



Subject: Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant and Home Flood Protection Program

To: Council

From: Public Works Department

Report Number: 2021-316

Meeting Date: December 13, 2021

Recommendation:

That Public Works Department Report 2021-316 be received;

That Council approve applying for the Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant; and

That the Manager of Water/Wastewater be directed, if funding is received, to enter into an agreement with AET Group Inc. to administer a Home Flood Protection Program for up to 50 homes in Port Colborne.

Purpose:

This report is being written to seek Council's approval to apply for a Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant, and, should funding be received, to enter into an agreement with AET Group Inc. to administer a Home Flood Protection Program for the City's homeowners.

Background:

Intact Financial Corporation, through its Intact Foundation and Intact Public Entities group have launched the Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant to help municipalities adapt to climate change and keep people safe. The focus of the grant is to invest in projects that can increase community resiliency to flood and wildfire risks. The following types of projects are being prioritized:

- **Shovel-ready:** greening and natural infrastructure solutions such as wetland restoration to reduce flood risk or vegetation management techniques to create a community fireguard.

- **Climate mitigation tools:** these could include incentives for homeowners to install sump pumps or fire-retardant roofing.
- **Research readiness and feasibility assessments:** these could include updating flood and/or wildfire-risk mapping or undertaking a flood or wildfire hazard assessment.
- **Awareness and education:** these could include distributing home flood and/or wildfire protection materials or creating an online portal for residents to obtain flood-risk information.

Intact is funding initiatives, up to \$100,000, that are slated to start by October 2022 and will be completed within one year.

Discussion:

In October 2021, City staff and Council members received an email campaign from AET Group Inc. (AET) that promoted a Home Flood Protection Program (HFPP). Staff reached out to AET to learn more about the HFPP, and at that time were made aware that the HFPP qualified as a project under the Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant.

The HFPP was developed in 2016 by the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo to help homeowners reduce the risk of basement flooding and to minimize damage if flooding did occur. AET partnered with the University from 2017 to 2018 to test and refine the program and completed pilot studies in Toronto, Burlington and Saskatoon. In 2019, the University of Waterloo gave AET a license to continue offering the program. More information about the program is provided in Appendix A.

The information from AET was very timely, considering the basement flooding that occurred throughout the City during the July 17th extreme rainfall event.

Staff are proposing the following projects, which total \$100,000, for the funding application:

- Home Flood Protection Assessment for 50 homes (completed by AET, approximate value of \$500 per home)
- Grant for the assessed homeowners (50) to complete recommended upgrades from the assessment (maximum \$500 per home)
- Grant for the assessed homeowners (50) to install a backwater valve to prevent sewer backups (maximum \$500 per home)
- City-wide grant for 50 additional homeowners to install a backwater valve to prevent sewer backups (maximum \$500 per home)

The intention is that the grants will first be offered to the homes in the area that experienced flooding during the July 17th storm event, and then will be offered to homeowners throughout the City.

If the City's grant application is not successful, these projects will not be offered.

Financial Implications:

These projects would be completed entirely on private property in private homes at no cost to the City, except for some minor administrative tasks (i.e. receiving receipts from residents, verifying the expenses, and issuing a grant cheque).

If the application is successful, the projects would be entirely funded from the \$100,000 received from the Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Service and Simplicity - Quality and Innovative Delivery of Customer Services
 - Governance: Communications, Engagement, and Decision-Making
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Conclusion:

With climate change, the frequency of extreme rainfall events is likely to increase. The Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant, if received, provides an opportunity for the City to assist homeowners in protecting their basements from flooding during these events.

Appendices:

- A. Flooding in Canada: Why Is It Happening and What Are We Doing About It?

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Suddard
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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.