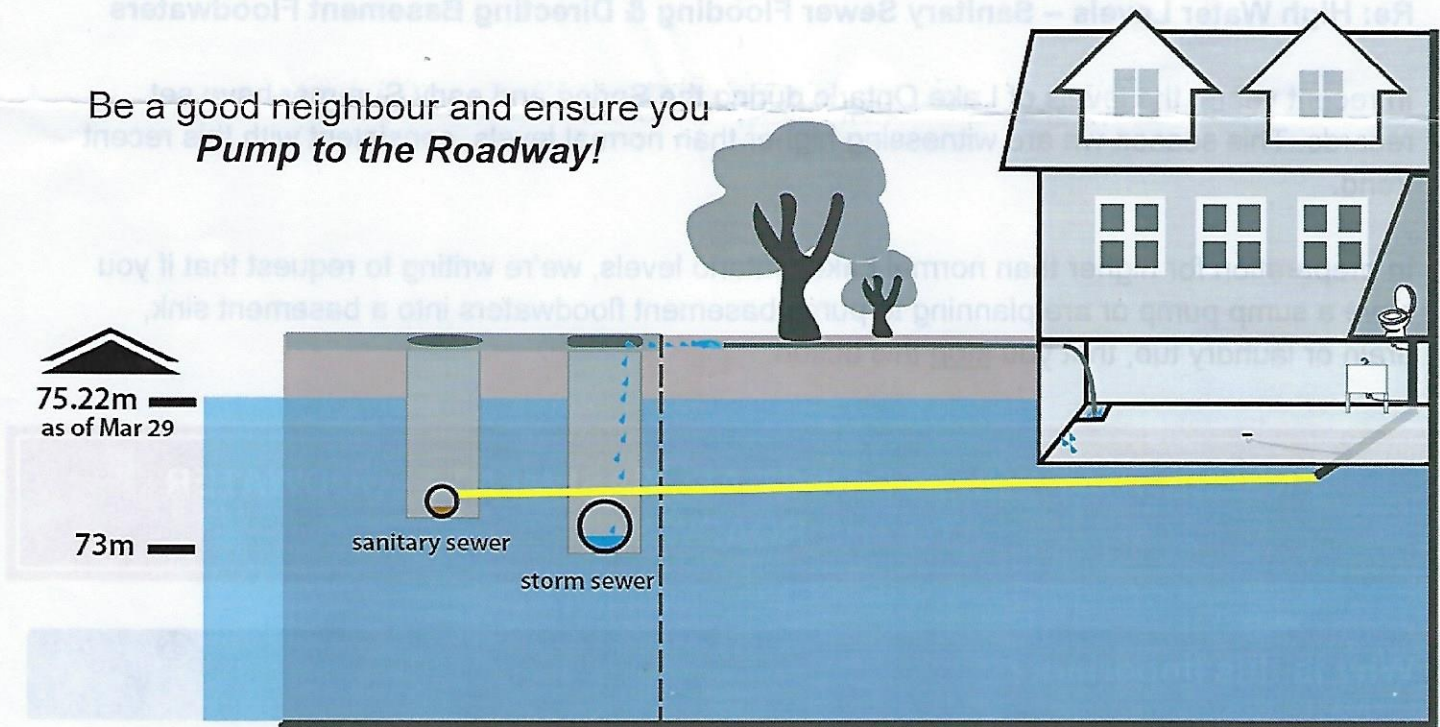
- overwhelm the sanitary system
- limit the ability of the sanitary system to take away the home's sanitary wastewater
- cause interior home flooding
- increase flow to the treatment plant to clean unnecessary lake water
- impact your neighbours



## High Water Level Impacts

The sewers collecting sanitary wastewater from homes in this area are between 73m and 74.5m above sea level (as shown below). The current water level is 75.22m and homes with basements or crawlspaces are already seeing impacts with basement flooding due to infiltration through joints or cracks in basement walls. The storm sewer as shown below is much larger and takes rainwater and the high water level sump pump water directly to the environment. If residents pump into a basement drain, sink or laundry tub, it leads to the smaller sanitary sewer and has significant impact on the sanitary sewer system function, the wastewater treatment plant and can flood your neighbours.

Be a good neighbour and ensure you  
***Pump to the Roadway!***



## Beach Blvd Area Sanitary Sewer System

In most communities, wastewater collection systems are graded to flow down towards the wastewater treatment plant. The Beach Blvd neighbourhood is a low-lying area where the sanitary wastewater needs to be pumped at multiple points to make it up to the wastewater treatment plant. The Beach Blvd area has 24 inground and above ground pump stations with multiple pumps at each location that service just this small Beach Blvd area. This sanitary wastewater then makes its way to the Eastport Pump Station where it is then pumped to the Woodward Wastewater Treatment Plant.

With this complex system, even minor equipment failures can prevent homes and businesses from being able to flush toilets and do laundry, and the messes in basements are much worse than those caused by flood waters. In both 2017 and 2019, with the Beach Blvd. pump



stations running constantly, there had been a number of failures that nearly resulted in a loss of wastewater services to the community. This is a great reminder to **Only Flush the 3P's – Pee, Poo and Toilet Paper**, as anything else like wipes, paper towels or tissues can clog, stop and even damage these wastewater pumps. While Hamilton Water staff have been doing a great job mitigating these failures before they impact the community, that may not always be the case.

## What is the City Doing to Help?

With the changing conditions and impacts to this community, the City has completed and continues to work on the following:

- In 2019, the City completed a technical study to assess the existing stormwater drainage infrastructure in the Beach Blvd area. The study findings included:
  - the need to increase the flow capacity of the existing storm sewer systems
  - potentially including construction of new stormwater pumping stations
  - 0.5 metre increase in the lowest allowable floor elevation for new construction
- Beginning in 2020, the City is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) to determine the preferred solution for stormwater infrastructure improvements that will address the identified drainage concerns in the Beach Blvd area. Public and regulatory agency consultation will be conducted to assist the City in identifying the best long-term infrastructure solutions for the community. Engineering design of the drainage improvements is expected to commence in 2021 following completion of the EA.
- The City has been completing sewer investigations to review the status and function of the sewers and also to determine if there is any inappropriate sewer use.
- The City is currently looking at several pump stations along Beach Blvd to make improvements to support the efficient movement of sanitary wastewater.
- In 2020 or early 2021, the City will be moving forward with a plan to address the increased flows in the sanitary sewer system.
- The City is working with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to investigate the condition of existing drainage culverts extending under the QEW from the Beach Blvd neighbourhood to Hamilton Harbour to ensure they remain fully functional.
- The City is continuing to use the same annual overland pumping and vacuum truck strategy to assist with the excess water in the Beach Blvd area. These temporary solutions are very costly, and we need residents to ensure that you **Pump to the**



**Roadway** so the wastewater and stormwater can be effectively managed during times of increased lake levels.

- The City is providing an exemption to the Property Standards By-law (sec.21(2)) during times of high water levels so that residents can discharge floodwaters onto the roadways.

We appreciate your continued support and the support for your neighbours who may be impacted. Please help your neighbours and help Hamilton Water staff by directing your flood water to the roadway where it is easier to control.

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