

Request for Decision

Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

Presented To:	Policy Committee
Presented:	Wednesday, Jul 14, 2010
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Type:	Presentations

Recommendation

That Council support and approve the Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program as outlined in this report and that funding Option _____ be approved from the 2010 and 2011 Wastewater Capital Annual Rehabilitation Program.

Finance Implications

If approved, the funding for 2010 and 2011 will come from the Wastewater Capital Sewer Annual Rehabilitation Program. For 2012 and future years, staff will review the success of the Program and provide a recommendation to Council to possibly fund the Program in future years from an increase in the wastewater operating budgets. This will allow the entire approved Capital Budget to be used for necessary wastewater capital programs.

BACKGROUND

At the Policy Committee Meeting of February 24, 2010, Council passed Resolution 2010-87 directing Staff "to more fully develop a Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program which, if approved and funded, would be effective retroactive to July 25th, 2009 for those who experienced flooding due to the July 26, 2009 storm and subsequently to residents residing in flood regions, as identified in the draft policy; and to identify a potential funding source for the program, and present the draft policy to Council at its April 21, 2010 Policy Committee meeting".

At the April 21, 2010 Policy Committee meeting, Staff provided a status/update on the progress of the development of the Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program.

Following the Policy Committee meeting of February 24, 2010, Staff worked diligently in reviewing the best practices and similar experiences of other Canadian cities that have developed similar Flood Prevention Assistance Programs (FPAP). Table 1 (attached) summarizes the similar programs provided in five (5) Canadian municipalities including St. Catharines, Ottawa, Peterborough, Edmonton and Toronto.

INTRODUCTION

Signed By

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Digitally Signed Jul 8, 10

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This report provides a description of the key elements of the proposed program which are as follows:

- Objectives of the program
- Eligibility criteria
- Financing
- Implementation schedule and administration of program

OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM

The objective of the program is to provide financial assistance to property owners that have either experienced or could potentially experience flooding of their basements as a result of sewer system backups during times of heavy precipitation. The financial assistance would be to assist the property owners in the cost of disconnecting their weeping tile system from the sanitary sewer system and installing a sump pump that would discharge rain water outside the property and/or installing a backwater valve in the sanitary discharge line to minimize the potential for the municipal sewer from backing up into their residence.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This program will be available to all property owners whose properties are located in low-lying areas that have either experienced or could potentially experience flooding of their basements as a result of a municipal sewer system backup.

The priority for financial assistance will be to property owners that have experienced flooding in 2009 followed by those that experienced flooding earlier and then those that could potentially experience flooding.

The application for assistance will be approved on a first come-first served basis and will continue until all approved annual funding has been exhausted. Once the approved funding levels have been spent, any future applications will be placed on the next year's list on a similar first come-first served priority basis. It is envisaged that there will be a large number of applications in the first several years of the program and that the numbers of applications will decrease with time.

As a condition of approval for financial assistance the property homeowner, as part of the application, must provide a disclaimer absolving the City of any responsibility as a result of the property owner installing any protective devices and/or discharged water adversely impacting on any abutting property either private and/or municipal infrastructure including sidewalks, laneways and roadways. The waiver will be registered on the title of each property.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

It is recommended that the City follow a funding formula consistent with the other municipalities with similar programs.

It is proposed that funding be provided for property owners wishing to install protective devices such as either sump pump and/or backwater valve. A condition for receiving funding assistance is that the property owners would have to comply with the program requirements as outlined in **Appendix A** attached.

Table 2 (attached) outlines several funding options including annual percentage of contribution and contributions from the Wastewater Annual Capital Rehabilitation Program Budget for 2010 and 2011 Council's consideration.

Option 1 does not suggest financial assistance but only an education program to educate residents on how to protect their basement from flooding. Options 2(a), 2(b), 3(a) and 3(b) indicate either 50 or 75 percent contributions and an annual program contribution of either \$175,000 or \$350,000 with the number of property owners who could benefit from each option and funding level.

Based on similar other municipal cost sharing initiatives, as shown in Table 2, an annual contribution of \$350,000

would be appropriate for 2010 and 2011.

As Council is well aware, the City has an increasing "gap" in necessary infrastructure funding for all municipal infrastructure. Therefore, staff propose to report back to Council in 2012 on the success of this program including anticipated funding requirements to maintain the program in future years. It is anticipated that if the program is very successful, that staff will recommend that funding for the program in 2012 and beyond come from an increase in the Wastewater Operating Budget.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION

As outlined in **Appendix A** attached, it is proposed that residents wishing to apply for financial assistance would contact either Engineering Services Staff at Tom Davies Square or any Community Centres to receive an information package and application form. They can also download the information from the City's website. The homeowner would then obtain a Plumbing Permit from the Building Services Division. Upon successful completion of the works and submission of completed backup documentation, the City will pay the property owner in accordance with the approved subsidy and funding availability.

It is proposed that the program will be administered by existing Engineering and Water/Wastewater staff located at Tom Davies Square. Staffing requirements will be monitored and expanded as necessary based on the success of the program. We will come back to Council for approval for any additional staffing.

It is anticipated that the program can be implemented by August 1, 2010.

Regular information and update reports will be provided to Council during the implementation period.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council support and approve the Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program as outlined in this report and that funding Option _____ be approved from the 2010 and 2011 Wastewater Capital Annual Rehabilitation Program .

Proposed Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

Table 1: Sample of Preventative Plumbing Programs

	St Catherine	Ottawa	Peterborough	Edmonton	Toronto
Program Name and starting date	-Flood Alleviation Program (FLAP) - Started in 1998 and still ongoing	Grants for Protective Plumbing Devices 2005 and ongoing	Sanitary Backflow Prevention Subsidy Program. 2005 and ongoing	Flood Prevention Program, 2006 and ongoing	Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program. 2006, ongoing
Protective devices included	- Backwater valve -Sump pump -Downspout disconnections	Inspector determines the required work (backwater valve, sump pump)	- backwater valve -Sump pump	Backwater valve	-Backwater valve -Sump pump - Pipe severance and capping
Subsidy	Max \$3000	-100% of the work up to max \$4000 (if experienced backup due to surcharging of City Sewers) - 50% and up to 2500 (didn't have a backup but located in areas with history of blockage or surcharging of City sewers)	- 100% up to \$800 max for backwater valve - 100% up to \$800 max for sump pump - 100% for both up to \$1800	-Max 1200 for backwater valve	-80% up to \$1250 for backwater valve - 80% up to \$1750 for sump pump
Responsible department/	Environmental Services	Environmental Services	Building Services	Drainage Services Branch	Toronto Water
City's role	-Pre -inspection -Recommend required work	-Pre-inspection -Provide info for protective plumbing requirements - Final inspection of work performed	-Building permit -Application review	Information & communication Application review	-Building permit -Application review

Proposed Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

TABLE 2: FINANCING OPTIONS

	Option 1 Status Quo	Option 2(a) 50% Subsidy to max of	Option 2(b) 75% Subsidy to max of	Option 3(a) 50% Subsidy to max of	Option 3(b) 75% Subsidy to max of
Backwater/Back-up Valve	N/A	\$1,000	\$1600	\$1,000	\$1,600
Sump Pump	N/A	\$1,250	\$2,000	\$1,250	\$2,000
Combined (BWV+ SP)	N/A	\$2,250	\$3,600	\$2,295	\$3,600
Annual Contribution from Wastewater Capital Budget	\$10,000 ¹	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$175,000	\$175,000
	Number of properties who could benefit from each option at maximum funding on an annual basis.				
Backwater valve	N/A	350	219	175	109
Sump pump	N/A	280	175	140	88
Combined (BWV+ SP)	N/A	156	97	78	49

¹ Cost for communication and education plan.

Proposed Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

Appendix A

Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

1. Objective of the program

The objective of the program is to assist those owners of properties which have suffered flooding on July 25th, 2009 to install approved forms of protective measures to prevent future basement flooding, and owners who are considering protecting their properties from future potential flooding. Assistance will be in the form of a subsidy, to a specified maximum amount, which may change from year to year, based on available funding. The subsidy will be provided on a reimbursement basis, to offset the purchase and installation costs incurred for the approved preventive measures, subject always to available program funding and compliance with program requirements.

2. What is Preventative Plumbing

Preventative plumbing is the installation of plumbing devices which will help control flooding or sewer back-ups in the home.

Two forms of Preventative Plumbing are authorized for subsidy under the Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program:

- (a) backwater valves; and
- (b) sump pumps

The combined installation of both a back up valve and sump pump will also qualify.

Definitions

Backwater Valve

A backwater valve is a device installed on the sanitary sewage connection, either within or outside the home. Backwater valve will close when there is a sewer back flow. However, when the valve is closed, use of water within the home needs to be restricted, as water cannot escape the house. Use of water while the valve is closed may result in flooding. A backwater valve must also be maintained by the property owner at his or her own expense, as recommended by the manufacturer.

Proposed Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

Sump Pump

A sump pump serve to manage the water normally collected by footing weeping tiles that drain to the sanitary sewer.

NOTE: this is desirable only if lot grading has a positive slope and collected water will not impact neighboring properties. Without sufficient grading, then installation of a sump pump may actually increase property flooding.

3. Will Preventive Plumbing Help?

It is the responsibility of the home owner to make any necessary enquiries of qualified professionals to determine the best way to address any potential problems with flooding or sewer backups to his or her property. There is no single solution. The availability of a subsidy for certain types of preventative plumbing is not intended to be a recommendation to the home owner to engage in the installation or a representation that the subsidized forms of preventative plumbing will resolve flooding or sewer back-up in your particular instance. Consultation with a licensed plumber or contractor is a necessary first step.

The property owner who has suffered flooding or sewer backup is advised to arrange for a site assessment to be conducted by a licensed plumber or qualified licenced contractor. The plumber or contractor may assist the homeowner to determine:

- a. whether it is appropriate to isolate their property from the City's sewer system;
- b. whether the installation of preventive plumbing measures will assist in controlling flooding in their particular circumstances; and
- c. where preventive plumbing is desirable, the best form of preventive plumbing.

The property owner, in conjunction with his or her licensed plumber or licensed contractor, will want to consider the following factors (among others) when assessing whether a property would benefit from preventative plumbing of the type subsidized under this program:

- a. does the lot grading around the home has a positive slope– if not, a sump pump is unlikely to be an effective solution and may cause flooding;
- b. can the water can be directed in such a way that it will not adversely affect neighbouring or other properties – if not, a sump pump is unlikely to be an effective solution and may cause flooding in the same or other areas or homes;

Proposed Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

c. what is the effect of and proposed drainage pattern of any water discharged by a sump pump (if installed);

NOTE: pay close attention to areas where there is limited drainage as water discharged by sump pump may create more flooding.

4. Eligibility requirements

An applicant for a preventative plumbing subsidy must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- a. the applicant must be the current owner of property on which there is a building which suffered a flood or sewer backup since January 1st, 2009;
- b. the property taxes for the property are not in arrears;
- c. the eavestrough downspouts and sump pump on any building on the property which is the subject of the application are properly disconnected from the City sewer system, **unless** the property owner has submitted an opinion of a plumber licenced by the CGS that it is not feasible to do so, in the circumstances, satisfactory to the City's General Manager of Infrastructure Services;
- d. the applicant has provided the necessary information and documentation and is otherwise compliant with the program requirements;
- e. the property is located within the area identified in the flood prone areas;
- f. the applicant obtained any necessary permits for the completed work, including, where applicable, a building permit, and the permits are in good standing;
- g. the applicant must have installed in the property
 - a backwater valve; or
 - a sump pump; or
 - both a backwater valve and a sump pump
- h. the installation of the approved form of preventative plumbing must have been installed by a licensed plumber;
- i. where the application relates to a sump pump, the property to which the application relates must have a positive slope;
- j. where the application relates to a backwater valve

Proposed Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

- the backwater valve must be a **MAINLINE®** brand or one that is approved by the Ontario Building Code;
- the backwater valve must be installed on the sanitary sewage connection;
- the installation must be completed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code Section 7.4.6.4 for a single family dwelling unit only and reference with the CAN/CSA B181. 1-M90 Standard and to the satisfaction of the Chief Building Official;

NOTE: the City will require as part of the building permit application process, a schematic of the building drains and the proposed location of the backwater valve and an inspection will be required prior to backfilling.

- storm water pipes, drainage services connection, drainage water pipes, drainage sump pump discharge laterals, foundation drains, storm water leaders or down spouts shall not be connected to the sewer;
- the Backwater valve must have been installed in a manner that it is accessible for inspection and maintenance by the owner at his/her expense.

Priority will be given to properties flooded in year 2009 for application received in 2010 and it will be based on first come first serve basis.

NOTE: Property owners who have already installed protective devices and the installation is approved by the City are eligible to receive the subsidy in the same way as new applicants.

Starting in year 2011, the program will be open to all properties located in flood prone areas who are wishing to install preventative devices.

5. The Maximum Subsidy

The maximum amount of subsidy payable for each eligible property is outlined in **Schedule A.**

Subsidies for eligible work are subject to available funding and provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Subsidies are provided one time only for each eligible installation, per property, and on a no-fault basis.

Proposed Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

Only one subsidy payment is permitted per property. Additional measures installed after the first subsidy payment will not qualify for further subsidy.

6. Application

The General Manager of Infrastructure Services may from time to time, establish the form of application for the subsidy which is to be submitted by an applicant. A Subsidy application will not be processed unless the application is fully completed, signed by the applicant, and all necessary supporting documentation provided. An Applicant shall provide in support of the application:

- a. "Proof of ownership" such as, a copy of the registered deed or transfer of land or tax bill confirming the applicant as the registered owner of the property;
- b. "Proof of flooding" such as a letter or statement from the Insurance Company to provide information regarding the date and extent of the basement or cellar flooding (if applicable), applies only for properties flooded in 2009;
- c. Consent for City of Greater Sudbury Representatives to conduct inspections and investigations on the homeowner's property;
- d. Evidence of the issuance of a Building Permit and a successful final inspection;
- e. full and complete invoices for eligible costs and proof of payment in full of all submitted invoices;
- f. such further documentation as may be reasonably requested by the General Manager of Infrastructure Services.

NOTE:

All installations must be completed before the applicant applies for the subsidy.

All supporting documents must be originals. Photocopies will be not be accepted.

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7. Process to Obtain a Subsidy

Step 1 – Eligibility

The property owner should ensure that the Property qualifies for the subsidy program.

Step 2 -Review of Protective Plumbing requirements

In consultation with the Plumber/Contractor licensed by the City of Greater Sudbury, the property owner determines the appropriate protective plumbing to best resolve the flooding problem for his or her particular property. If the proposed solution falls into one of the categories, the property owner may qualify for a subsidy.

Step 3: Building Permit

The property owner arranges to obtain Building Permit for the proposed work.

Step 4 – Protective Plumbing is installed

The property owner arranges for the performance of the work. The licensed plumber /Contractor installs the protective plumbing devices.

Step 5– Work inspection

The property owner arranges for necessary inspections by building services, in compliance with the building permit.

Step 6 – Payment of Contractor

The property owner pays the plumber for the performance of the work, making sure to retain copies of all invoices and proof of payment.

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Step 7 –Application

The property owner applies for the Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program, either in person at the 3rd floor in TDS, Community Centres or by mail by sending their application *and all supporting materials* to the following address:

Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program

City of Greater Sudbury

3rd Floor TDS Engineering Department

200 Brady Street Sudbury P3A 5P3

Information package with the application form can be found either at the Citizen's Office or 3rd floor in TDS or Community Centres or can be downloaded from City's web site.

Step 8- Review of Application

The City will review the property owner's application to ensure that the eligibility guidelines have been met and the application is complete. Eligible homeowners will receive a receipt of application letter. Homeowners who are not eligible or who submitted an incomplete application are sent an explanation letter and where applicable, an explanation of what is required to comply.

Note: If a Condominium Corporation submits applications on behalf of more than one homeowner then the protective plumbing grants will be processed under one application administered by the condominium and a letter of authorization from each homeowner represented by the condominium must be attached to the application.

Step 9: Payment

The City will issue a subsidy cheque to the eligible home owner who has otherwise qualified under the program, for an amount up to the permitted maximum and to the extent that funds are available for the program.

Schedule A: As per Council's decision

PREVENTIVE PLUMBING SUBSIDY PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

Applicant /Property Info

Name of each Property Owner / Applicant: _____

Address of Property for which a subsidy is applied: _____

Legal Description of Property for which a subsidy is applied _____

Mailing Address of Property Owner (if different than Property Address) _____

Contact Info:

Application

I,----- and I, ----- apply for a Preventative Plumbing Subsidy under the City's Preventative Plumbing Subsidy Program and certify as to the following:

- (a) I consulted with a plumber and/or contractor licensed by the City of Greater Sudbury as to the advisability of the work completed;
- (b) the property for which the subsidy is applied has been flooded since January 1, 2009, applies only for owners affected during 2009 flooding.
- (c) the property taxes for the property are not in arrears;
- (d) no eavestrough downspout and no sump pump on the property is connected to the City sanitary sewer system OR
() eavestrough / (Sump pump) connected to sewer system & plumber/contractor opinion provided
- (e) a building permit was obtained to do the preventative plumbing Permit _____
- (f) qualified plumber completed the installation at the specified property of:
() MAINLINE backwater valve or one that is approved by Ontario Building Code
() sump pump () Back water valve and sump pump

I / We understand that

- (a) if I installed a sump pump, I must ensure:
 - (i) my yard has a positive slope
 - (ii) I am responsible if collected water impacts other properties
 - (b) if I installed a back water valve, the backwater valve needs to be:
 - (a) accessible for maintenance purposes;
 - (b) maintained in good working order – an annual maintenance plan is advisable; and
 - (c) protected from damage including damage from freezing
- AND I understand how a backwater valve operates and that using water while the backwater valve is closed may result in flooding my home

adn

I/ We have attached the following original documents in support of my application:

- ☐ -proof of flooding since January 1, 2009; applies only for owners affected by 2009 flooding
- ☐ -opinion of plumber that disconnect of eavestrough / sump pump not feasible in circumstances
- ☐ -proof of ownership - ☐ copy of transfer ☐ tax bill ☐
- ☐ -Consent for inspection of property
- ☐ -invoices for eligible work, completed by Contractor or plumber, marked "paid"
- ☐ other _____

I/ we understand and agree that the subsidy provided by the City is not a recommendation by the City that the work subsidized should be undertaken or a representation that the work undertaken will prevent any future flooding or sewer backups. I/ we have satisfied ourselves on all matters regarding to the work.

The City, its elected and non-elected officials, employees and agents will not be liable to the recipient or recipients of the subsidy funding, their contractors, any person affected by the work done to obtain a subsidy, or any other person, for Claims however caused that arise out of or are in any way related to the Subsidy, the Subsidy Program or work done for which a subsidy is available or made.

I/We hereby agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City, its elected and non-elected officials and employees from and against any and all liability, loss, costs, damages and expenses, (including legal fees), causes of action, claims, demands, lawsuits or other proceedings by whoever made, sustained, incurred, brought or prosecuted, in any way arising out of or in connection with the Subsidy Program or work done for which a subsidy is available or made.

Dated at the City of Greater Sudbury this _____ Day of _____

Signature

Signature

Print name

Print Name

To be completed by staff:

- ☐ taxes are paid ☐ property within the designated flood zone
- ☐ plumber's opinion re no disconnect satisfactory
- ☐ building services confirmed work complete
- ☐ all submissions received and in order

Subsidy Calculation

paid: Building Permit Application \$ _____

Paid: work \$ _____

Total \$ _____

X% of Total Cost \$ _____

Subsidy approved of lesser of

() _____ (X% of total cost) And () \$ _____ Maximum Subsidy for work done

Approved by _____ Dated _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION collected herein is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, for the purposes of assessing entitlement to and administering a subsidy program. Questions can be directed to the City of Greater Sudbury's Freedom of Information Co-Ordinator at Tom Davies Square, 200 Brady Street, P.O. Box 5000, Stn A, Sudbury, Ontario, P3A 5P3, or by phone at 3-1-1.

Send the application to:

Preventative Plumbing subsidy Program
3rd floor Tom Davis Square
City of Greater Sudbury
200 Brady Street Sudbury P3A 5P3

For more additional information call:
(705) 674-4455 extension 4235