
To: Liquid Waste Committee

From: Carol Nicolls, Communications Specialist, Corporate Communications, External Relations
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Date: January 28, 2021 Meeting Date: February 11, 2021

Subject: **Results for 2020 *Wipe It, Green Bin It* Campaign**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Liquid Waste Committee receive for information the report dated January 28, 2021, titled “Results for 2020 *Wipe It, Green Bin It* Campaign.”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 *Wipe It, Green Bin It* campaign asked residents to put fats, oils and grease (FOG) in their green bins, not down their sinks. In addition to region-wide promotion, the campaign targeted hot spot areas in the City of Richmond and Township of Langley, where staff monitored FOG build-up in pump stations. The campaign ran in two phases (Thanksgiving and Christmas/holiday season) and included social media, online advertising, television, transit shelter advertising and mail-outs. Where possible, materials were tailored to hot spot areas. The campaign delivered over 10 million impressions and reached 476,000 residents through social media, showing solid levels of engagement on social media and the campaign website. In the hot spot areas, data trends show decreases in FOG levels corresponding to campaign efforts.

PURPOSE

To update the Liquid Waste Committee on the 2020 *Wipe It, Green Bin It* campaign to reduce the disposal of fats, oils and grease into the wastewater system, which took place in the fall and winter of 2020.

BACKGROUND

As a region, Metro Vancouver spends at least \$2.7 million every year to address issues related to the disposal of FOG into the wastewater system. FOG can clog sewers, contributing to overflows into homes, businesses and the environment, and associated maintenance and repair costs. Since 2017, Metro Vancouver has conducted regional *Wipe It, Green Bin It* campaigns to ask residents to dispose of FOG in their green bin instead of down their sink. Since 2019, the campaign expanded its focus to cover fats and oils, in addition to grease, and shifted its approach to include both region-wide approaches and problem ‘hot spot areas’ in municipalities. These approaches continued for the 2020 campaign.

This report provides an overview of the main results of the 2020 *Wipe It, Green Bin It* campaign, as identified in the 2020 Liquid Waste Committee Work Plan.

2020 FATS, OILS AND GREASE CAMPAIGN

The 2020 campaign combined regional coverage with targeted tactics for the City of Richmond and Township of Langley, where the three hot spot areas were located. The campaign took place in two phases, from September 21 to November 1 and from December 14 - 31.

Campaign Elements and Approach

The campaign was timed to target residents with messaging in the lead-up to Thanksgiving and the Christmas/holiday season. These are times of heavier holiday meals and previous campaigns have shown that this is an effective time to reach people with information on proper disposal of FOG.

The campaign included a media buy that focused largely on tactics that would reach people at home. The campaign was promoted via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), online platforms (YouTube, Pinterest), Google search and online advertising, and through public service announcements in English, Cantonese and Mandarin, which ran on various TV networks. Staff also conducted two televised interviews in Cantonese and Mandarin. Some digital tactics were specifically targeted to hot spot municipalities or related topics, such as advertising on cooking websites.

While it was not possible to conduct in-person outreach, the campaign was still able to reach people in relevant locations outside their homes through advertising in grocery stores (on shopping carts and grocery bars). Hot spot municipalities were also targeted with customized transit shelter advertising and a mail-out flyer.

Engagement with Members

Campaign details and creative materials were shared with members' communication staff prior to the campaign's launch. All materials are made available for download on the Metro Vancouver website, and custom, co-branded materials were created upon request. The media buy included all Member jurisdictions, ensuring that the campaign ads appeared across the region. Campaign materials were used by six members, two building managers and two regional districts.

Results

This is the second year of the hot spot areas approach and data trends show decreases in FOG levels corresponding to campaign efforts. Campaign results were assessed using FOG monitoring data from pump stations, media buy and website results.

Digital Media Performance

The campaign had a significant online component. The post-campaign report on media promotion shows that the digital and social media elements of the campaign generally performed well.

- The campaign reached an estimated 476,000 residents via Facebook and Instagram.
- The digital components delivered 10.7 million impressions, the majority of which came from Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.
- Digital channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest) had almost 24,000 engagements (likes, shares, saves, comments, pins).
- Google Search terms related to FOG and online banner ads generated a total of 3,208 clicks for more information.
- Video ads resulted in over 89,000 video views.

- Information on the performance of the television placements is not yet available.

Website Traffic

The campaign webpage had 8,220 page views during over the two campaign phases, with visitors spending, on average, almost five minutes on the page. The time spent on the page is quite high, especially for a single webpage, and indicates that people took the time to read everything on the page and engage with the content.

Impact of Fats, Oil and Grease on the Wastewater System

As part of this campaign, Metro Vancouver, the Township of Langley and the City of Richmond have been using a visual rating scale to monitor FOG build-up in one Metro Vancouver pump station and two municipal pump stations in residential hot spot areas. In general, monitoring data from the hot spot areas showed a decrease in FOG levels following the campaign's launch, particularly around Thanksgiving. This monitoring should be considered as just one metric used to measure campaign success, but external conditions (such a rain and cleaning schedules) can affect FOG build-up. The use of the visual rating schedule is generally well received by participating members and has minimized the effort required by operations staff to quantify FOG build-up.

PLANS FOR 2021 CAMPAIGN

The campaign is scheduled to run again in 2021, likely with similar timing. The campaign will continue to focus on online options that reach a wider regional audience and will add in-person outreach should that become possible. The continuation of the hot spots approach in 2021 will be assessed to determine the best use of 2021 resources, as fewer members were able to participate in monitoring in hot spots areas in 2020, in part due to shifting staff priorities due to COVID-19. Many residents remain unaware of the various types of food that contain fats, oils or grease, so the campaign will continue to look for ways to increase this understanding. An additional source control behavior change effort this year, will be the development of a regional campaign to address contaminants of emerging concern (CEC's). The research, final direction, and creative development will be shared in coming months with Members and Committee, with a plan to launch in the Fall.

ALTERNATIVES

This is an information report. No alternatives are presented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for the 2020 Wipe It, Green Bin It campaign was \$170,000. These costs were included in the 2020 Liquid Waste Communications Program Budget managed by the External Relations Department. A budget of \$100,000 has been allocated for the 2021 regional campaign. The additional source control behavior change campaign addressing contaminants of emerging concern (CEC's), being planned to launch in the Fall of 2021, is budgeted for \$195,000.

CONCLUSION

The disposal of fats, oils and grease (FOG) into the sewer system contributes to sewer clogs and overflows, costing Metro Vancouver and its members at least \$2.7 million to deal with on a yearly basis. The 2020 *Wipe It, Green Bin It* campaign ran in the lead-up to Thanksgiving and the Christmas/holiday season (Sept. 21 to Nov. 1 and Dec. 14 - 31) and addressed the proper disposal of

a range of FOG-related foods. In addition to region-wide promotion, the campaign also targeted the Township of Langley and City of Richmond, which identified and monitored FOG build-up in pump stations in three hot spot areas. Campaign elements included: promotion on social media, YouTube, online banner ads, Google search, television, advertising in grocery stores and transit shelters, and direct mail. Where possible, tactics were tailored to each hot spot municipality. Overall, the digital components of the campaign performed well, generating solid online engagement and website traffic, and monitoring at pump stations showed that FOG levels dropped following each phase of the campaign.

Attachment:

Samples of Campaign Materials

Reference:

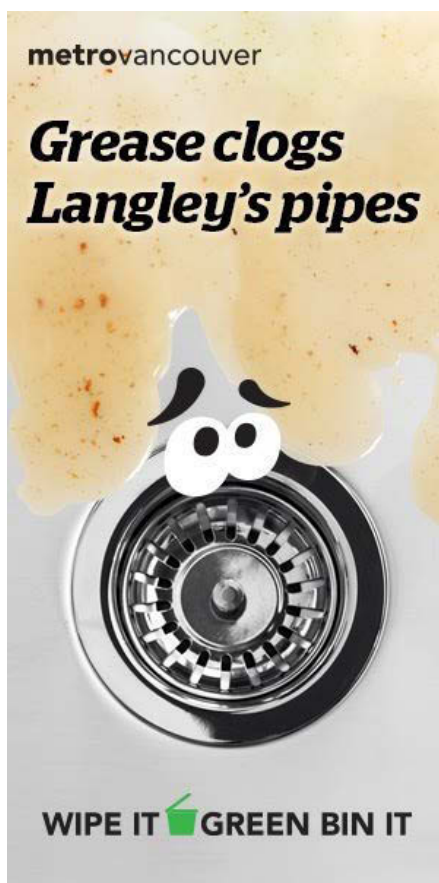
[Campaign webpage](#)

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Samples of Campaign Materials



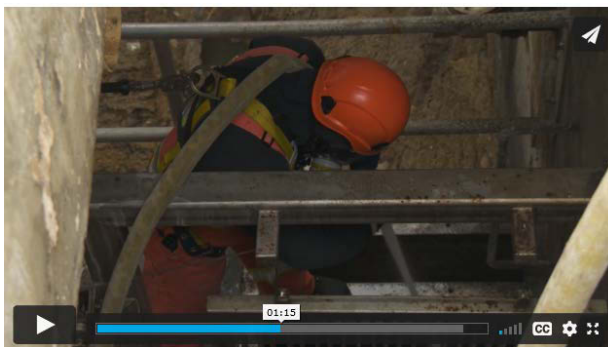
Out-of-home advertising in grocery stores and transit shelters



Online advertising targeted to hot spots



City of Richmond campaign post



Campaign video showing pump station cleaning