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## **Sanitary Backwater Valve Subsidy Program Information Report**

Report Number: 2018-16

Department(s): Public Works Services

Author(s): Manger, Water/Wastewater Services

Date: March 9, 2018

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

### **Purpose**

To inform Council about the implementation of the Sanitary Backwater-Valve Subsidy program.

### **Background**

With climate change on the rise, frequent and severe weather events/flash floods, particularly in the rainy Spring and Autumn months, are becoming increasingly frequent. During these heavy rain events, basements can flood due to Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) putting additional strain on the sanitary collection system. There were 14 claims against the Town from incidents during the June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 storm alone.

The Town of Newmarket is proactively working to ensure that the system of underground sanitary sewer pipes is properly constructed, maintained and functioning. There are many concurrent projects happening around the Town to try to reduce I&I. These actions include internal capital projects and projects in conjunction with York Region and certain developers.

These projects, although a benefit to the system, cannot eliminate basement flooding entirely. To reduce the risk of basement flooding in higher risk areas, the Sanitary Backwater Valve Subsidy Program has been developed to assist homeowners in protecting their basements from flooding caused by surcharged sewers during severe weather events.

Residents who install a backwater valve may significantly reduce the risk of basement flooding; however, there is no guarantee that installing a backwater-valve will completely prevent basement flooding in the future.

To assist homeowners, a budget of \$10,000 was requested and approved through the 2018 Water/Wastewater Operating Budget to introduce a Sanitary Backwater Valve Subsidy Program. To initiate the program, staff is recommending that the Town offer homeowners of single-family homes a financial subsidy of up to \$500 per property to install a backwater valve.

## Discussion

### How the Program will Work

During the first years of this program, depending on budget, staff will conduct an outreach to properties that have previously been affected by basement flooding from the sanitary system. Staff will target these specific areas with door hangers and other public outreach mechanisms to focus the allocation of the budget on high risk areas.

Those in the specific targeted area will be able to apply for the subsidy on a first come, first served basis until the first week in August and depending on available budget. See attached for the identified target area. After the first week of August, the funding will be available to all residents who meet the criteria regardless of previous incidents. The following year, the high risk area(s) will be targeted again for the available funding until August when the cycle repeats.

Each property owner is required to have a licensed plumber or drain contractor, carry out a site assessment to determine the suitability of isolating their property one way from the Town's sewer system.

In consultation with the licensed plumber or drain contractor, homeowners may determine that a **backwater valve** on the sanitary sewage connection may provide sufficient basement flooding protection.

The resident would then send in the applicable information for the subsidy and cost of installing an approved backwater-valve, up to a maximum of \$500, including eligible labour, materials, permit and taxes. Note that the current Town of Newmarket permit fee for installation of a backwater valve is \$185. Inspections are typically to verify that the approved unit has been installed in the direction of flow and that it is accessible for maintenance.

### Requirements and Information

- The property must be registered as a single-family residential, property within the Town of Newmarket.
- The subsidy is available only to existing homes, not new homes in the planning stages or currently under construction.

- The property must have its eavestrough downspouts properly disconnected from the Town’s sanitary sewer system, wherever possible, to the satisfaction of the Town.
- A qualified licensed plumber or drain contractor must be hired to perform the installation of a sanitary backflow device.
- A plumbing permit and approved inspection must be obtained for backwater valve installations.
- All installations must be completed before the applicant applies for the subsidy.
- Invoice(s) must show a cost breakdown of all charges, the plumbing or drain license number of the contractor, the total amount paid, and clearly marked as “paid-in-full.”
- The backwater valve must be approved for residential use by the Ontario Building Code, no exceptions.
- All documents, **must be originals – no photocopies will be accepted.** Once the application is processed, the original invoice(s) will be returned to the property owner.
- Subsidies for eligible work are subject to available funding and are provided on a first come, first-served basis.
- Subsidies are provided one time only, per property, and on a no-fault basis.
- Labour provided by the homeowner is not eligible for reimbursement under this program.
- Reimbursement will not be provided for any interior restoration, such as drywall, paint or finished flooring, or any exterior restoration work.
- Once the approved budget for the Backwater Valve Installation Subsidy Program has been depleted in any year, those homeowners approved to receive a subsidy will have to wait until funding has been approved in the following year to receive their subsidy.

## Conclusion

The installation of a sanitary backwater valve will help protect basements from flooding and may reduce the amount of claims the Town receives. A subsidy of \$500 per installation would help incent residents to install these preventative appurtenances.

## Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Focusing on health, safety and the environment to promote activity, innovation and create a truly livable and engaged community means we are:

- Ensuring community safety and security
- Encouraging environmental protection and natural heritage preservation

## Consultation

Public Works Staff have reached out to other municipalities around the province to compare this proposed Program and determine the appropriate amount of subsidy.

## Human Resource Considerations

No impact to human resources.

## Budget Impact

A budget of \$10,000 was requested and approved through the 2018 Water/Wastewater Operating Budget to support this Sanitary Backwater Valves Subsidy Program.

## Attachments

Map of area affected by the June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 storm

## Contact

For more information on this Report please contact Luigi Colangelo at [lcolangelo@newmarket.ca](mailto:lcolangelo@newmarket.ca) or extension 2553

## Approval



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