



Greater Sudbury Watershed Alliance

January 13, 2015

Input to City of Greater Sudbury Budget 2015

The Greater Sudbury Watershed Alliance (GSWA) is concerned about protecting and improving water quality in the lakes and rivers throughout the watersheds of the City of Greater Sudbury (CGS). We are an association of 17 lake, creek and river stewardship groups.

In making a submission to the Budget Committee we are not looking for funding for special projects or a onetime allotment of funds. GSWA believes that the CGS budget should reflect a meaningful commitment to protect and improve our natural infrastructure, our city of lakes.

We recommend Watershed and Sub-watershed Studies be included in the 2015 budget:

- **Set watershed and sub-watershed studies as a budget priority - \$250,000;**
- **Place watershed and sub-watershed plans into a permanent budget line to be carried forward year after year;**
- **Accept the Official Plan lake priority list, while ensuring that Ramsey Lake is the first to be studied.**

Rationale: The budgeting for a Ramsey Lake watershed study was approved in the 2014 budget but was included within the Infrastructure umbrella. City staff is working on a Terms of Reference for the watershed studies but to our knowledge this has not yet been completed, and the Ramsey Lake watershed study has not been undertaken.

Our second recommendation is to reconsider the decision the Budget committee made to not raise fees for Water and Waste Water. This department must have adequate funding in order to permanently address the issues that lead to sewage by-passes during heavy rain events, spring flooding, or when equipment fails. Unless adequate funds are set aside to repair and replace aging infrastructure, correct the inflow and infiltration challenges, and enforce the Sewage Use By-law, the serious problem of sewage bypasses will not be properly addressed.

Rationale: On the CGS website there is a section devoted to a Wastewater Stewardship Report. A review of these reports shows that there were 61 by-pass events in 2014. Of these, 19 occurrences were termed major. For example a particularly major event occurred on October 15, 2014 when 325,058 cubic metres of raw sewage was released into Junction Creek with only partial disinfection. Of course disinfection kills dangerous bacteria but does not prevent nutrients such as phosphorus from entering the receiving water ways. GSWA is not alone in believing that sewage by-passes must stop. We recognize that staff is doing their utmost to manage and prevent these by-passes; however, they must be provided with adequate funding if they are to correct the issues.

GSWA also recommends that the City of Greater Sudbury become the lead in a program of mandatory inspection and regular maintenance of private sewage treatment systems such as holding tanks, septic tanks, leaching beds (including outhouses and pit privies) in order to preserve fresh water resources and protect public health and safety. Following institution of such a program, re-inspections should be repeated every five years.

Rationale: We understand that this program will be costly, and that the Sudbury and District Health Unit (SDHU) is currently the chosen lead on this issue. We also understand it is partially funded by the City. Nevertheless SDHU has responsibilities beyond the city limits so; we suggest that the City of Greater Sudbury take back responsibility for private septic system inspections within the City of Greater Sudbury boundaries.

Private drinking water source protection has the potential for preventing serious consequences for rural and suburban residents who get their water from wells and surface water. Unmaintained or failing septic systems can degrade water quality and contaminate drinking water sources.

Respectfully submitted:

Lesley Flowers, Chair
Greater Sudbury Watershed Alliance