

COUNCIL MEETING
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES / ENGINEERING

REPORT ENG-2025-05
February 18, 2025

SUBJECT: Rear Yard Disconnection of Sewer (RYDS) - Grant Allocations

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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND approve an increase to the maximum funding available under the Sewage Water Alleviation Program (SWAP) to \$10,000.00 for Rear Yard Disconnection of Sewer (RYDS) cases; and further

THAT Council approve an amendment to By-law 2017-18 being A BY-LAW TO REGULATE MANAGEMENT OF A SYSTEM OF SEWER WORKS AND DRAINAGE WORKS IN THE CITY OF WELLAND to increase Section 4.3.2 maximum reimbursements from \$6,000.00 to \$10,000.00.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

This recommendation is aligned to Council's strategic priority of ensuring "**Health and Wellbeing**" to promote personal health and well-being by offering an abundance of activities that meet the diverse needs and interests all while, advocating for improved health care throughout the city, and supporting the need for safety and security.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Welland faces challenges with stormwater inflow and infiltration (I/I) into the sanitary sewer system, which can cause basement flooding, increase treatment costs, and limit sewer capacity. To mitigate I/I, homeowners can disconnect downspouts and weeping tiles from the sewer and repair private sanitary laterals.

To assist with costs, the City offers the Sewage Water Alleviation Program (SWAP), providing grants for eligible work such as installing backwater valves, sump pumps, and disconnecting foundation drains. Under By-law 2017-18, homeowners can receive up to \$8,000 in funding for certain drainage disconnections.

A growing issue is the costly redirection of sanitary laterals from aging rear yard sewers to new municipal mains. Recognizing the higher financial burden, the City proposes increasing the maximum grant for these "Rear Yard Disconnection of Sewer (RYDS)" cases to \$10,000, while keeping other SWAP grant amounts unchanged.

BACKGROUND:

The City's challenges with inflow and infiltration (I/I) of stormwater into the sanitary sewer system are well documented. I/I can increase the risk of basement flooding, inflate water treatment costs, and limit capacity in the existing sewers which in turn limits the capacity for growth.

The solution to reducing I/I is multifaceted. In addition to municipal efforts, individual homeowners can significantly reduce I/I through the disconnection of downspouts and weeping tiles from the sanitary sewer as well as the repair/replacement of private sanitary laterals.

To assist homeowners with the financial costs associated with making changes to their property that benefit municipal network, the City of Welland offers a grant program. The program is titled, "Sewage Water Alleviation Program (SWAP)" and is based on provisions within By-law 2017-18 being A BY-LAW TO REGULATE MANAGEMENT OF A SYSTEM OF SEWER WORKS AND DRAINAGE WORKS IN THE CITY OF WELLAND (also known as the Sewer and Drainage Works By-law).

Work eligible for reimbursement under the SWAP program includes the following:

- Installation of an approved backwater valve that complies with Article 7.4.6.4. of the Ontario Building Code;
- Installation of a CSA approved sump pump, basin and discharge pipe including supporting electrical works and battery backup;
- Disconnection of foundation drains or weeping tiles from the sanitary sewer;
- Disconnection of downspouts to prevent the direct or indirect connection to the sanitary sewer;
- Lateral or weeping tile connection tracing by camera or other means;
- Installation of a cleanout if required (every home should have one); and
- All associated construction for the installation of the devices listed; and other limited restoration.

Additionally, the Sewer and Drainage Works By-law provides the following:

Section 4.3.2: Provided that funds are available, as approved through the Corporation's annual budget deliberations, financial assistance to a maximum reimbursement of \$8,000 may be considered to assist Owners with the Costs of the following repairs to disconnect Drainage connections from, and to reduce Extraneous Flow into, the Sewer Works:

- a) Removal of roof leaders from the Sanitary Sewer.
- b) Removal of existing sump pump connections from the Sanitary Sewer.
- c) Repair or replacement of a leaking Building sewers.
- d) Removal of Foundation Drain connections from the Sanitary Sewer.

With an increased number of infrastructure renewal projects in recent years, specifically focused on older neighbourhoods with aging infrastructure, staff have encountered a number of cases where residents are required to redirect their sanitary laterals from aging rear yard and/or privately owned sewers to new municipal mains to comply with the Sewer and Drainage Works By-law, specifically:

Section 4.1.4: Where Sanitary Sewers have been installed within a road Right-of-Way or easement which abuts the Property of an existing Building, the affected Owner shall connect to the completed Sanitary and/or Storm Sewer at his or her expense within twelve (12) months of the date of notice requiring the connection to be made provided to the Owner by the Corporation via registered mail at the Owner's last known address.

In these cases, redirecting a sanitary lateral from a rear yard infrastructure connection is typically more costly than a standard front yard lateral replacement. To that end, Council requested a review of these costs with consideration to be given to raising eligible SWAP funding.

DISCUSSION:

On May 07, 2024 Council referred back to staff Report ENG-2024-13: Increasing Sewage Water Alleviation Program (SWAP) Grant Allocations in which staff recommended an increase to the maximum funding available under the SWAP program from \$6,000.00 to \$8,000.00. There was discussion around the costs related to the redirecting of rear yard sanitary laterals compared to other SWAP initiatives.

The costs for private sanitary lateral replacements and connections to municipal servicing (at the property line) is the responsibility of the respective property owner. However, if these replacements, due to material type and age, are expected to benefit the City by reduce infiltration into the municipal sanitary network, they may be eligible for SWAP grants.

In recent years staff have encountered several cases where residents must redirect their sanitary laterals from aging rear yard and/or privately owned sewers to new municipal mains within the road allowance. Under SWAP, staff now refer to these cases as "Rear Yard Disconnection of Sewer (RYDS)".

In 2023 and 2024, the average cost to homeowners to complete eligible SWAP works was \$7,321, while the average cost to homeowners to complete eligible RYDS works was \$13,520. Both costs exclude applicable taxes.

Grants are intended to encourage residents to participate in I/I reduction initiatives and to alleviate the financial burden related to the same. Therefore, recognizing that the disconnection from a rear yard sewer is frequently a larger financial outlay for a homeowner than other SWAP eligible works, staff recommends that RYDS applications under the SWAP be eligible for a maximum funding of \$10,000.00 and that Section 4.3.2 of By-law 2017-18 be amended to reflect this specific case and grant. Other eligible works and grant amounts will remain unchanged under the SWAP.

FINANCIAL:

The 2025 Capital Budget included \$100,000 in approved SWAP funding.

ATTACHMENT:

None.