

Phase One of Halifax wastewater treatment facility recovery set to begin

(Tuesday, September 22, 2009) - Halifax Water will soon begin the phased in diversion of wastewater flows through the Halifax Wastewater Treatment Facility, marking a significant milestone in recovery efforts.

The introduction of screened dry weather flows into the plant will be carefully sequenced beginning with the gravity-fed systems on the peninsula, followed by flows from the Pier A pumping station (located at the intersection of Barrington and Inglis Streets) and the Duffus Street pumping station in the north end. The diversion is expected to begin next week.

Once fully in place, this plan will see dry weather flows that are currently being discharged directly into the harbour diverted through the Halifax WWTF, debris and floatables screened out by the coarse and fine screening system, then discharged via the plant's existing outfall pipe which extends approximately one kilometre into Halifax Harbour. This measure will significantly reduce or eliminate odours that have been present in the Cogswell Street interchange area, particularly during hot, dry weather.

"This is a complex operation that we are undertaking after significant study," said Halifax Water General Manager Carl Yates.

When wastewater flows are high due to extreme rainfall run-off, the flows will be directed through the combined sewer overflows directly into the harbour in order to protect the plant during this phase of recovery.

The work required to begin the diversion of flows is already underway with pumping at a number of combined sewer overflow chambers in the downtown area completed or in progress. This pumping could briefly generate odours in the vicinity of the CSOs.

The flow diversion through the plant is phase one of the effort to recover the Halifax facility. The work to accomplish phase one is being carried out in conjunction with broader recovery efforts to have the Halifax WWTF back on-line in spring 2010.

"The successful diversion of screened dry weather flows will bring significant improvements to the aesthetics of the harbour and greatly reduce or eliminate odours. Once this measure is in place, we will be well on our way to full recovery next spring and a return to improved water quality in Halifax Harbour," said Mayor Peter Kelly.

Phase two is the final recovery of all processes and systems in the WWTF. All damaged equipment will be repaired or replaced with funding for the recovery effort provided primarily by the project's Builder's risk insurance.

It remains the intention of Halifax Water and HRM to see the Halifax WWTF back in full operation in the spring of 2010, that any problems that led to the sequence of events that caused the flooding are addressed, and that the water quality with Halifax Harbour is once again restored to levels enjoyed last year by residents.

In depth information about the Halifax WWTF along with other aspects of the Harbour Solutions project are posted on the HRM website at <http://halifax.ca/HWWTF/index.html> where newsletters, diagrams, photos, background materials, and answers to frequently asked questions can be found.