
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report PED-GM-07-2017 Proposed Plumbing Inspector Position

For Consideration by Committee of the Whole on December 7, 2017



OBJECTIVE:

To obtain Council approval to add 1.0 FTE – Plumbing Inspector to the Building Controls and By-law Enforcement Division complement to undertake internal plumbing inspections, lateral inspections and septic system inspections to mitigate risk from inflow and infiltration and to improve efficiencies relative to significant service demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report PED-GM-07-2017 Proposed Plumbing Inspector Position be received;
2. AND THAT staff be authorized to change the staff complement responsible for building inspection services, as outlined in Report PED-GM-07-2017, on the understanding that the overall Building Controls and By-law Enforcement division staff complement will increase by net 1.0 FTE and include the introduction of two new positions responsible for plumbing inspections;
3. AND THAT the costs associated with the change be approved and incorporated into the 2018 Tax Supported Operating Budget as a Council Approved Initiative with net costs funded from the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund, with related capital expenditures included in the 2018 Tax Supported Capital Budget with funding from the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund;
4. AND THAT staff be directed to draft the required amendments to the Water and Wastewater and Tax Supported User Fees and Charges By-laws as required.

Respectfully submitted: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development

Approved: Donald G. Boyle, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

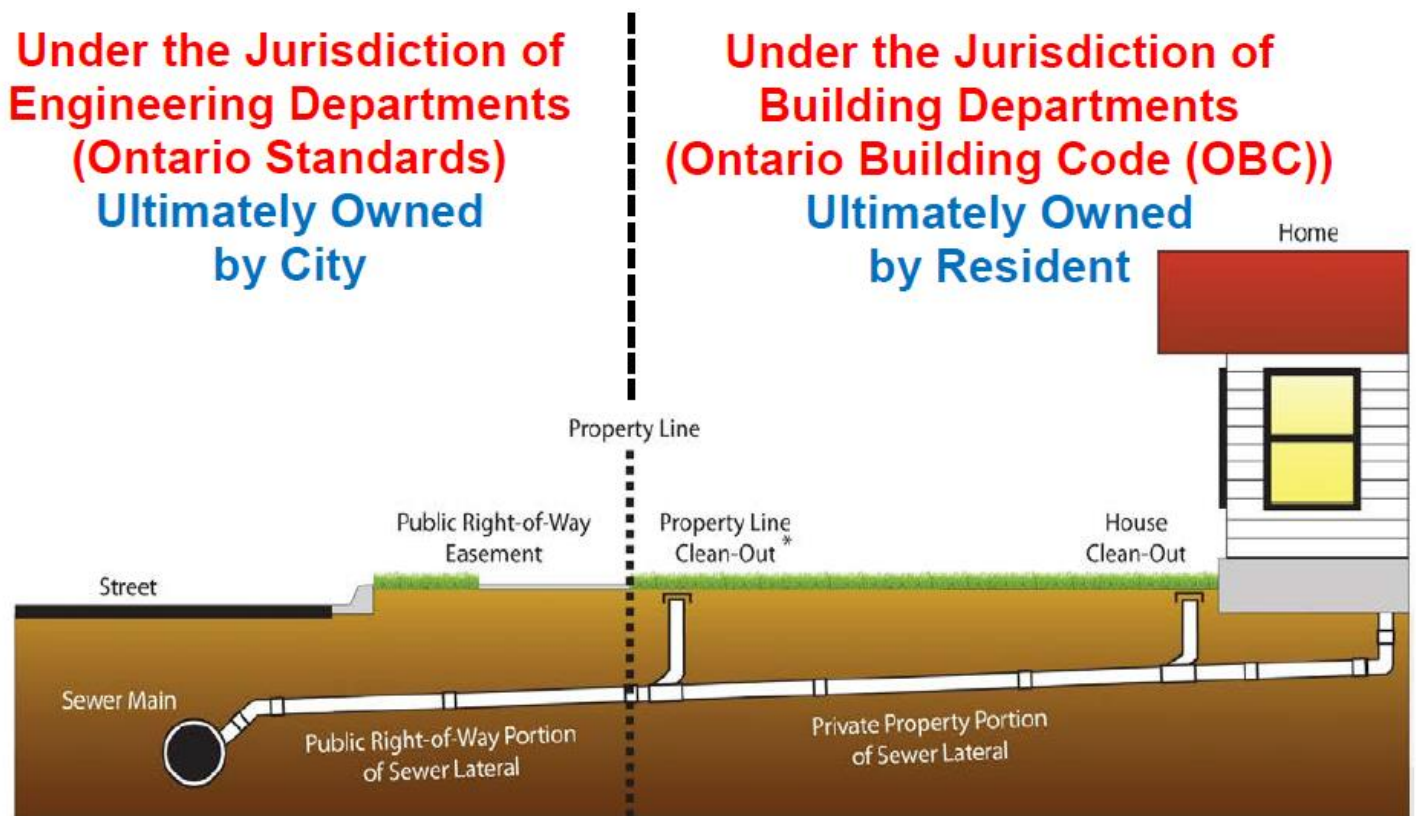
In order to manage investments made by the County in servicing capacity, a new inspection procedure is required – specifically to inspect and pressure test laterals on private property, so as to ensure no leaks occur leading to infiltration and inflow of water into the sanitary sewer system. This falls under the purview of the *Ontario Building Code*. At the same time, permit levels are five times historic rates and this level of development is expected into the future. To address this need and effectively deliver the service (1) new FTE – Plumbing Inspector is proposed to be funded from the Building Permit Stabilization Reserve.

BACKGROUND:

The County is facing unprecedented levels of construction and is anticipated to have sustained growth in the future. In 2017, it is anticipated that over 500 new dwellings will be constructed as compared to past annual averages of under 100. A recent review of inspection procedures between the Public Works

and Planning and Economic Development Departments indicated that there was a need to revise the current inspection processes as it relates to the private property portion of sanitary laterals – specifically, to introduce a pressure test of these to confirm that they will not leak.

Currently, the public portion of the sewage collection system is pressure tested before acceptance by the County to ensure system integrity and the individual plumbing systems within a dwelling are also tested as part of the Building Inspection process. However, the portion in between these two components comprising the sanitary lateral on private property has only been subject to visual inspections to confirm proper grade and the presence of proper bedding supporting the infrastructure. Given the timing of the emplacement of this infrastructure, such inspections have been undertaken by Public Works staff since it occurs before dwelling construction/permits. A recent review of legislation indicates that these laterals properly fall under the *Ontario Building Code* and require inspection from a properly qualified person pursuant to that legislation.



The implications of not pressure testing the laterals on private property are significant. Specifically, it can result in the inflow and infiltration of clean water into the sanitary system through cracks, loose joints or pipe defects. If this occurs it can significantly limit capacity to allow new development, can exacerbate routine flood events and increase treatment costs. The issue of unacceptable inflow and infiltration in new subdivisions is a growing issue in Ontario. Recent research conducted for the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario and funded by several municipalities and the Institute of Catastrophic Loss Reduction found, that there is significant risk and recent flooding experienced in new subdivisions that is directly associated with infiltration as a result of leaks in new private laterals. As part of its Engineering Design Standards, the County is intending to introduce design measures in early 2018 that will allow these laterals to be pressure tested and inspected so as, to better manage this risk. This type of design standard is increasingly being introduced by municipalities across the

Province. Engineering Staff will be communicating this change in standard to all developers in the County early in 2018, well in advance of the construction season.

ANALYSIS:

Given the increase in development activity and the importance that the County has on maximizing the investments it has made in servicing capacity, avoiding unnecessary costs that can impact rates and to retain capacity to facilitate further growth, Staff of the two Departments proactively met to review current procedures and determined a new approach to better manage the emplacement/condition of new private laterals. Key to this is the legislative requirement that the private side of the system falls under the *Ontario Building Code*. As such, there is a legislative requirement to have a qualified inspector ensure the integrity of these systems.

It is proposed, that to undertake this new inspection work that a new Plumbing Inspector position be created within the Building Controls and By-law Enforcement Division. The position will be established to implement the inspection requirements of the *Ontario Building Code* as they relate to private laterals, internal plumbing and septic systems. Staff propose that this position be fully funded from the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve which is funded solely from permit revenue and can only be used for Building Code matters. Current permit fees recover costs for septic inspections and internal dwelling plumbing inspections. An additional fee of \$180 will be applied to recover the cost of the inspection of the private laterals and to be added to the building inspection fees for dwellings on public sewer and water systems, resulting in additional annual estimated permit revenue of \$73,500.

The attached analysis (Attachment 1)—based on the estimated number of plumbing related inspections and expected construction levels—indicates that the workload from plumbing inspection activities equates to 1.5 FTE. The additional 1.0 FTE staff request for a dedicated Plumbing Inspector will be augmented by allocating a portion of another existing approved Building Inspector position who will provide back-up and additional support for plumbing inspections in addition to undertaking other inspection work.

A revised job description will need to be developed and reviewed via the job evaluation process for any new position created as a result of this initiative. A preliminary review of the proposed plumbing inspection tasks/responsibilities indicates that the job is likely to be evaluated at the same grade as the existing Building Inspectors. However, it is important to note that the Building Inspectors currently receive a temporary Labour Market Wage Adjustment premium, as approved by Council through consideration of Report PED-GM-12-2016 in recognition of the labour market shortage for qualified Building Inspectors. Staff do not have evidence to suggest that the job market for qualified Plumbing Inspectors necessitates a Labour Market Wage Adjustment premium; so, according to the approved policy, this premium cannot be extended to the proposed new position of Plumbing Inspector. Staff do not anticipate difficulty recruiting for this position and in fact, there may be advantages and internal growth opportunities related to this model. However, should there be difficulty in recruiting or retaining staff in this position in the future, an analysis of the plumbing inspection labour market will be undertaken and reported back to Council for consideration of an appropriate premium adjustment, if warranted, at a later date.

Fundamentally, work volumes and the need to ensure system integrity of the private property portion of sanitary laterals supports the introduction of a Plumbing Inspector specialist, as well as redefinition of an existing Building Inspector to also include plumbing inspection as a primary function. These changes would also have the additional benefit of allowing the remaining building inspection staff complement to be deployed for additional plan review or other inspection activity that better utilizes their skills and qualifications. It also removes some workload from Public Works staff who are similarly responding to higher volumes of development related activity.

Based on current projections of development, staff believe that the influx in workload will continue for at least the next eight to ten years. Given the workload concerns, adding to the staff complement by introducing a Plumbing Inspector specialist will allow the County to meet the provincially mandated and the County customer service demands put in place for the Division. However, should workload demands lessen in the future, it is important to note that Council does have the ability to reduce staff complement in the Division through layoff measures. Article 16 of the CUPE Collective Agreement, which covers all Building Inspectors, provides detailed provisions for laying off an employee. Briefly, the employee with the lowest seniority in the classification would be provided a notice of layoff and be given options of severance, recall and/or “bumping” into another qualified position within the bargaining unit.

Building Inspector Staffing

	2017 Approved	2017 Currently Filled FTE	2018 Proposed	Ongoing	Ongoing vs. Approved Increase/(Decrease)
Permanent Full-time (PFT)	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.0
Permanent Full-time (PFT) / Report PED-BC-07-2017	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	(1.0)
Maternity Leave (PFT) (until approximately June 2018)	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Building Inspector (PFT)(Plumber)	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Building Inspector (PFT)(Plumber/Building Inspector)	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
Total	8.0	5.0	9.0	9.0	1.0

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The following annualized costs including non refundable HST for the proposed Plumbing Inspector position will be included in the 2018 Tax Supported Operating Budget as a Council Approved initiative:

	2018 Council Approved Initiative
Expenditures	
Full-Time Salaries/Wages and Benefits (Removal of Building Inspector Position)	\$(96,500)
Full-Time Salaries/Wages and Benefits (Addition of Plumbing Inspector)	\$87,900
Full-Time Salaries/Wages and Benefits (Addition of Plumbing/Building Inspector)	\$87,900
Tools & Supplies	\$450

Uniforms	\$500
Safety Wear & Supplies	\$500
Professional Development	\$3,800
Memberships	\$500
Cellular Telephone Charges	\$500
Fleet Equipment Charge	\$6,730
Interdepartmental Chargeback – Human Resources	\$1,370
Interdepartmental Chargeback – Information Systems	\$4,400
Total Expenditures	\$98,050
Financing	
Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund	\$22,450
Plumbing Permit Revenues	\$75,600
Total Financing	\$98,050

Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund

As all activity related to the *Ontario Building Code* is to be self-funded (i.e. no levy impact), any revenue surpluses or shortfalls will result in a contribution to or from the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund, as appropriate. The 2017 Tax Supported Operating Budget included a one-time initiative to retain a consultant to undertake the drafting of a new Building By-law, which is to include a review of the building permit fees structure. The outcome of this review may impact the underlying cost allocation methodology relating to the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund.

The related capital expenditures including non refundable HST for the proposed Plumbing Inspector position will be included in the 2018 Tax Supported Capital Budget:

	2018 Budget
Expenditures	
Workstation (Desk, Chair)	\$3,500
2 in 1 Device	\$2,900
Desk Phone	\$250
Mobile Device	\$350
Mobile Printer	\$400
Compact Pickup/SUV	\$30,000
Total Expenditures	\$37,400
Financing	
Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund	\$37,400
Total Financing	\$37,400

Building Inspection Services are 100% funded from building permit revenue. Provincial legislation dictates that the permit fees must be justified by the applicable costs with any surpluses held in a specific reserve dedicated to fund these services. There are currently sufficient funds within the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve Fund to fund the expenditures related to the proposed Plumbing Inspector position.

As a result of this change in service, amendments will need to be made to both the Water and Wastewater Fees and Services Charges By-law and associated schedules (Schedule C), as well as the Tax Supported User Fees and Services Charges By-law and associated schedules (Schedule N).

The related fee impacts for the Water and Wastewater Fees and Services Charges have been incorporated as a New Initiative in the 2018 Draft Water and Wastewater Operating Budget. A summary of this reduction in fees is included below:

	2018 Base Budget	Removal of Building Related Inspection Fees	2018 Total Budget
Water Portion of Connection Permits	(45,320)	38,260	(7,060)
Wastewater Portion of Connection Permits	(45,750)	36,030	(9,720)
Total Connection Permit Revenue	(\$91,070)	\$74,290	(\$16,780)

Until a Plumbing Inspector can be hired, Water and Wastewater staff will continue to completed inspections under the current arrangement. As it is anticipated that this position will be approved through the Tax Supported Operating Budget, the related amendments to the affect user fee by-laws will occur at that time.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: Yes

Budget Amendment: Yes

Policy: No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Business Case – Plumbing Inspector.