



Outside Water Use By-law Review

Phase 2 Discussion Guide - April 2013



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Managing Our Water Together

Guelph is a community that depends on groundwater to meet our drinking water needs. As our City grows and changes over time, it is important that we work together to conserve water for future generations and to protect against the impacts of drought—particularly during dry summer periods.

Typically, water demands increase during the summer months as people use more water for things like washing the car, watering gardens and lawns, and filling swimming pools. In 2003, City Council approved an Outside Water Use By-law to help manage periods of low water supply and high water use. The By-law was also a necessary step for the City to meet Provincial requirements for water management outlined in Ontario's Low Water Response Plan.

Today, Guelph's Outside Water Use Program (OWUP)—which includes the By-law noted above—is one of the most successful and recognized water conversation programs in Ontario. It outlines the steps that residents and businesses need to take during drought conditions to help protect our water supply, the natural environment and ensure we all have access to the water we need.

Through community support and participation, the OWUP and By-law has decreased our daily annual peak day demand for water. Our water conservation efforts have also:

- 1) Extended the sustainability of local groundwater resources;
- 2) Delayed the need for the City to spend money on new water infrastructure that would be used to meet water supply requirements during peak periods of use (summers); and
- 3) Helped the City meet Provincial regulations for taking water for City use from local groundwater sources.

What's included in the Discussion Guide:

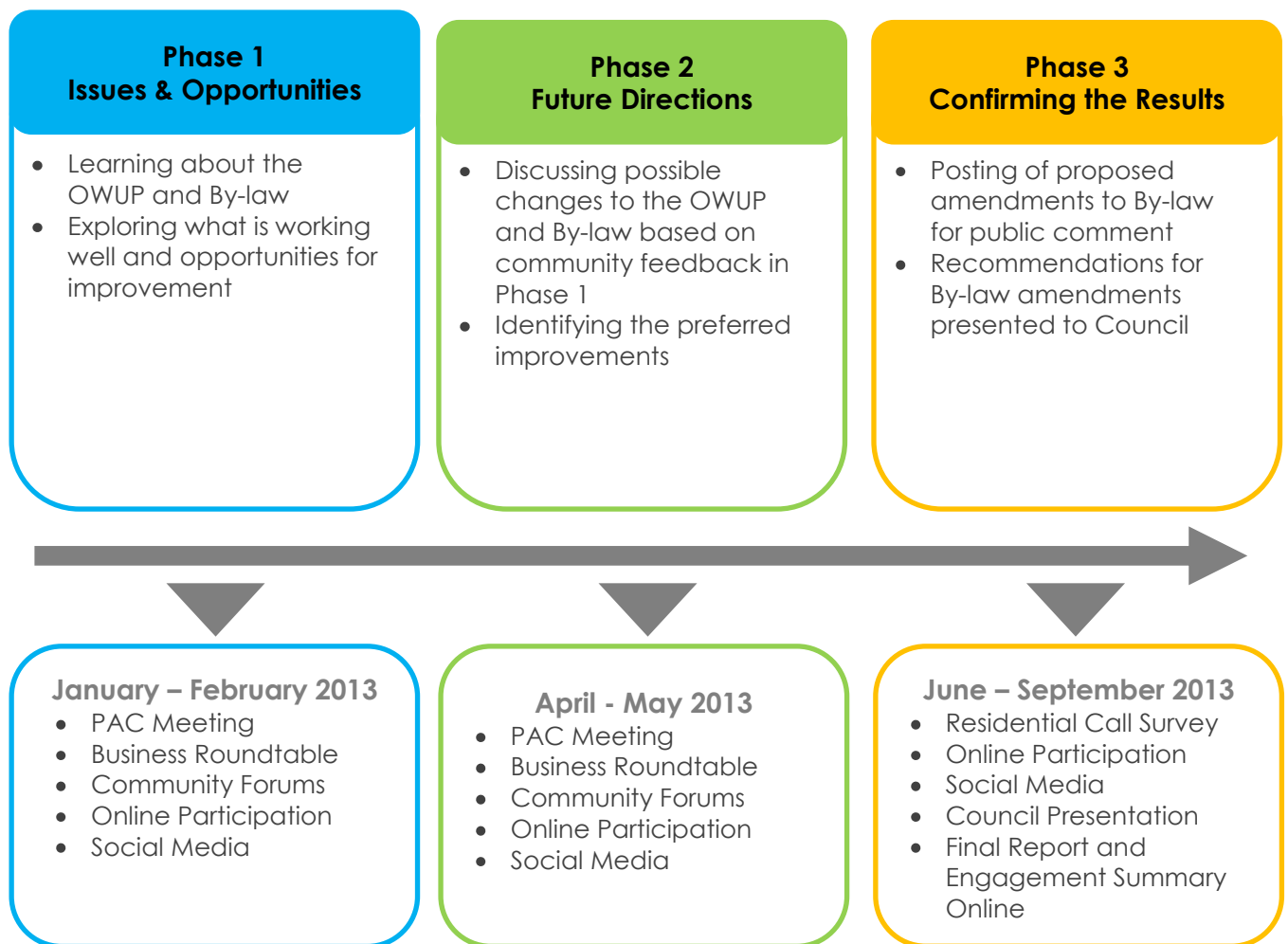
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About the Review Process

The Outside Water Use By-law and program have been in place in Guelph for nearly 10 years. During prolonged periods of drought in 2012, the City of Guelph implemented enhanced water use restrictions under the By-law to ensure there was enough water to support both the needs of the City and the local environment.

In response to recent concerns about the By-law and to ensure the City is meeting its water needs in the best way possible, the Water Services Department has initiated a review of the Outside Water Use By-law and program. The review is exploring aspects of the OWUP and By-law that are working well, and examining opportunities for refinements that could meet the community's needs and help the City better manage its water resources into the future.

Process Overview



Phase 2 – What Changes Should We Consider?

We are now in Phase 2 of the review process. The purpose of Phase 2 is to hear feedback from residents and businesses on potential changes to the OWUP and By-law. The proposed changes (see page 8) have been put forward by the City based on the results of Phase 1, as well as consideration of the needs of the community and the City's water conservation goals. Conversations with the community in Phase 2 will focus on confirming that these are the right changes and discussing specific options for how these changes could be incorporated into the OWUP and By-law.

What We've Heard So Far

During Phase 1, residents and business stakeholders provided input on issues and opportunities related to the Outside Water Use By-law and program. Conversations were centered on two key questions: 1) What do you think is working well and 2) What changes or improvements would you like to see in the Outside Water Use By-law and program. A summary of all the input received during Phase 1 can be found in the **Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report** on our website <http://guelph.ca/owureview>.

In general, Phase 1 participants felt the Outside Water Use By-law and program are helping to encourage water conservation in the community. Several changes were suggested moving forward:

- **Exemptions:** Certain activities could be exempted from the water use restrictions because they are essential to the community, such as watering food gardens, new trees and historical properties.
- **Time Periods for Lawn/Garden Watering:** Slight changes to the timing or schedule of the restrictions would make it easier for residents to water their lawns while still conserving water and complying with the By-law. For example, some people thought that allowing watering earlier in the morning would help to limit the amount of water lost to evaporation when watering. Some residents also expressed concern that watering restrictions are leading to decreased property values and aesthetic beauty of the City.
- **Car Washing:** While some people thought individual car washing is not an essential activity and should be more restricted, others felt it uses only a minimal amount of water and should be allowed even when water supply is low.
- **Pool Restrictions:** There were a number of suggestions on how to address water use by pool owners, such as limiting pool top ups to certain times of the day, or restricting filling of pools during times of low water supply.
- **By-law Enforcement:** The City should look at ways to better monitor and enforce compliance with the By-law.

- **Response Levels:** The number and structure of the Water Response Levels (see page 5) could be improved to better encourage conservation and awareness of the Program. For example, an increase in the degree of restrictions from Blue to Yellow would help to differentiate between levels; a change of the colour yellow to orange would help to express caution; and use of the blue rating as 'our standard' would encourage year round conservation.
- **Industry and Bulk Users:** It is important that the OWUP and By-law provide more clarity for industry, businesses and bulk water users.
- **Automated sprinklers:** Additional restrictions or requirements should be considered for individuals and commercial property owners who install automated sprinkler systems.
- **Education:** Residents and businesses need to continue to be educated on the importance of water conservation and the requirements of OWUP and By-law.
- **Municipal Leadership:** In general, the City should demonstrate its commitment to water conservation and show leadership in this area. The City should also do more to encourage and incentivize residents and businesses to implement water efficiency measures, such as drought resistant plants and larger scale rainwater harvesting systems.



Outside Water Use Program at a Glance

Water Response Level



When does it come into effect?

Blue is our standard Outside Water Use level. Blue indicates there are no serious storage, rainfall or stream flow issues.

Yellow can occur when:

- Less than 80 per cent of historical average of precipitation occurs over one and/or three months;
- Two weeks without rain;
- Eramosa River flow is less than 70 per cent of minimum low flow;
- Water storage level is less than 75 per cent of average

Red can occur when:

- Less than 60 per cent of the historical average over one and/or three months
- Three weeks without rain;
- Eramosa River flow is less than 50 per cent of minimum low flow;
- Water storage level is less than 65 per cent of average.

Lawn Watering	Alternate day and time restrictions. Permits are required for watering new lawns and treated lawns outside guidelines.	Alternate day and time restrictions. Permits are required for watering new lawns and treated lawns outside guidelines.	Lawn watering is not permitted. Permits are required for watering new lawns and treated lawns outside guidelines.
Watering Plants	No restrictions	No restrictions	Alternate day and time restrictions
Recreational Sprinkler Use	No restrictions	No restrictions	No restrictions
Filling Pools, Ponds, etc.	No restrictions	No restrictions	No restrictions
Fountains	Must recirculate water	Must recirculate water	Must recirculate water
Vehicle Washing	Anytime. Must have shut-off nozzle on your hose.	Anytime. Must have shut-off nozzle on your hose.	Alternate day with time restrictions. Must have shut-off nozzle on your hose. Permits are required for watering outside guidelines.

What Else You Should Know

Reduced Demand for Water Since 2002

Since implementation of the OWUP and By-law in Guelph, that daily annual peak day demand for water has decreased by over 11,800 m³/day. This reduction in consumption translates directly to reduced water takings, which contributes to the sustainability of local groundwater resources. Other benefits include deferred construction of water taking infrastructure and operating investments in that new infrastructure as well as deferred costs as related to source water investigations.

How will Climate Change Affect our Water Supply?

Changing temperature and precipitation patterns, as a result of climate change, have significant consequences for water resources. For example, research suggests Southern Ontario will see an increase in rainfall in the winter and decrease in the summer. As a result, stream flows will likely be higher in the winter and summer low flows will be even lower. Extreme weather, another likely result of climate change, could mean more floods interspersed with periods of drought, reduced surface water quality from eroded soils, and diminished groundwater recharge.

Typically, deep groundwater systems, such as the ones that support the City's wells, are not noticeably affected by one or two dry years. However, many dry years in a row, would reduce the water table and diminish availability for the municipal system. If Guelph residents continue using water outdoors in a similar manner to how they do today, longer, drier summers would mean that residents will require more water. In particular, demand for activities such as lawn and garden irrigation or filling pools may increase. Rising water demand coupled with a smaller system capacity during dry periods clearly indicates the need for a close look at our outside water use.

Feedback Welcome – Phase 2 Discussion Topics

The next step in the review is to engage the community in a discussion about potential changes to the OWUP and By-law. Based on the feedback received from Phase 1, the following options have been put forward by the City for discussion.

Your feedback on these topics (and other changes you'd like considered for the OWUP and By-law) is welcome!

1. **Car Washing:** Include new restrictions on car washing during Level 2 Red (as a non-essential water use).
2. **Fines for Non-Compliance:** Increase the fine amounts for non-compliance (currently \$130) and repeated non-compliance.
3. **Automatic Sprinkler Systems:** Include additional requirements for those choosing to install new automated sprinkler systems, such as use of master control valves to reduce water loss through leakage.
4. **Watering times:** Change the permitted watering time (7-9a.m./p.m.) to a time defined as more convenient by residents and best for plant health.
5. **Tree watering exemption:** Include an exemption for tree watering (levels 0,1&2) in support of City's urban canopy objectives.
6. **Food garden exemption:** Include an exemption for food garden watering (levels 0,1,&2) to support urban agriculture objectives of City's Official Plan.
7. **Water Response Levels:** Introduce an additional level of water response and provide clearer differences between the response levels.

Community Forum Agenda

Start Time: 6:30 p.m.

End Time: 9:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m. **Open House**

7:00 p.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

7:10 p.m. **Overview Presentation**

Questions and Answers

7:50 p.m. **Feedback on Potential Changes to OWUP and By-law**

Participants are invited to provide input on each proposed change by visiting topic stations and placing coloured dots on display boards (green = proceed; yellow = caution; red = don't proceed).

Additional comments can be made on the boards using sticky notes or filling out a Feedback Form (see page 10). Staff will be available to answer questions during this time.

When providing feedback, participants are encouraged to consider:

- *Potential impacts to residents and/or businesses;*
- *The importance of balancing the needs of the community with the City's need to conserve water;*
- *Any other changes that should be discussed.*

8:50 p.m. **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

Discussion Questions and Feedback Form

Please use the space below to record your feedback. Once completed, tear off the sheets and submit it to the project team at the end of the meeting or via the project website. All feedback received during the community engagement process will be used to prepare recommendations for refinement to the Outside Water Use By-law and Program and will be included in the Consultation Summary Report for the project.

Using the discussion questions below as a guide, what guidance would you give the City on the proposed changes to the OWUP and By-law?

Car washing restrictions

- ➡ Do you support a total restriction on car washing during Level 2 Red (as non-essential water use)?
- ➡ If not, what would you suggest to address car washing?

Non-compliance fine amounts and structures

- ➡ The current fine for non-compliance with the Outside Water Use By-law is \$130. Do you support increasing fine amounts for non-compliance and increasing fine structures for subsequent non-compliance events (levels 1&2)?
- ➡ What is a reasonable fine increase?
- ➡ What fine structure would be most effective for ensuring compliance?
- ➡ How can the City help to encourage By-law compliance?

Automated irrigation system standards

- ➡ Do you support specific system design requirements (such as the installation of master control valves to reduce water leakage) for those choosing to install new automated sprinkler systems?

[illegible]

Tree watering exemption

- ➡ Do you support the inclusion of an exemption for tree watering (under levels 0,1&2) in support of City's urban canopy objectives under Urban Forest Management Plan?

[illegible]

Permitted time periods/frequency for lawn and garden watering

- ➔ Do you support changing the permitted watering time (7-9a.m./p.m.) to another time that may be more convenient for residents?
- ➔ What time of day would be most convenient for residents, while keeping plant health in mind?
- ➔ Is there a better approach to the alternate day lawn water restrictions (level 2) that would better allow residents to meet their water needs while maintaining the same level of water conservation?

[illegible]

Food production garden exemption

- ➡ Do you support an exemption for food garden watering (levels 0,1,&2) to support urban agriculture objectives of City's Official Plan?

Water response levels

- ➡ Do you support the inclusion of an additional level (such as level orange) to occur prior to implementation of full outdoor water use restrictions, where a basic amount of lawn/garden watering would be permitted under a set schedule (such as once per week)?
- ➡ Currently the terms of program Level 0 Blue and Level 1 Yellow are very similar. Would you support a greater differentiation in activities between these level and how could greater differentiation between these base program levels be achieved?

Any additional feedback or ideas?

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