

Below are my official comments regarding the proposed expansion of the sewage treatment plant in the Glen Abbey area of Oakville.

General Comment:

I believe that staff needs to recommend to council that the approval of the expansion of the Mid Halton Plant must be delayed until more studies into alternate technologies, alternate sites, wind direction, odour management and effect on algae in the lake have been completed.

I believe that staff should recommend to council that the public comment period be extended so that the public can find out more and gain assurances that any future expansion plan will not diminish their quality of life, the environment, or the value of their property.

Specific Comments:

1. I do not think that any one or two sewage treatment plants in Halton should be forced to receive the bulk of the sewage from the rest of the region. I think sewage should be treated in several smaller plants throughout the region.
2. I do not think the lake should be used as a dumping ground for sewage plant waste water. If the creeks can't take it, neither should the lake. This is where we get our drinking water! Surely we have outlived the old slogan: "dilution is the solution to pollution". This is not a sustainable method of dealing with human and industrial waste.
3. I do not accept the theory that this is only a first step to decide to expand the plant, and that methods etc. will be looked at later. To make wise decisions, I believe one must look at the whole plan before deciding to go forward. I believe residents who are paying for this deserve this information. I am not impressed with the "preferred" treatment methods mentioned to date e.g. mixing the sludge from the plan with cement dust and calling it fertilizer. The technology exists that would result in much more useful bi-products – such as pure elements and clean water. Technology exists that would allow Milton to process its own waste.
4. I would like new, improved alternate methods of sewage treatment to be examined closely before this plant expansion is approved. Someone at the region said that they tried the membrane technology and that it doesn't work. I have received information that the membrane technology has been vastly improved in the last few years. I would suggest that you take another look at it. As with all new technology, significant improvements can be made in a relatively short period of time. If environment conscious countries like Singapore have selected the membrane technology (from a company in Oakville!!!) for their sewage

treatment why aren't we at least giving it a serious consideration. This technology would allow for smaller sewage treatment plants. No one community would be forced to take the sewage from the others.

5. I do not believe that the buffers between the plant and the very large residential area nearby are adequate. Meeting "minimum ministry standards" is not good enough. I also think that the Sixteen Mile Creek valley would channel odour down into south Oakville. QEW and the escarpment would also play a part in where the odour from the plant goes. How much have the effects of the valley, the highway, the escarpment been considered?

6. Your statements about wind direction use averages. I would like to see wind direction broken down by the month. What if the wind blows from the east all year except July and August, when it could blow from the west. This would not necessarily show up when you are using only averages.

7. Cost: I would also like to go on record as objecting to the fact that I will have to pay for this expansion. This expansion would not be needed if the communities in the region were not so determined to allow huge expansions in industrial and residential development. Developers are getting rich from these political decisions, and I think in the very least that they could pay for ALL of the required infrastructure.

Should you decide that the Mid Halton plant must be expanded:

I demand a promise that odour will never be an issue, that odour management be given top priority, and that all odour prevention and management be taken from a budget that is an integral part of the basic plan. I am opposed to odour being dealt with only as it arises, where funds would have to be sought from council to deal with it.

I understand that "odour" is not even listed as one of the components to study in the study criteria for this plan. I would like to know why it was verbally mentioned at the public meeting, but does not appear in writing where the study criteria is listed. I would like to know why the only study into odour to date was done in October. I notice that you now you state that you will do a study in the summer. This appears to be the result of public pressure from the November public meeting. It seems to me that only with public pressure do you do the right thing. How can I trust that you will do the right thing as we move forward?

In summary, I would like a swift and detailed response to the following questions:

1. Why do you consider it acceptable to create further pollution to Lake Ontario when technology exists that would prevent this.
2. What other sites were considered, and why were they rejected?

3. Why were “odour” and “phosphorous increase to the lake” not listed among the region’s preliminary criteria for evaluating wastewater servicing alternatives? I must insist that in the very least that they be added to the criteria list.
4. Will you do wind studies that consider the following (before approving the expansion plan): wind direction on a monthly basis, the effect of the highway, the river valley, the escarpment etc. on wind direction?

I look forward to your reply.

Linda Berzins
Oakville resident

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