



May 4, 2011

Ms. Pam Kaput
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 2700
Chicago, Illinois 60606
pam.kaput@glslcities.org

Sent Via Email

Dear Pam:

**Subject: Wege Small Cities Sustainability
Best Practices Award - City of Niagara Falls, Ontario**

The City of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada is committed to the protection of its unique natural environment especially since it has the privilege of an abundant supply of fresh water from the Great Lakes system.

The City's response to climate change, development pressure and aging infrastructure has been admittedly slow but focused as we try to balance our stewardship efforts to the triple bottom line.

The City's Weeping Tile Removal Assistance Program (WRAP) is an excellent example of how the residents in our municipality can reduce their contribution to combined sewer overflows (CSO's), basement flooding and costly premature capital investments.

Attached is an overview of this program which we are submitting as our application for the Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award. It is our intention to direct any grant money towards our public awareness campaign by producing a video clip explaining the social, economic and environmental benefits of the program.

Thanks for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Geoff Holman, C.E.T.
Director of Municipal Works

GH/st
Attachment

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Working Together to Serve Our Community

Municipal Works
Ext 4219 Fax 905-356-2354
gholman@niagarafalls.ca



**City of Niagara Falls
Weeping Tile Removal Assistance Program
(WRAP)**



The storm water and wastewater infrastructure that serves the City of Niagara Falls has been under increasing stress in recent years due to new development, climate change and aging infrastructure. This stress has contributed to more frequent combined sewer overflows (CSO's), basement flooding and costly premature capital investments.

Efforts to treat and intercept storm water before it reaches the Stanley Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant have been slow and expensive. Sewer separation projects, High Rate Treatment and in-line storage strategies have proven to be helpful but capital intensive initiatives. Studies have shown that the most cost effective solution to the problem is to eliminate the problem at its source. To achieve this, the City needs to redirect any connection that allows the inflow of surface drainage and groundwater into the sanitary sewer system.

While the impacts from residential weeping tile connections are only part of the City's strategy to address these issues, it is a critical and cost-effective part of the overall Pollution Control Plan. Although these weeping tile connections have been prohibited since 1989 through provisions in the Ontario Building Code, there were approximately 19,500 homes built in Niagara Falls between mid 1940's and late 1980's that may have weeping tile connected to the sanitary sewer system.

The proposed City's Weeping Tile Removal Assistance Program (WRAP) has been planned to achieve five specific goals;

1. Raise the awareness and inform residents of the long term benefits of removing weeping tile connections to the sanitary sewer system; and,
2. Provide a financial incentive to assist residents to comply with this new standard which is being implemented retroactively; and,
3. Confirm the City's ongoing commitment to the Ministry of the Environment to protect the natural environment from the downstream impacts of CSO's and sewer bypasses; and,
4. Reduce the volume of clean water entering the sanitary sewer using capacity that otherwise could be utilized for future development; and,
5. Reduce the City's sewage treatment costs by removing the sources of clean water prior to its arrival at the Region of Niagara's Sewage Treatment Plant.

Many areas of the City are serviced with separated storm and sanitary sewers however homes built prior to the 1980's were permitted to connect the weeping tile (external foundation drain that collects subsurface water from around the basement footing) directly into the sanitary sewer lateral (piping that discharges sanitary effluent from the home to the sewer main out in the municipal road allowance).

This connection becomes problematic during wet weather conditions when ground water can outlet to the sewer system at an uncontrolled rate. These large volumes of clean water entering the sanitary sewer system overload the downstream sewer network causing surcharging (i.e., backups) in the system. Those areas that have deep basements or are serviced with shallow sewers often are prone to sewer lateral backups and basement flooding. During storm events of abnormal intensity or duration staff conduct emergency pumping from the sanitary sewer either directly into the natural environment or into a local storm sewer system to minimize damage to public and private property. The Niagara Falls Pollution Control Plan Update (June 2008) identified this problem as having detrimental effects on property values and recommended action to regulate and remove all sources of storm water from the sanitary sewer system.

In 2007 the City of Niagara Falls participated in a joint study with the Town of Fort Erie in an effort to “supplement anecdotal evidence concerning the efficacy and financial impact of weeping tile disconnection as part of an overall extraneous flow removal program.”

This report published in March 2008 concluded that;

- The average yearly discharge from weeping tile sources per residence in the City of Niagara Falls averages 114.5m³. This equates to 0.0036 l/s on a yearly basis.
- In terms of system capacity this is equivalent to the base flow from 4 to 5 new homes.

From these conclusions it is evident that a program targeting the removal of weeping tile would be worthy of consideration.

The WRAP program has recently passed its first anniversary and although there has been some resistance to the enforcement of the City's By-Law its popularity is growing especially among those who have experienced chronic basement flooding. The number of discharges into the natural environment have decreased dramatically and as public awareness grows we are confident that our program budget of \$300,000 will increase concomitantly.

Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent

The world's largest source of surface freshwater is in peril and needs leadership to protect it. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) is a bi-national coalition of mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, provincial, tribal and first nation governments to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

While large cities have the resources to act, small cities - with populations of under 100,000 - often do not. The Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award program awards \$5,000 to one small GLSLCI member city in the U.S. or Canada working to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and improve the quality of the water resource for future generations. This award was originated by the host of the GLSLCI 2007 annual meeting, the City of Grand Rapids, with support from the Wege Foundation. GLSLCI, in partnership with the Wege Foundation, is proud to continue the tradition of this annual award to encourage environmental stewardship and recognize effort and results.

What

Cities with populations under 100,000 are encouraged to submit a sustainable and meaningful project for consideration for an award that balances economic, social, and environmental aspects within the community that could be used as a best practice in other cities.

How

Small cities are encouraged to submit a 500-word description of a new or existing project that clearly delineates triple bottom line aspects (economic vitality, social equity and environmental stewardship) and the resulting community impact on Great Lakes-St. Lawrence water resources. Include a cover sheet describing why the project should be considered for the award and what the community will do with the associated \$5,000 grant award.

When

Submittals are due by May 6, 2011. If you are mailing hardcopies, they must be sent to the GLSLCI office postmarked no later than May 6, 2011 to be considered. Submittals will be reviewed and an award winner selected by the GLSLCI Board of Directors.

The award winner will accept their award during a 5-minute time slot at the Awards Luncheon during the Annual Meeting and Conference on Friday, June 17, 2011.

The award winner will be expected to return to the Annual Conference the following year with a report on their use of the award monies. This will ensure

accountability, development of best practices, and education on triple bottom line strategies that can be used by any city in development of sustainable best practices within their communities.

Submittal Guidelines:

1. Prepare a 500-word description of a new or existing project that clearly delineates triple bottom line aspects (economic vitality, social equity and environmental stewardship) and the resulting community impact on Great Lakes-St. Lawrence water resources. The program must be one that is currently operating.
2. You may select as many programs within your city as you wish to nominate, but a separate submittal must be completed for each program you submit.
3. Include a cover sheet describing why the project should be considered for the award and what the community will do with the associated \$5,000 grant award.
4. Electronic submissions in PDF format are preferred. If you are sending a hardcopy, staple the pages together for each submittal. Do not use binders, report covers, folders, etc. Please send only one (1) copy of each submittal.
5. Provide your contact information, phone and email.
6. Submittals are due by May 6, 2011. If you are sending hardcopies, they must be postmarked by May 6, 2011. You may send hardcopies by regular mail, Federal Express, UPS or other mail system.

Send electronically to:

Pam Kaput
pam.kaput@glslcities.org

Send hardcopy to:

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Attn: Pam Kaput
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 2700
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Timeline:

Tuesday, March 15, 2011Call for submittals
Friday, May 6, 2011.....Submittals due
Friday, June 3, 2011Winner notified
Friday, June 17, 2011Award presented

Questions?

For more information, contact Pam Kaput at 312.201.4518 or pam.kaput@glslcities.org

Selene Tudini - Reminder: Wege Award Submissions due May 6th

From: Pam Kaput <pam.kaput@glslcities.org>
Date: 25/04/2011 11:50 AM
Subject: Reminder: Wege Award Submissions due May 6th
Attachments: Small Cities Sustainability_Award Info 2011.pdf

Good Morning Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Mayors and Staff:

A reminder that submissions for the **Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award** are due **next Friday May 6th**. Attached is the formal submittal document for your reference. The Award will be presented at this year's Annual Meeting and Conference in Niagara Falls on Friday June 17th.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Pam

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