

For Information Only

Storm Working Group Update

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Recommendation

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Background

This Report updates the Council Report of August 12, 2009 and describes the work being undertaken by the Storm Working Group.

As requested by the Mayor, the Staff Working Group has been formed with a mandate to fully assess the impact of this storm and the City's response to it, and to make recommendations to improve the City's ability to cope with future severe weather events.

The Group will focus on the July 26th storm, its intensity and impact and how assistance was provided to those affected. The aftermath of the storm, including insurance, clean-up, waste collection protocols, access to landfill and communications and co-ordination between staff, agencies, Council and the public will be reviewed. The Group will then move into looking forward, including a review of public education around severe weather awareness and post storm recovery and the relationship between localized storms and emergency planning. A detailed analysis of storm and draining systems, including their capacity, impacts of cross connections, review of maintenance programs, analysis of drainage from the SalDan Subdivision and review of specific areas including Pine, Mountain and Dell Streets in the downtown area and Soloy, Beatrice and Lasalle in New Sudbury, as well as the Brady and Frood Underpasses will be included.

The Staff Working Group held its first meeting on August 4th and work was assigned to specific individual and teams. The team members have received copies of all the questions asked both in e-mail and at the public meeting. Since that time, some topic specific meetings have been held, analysis has begun at the department level with a follow-up meeting of the entire Group on September 10th. The final report and recommendations will be delivered to Council on February 11, 2010

Signed By

Report Prepared By

Caroline Hallsworth
Executive Director, Administrative
Services

Digitally Signed Sep 16, 09

Recommended by the Department

Caroline Hallsworth
Executive Director, Administrative
Services

Digitally Signed Sep 16, 09

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer

Digitally Signed Sep 16, 09

Disaster Relief Assistance Programs:

The Mayor sent a letter to Minister Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on August 13th requesting the declaration of a disaster under authority of the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP). That letter was accompanied by a package of materials, including the resolution of City Council requesting the declaration of a disaster under authority of ODRAP, a storm map, pictures of some of the damage and copies of the media coverage of the storm. CGS Staff subsequently met with staff from the local Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing office who requested additional information, which was provided on August 21, 2009. Ministry staff in both Sudbury and elsewhere are now conducting their research and investigation of the storm and associated damage and CGS staff are responding to these inquiries as they arise.

A staff member has been assigned to research existing local or municipal disaster relief assistance programs, including how they function and what the programs cost.

Communications with Citizens and Public Education:

The public education component is being reviewed by Corporate Communications and the Public Awareness Program Committee which is a sub-committee of the Greater Sudbury Emergency Management Advisory Panel who will make recommendations about public education related to severe weather awareness, post storm event recovery, basement flood protection and sewer backup avoidance. Information and examples from other jurisdictions are being gathered and the matter is on the Panel's next agenda. New materials which are proposed by the Sub-Committee will be prepared by Corporate Communications or by community partners as appropriate and will be ready for early 2010.

A staff team met to review protocols associated with 3-1-1 and telephone access during storm events. The City has a protocol in place to activate the call centre (3-1-1) and dispatch during storm events and this protocol is followed during winter storms where more than 8 cm of snow is anticipated. Because of the fact that the July 26th storm occurred without any storm watches or warnings, the after-hours activation of the call centre on that day did not occur. Staff are meeting with the after-hours dispatch service to review escalation procedures so as to ensure an earlier alert to municipal staff when there is a spike in calls related to a particular event. Also, the Citizen Inquiry Centre Emergency Operations Plan which was developed in 2004 will be updated before February 2010 to incorporate new technologies and any changes to process which would improve the citizen response.

The capacity to activate a secondary call centre when there are high call volumes is already in place and can be exercised as required. Having reviewed the calls received, it became apparent that a number of citizens called more than once. The number of second calls can be reduced by providing clearer information as to when the citizen can expect a response and what information is available.

Through the review, a number of ideas as to how to maximize the effectiveness of the call flows were discussed. All staff will be further encouraged to provide their contacts with the 674-4455 number which allows callers to enter the extension required and frees up call centre staff to respond to citizen inquiries. Further, analysis of calls which are being redirected will be completed and may lead to changes to the messaging which plays when a citizen is on hold.

Emergency Response:

The primary role of municipal government in an emergency is to provide the organizational framework within which the co-ordinated response will take place, thereby reducing the impact of the emergency on the inhabitants of the City. Emergency Management is a corporate initiative that serves as an essential component of the City's Emergency Response Plan.

The Emergency Services Division will develop a Corporate Early Notification Protocol so as to ensure the appropriate escalations and a corporate wide response as required. Emergency Services is also exploring adopting Ontario's Incident Management System so as to unify and standardize the approach to incidents in which multiple jurisdictions are involved.

Urban Flooding and Flood Response:

Over the past few years the Province, through an inter-ministerial working group, including Conservation Authorities and municipalities, has been working on addressing the phenomenon of urban flooding due to the more frequent severe storm events that are occurring during all seasons. Urban flooding is what was experienced on July 26th in our community. A great deal of work has been done at the provincial level but much more remains to be done.

Following the spring 2009 runoff period, staff from NDCA and the City met to discuss how we are collectively responding to citizens' needs in the watershed during periods of flooding. The intent of this joint working group is to review what it is possible to do for our residents, recognizing that resources are a major issue and that in some traditional flood-prone areas around the City sandbagging will not help, even during a growing spring runoff for which advance preparation is usually possible. Staff in attendance at that meeting were assigned tasks and a timeline was developed to ensure readiness for the 2010 spring runoff period.

Stormwater and Drainage Systems:

Staff have begun analysis of drainage in some of the areas most affected during the July 26th storm. This analysis includes review of the size of the drainage shed, existing pipe infrastructure, storm sewer capacity and overland flow routes in the Mountain Street, Sunrise Ridge, Lower Flour Mill and Kingsway areas, and along the East Branch of Junction Creek and Nolin's Creek. As part of this review, staff will look at flood anomalies to try to determine the origins of excess water flow. Original construction plans for the Brady Street Underpass are also being reviewed in the context of drainage capacity and water flow.

Over past years the construction of the Nickeldale Dam, north of Lasalle Boulevard, and the Maley Dam, north of Malley Drive, has significantly reduced the amount of flooding that downtown Sudbury frequently experienced. A more in-depth study of factors influencing the rapid rise of water on Junction and Nolin Creeks is required. There are several sub watersheds that drain to Nolin's Creek, some of which were enclosed many years ago, meaning that there is less information available about the design of those systems.

Some years ago, the proactive, routine cleaning and flushing program to storm sewers and catch basins was eliminated during the budget deliberations as part of a program of fiscal constraints. As a result, the program became reactive and areas with sand and debris in catch basins and storm sewers were addressed on an as-needed basis.

Staff will be reviewing flushing and cleaning programs, giving consideration to the many factors, including location, ground conditions and the type of winter control products used (ie, sand or salt) in the area to determine if reinstitution of some form of a pro-active maintenance program is warranted and what new or realigned resources such a program might require.

Sunrise Ridge (SalDan) Development:

The City's insurer has appointed an independent third party engineer to review the impact Sunrise Ridge development may have contributed to this event within the Leslie Street and Mountain Street Neighbourhoods. The engineer has expertise in storm water management, storm water engineering, design and construction and resides outside of Greater Sudbury. The review will assess the original storm water management report provided by the engineering consultants as well as the design drawings submitted by the developer's engineer. It will also assess the storm water management facilities which have been constructed to date on site for conformity to design, functionality and applicable standards. Findings and recommendations of this review will be made at a later date.

Next Steps:

Staff will continue their analysis and review of the above noted matters and will report to Council with recommendations in February 2010.