

Information Report



Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Friday, September 25, 2020
Subject	Sharps Kiosks – Increasing Access and Community Safety

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report provides background and information regarding a collaborative approach between the City of Guelph, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) and ARCH to address the ongoing issue of improperly disposed of hypodermic sharps within the community.

Key Findings

A request for Sharps Kiosks to be installed in public spaces within the City of Guelph was received from the director of HIV/AIDS Resources & Community Health (ARCH), to the Mayor's Office in October 2018. Since then, the City's Solid Waste Resources division has been working with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) and ARCH to develop an approach to address the ongoing issue of improperly disposed of hypodermic sharps within the community. The goal of this collaboration is to decrease the health and safety risk to the public and City staff as well as decrease the costs associated with handling improper disposal of sharps. Staff are recommending to proceed with the installation of additional kiosks in locations where discarded needles are currently being found.

Improper disposal of hypodermic needles has become a dangerous and costly issue for the City. Installing Sharps Kiosks in the public spaces would provide convenient, safe disposal sites, reducing the number of sharps exposures for citizens of Guelph.

The City's Building our Future priority within the Strategic Plan encompasses the work of building safe and healthy communities, including mitigating challenges associated with addictions.

Financial Implications

Potential costs to the City include installation costs of concrete pads in locations that do not have concrete already installed, for a total cost of \$3,600.

Report

Background

Health and Safety

Improperly disposed of hypodermic needles continue to put the public and City workers' health and safety at risk. Specifically, downtown maintainers, parks staff, and the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) sorting staff are the primary City staff that come into contact with improperly disposed of sharps on a regular basis. They require proper training on handling these materials.

Public exposure to sharps that have been improperly disposed also puts the health and safety of the community at risk. Many of the top recommended locations are public parks where families and children could be exposed.

Cost to the City

When improperly disposed of needles are found in City owned areas, or City staff come into contact with these needles, there is a cost to redirect the material to proper disposal. When hazardous materials appear on the sorting line at the City's MRF, a temporary shutdown occurs. For sharps alone, the total downtime in 2019 was eight hours. The two key measures of a plant shutdown are material loss and cost. Material loss occurs when sharps are spotted on the sorting line and any materials surrounding them must not be handled for health and safety reasons. This material is diverted to a residue bunker. For every hour of shutdown, the average loss of material is approximately five tonnes of recoverable material. The total production cost for one hour of downtime is \$1,300, which includes labour costs, loss of revenue, and disposal cost of lost material (\$10,400 total in 2019).

Current City Practice

City staff require training for proper handling in the event they may encounter improperly disposed of sharps through their work. The City's health and safety team, in collaboration with ARCH, has implemented measures to reduce risk to staff. For example, all staff within the Parks department have completed training with ARCH, and all Parks vehicles are equipped with disposal containers, gloves, and tongs. Improperly disposed of sharps are collected and brought to the City's Household Hazardous Waste Depot to be properly disposed of.

Currently, sharps disposal containers are located in the following locations: washrooms of City parks, recreation facilities, on the main floor of City Hall, three libraries, and court services.

Collaborations

The top priority kiosk locations have been identified by ARCH based on the location and number of calls received for improperly disposed of sharps within the City. Careful consideration has been given to each location. Comparator municipalities (Durham and Waterloo Region) have shown a significant increase on return rates after installing kiosks by comparing the number of sharps provided by health units to the usage of the kiosks.

Communications

The City will implement communications to educate residents about the community benefit of outdoor sharps kiosks. The City will also work with project partners to get information about the kiosks to people who need it.

Locations

There are seven locations that have been selected. Five are located on City-owned property, one on Guelph Junction Railway (GJR) property, and one on Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) property. They are listed below. Please see Attachment-1 for images of locations.

1. Chapel Ln. by Royal City Church (City owned)
2. Goldie Mill (City owned)
3. Transit Terminal (City owned)
4. Wellington Plaza (City owned)
5. Royal City Park (City owned)
6. River trail by Eramosa Rd. (GJR owned)
7. Marianne's Park (GRCA owned)

Financial Implications

Potential costs to the City include installation costs of concrete pads in locations that do not have concrete already installed, for a total cost of \$3,600. The City will also be responsible for maintenance and removal of the concrete pads if necessary. WDGPH will provide funding for purchasing and maintaining the kiosks and ARCH will be responsible for the costs of servicing the kiosks. Costs may be offset by reduced downtime in the City's Material Recovery Facility associated with diverting material containing sharps.

Consultations

Solid Waste staff have consulted other departments that already have kiosks installed in their facilities, including Parks and Recreation, Corporate Facilities, Libraries, Operations, and Legal, Realty and Court Services.

The City is committed to working with WDGPH to install the kiosks. Legal Services has been engaged in the development of agreements with WDGPH, GJR and GRCA.

Solid Waste staff have been working with Communications; the City will implement communications to educate residents about the community benefit of outdoor sharps kiosks. The City will also work with project partners to get information about the kiosks to people who need it.

Strategic Plan Alignment

These recommendations align with the City's Strategic Plan through the strategic priority of Building our Future. The strategic direction of these recommendations is to continue to build safe and healthy communities, enhancing community safety by providing safe disposal sites for hypodermic sharps.

Attachments

Attachment-1: Sharps Kiosk Locations

Departmental Approval

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