




# COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	May 5, 2026
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Powell Park Community Garden Soils Finding (ES2609) (Ward 3)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Ward 3
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Cynthia Graham Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## PURPOSE

To update City Council on the temporary closure of the Powell Park Community Garden, effective May 5, 2026, as a precautionary measure to ensure the protection of the residents who use the community garden to grow and harvest food. Powell Park Community Garden is located in Powell Park near the corner of Harvey St and Birch Ave (see Appendix A).

## INFORMATION

On August 18, 2025, soil testing was completed at Powell Park in Ward 3 as part of the Park reconstruction project. In order to comply with the Excess Soils legislation, (O.Reg. 406/19 On-site and Excess Soil Management and implemented O.Reg. 407/19, which amended O. Reg. 153/04 Records of Site Condition) these soil tests were required for the handling and disposal of soils. The results of the soil tests were reported by the consultant hired by the City in October 2025 and revealed elevated levels of some contaminants in an area close to the community garden. The consultant was then asked to do three additional samples within the fenced community garden area prior to the start of the 2026 garden season. These tests were completed on March 18, 2026, with results delivered on April 2, 2026, indicating that of the three samples taken from the area of the community garden, two satisfy the site condition standards and one sample did not meet the standards due to elevated

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levels of lead, zinc, antimony, and benzo(a)pyrene. These contaminants are commonly found in urban environments.

On April 29, 2026, City staff consulted with the Healthy Environments Division of Hamilton Public Health and received the opinion that residents should not be permitted to conduct any gardening activities, including harvesting and consuming produce, from the community garden until a remedy can be determined and implemented.

Effective immediately and out of an abundance of caution to protect the health of residents who use the community garden, Public Works is closing the Powell Park Community Garden to the public until further notice. The fully fenced community garden space will be locked, and a closure notice sign will be placed at the entrance. These precautionary measures are based on the initial soil screening information.

It is recognized this closure will be an inconvenience and the City is asking for patience while staff determine next steps. Residents, including the Powell Park Community Garden Collective (the group of residents who run the garden) and registered gardeners will be contacted through approved external communications and encouraged to contact City staff with any questions.

Staff will report back to Council with a subsequent Communication Update once a recommended action plan is in place.

If you have any questions regarding this Communication Update, please contact Amy Angelo, Project Manager, Office of Climate Change Initiatives, at [Amy.Angelo@Hamilton.ca](mailto:Amy.Angelo@Hamilton.ca).

## **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix A: Aerial map of Powell Park Community Garden within Powell Park



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