



Greater Sudbury Watershed Alliance

October 21, 2016

Re: City of Greater Sudbury 2016-2017 Budget

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

The Greater Sudbury Watershed Alliance (GSWA) continues to be dedicated to protecting and improving the lakes, rivers, and watersheds of the City of Greater Sudbury.

We believe that council needs to allocate sufficient funds to protect our lakes, waterways and wetlands. This would require a shifting of funds from other priorities and taking advantage of any federal and provincial cost sharing opportunities. Citizens understand the value of safe water and the recreational opportunities of the lakes and rivers in our city. We feel confident that most taxpayers would support projects that protect these valuable natural assets. City staff have the ability to meet the challenge, and with council's support, set a strategic plan in motion.

GSWA has compiled the following priorities that we request be considered. The list is not complete, but includes priority items that warrant inclusion in the 2016-2017 budget, and beyond into the future.

Reduction of inflow and infiltration of storm water into sanitary sewers:

Inflow and infiltration of storm water into the wastewater system during heavy rain events and snow melt results in sewage by-passes into local streams, rivers and lakes. The release of untreated or partially treated sewage into the natural environment must be reduced to control harmful chemicals, nutrients, and dangerous pathogens from entering our waterways. The public never likes to hear about reports of blue green algae, Eurasian milfoil, beach closures and drinking water advisories. GSWA recommends that effective initiatives be implemented to reduce inflow and infiltration, store storm water in catchments for later treatment, and to ultimately end the harmful sewage by-passes into our waterways.

Storm water protection:

GSWA is recommending that the city accelerate the implementation of initiatives to reduce the impact of storm water into our lakes and rivers. We thank council and staff for the recent watershed studies and other projects under development but believe that more work needs to be done. We look forward to discussing the recommendations in the watershed studies with you.

Sewage treatment facilities

We are recommending that the city continue to evaluate the treatment levels of sewage facilities and implement enhanced or tertiary treatment where the receiving waterbody is being harmed. We believe funds or staff time should be allocated to setting priority projects.

Septic system inspection

We are recommending that the city consider implementing an enhanced septic system inspection requirement through discussions with the Sudbury Health Unit. It is important that a robust inspection system is in place to ensure that the existing septic treatment facilities are functioning properly and that property owners understand their responsibilities. Many of the systems are old or in environmentally sensitive locations and pose a risk to lakes and streams. The city's funding portion the Health Unit requires additional funding to achieve this.

Railway safety

Recent and ongoing concerns over railway safety is an important issue with the public and our group. Prevention, risk reduction, emergency planning and environmental cleanup of railway incidents are recurring topics and we recommend that the city enhance their ability to respond to emergencies and cleanup. We understand that there is overlapping responsibilities with others but enough staffing and resources should be dedicated to this risk.

HCI funds

We support using these funds for projects that would improve lake water quality and recreational uses. GSWA endorses the SLCSG's request for the City to remove algae from Mud, Simon and McCharles Lakes, and that whatever method is chosen must result in minimal environmental impact, with special precautions in place to prevent the spread of Eurasian Milfoil and contaminated sediment into the downstream waters.

Watershed Advisory Panel

We are recommending that funding for the panel be increased to allow individual lake stewardships and associations to undertake projects and promote volunteering with their members. It is important that these not for profit organizations receive financial and city staff support for this important role in the community. We are requesting that the funds available be increased and that the grant criteria be more flexible to encourage more innovative projects.

The importance of healthy lakes is critical to all of us. We believe that prevention and risk control is simpler and less expensive than restoration and or dealing with emergency situations. GSWA therefore urges the City to consider our recommendations.

We thank you for initiatives the City has undertaken and hope you can support GSWA in our mandate to protect and improve our waterways.

Margaret McLaughlin

Chair, GSWA