

CITY, ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY AND HEALTH UNIT RESPONDING TO FINDINGS OF ELEVATED TRICHLOROETHYLENE IN GROUNDWATER ON BRYDGES BETWEEN ASHLAND AND Highbury

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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London, ON - The Middlesex-London Health Unit, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) and the City of London, have advised residents in the area of Brydges Street, west of Highbury Avenue, of the presence of trichloroethylene (TCE) in the groundwater and soil near their homes. They also indicated they will soon be conducting additional sampling to assess the extent of contamination and to determine if residents are being exposed to non-residential sources of TCE.

The effort comes after the discovery of TCE in groundwater samples taken during assessment work last year at nearby commercial and industrial properties. The chemical may have been present in the area groundwater for several decades. Working with the MOECC, the City installed monitoring wells in the area and inserted ground probes to determine whether TCE vapour in the soil presented any risk to area residents. Last week, the vapour analysis indicated levels of TCE that warrant further examination. Assessment of the situation is currently on-going to determine the extent of contamination and the source of TCE.

"There is no immediate health risk associated with this situation," says Dr. Chris Mackie, Medical Officer of Health with the Middlesex-London Health Unit. "The initial analysis shows that the levels of TCE in the groundwater and soil vapour are higher than desired, but far below levels that would cause immediate health effects."

TCE is used for cleaning and degreasing metal parts, and can be found in some household products including glues and adhesives, paint and spot removers, rug cleaning fluids, paints, and metal cleaners. In the past, it has been used in the food industry to decaffeinate coffee and extract oils from plants. At very high or prolonged exposures, such as for individuals who work with TCE in industrial settings, it may cause cancer and other health effects.

"The City will work with the Health Unit and the MOECC to determine the extent of the problem," says London Mayor Matt Brown. "The tests being conducted will help identify what steps we need to take to ensure homeowners are informed and safe."

Information packages prepared by the Health Unit, MOECC and the City were delivered to about 50 homes and apartment units in the area today. Additional sampling, which will include indoor air testing of select homes along Brydges Street, west of Highbury, is expected to begin this week.

See attached area map

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Map showing Brydges Street east of Highbury Avenue.

