

City sets new swimming advisory for Petrie Island

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The City of Ottawa has implemented a new 24 hour, non swimming advisory for Petrie Island.

The advisory fo Petrie Island will happen after a rainfall of 20 millimetres (mm) or more and will be used similarly as the one for Westboro Beach.

Jean Guy Albert, program manager for Ottawa Public Health, said that the advi-

sory will also be issued if the City of Ottawa is notified on any spill, overflow or dumping in the Ottawa River.

"We're confident about the accuracy and reliability of the statistics that go with the rainfall advisories," said Albert.

Why Petrie Island's advisory is 20 mm compared to Westboro's five is simply from stats that were collected on the water quality at each of Ottawa's beaches, and how it corresponds with

rainfall, added Albert.

Orléans city councillor Bob Monette said while he wasn't happy with Petrie's advisory number, he sees the need.

"The safety of the residents always comes first and this is just an added safety measure," said the east end councillor.

Council approved last week for a modelling of the Ottawa River to help estab-

lish how the water course is run and how Ottawa impacts the river on a daily basis.

"This will give us a better starting spot when trying to deal with how to midigate any negative impact for current and future development," added Monette.

The city's Planning and Environment Committee also approved \$20 million in next year's budget to match

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the \$20 million provided by the federal government to help with the prevention of sewer overflows across Ottawa.

"We need every drop we can get to eventually fix the problem once and for all," said Monette. "The better technology we have on and in the sewer system the better we will able to monitor what is being outflowed to the river and how we can outflow as little as possible."

Monette was quick to point out recent discoveries at Petrie Island, which led to its disastrous 2006 swimming season due to high levels of E.coli bacteria, which Monette said has a lot to do with less than stellar attendance numbers this summer.

Nearly one million cubic metres of human waste was dumped into the Ottawa River after a massive rainfall in July of 2006 when a gate in the sewage system was left open.

Council was only recently notified of the problem.

Monette said that while the last two years have been underwhelming numbers for Petrie, rainy days also are a factor to the east end beach's low attendance numbers.

"There were more cloudy rainy days in June then sunny days and this is a major impact on beach numbers," he said.

With everything that the city is trying to do, Monette is confident that Petrie will see better days.

"Everyday the beach is open, it will slowly change people's perception," he said. "Petrie Island is not only a beach, but many activities can be done such as kayaking and canoeing. There are nature trails and people can play beach volleyball. Slowly but surely, the more information we get out to the public, the better the perception of the island will be."