



Subject: 2026 Annual Drain Maintenance Billing

To: Council

From: Public Works Department

Report Number: 2026-25

Meeting Date: April 14, 2026

Recommendation:

That Public Works Department Report 2026-25 be received; and

That staff be directed to bill the outstanding drainage maintenance work through charges to the final tax bill and through regular billings for properties outside of the Port Colborne boundary;

That the By-law, attached as Appendix A, be brought forward for approval to amend the Assessment Schedules and levy the actual costs incurred for the maintenance of the following drains: Biederman Drain, Wignell Drain, Bearss West Branch West, Marsh Drain, Beaver Dam Drain, Oil Mill Creek West Branch Drain, William (Wm) Michael Drain, and Bearss Municipal Drain.

Purpose:

This report provides an update to Council on municipal drain maintenance billing, as well as the timing of drainage billings for assessed properties. Staff have also prepared a levy by-law for Council to adopt, which will allow staff to bill outstanding maintenance balances on the 2026 final tax bill as previously directed.

Background:

Port Colborne has a large network of municipal drains which move water into natural bodies of water, prevent flooding and protect agricultural land, mostly in agricultural areas. Municipal drains include natural systems such as berms, grassy waterways, and others are closed systems such as pipes, culverts and bridges. They are not sewers or meant to carry hazardous waste, septic waste or any other type of contaminant. The process for creating a municipal drain is outlined in detail in the *Drainage Act, R.S.O., 1990* (the Act).

At a high level this is done through petition and an engineer's report is presented for consideration of City Council to enact a by-law to adopt the report and the drain.

Once a Municipal Drainage Report has been adopted by Council, it is then the Municipality's responsibility to perform maintenance on the drain. The drain maintenance outlined in this report was performed under Section 74 of the *Drainage Act, R.S.O., 1990* which provides that drainage maintenance performed by a municipality shall be at the expense of all the upstream lands and roads assessed for the construction or improvement of the drainage works.

Maintenance expenses are distributed in the apportion amount determined by the appointed engineer, unless varied through a successful appeal or granted through a severance. Following an appeal, each municipal drain was adopted through by-law. The respective by-law information can be found on each assessment schedule included in Appendix A to this report.

The City has prepared a public [municipal drains web page](#) which includes a list of municipal drains in Port Colborne and information for residents for petitions, appeals, notifications and more information.

Discussion:

Municipal drains require regular maintenance such as beaver trapping, removal of dams, brushing and clearing of the drain and working corridor, excavation, levelling of excavated material, and gate control structure operation and maintenance to ensure water flow and prevent flooding. Works can be performed by both third-party contractors and Public Works staff. The following is a summary of the unbilled maintenance costs that have been accrued up to December 31, 2025 for drains across the City.

	Drain	Outstanding Balance
A	Biederman Drain	\$2,569.46
B	Wignell Drain South of Friendship Trail	\$572.49
C	Bearss West Branch West	\$52.82
D	Marsh	\$1,100.00
E	Beaver Dam Dain Outlet maintenance	\$2,823.62
F	Oil Mill Creek Main Drain	\$52.95
G	Oil Mill Creek West Branch	\$1,307.62
H	Oil Mill Creek Outlet Structure	\$52.82
I	Wm Michael Drain	\$8,110.22
J	Bearss Drain	\$230.07
K	Beaver Dam Drain North of the Flood Gate	\$2,139.50
	Total	\$19,011.57

A requirement of the Act is to ensure that the drainage schedules be kept up to date. Drainage staff work with the Planning Department and Financial Services to ensure that happens. The schedules in the attached by-law will act as a resolution of Council's endorsement to comply with Section 65(2) of the Act.

Internal Consultations:

Drainage staff have met with Financial Services to discuss the 2025 drainage works and outstanding fees.

Financial Implications:

When the municipality carries out work on a municipal drain, the costs are initially paid for by the City. These expenses are then recovered from the property owners within the watershed at the time of billing. The following is a summary of costs to be billed this year:

Collection method	Amount to be collected
Added to tax accounts	\$12,661.07
Accounts receivable (Ministry of Transportation, Niagara Region, etc.)	\$2,143.88
City Portion (Municipal roads and municipal owned parcels)	\$1,882.62
Storm Sewer Rate (parcels assessed in a drainage report that also pay the storm sewer rate)	\$18.19
OMAFa grant	\$2,305.81
Total	\$19,011.57

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFa) grants have been applied for however, not yet received. Should the 2024 grant be less than the anticipated standard of 1/3, or an error is noted from OMAFA, another bill will be sent to assessed parcels for the difference in the cost. The cost breakdown for each drain can be found in the Levy By-law.

Eagle Marsh Drain

This billing exercise will resolve all maintenance accounts, except for accounts included in the Eagle Marsh Drain as there is not currently an assessment schedule for that report. When the engineer completes the new report, the engineer will incorporate the accumulated maintenance costs into the new assessment schedules and the accrued amounts will be billed to the assessed property owners of the watershed. To date the account balance is \$154,790.29.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillars of the strategic plan:

- Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure
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Conclusion:

Approval of this report will allow staff to collect the outstanding amount of \$19,011.57 based on maintenance completed on the individual municipal drains outlined within this report.

Appendices:

- a. By-law to Amend the Assessment Schedules A-K and to Levy the Actual Costs Incurred for the Maintenance of Drainage Works 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Alana Vander Veen
Drainage Superintendent
905-228-8127
Alana.VanderVeen@portcolborne.ca

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.