



**DATE:** December 12, 2017 **REPORT NO.** PHSS2017-125

**TO:** Chair and Members  
Committee of the Whole – Operations and Administration

**FROM:** Jo Cupoli-Atanas, General Manager  
Health and Human Services

**PREPARED BY:** Aja Peterson, Project Manager  
Office of Safe Brantford

Aaron Wallace, Director  
Strategic Planning and Community Partnerships

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**1.0 TYPE OF REPORT** **CONSENT ITEM** [  ]  
**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION** [  ]

**2.0 TOPIC**

Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan [Financial Impact - \$72,000] (PHSS2017-125)

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**3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Report PHSS2017-125 Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to implement the proposed Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan for a period of one year as outlined in this report and to provide a program summary for Council’s review; and
- C. THAT the General Manager of Health and Human Services BE DIRECTED to execute a one year agreement between the City of Brantford and the Brant

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County Health Unit for the funding of a full-time Community Health Broker to coordinate proactive needle discovery and retrieval; and

D. THAT the one-time cost of the Pilot, in the amount of \$72,000, BE FUNDED from the Corporate Contingency Fund.

#### 4.0 PURPOSE

This report outlines a proposed *Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan* to be implemented through a partnership with the Brant County Health Unit and St. Leonard's Community Services with the goal of reducing the number of needles<sup>1</sup> encountered on public property.

#### 5.0 BACKGROUND

The total number of needles discarded on public property is difficult to measure, however several indicators suggest that the problem is becoming more prevalent. Distribution of needles through the Needle Exchange Program has doubled since 2011, resulting in an increase in the number of needles in circulation, and both City staff and Police are responding to 'found needle' calls more frequently than in past years.

The cause of this increased needle use, and the corresponding increase in improperly discarded needles, is also difficult to definitively determine. Individuals use needles for a variety of health-related purposes including the self-administration of insulin, blood thinners and other prescribed medication. However the increasing misuse of opioids, particularly through intravenous injection, is very likely a key contributing factor in the increased visibility of discarded needles. A coordinated local plan to address the opioid crisis, along with recommendations to decrease the misuse of all drugs, is contained within the *Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategy* (see PHSS2017-101, Community Drugs Strategy). Although it is anticipated that a reduction in the prevalence of intravenous drug use over the long term may reduce the number of needles found on public property, it cannot immediately decrease the probability of residents encountering discarded needles.

In response to this concern Brantford City Council formally directed staff to develop a comprehensive plan to reduce the number of discarded needles found on public property through the approval of the following *Recommendations* in November 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> Medical personnel and literature use the term 'sharps' to refer to any medical device that is designed to cut or puncture the skin including needles, syringes and lancets. This report uses the more commonly understood term "needles", however the plan is intended to address any type of 'sharp' encountered on public property.

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- A. THAT the Report PHSS2017-111 Proposed Municipal Actions to Support the Recommendations of the Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategy BE RECEIVED; and
- B. That staff BE DIRECTED to implement the proposed Municipal Actions as outlined in this report and to provide regular progress updates to Council.
- C. THAT, in addition to the direction provided in Clause B above as it relates to Municipal Action #11, staff BE FURTHER directed to work with community partners to design a needle disposal awareness and retrieval program and to bring a report before Council outlining the program, its anticipated benefits and any associated costs.

The *Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan* outlined below serves to enhance needle disposal options, increase awareness of proper needles disposal and creates a proactive approach to reduce the number of needles being encountered on public property.

## 6.0 CORPORATE POLICY CONTEXT

High Quality of Life & Caring for All Citizens

Brantford will be recognized as a safe and healthy community- one that promotes and enables the well-being of its citizens, and support access of all citizens to a full range of health and community services.

Brantford will be known as a community with a social conscience – one that supports those in need (including, for example, children, youth, seniors, people with disabilities and marginalized populations).

*Related Strategic Actions:*

- 2.2 Safe Brantford
- 2.3 Healthy Brantford

## 7.0 INPUT FROM OTHER SOURCES

The recently released *Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategy* (see PHSS2017-101, Community Drugs Strategy) includes a number of recommendations related to needle disposal, recovery and exchange. This Strategy and the input of the Drug Strategy Coordination Team, as well as individuals with lived experience of intravenous drug use, were instrumental in the development of the *Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan*.

Other Consulted Agencies and City Departments:

- St. Leonard's Community Services
- Brantford Police Services

- Brant County Health Unit
- Operational Services
- Legal and Real Estate Department
- Community Programs, Parks and Recreation Department
- Communications and Community Engagement Department
- Corporate Services Department

## 8.0 ANALYSIS

### ***Current Practice for Found Needles***

The responsibility for removing publicly discarded needles varies depending on the location of the waste. Parks Department staff is responsible, once notified, for removing needles found in public park property, while Operational Services responds to discarded needles found in the downtown, on City streets and the right-of-way as part of routine maintenance. Commercial and residential property owners are responsible for clearing their own private property. The City can assist by dispatching a By-law Enforcement Officer to notify the business or homeowner of the urgency of the situation and their obligation to comply with the City's Lot Maintenance and Waste By-Law in a timely manner.

Procedures for the safe and proper disposal of needles is provided by the Ontario Sharps Collection Program at <http://www.ewswa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Ontario-Sharps-Collection-Program.pdf><sup>2</sup>

While the City has established effective protocols through the Customer Contact Centre for timely removal of needle waste, this response is often initiated by a member of the public encountering a discarded needle, and does not address the underlying issues of improper disposal or support a proactive approach to the retrieval of needles.

### ***Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan***

This plan is intended to reduce the number of improperly discarded needles found on public property through the development of four core components:

- 1) Public Awareness and Engagement
- 2) Access to Needle Disposal Locations
- 3) Proactive Needle Discovery
- 4) Tracking and Evaluation

Staff is recommending that this plan be implemented as a one-year pilot for the year 2018, and that the effectiveness of the plan be reported to Council to inform direction regarding the continuation or modification of the program in future years.

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<sup>2</sup> The City of Brantford does not control this website and is not responsible for the accuracy the contents therein



## PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

**Objective #1:** Increase Awareness of Proper Needle Disposal

**Objective #2:** Increase Awareness of City Response Protocols ('What to Do')

### *Proposed Actions*

- Develop and implement a twice annual 'needle disposal awareness' campaign in partnership with the Brant County Health Unit, St. Leonard's Community Services and other partners that will: 1) instruct the public on safe and proper needle disposal and 2) inform the public of who to contact when encountering a needle on public property
- The proposed awareness campaign, conducted in two separate public outreaches in March and September, would include messaging through paid media efforts (print, digital, outdoor, social media), media relations and web content on all partner website channels



## ACCESS TO NEEDLE DISPOSAL LOCATIONS

**Objective #1:** Increase Number of Public Needle Disposal Locations

**Objective #2:** Support Enhancements to the Needle Exchange Program

**Objective #3:** Provide Disposal Box Information to Community Stakeholders

**Objective #4:** Develop Pilot Projects to Explore Non-traditional Solutions

### *Proposed Actions*

- The City of Brantford will install 10 needle disposal sites at a variety of convenient indoor and outdoor public property locations
- The City of Brantford will, as part of the communications campaign noted above, provide corporate and public sector partners with information regarding the installation of needle disposal boxes within their locations
- The Drug Strategy Coordination Team will work with persons with lived experience to develop pilot projects that support proper needle disposal
- St. Leonard's Community Services will expand the Needle Exchange to include evening hours, and will seek partnership opportunities to expand 'exchange' locations to encourage higher return rates
- The Brant County Health Unit will provide 'home use' needle disposal boxes through the Needle Exchange Program to encourage proper disposal



## PROACTIVE NEEDLE DISCOVERY

**Objective #1:** Identify High-incidence Areas for Improper Needle Disposal

**Objective #2:** Enhance *Needle Discovery and Recovery* efforts

### *Proposed Actions*

- The City of Brantford will fund, for the period of one year, the hiring of a full-time Community Health Broker within the Brant County Health Unit to coordinate *needle discovery and retrieval efforts* including volunteer coordination and *community outreach* regarding harm reduction techniques and proper needle disposal
- The Brant County Health Unit will train and equip the volunteer *Needle Discovery and Disposal Team* for safe needle retrieval and disposal
- This *Needle Discovery and Disposal Team* will regularly patrol high priority public property areas to retrieve and remove needles
- In the interim period in which the partnership agreement is developed and the program is launched, City of Brantford staff will continue to monitor identified high priority areas



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

**Objective #1:** Develop a Tracking and Evaluation Framework

**Objective #2:** Ensure Strategic Deployment of Needle Discovery 'Routes'

### *Proposed Actions*

- The Brant County Health Unit will develop a tracking tool that will provide up-to-date data on the location and number of needles being collected through this plan
- The Brant County Health Unit will use this up-to-date data on existing or emerging high-priority areas to monitor the 'routes' of the *Needle Discovery and Retrieval Team* to ensure maximum needle discovery and retrieval
- The City of Brantford and the Brant County Health Unit will evaluate the effectiveness of the one-year pilot and bring a report to City Council for review and further direction

## 9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

**Table 1: Total Costs**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Installation of 10 Needle Disposal Boxes	\$5 000
Community Health Broker (through Brant County Health Unit)	\$42 000
Awareness and Engagement Campaign (March and September)	\$25 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$72 000</b>

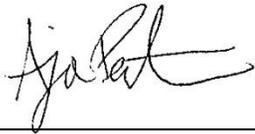
**Table 2: Detailed Breakdown: Awareness and Engagement Campaign**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Newsprint (Expositor)	\$7,000.00	March 5th x 6 weeks and August 27th x 6 weeks
brantfordexpositor.ca sponsored content	\$3,000.00	March 5th x 6 weeks and August 27th x 6 weeks
Laurier Brantford publications (Sputnik & Orientation Book)	\$2,800.00	Sputnik x 4 ads Feb - May / Orientation - September
Social Media Boosts from City Accounts	\$2,400.00	March 5th x 6 weeks and August 27th x 6 weeks
Intrigue Media (50 community screens)	\$3,500.00	March 5th x 6 weeks and August 27th x 4 weeks
Outdoor Digital Boards (4 Locations)	\$6,300.00	March 5th x 6 weeks and August 27th x 4 weeks
Website Content	In House	March 5th x 6 weeks and August 27th x 6 weeks
Media Relations (media advisories/releases)	In House	March 5th x 6 weeks and August 27th x 6 weeks
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25 000</b>	

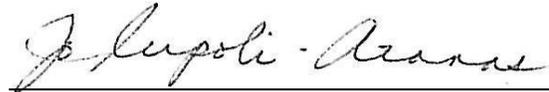
## 10.0 CONCLUSION

Brantford City Council and community members are seeking a proactive solution to discarded needles found on public property. The Brant County Health Unit is mandated and funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to conduct and support Harm Reduction activities that reduce the risk of harm and disease

to the public. The enclosed *Harm Reduction – Needle Retrieval and Disposal Plan* leverages community partnerships and the expertise of the Brant County Health Unit to encourage proper needle disposal, conduct outreach to ‘user’ groups, coordinate ‘sweeps’ of priority areas, and effectively monitor disposal and retrieval efforts to ensure the plan is both effective and responsive.



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Aaron Wallace, Director  
Strategic Planning and Community Partnerships

Attachments: None

Copy to: N/A

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no
Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no