



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To: Members of the General Committee**

**From: Sandra Clancy, Chief Administrative Officer**  
**Richard Freymond, Commissioner of Corporate and Legislative Services**

**Meeting Date: July 4, 2022**

**Subject: May 21, 2022 Windstorm Response – Interim Update, Report CLSFS22-025**

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## **Purpose**

A report to provide an interim update on the City's response and financial impact of the May 21, 2022, windstorm.

## **Recommendations**

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CLSFS22-025 dated July 4, 2022, of the Chief Administrative Officer and the Commissioner of Corporate and Legislative Services, as follows:

- a) That the May 21, 2022, Windstorm Response – Interim Update, outlined in Report CLSFS22-025, dated July 4, 2022 of the Chief Administrative Officer and Commissioner of Corporate and Legislative Services, be received for information.
- b) That Council approve the following resolution as provided by the Province that would be attached to future funding claims, if any are submitted:

**WHEREAS**, the Municipality of the Corporation of the City of Peterborough, recently experienced a Derecho windstorm natural disaster on May 21, 2022 and has experienced incremental operating and capital costs;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, Council of the Corporation of the City of Peterborough hereby requests the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to activate the Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance program; and

**FURTHER THAT**, the Treasurer is given delegated authority to verify and attest to the accuracy of the attached claim.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

There are no budgetary or financial implications of receiving this report.

Actual and estimated costs to date for the storm total \$3.3 million. Staff will continue to monitor actual costs as they are incurred and determine if the minimum threshold for the Provincial Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance (MDRA) program has been met. Staff will report to Council in a future report on the final costs and funding options.

## **Background**

A full debrief with all City Divisions has not yet been completed. This staff Report is an interim update on the impacts of the 2022 windstorm which occurred on Victoria Day weekend, Saturday, May 21, 2022. At the time of writing this report, staff remain involved in storm recovery and have yet to complete a full incident debrief and analysis.

The May 21, 2022, windstorm event was classified as a “Derecho” by Environment Canada. A derecho is a widespread, long-lived, straight-line windstorm that is associated with a fast-moving group of thunderstorms known as a mesoscale convective system. Derechos can cause hurricane force winds, tornadoes, heavy rains, and flash floods. Derechos are rare events, with the last significant derecho occurring in Canada in 1999. The May 21<sup>st</sup> derecho developed near Sarnia and moved northeastward across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) into eastern Ontario and then into Quebec, with the most significant damages occurring in Uxbridge, Peterborough, and Ottawa. Environment Canada issued a broadcast weather alert for the GTA and the Lindsey – Northern Kawartha Lakes Region after windspeeds of 132 km/h were recorded at the Kitchener airport. Environment Canada alerts are issued for weather events with windspeeds exceeding 130 km/h. An alert was not issued for Peterborough on May 21<sup>st</sup>, as Environment Canada was unsure if the windspeeds would reach the 130 km/h threshold when the storm reached the Peterborough area. The storm reached Peterborough around 2:00 PM and lasted for several minutes causing significant and widespread damages across the City and Peterborough County including downed trees and power lines, property damage and bodily injury.

The derecho cut power to 1 million households and resulted in 11 deaths across Ontario and Quebec. Locally, power outages impacted the entire City of Peterborough and much of Peterborough County, and two deaths occurred in Lakefield and Apsley. Hydro One immediately deployed crews to assess storm damage and respond to the outages.

Due to the magnitude of the storm, Hydro One called upon its Mutual Aid partners and received support from utility companies across Ontario and other provinces, as well as the United States. Hydro workers were stationed out of Peterborough and area hotels, and Trent University and Fleming College residences, and remained in the city in large numbers until June 1, 2022, with a few crews remaining until Friday, June 3, 2022. In the days following the windstorm, hydro workers pushed hard to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. At times, these efforts were hampered by inclement weather. Power was restored intermittently across the city; however, full grid power was not restored until May 31, 2022.

The storm immediately prompted calls to 9-1-1 to report downed trees, power lines, property damage, automatic alarms, and bodily injury. Call volumes exceeded local 9-1-1 capacity for Police and Fire Services. This issue was exacerbated by generator, network, and telecommunication issues. The Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) quickly became overwhelmed. Public Works was also inundated with calls. Peterborough Fire Services implemented a General Alarm to callback firefighters and Peterborough Paramedics and Public Works also called in off-duty personnel. These efforts were slowed by the network and telecommunication issues. Peterborough Police were responding to a major incident that day, so additional personnel were on-duty working on that case. Further details and recommendations regarding emergency services will follow in subsequent Council and Incident After-Action reports.

The City of Peterborough Emergency Control Group convened at 5:30 PM on Saturday, May 21st and continued to meet at regular intervals in the following days and weeks to assess needs and coordinate response efforts with all City Departments, community partners and responding agencies. In addition to City staff, the Committee included representatives from Peterborough Public Health, Peterborough County/City Paramedics, Peterborough Police Services, and the Mayor.

Following is a synopsis of some of the impacts to City operations, services and critical infrastructure, including estimated costs to date where this information is available:

- Public Works responded to over 12,100 service calls in the week following the storm. Staff worked around the clock to respond to emergency tree removals and relied on the assistance of 10 private contractors in the days and weeks following the storm. Contractors were primarily deployed to parks and the municipal right-of-way for emergency tree removals and clean-up. Environmental Protection Division Wastewater Collection staff also assisted Public Works with storm response. The storm resulted in the need to purchase additional chain saws, blowers, and a large volume of personal protective equipment such as chainsaw pants, earmuffs, hard hats, and eye protection have been purchased. In addition, some forestry equipment was rented. Estimated costs incurred to date total \$625,000.
- Curbside waste collection bag limits were increased by one bag for the two weeks following the storm to allow for disposal of storm related waste (i.e., spoiled food).

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- The regular Green Waste Collection program continued, and a Specialized Green Waste Collection program was added to assist with the removal of tree limbs and branches from private property. The specialized collection began the week of June 20<sup>th</sup>. A free temporary green waste drop-off site was established at Kennedy Road to take some pressure off the landfill site and operated until Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. Total costs for receiving, processing, and transporting the additional green waste is estimated to be \$400,000.
  - Fees for green waste (tree branches and limbs) resulting directly from storm damage were suspended at the Landfill, effective May 31, 2022 until June 30, 2022.
  - The City Tree Removal By-law requirement to obtain a permit for removing trees damaged by the May 21, 2022 event was suspended.
  - Support was extended to Peterborough Paramedics to assist with fueling fleet vehicles for a couple of days following the storm. A fuel card was programmed to track usage at the Weber Avenue Operations Centre.
  - No service interruptions at the Wastewater Treatment Plant; plant operated on backup generator power. Portable generators were used to operate pumping stations.
  - Peterborough Utilities reported no loss of service or water quality concerns at the Water Treatment Plant and Distribution System; plant operated on backup natural gas generator, without issue, until full power was restored. The pumphouse and dam also operated on backup power and provided uninterrupted raw water flows to the plant. Several booster pumpstations and all elevated tanks within the drinking water system have back-up diesel generators. All generators functioned as designed providing adequate pressure in the system at all times.
  - Peterborough Utilities supported Hydro One and other utilities with a staging area at the Ashburnham facility, as well as access to fuel for vehicles and equipment.
  - Transportation system impacted; traffic lights were out across the city which turned intersections into 4-way stops causing congestion on roadways for a few days. Costs incurred to date total \$52,000 and estimated future costs total \$25,000.
  - Peterborough Transit suspended services immediately following the storm but resumed modified services later that afternoon. Transit Handi-Van services were used to transport a few residents with mobility equipment to a hotel for temporary accommodation and Reception Centres to charge batteries.
  - Team Rubicon Disaster Response, a volunteer based not-for-profit organization, deployed to the City from June 3-19, 2022, to assist vulnerable people with cleanup of downed tree limbs and debris on private property. Team Rubicon also

worked in City parks and trails to aid in the cleanup of public property. Accommodation was provided for Team Rubicon at the Healthy Planet Arena. Costs incurred to date total \$2,500.

- The City received assistance from the City of Kingston and the City of Hamilton Urban Forestry Crews to address emergency tree removals in the right-of-way. The City provided fuel, meals, and hotel accommodations for both municipalities, as well as reimbursement for wages and equipment costs for Hamilton.
- Closure of City parks, sports fields, and trail systems due to tree damage and ongoing risk of hangars. All areas required forestry and safety assessments, and remedial work prior to occupancy. Parks, sports fields, and trails were reopened as remediation work was completed. Estimated lost revenues from these closures is \$10,900. Peterborough Utilities closed Riverview Park and Zoo until May 28, 2022.
- Closure of City facilities including the Peterborough Sport and Wellness Centre, community arenas, the Peterborough Memorial Centre, Peterborough Public Library, Peterborough Museum and Archives and the Art Gallery. Some facilities remained closed in the days following the storm due to hydro outages and to encourage residents to remain home while response and recovery efforts were underway to reduce risk and ease traffic congestion and impacts on emergency call response times. Costs incurred to date for these facilities total \$44,000 and lost revenue totals \$35,000.
- The Peterborough Sport and Wellness Centre and the Healthy Planet Arena were open and operated on generator power from Monday, May 23 to Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> to allow residents to charge batteries on health and mobility equipment and portable communication devices only. Access to showers was also permitted. Normal operations were suspended. When grid power was restored, the Peterborough Public Library, the Kinsmen Arena and the Peterborough Museum and Archives also opened to allow residents access to power to charge equipment and devices.
- Social Services temporarily relocated to the Peterborough Public Library on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, due to continued power outage at the Charlotte Street offices. The Division Business Continuity Plan was implemented to ensure issuance of Ontario Works cheques. Special Emergency Assistance was provided to 4335 individuals to replace spoiled food, at a total cost of \$325,125.
- Property damage occurred at some city facilities including the Kinsmen Arena, the Household Hazardous Waste Depot, Nichols Oval Pavilion, and the Overflow Shelter. It is still undetermined if the City will file an insurance claim for damages.
- As of June 21, 2022, there were 25 claims made against the City for property damages caused by the storm. There have been no bodily injury claims received to date.

- The City Council meeting scheduled for May 24, 2022, was postponed until May 30, 2022, due to telecommunication issues.
- Estimated costs for Peterborough Technology Services (PTS) labour incurred to restore all of the City's IT infrastructure was approximately \$8,500.

The May 21, 2022, storm will impact the City beyond the initial response and clean up phase. The urban forest has sustained significant damage and following the emergency tree removals, will require an in-depth review and assessment. Ongoing risk / health and safety inspections will be required in public parks / spaces following future inclement weather (i.e., summer and winter storms) as ongoing tree failure is likely. The City will need to consider its tree program and replacement of lost trees. Estimated costs for 2022 total \$50,000 for a contractor to plant the spring tree stock which would normally have been undertaken by Public Works staff. Future costs for recovery of tree canopy are estimated to be up to \$1.75 million. Additional LiDAR data to quantify the extent of tree canopy lost during the event was captured the week of June 13, 2022 at an approximate cost of \$45,000. This information will be critical to inform future planning of restoring the urban canopy.

Emergency Management staff will conduct debriefs with each Division / operational area to review the impact of the storm and associated response. Sessions will also be held with partners engaged in the response. Following the operations specific debriefs, a session will be held with all groups to present the overall response, lessons learned and opportunities for improvement. Summary recommendations will be collated in an After-Action Report. The report will be shared with Council.

## **Provincial Funding Programs**

There are two relevant provincial programs that provide funding after natural disasters: Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians (DRAO), and Municipal Disaster Recovery (MDRA). Both programs require activation by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), and currently neither program has been activated for the City. The two programs can be activated independently and are not reliant on each other.

### **Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians**

DRAO provides funding to individuals for damages to private property that are not eligible to be covered by insurance. This program covers costs of clean up, repair or replace essential property, basic emergency expenses. The maximum claim is \$250,000 per application, subject to a \$500 deductible which may be waived for low-income households. This program will reimburse up to 90% of total eligible costs with some limits. Insurance payments are deducted from eligible costs. DRAO, when activated, is available for claims from small, owner-operated businesses and farms, not-for-profit organizations, homeowners for their principal residence, and residential tenants.

DRAO is activated only where there is costly and widespread damage to essential property that is not covered by insurance. MMAH staff are actively working to identify, as quickly as possible, any areas of the province where the impacts of the storm would meet the criteria for activation. At the time of writing this report, DRAO has not been activated by this storm. Residents impacted by the storm are encouraged to reach out to their insurance provider as wind damage is a standard coverage under most homeowner insurance policies. As well, some costs for debris removal and disposal may be covered under homeowner's insurance.

### **Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance**

MDRA provides funding to municipalities for the response and recovery costs to a natural disaster when those costs equal at least 3% of the municipalities own purpose taxation revenue. MDRA funds 75% of eligible costs up to the 3% of own purpose taxation revenue threshold, and 95% of costs over that threshold. Eligible operating costs are those incurred to protect public health, safety and access to essential services. Eligible capital costs are those to repair public infrastructure or property to pre-disaster condition. Costs that are covered by insurance or costs that would have been incurred if the disaster had not taken place (such as regular municipal salary costs) are ineligible under the program. In order to submit a claim under this program a council resolution must be approved. Sample wording was provided by the Province and is included as recommendation b) in this Report for Council consideration. Municipalities have 120 calendar days from the date of the natural disaster to submit a claim.

Three percent of the City's own purpose taxation revenue for 2022 is \$4.422 million. Actual and estimated costs to date total \$3.3 million. Staff will continue to monitor actual costs as they are incurred and determine if the minimum threshold for the MDRA program has been met. Staff will report to Council in a future report on the final costs and funding options.

## **Summary**

The May 21, 2022, windstorm recovery is ongoing and will continue to result in financial impacts on the City of Peterborough throughout 2022. Staff anticipate a follow-up report to Council in September.

Submitted by,

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