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Item No. 11.1.9
Halifax Regional Council
June 23, 2015

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council
Original signed by 
SUBMITTED BY: Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer
Original Signed by 
Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: May 8, 2015
SUBJECT: National Disaster Mitigation Program – Flood Risk Assessment

ORIGIN

January 2009 Halifax Regional Water Commission Board Report requesting participation from HRM in funding stormwater infrastructure;

February 26, 2013 Regional Council approved a stormwater infrastructure interim funding solution; and,

April 20, 2015, Federal call for applications for National Disaster Mitigation Program.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Section 74 – permits the Municipality to enter into agreements with the Province or Government of Canada to provide or administer municipal services.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Part IV, Finance, Power to expend money, section 79, permits Council to expend money required by the Municipality for preventing or decreasing flooding, and for wastewater facilities and stormwater systems.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to submit an application to the National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) to carry out a risk assessment on flood prone areas in the municipality, as outlined in the budget implications section of this report.

BACKGROUND

Regional Council has previously directed staff to develop a long term funding program in conjunction with Halifax Water, for deep storm sewers that will alleviate flooding of both private property as well as public streets.

On April 20, 2015 the federal government announced it is now accepting proposals for its National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) to address flood risks and costs, and invest in mitigation efforts that reduce or negate the impacts of future flood events. The deadline to submit proposals for 2015/16 funding is June 30, 2015.

The NDMP allocates approximately \$200 million over 5 years and is completely merit based. In broad terms, there are four categories of projects that are eligible for funding: risk assessments, flood mapping, mitigation planning, and small scale mitigation projects.

DISCUSSION

As a result of the direction from Regional Council, staff have been developing an inventory of areas in the Municipality that are at risk of flooding or that have flooded as a result of storm events. The list to date consists of almost 700 sites that are flood prone or have drainage issues. In addition, there are over 500 sites that are routinely visited by operations staff prior to a storm in an attempt to clean inlets to prevent flooding; some of which may also benefit from a system upgrade or replacement. The total number of sites prone to or at risk of flooding far exceeds the number anticipated by staff.

Staff is set to begin the task of consolidating flooding sites into areas based on street, neighbourhood or community depending on the extent of the flooding problem. The consolidated list can then be sorted according to cause, severity of impact, and rough order of magnitude costs which will help Council identify priority areas for remedial work; which will help HRM complete it's Council directed task in a more timely and less costly manner.

This work may be eligible for funding under the National Disaster Mitigation Program. Work on the joint funding strategy for stormwater could be greatly advanced by securing funding to carry out a risk assessment to federal guidelines on the flood prone areas in the municipality. The risk assessment would provide the needed data on impacts, consequences, and frequency of occurrence for floods that would help Council prioritize areas to be addressed and to develop mitigation plans and projects that may also be eligible for funding in later years of this program.

Staff are recommending an application be submitted to carry out risk assessments on flood prone areas, and provide recommendations for capital upgrades and small scale mitigation projects. This project would have a total cost of \$200,000. Under the NDMP, federal funding is provided for 50% of project costs. There is no Provincial cost-sharing component.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funds are available within the 2015/16 approved operating budget to support a municipal contribution in the amount of \$100,000 from cost centre: D935 – 6399, contract services.

Halifax Water has agreed to reimburse the Municipality 50% of the Municipal share to a maximum amount of \$50,000.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The risk assessment will form the basis of a long term funding strategy for the provision of stormwater facilities aimed at reducing flooding in the municipality. Outcomes of this program include protection of property, protection of the municipal right of way, and enhanced water quality in lakes and streams.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could agree not to request funding for a risk assessment of flood prone areas. If this alternative is selected, the development of a joint stormwater funding strategy will be further delayed as the number of areas prone to flooding far exceeded what was anticipated. Identifying projects for Council's consideration in 2016/2017 under the interim funding policy will not be affected if this alternative is selected.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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