



TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
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REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Bill Andrews, Commissioner of Transportation & Public Works
Greg MacNaughtan, Director of Building Services & CBO

DATE: May 9, 2025

REPORT NO.: TPW-2025-017

SUBJECT: Proposed Pilot Program for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. TPW-2025-007, dated May 9, 2025, regarding the Proposed Pilot Program for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council authorize staff to establish a Pilot (2024-2025) Program for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant for up to 200 permits from the July 2024 or April 2025 events based on the qualifying conditions in this report;

AND FURTHER THAT the cost of the Pilot (2024-2025) Program for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant, with an upset limit of \$50,250.00 be funded through an offsetting transfer from the Tax Rate Stabilization reserve to the operating budget;

AND FURTHER THAT the budget requirements for the Proposed Annual Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant be referred to Budget Committee for consideration with the 2026 operating budget.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Town of Halton Hills encountered two major weather events in July 2024 and April 2025 with approximately 140 homes experiencing basement flooding associated with the surcharging of the Region's sanitary sewer system.
- Halton Region has been actively working to identify the cause(s) and engaging with affected residents.

- The Town has received direct requests from local residents requesting that the Town provide additional support to affected residents.
- The City of Burlington has an active Plumbing Permit Fee grant program to provide residents with financial support for improvements being undertaken in their homes or businesses to reduce the risk of basement flooding.
- The Town consider implementing a Pilot Program for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grants to support residents affected by the July 2024 and April 2025 events.
- The Town consider implementing an Annual Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant to encourage residents to undertake flood risk protection improvements.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Town of Halton Hills, specifically the Delrex Blvd neighborhood, encountered two major weather events in July 2024 and April 2025. These events led to basement flooding in several residential properties. As a result of the July 2024 events, Halton Region identified approximately 124 homes in Halton Hills that experienced basement flooding. Of the 124 identified, approximately 97 of these were associated with the surcharging of the sanitary sewer system. Following the April 2025 event, Halton Region identified approximately 43 homes that experienced basement flooding associated with the surcharging of the sanitary sewer system.

In Halton Hills, Halton Region is responsible for the operation & maintenance of the sanitary (wastewater) collection and treatment systems. For residents who have experienced basement flooding due to surcharging of the sanitary sewer system and/or wish to undertake home improvements to reduce flooding risk, Halton Region has the following programs available to provide financial support:

Halton Region Ex-gratia Grant for Public Sewer Back-ups

The Ex-gratia Grant (\$1,000) is intended to help residents either offset the cost of an insurance deductible or help with flooding-related clean-up costs. Residents may be eligible for the grant if a blockage occurred on the municipal side of the wastewater sewer system (i.e., beyond property line) or if the backup was the result of a blockage that occurred on the municipal side of the wastewater system; or the wastewater backup was the result of a sewer surcharge.

Halton Region - Enhanced Basement Flooding Prevention Subsidy Program

The Enhanced Basement Flooding Prevention Subsidy Program is intended to make it easier and more affordable for residents to undertake home improvements that can help reduce the risk of flooding. Improvements that may be eligible for subsidy under this program include:

- weeping tile disconnection & sump pump installation (Up to \$5,000)
- downspout disconnection (Up to \$500)

- backwater valve installation (Up to \$675)
- sewer lateral lining or repair subsidies (Up to \$2,000)

Refer to the link below for additional information:

<https://www.halton.ca/For-Residents/Water-and-Environment/Enhanced-Basement-Flooding-Prevention-Subsidy-Program>

As noted above, a number of Halton Hills residents have experienced basement flooding due to surcharging of the sanitary sewer system as part of these recent events. The Region has been actively working to identify the cause(s) of the flooding and engaging with affected residents. The Town has received direct requests from local residents asking the municipality to provide additional support to affected residents, including consideration for waiving of Building (Plumbing) Permits fees for improvements related to flood risk reduction (e.g., works associated with the Region's Enhanced Basement Flooding Prevention Subsidy Program).

Although this type of program would be new for Halton Hills, a comparable program is has been effectively utilized by the City of Burlington for over a decade. Since a significant weather event in 2014, the city has offered a Plumbing Permit Fee Grant Program to provide residents with financial support for improvements to their homes to reduce the risk of basement flooding. This program covers the cost of the Building/Plumbing Permit to implement the flood prevention works described above. As part of this program, the homeowner must sign an Acknowledgement and Release Form to ensure that the grant does not indicate or admit liability or responsibility and cannot be used against the municipality in any legal proceeding.

Town of Halton Hills – Building Permits

For residents to implement the flood risk reduction works included in the Region's Enhanced Basement Flooding Prevention Subsidy Program, a Building (Plumbing) Permit is required. The Town has established a permit fee associated with these works (Plumbing under RBFM Program) in the amount of \$251.21 (2025 Rate). This fee is specific to works associated with the Region's Subsidy Program and includes:

- Installation of a backwater valve, and/or;
- Installation of a sump pump and weeping tile disconnection, and/or;
- Repair/replacement of a sanitary line (only with the installation of a backwater valve).

Based on resident requests and in an effort to support Halton Hills' residents, particularly those who experienced flooding from the July 2024 and April 2025 events, staff recommend that consideration be given to establishing a Town of Halton Hills Program for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grants for flood mitigation/prevention works. The fee grant would be specific to those works identified in the Region's Enhanced Basement Flooding Prevention Subsidy Program as described above.

Proposed Pilot Program (2024-2025) for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant:

The proposed Pilot Program (2024-2025) for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant is based on the number of properties identified by the Region as having experienced basement flooding from the Region's sanitary sewer system (July 2024: ~97, April 2025: ~43) and allow for retroactive reimbursement for homeowners of affected properties that undertook qualifying permit works (resulting from the identified events) prior to the establishment of this program. In addition to those identified above, an allowance for an additional 60 properties is recommended to cover unidentified homes and those in the affected area who may wish to proactively undertake these types of work. This would provide for up to 200 total permit grants as part of the pilot program.

It is recommended that qualifications for the Town's Pilot Program (2024-2025) for Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant be based on the residents providing the following documentation:

- A completed Building Permit Application (Plumbing under RBFM Program) for the qualifying works, and;
- Documentation indicating acceptance of the works by Halton Region as part of the Enhanced Basement Flooding Prevention Subsidy Program, and;
- Execution of an Acknowledgement and Release Form to ensure that the grant does not indicate or admit liability or responsibility and cannot be used against the Town in any legal proceeding.

Only the Plumbing under RBFM Program permit fee (\$251.21) will be eligible for the grant program (i.e., other restoration/reconstruction works are not eligible). As noted above, it is recommended that the initial program be capped at 200 permit grants to allow for a reasonable level of cost certainty. The estimated cost of this program is approximately \$50,000.

Proposed Annual Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant Program:

Although the most recent basement flooding events have been generally focused in the Delrex area of Georgetown, it should be noted that there is potential for basement flooding to occur in almost any area serviced by the Region's wastewater collection system.

It is recommended that the proposed Annual Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant Program includes an allowance to subsidize up to 50 permit applications per year, granted on a first-come, first-served basis. The estimated cost of this program for 2026 is approximately \$13,000 and would need to be considered as part of the 2026 Budget process.

Qualifications for the Town's Annual Building (Plumbing) Permit Fee Grant Program would be the same as the proposed 2024-2025 Program as described above.

Opportunity for Future Consideration

Residential property owners are responsible for the maintenance of the buried municipal water and sewer service between the property line and the exterior of their home. As these services are not typically covered by standard home insurance policies, Local Authority Services (LAS, AMO Business Services) has established a Sewer and Water Line Warranty program in partnership with Service Line Warranties of Canada. This program provides sewer & water service protection for homeowners (voluntary participation) at competitive rates and includes a program for low-income residents. Homeowner participation in the program is completely voluntary and is provided at no cost to the municipality. Staff will review this opportunity in greater detail and report back to Council at a future date.

Refer to the link below for additional information:

<https://www.las.on.ca/slwc>

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report identifies a safe and welcoming community as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement will be focused on communicating the availability of the program to residents using various methods (social media, website etc.).

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

This Report was discussed within Transportation and Public Works, Finance and Communications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report has an immediate financial impact and requires a funding source.

This report has the potential to require funding in a future budget year and therefore needs to be referred to budget committee for tracking purposes.

Based on consultations with Finance, it is recommended that the implementation of the Proposed Pilot Program be funded through the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve for 2025. Funding for implementation of the Annual Program (2026+) will be considered through the 2026 Budget Process.

A summary of the cost for the Building Fee Grant Program is summarized below.

Recommended Building Permit Fee Grant Program

Program Description	Permit Cost	Grants Available	Total Cost
July 2024 Event	\$243.89	97 ¹	\$23,657.33
April 2025 Event	\$251.21	43 ¹	\$10,802.03
Inclusion for Unidentified and/or Proactive Applications	\$251.21	60	\$15,072.60
Base 2024-2025 Program	\$251.21	200	\$49,531.96 (~\$50,000.00)
Annual Program (2026+)	\$260.00 ²	50	\$13,000.00

- 1: Only includes properties identified as having basement flooding associated with sanitary sewer surcharging.
- 2: Assumes an approximately 3% increase for 2026.

Reviewed and approved by,

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer