



SUBJECT: Plumbing Permit Fee Grant Program

TO: Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.

FROM: Engineering Services Department

Report Number: ES-07-22

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 565-01

Date to Committee: April 7, 2022

Date to Council: April 19, 2022

Recommendation:

Approve \$80,000 from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund be provided for the continuation of the Plumbing Permit Fee Grant Program in 2022 and 2023.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment

Background and Discussion:

Following the major storm and flooding of August 2014, the City established a Plumbing Permit Fee grant program to provide residents with financial support for improvements being undertaken in their homes or businesses to reduce the risk of basement flooding. This program provides a 100% rebate on the cost of the Plumbing Permit Fee for improvements including:

- Weeping Tile Disconnection and Sump Pump Installation Subsidy
- Backwater Valve Installation Subsidy
- Sewer Lateral (pipe) Lining and Repair Subsidy
- Downspout Disconnection program

The City's program was established to provide residents with financial support in addition to Halton Region's "Enhanced Basement Flood Prevention Subsidy Program".

The City's Plumbing Permit Fee grant program has successfully been in place since 2014. The following summarizes the amounts of permit fees that have been refunded annually:

2014 = \$176,983

2015 = \$ 60,709

2016 = \$ 14,953

2017 = \$ 26,985

2018 = \$ 35,626

2019 = \$ 17,225

2020 = \$ 24,150

2021 = \$ 36,861

Strategy/process

Following the August 2014 storm, Halton Region undertook a number of phased initiatives, in coordination with the City of Burlington, to mitigate the risks of future basement flooding. The initial work focused on areas most impacted by the 2014 flooding, followed by the development of a strategic approach to address basement flooding mitigation Region wide. The overall objective of the program was to remove extraneous stormwater and groundwater, from both public and private sources, from entering and overloading the sanitary sewer system and causing basement flooding. This extraneous flow is typically referred to as "I&I": Inflow and Infiltration.

This program includes a sanitary sewer flow monitoring program. Its purpose was to initially identify neighbourhoods that had high levels of I&I, and to quantify the reductions of I&I after in-home flood prevention installations took place and after sanitary sewer improvements were completed.

Halton Region is currently completing this flow monitoring analysis and plans to launch a focused outreach program in specific neighbourhoods that continue to show high levels of I&I. Burlington has some of these neighbourhoods. The anticipation is that there will be an increase in the number of residents taking advantage of the Region's subsidy program.

A significant amount of I&I has been already eliminated from entering the sanitary sewers through the work of the “Region Wide Basement Flooding Mitigation Program” since 2014. This important work needs to continue.

It is our recommendation to keep the Plumbing Permit Fees grant program in place to support our residents and to encourage them to take advantage of the subsidies available from Halton Region and the City of Burlington.

Options Considered

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

Financial Matters:

This report is proposing \$80,000 be provided for the continuation of the Plumbing Permit Fees grant program in 2022 and 2023.

Source of Funding

The Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund is proposed to be the funding source.

Other Resource Impacts

The Building Department will interact with applicants and administer this program.

Climate Implications

Climate Change is an ongoing concern in the City of Burlington for both the storm drainage system and the sanitary sewer system. The increasing frequency and intensity of storms are becoming more common. Assisting our residents with a rebate for the cost of Plumbing Permit fees will help to promote the installation of basement flood prevention devices in our City’s homes and businesses. This program will improve public safety and provide protection for private property and our municipal assets.

Engagement Matters:

Engagement and consultation with the City's Building Department will be required by applicants to obtain a Plumbing Permit for the installation of any basement flood prevention devices.

Continuing information will be available on our City's website. Also, whenever possible, staff will provide reference to this program, to assist applicants during interaction.

Conclusion:

The City's Plumbing Permit Fees grant program has been in place since 2014, providing our residents with monetary support for the permit fees of basement flooding prevention devices being installed in their homes and businesses.

With confirmation from Halton Region that they are planning to increase their promotion of the Enhanced Basement Flood Prevention Subsidy Program, it is our recommendation that we continue our coordination and support of this program through the continuance of the City's Plumbing Permit Fees grant program, for the benefit of our residents.

It is recommended to approve \$80,000 from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund be provided for the continuation of the Plumbing Permit Fees grant program in 2022 and 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Cary Clark, P. Eng.

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Notifications: (if none delete section)

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Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.