

SER-001-014

Strathcona County  
Municipal Policy Handbook

## **Private Sewer Service Lines - Requests for Assistance**

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Date Approved by Council: 04/04/95

Resolution No: 269/95

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Replaces: n/a

Last Review Date: October 19, 2012

Next Review Date: 08/2015

Administrative Responsibility: Utilities

### **Policy Statement**

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The County will respond to and clear storm and wastewater sewer service line blockages located on private property in order to minimize property damage and reduce potential health risks associated with sewerage backup, for those customers connected to Strathcona County owned Storm and/or Wastewater Collection Systems.

#### **1.0 OBJECTIVE:**

1.1 The County shall have in place a formal procedure to assist with customer requests to clear storm and wastewater service line blockages. This procedure will ensure that customers are provided with access to emergency response for sewerage backups in an effort to minimize property damage and reduce potential health risks associated with sewerage backups.

1.2 The costs associated with the procedures outlined in this document will be borne by the benefiting customer and not the utility as a whole. Where the cause of the blockage is found to be only on public property, the utility will bear the costs of any works undertaken to rectify the deficiency.

1.3 This policy does not preclude in any manner the ability of the customer to employ a private business to clear storm and wastewater service line blockages.

#### **2.0 AUTHORITY**

2.1 Section 38(1) of the Municipal Government Act states: *"Despite Section 37, the Council may as a term of providing a municipal utility service to a parcel of land give the municipality the authority to construct, maintain and repair a service connection located above, on or underneath the parcel."*

2.2 Section 39(2) of the Municipal Government Act States: *"The municipality's costs relating to the construction, maintenance, repair under Section 37 or 38 and restoration costs under this Section are an amount owing to the municipality by the owner of the parcel."*

#### **3.0 DEFINITIONS:**

3.1 Coordinator of Treasury & Risk Management - shall mean the Coordinator of Treasury & Risk Management, position within the Financial Service Department, in the County, or his designate.

3.2 Council - means Council of Strathcona County.

3.3 Occupant - is a person(s) occupying or exercising control over, or having the right to occupy or exercise control over, the land.

3.4 Water & Wastewater Operator - an employee of Strathcona County duly trained in responding to storm and/or wastewater line blockages to undertake corrective action.

3.5 Works - task of cleaning the sanitary and/or wastewater service lateral including diagnosing the probable cause.

## **Guidelines**

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4.1 Upon receipt of the customer request, the Water & Wastewater Operator will discuss the circumstances arising and advise the Occupant as to his approximate time of arrival, and cost implications to the customer, that are associated with the Works.

4.2 The Water & Wastewater Operator will check historical data base records of the residence before arrival on site, and collect all necessary equipment to undertake the Works.

4.3 The Water & Wastewater Operator will inspect the upstream and downstream storm sewer and/or wastewater collection system manholes to ensure that the problem is not a mainline deficiency versus a service lateral deficiency.

4.4 Upon arrival the Water & Wastewater Operator will discuss with the customer the potential works necessary to correct the deficiency and the requirement to sign a waiver for the provision of services, and request the customer's signature for authorization to undertake Works on private property.

4.5 Blockages in the service line will initially be cleared with a sewer tape in order to facilitate inspection.

4.6 If there is no previous record on file, the line will be inspected with aid of closed circuit television, to diagnose the probable cause of the blockage. Upon diagnosis, a sewer tape and/or power auger equipment will be used to remove the blockage. Documentation of the condition of the line and work undertaken to remove the blockage in the line will be completed and provided to the supervisor.

4.7 The property line in relation to the service lateral will be determined by:

i locating the curb cock valve box

ii a direct line measurement between the valve box and the foundation wall at the point the service lateral exits the residence. All recorded bends and deflections in the service line will be incorporated into the measurement to determine line ownership.

4.8 The owner and/or occupant will be advised of the findings and be provided with recommended course(s) of action in writing, to mitigate potential problems in the future.

## **5.0 CLAIMS:**

5.1 All claims will be forwarded to the Coordinator of Treasury & Risk Management and appropriately reviewed and processed in accordance with Strathcona County's Claims and Damages Settlement Policy.

## **Sewer Line/Tree Root - Damage Control**

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Date Approved by Council: 04/04/95

Resolution No: 271/95

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Replaces: n/a

Last Review Date: October 19, 2012

Next Review Date: 10/2015

Administrative Responsibility: Utilities

### **Policy Statement**

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Strathcona County shall respond to a property owner's request to resolve sewer backup problems on private property due to tree root intrusion of the sanitary sewer line. This policy will ensure Strathcona County's tree infrastructure is managed in an effective, efficient manner which mitigates potential damage claims against the County.

### **Guidelines**

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#### **1.0 OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of this policy is to minimize the loss of boulevard trees that are impacting the storm/sanitary sewer by root intrusion. To this end Strathcona County will develop and implement procedures to meet the policy objective.

#### **2.0 DEFINITIONS:**

2.1 County Owned Portion - section of the service line located on publicly owned land.

2.2 C.I.P.P. – Cured in place technology of relining service line without disrupting surface.

2.3 Private Owned Portion - section of the service line located on private property.

2.4 Prorated Basis - a financial arrangement of payment based on cost sharing of rehabilitation based on the length of service line on Private Owned Portion over the entire length.

2.5 Review of Request - the Utilities Department of Strathcona County will assess the pipes' structural condition and the magnitude of root intrusion. Review will take into consideration the effective and efficient expenditure of funds to alleviate the problem from a public and homeowner's perspective.

2.6 Root Control Program – Service lines are treated with mechanical and / or Alberta Environment approved chemical procedures to remove roots and retard root growth. The program entails pre, and post, closed circuit inspections to ensure effective retardant of root growth.

**3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES:****3.1 Utilities**

3.1.1 Homeowner(s) must direct their written request for tree removal to Utilities.

3.1.2 Upon receipt of the homeowner(s) letter, Utilities will review the request, and contact the respective homeowner(s) to address all other viable options, in an attempt to ensure the tree(s) removal is the last resort to resolve the issue with the resident. The Review of Request will take into consideration the condition of the County Owned Portion and the Private Owned Portion. Options made available to the respective homeowner(s) will be:

**Scenario # 1** - Tree(s) on County property is causing root intrusion in County and Private Owned Portion of the service line:

- i) Root Control Program, costs borne by County;
- ii) Preventive Maintenance Program of cleaning and inspection to prevent recurrence, costs borne by County;
- iii) C.I.P.P. Lining of entire service line, costs assigned on a Prorated Basis;
- iv) Joint venture in an excavation replacement of both the Private and County Owned Portions of the service line, costs assigned on a Prorated Basis;
- v) Other viable technology replacement/repairs that may be available.

**Scenario # 2** - County owned tree(s) causing root intrusion to County Owned Portion only. Potential problem exists at later date to Private Owned Portion:

- i) Root Control Program, costs borne by County;
- ii) Line replacement (County Owned Portion only), costs borne by County;
- iii) C.I.P.P. Lining of County Owned Portion of service lateral (entire cost borne by County);
- iv) Other viable technology replacement/repairs that may be available;.

**Scenario # 3** - County owned tree(s) causing problem on Private Owned Portion only:

- i) Root Control Program, costs borne by County;
- ii) Line replaced on Private Owned Portion, costs borne by homeowner;
- iii) C.I.P.P. Lining of service line at homeowner's expense at Prorated Basis;
- iv) Preventive Maintenance Program of cleaning and inspection to prevent recurrence, costs borne by County;
- v) Other viable technology replacement/repairs that may be available.

3.1.3 If the respective homeowner(s) advises that he/she wishes not to participate in any of the other options made available to him/her, then the tree removal request will be forwarded to Recreation, Parks and Culture for action.

**3.2 Recreation, Parks & Culture**

3.2.1 Upon receipt of memorandum from Utilities, Parks Maintenance staff will investigate the site to determine the most appropriate option of relocating tree(s) or removal.

3.2.2 Parks Maintenance will discuss the alternatives with the respective owner(s) and provide in writing a tentative date for the work to be undertaken.

3.2.3 Parks Maintenance will be responsible for all costs incurred in relocating and/or removal of tree(s).

## Rehabilitation of Residential Sanitary Sewer Services

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Date of Approval By Council: 05/06/97

Resolution No.: 253/97

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Replaces: n/a

Last Review Date: October 10, 2012

Next Review Date: 10/2015

Administrative Responsibility: Utilities

### Policy Statement

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Within annual operating budget parameters Strathcona County will provide a financing mechanism to support rehabilitation of the sanitary sewer service laterals on private property that are being affected by tree roots from County owned boulevard trees.

### Background

1. Historically, as development occurred throughout Sherwood Park, developers, as a condition of development, and/or the respective homeowners have planted boulevard trees to improve the aesthetics of the subdivision and / or the lot.
2. As the trees matured the root system migrated into the sanitary sewer system and gained access through the pipe joints. The roots within the system expanded to the point that the homeowner experienced a sewer line blockage. Utilities has provided maintenance to date as outlined in Policy SER-001-016 to demonstrate due diligence in maintaining these service lines.
3. From a legal perspective the Municipality may be held liable for damages resulting from the boulevard trees where the root system is affecting the service line on private property.
4. By providing the maintenance of the wastewater service lines, the County's boulevard trees are protected from requests for removal.

### Definitions

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- "Owner": includes the registered owner of a property and the person in charge of the premises.
- "Rehabilitation": means the undertaking to restore the capacity of the sewer line either through, cured in place pipe technology, directional drilling or conventional trenching.

### Guidelines

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#### 1.0 OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The County will have the ability to address sewer service lateral integrity while maintaining the boulevard tree infrastructure.
- 1.2 The County will have a formal procedure to financially assist the customer with rehabilitation of the service lateral to reduce the risk of a service lateral blockage due to root intrusion.

**2.0 AUTHORITY**

- 2.1 Section 36, 37, 38 and 39 of the Municipal Government Act, S.A. 1994, c. M-26.1, as amended.

**3.0 PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 Upon receiving a written request from the respective customer, Strathcona County Utilities will provide a written cost estimate outlining the rehabilitation options to the respective property owner. The written proposal will outline the financing options.
- 3.2 Upon receiving confirmation from the respective owner on the acceptance of one of the options proposed and financial repayment schemes, Strathcona County Utilities will enter into an agreement to:
- 3.2.1 enter private property to undertake the work;
  - 3.2.2 undertake the work on behalf of the homeowner; and
  - 3.2.3 recover the County's financial investment as per agreement between two parties.

If the respective homeowner declines to have one of the rehabilitation options undertaken to resolve the potential of a sewer line blockage, Strathcona County will respect the individual right to refuse. The residence will be included on the annual Root Control Maintenance Program.

**4.0 FINANCING OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Where it can be demonstrated that a municipally controlled boulevard tree is located adjacent to the residence in question the County will pay for 100% of the costs of rehabilitating the sewer service lateral located on public property. This area is typically found between the sewer mainline and the resident's property line.
- The County will be responsible for 50% of the costs, to a maximum of \$750.00, associated with the rehabilitation of the sewer service lateral located on private property.
- 4.2 In locations where a sewer service lateral requires upgrading on the public or private portion of the line and the problem is not associated with boulevard tree roots the County may finance 100% of the rehabilitation costs. The landowner has the option of repaying the cost of rehabilitating the private portion of the line.
- 4.3 The homeowner has the following options for financing this initiative:
- 4.3.1 payment in full upon construction completion; or
  - 4.3.2 monthly installments on the utility bill based on a maximum repayment schedule of 48 months and an interest rate subject to a return on equity calculation determined annually.