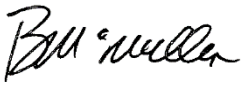




## COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	January 31, 2022
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Service Line Warranties of Canada (SLWC) Corporate Social Responsibility Program (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Brian McMullen Director, Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Corporate Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

Since August 2014, when the City of Hamilton began its partnership with Service Line Warranties of Canada (SLWC), nearly \$3.5 M for over 8,200 home repairs have been completed for Hamilton homeowners with SLWC service plans. These are repairs that homeowners otherwise would have had to pay for out-of-pocket without a coverage plan.

Recognizing that everyone needs some help once in a while, SLWC takes pride in giving back to the people and communities it serves. As such, a new assistance program is being developed known as the SLWC Cares program with the objective to assist qualified homeowners with free repairs when they are faced with a plumbing service emergency. SLWC arranges for emergency repairs at no cost to the homeowner through SLWC's network of local, licensed and qualified contractors.

Over the past two years, SLWC has completed three pro-bono plumbing repairs for Hamilton homeowners experiencing significant hardship and unable to address plumbing issues affecting their health and safety:

### SLWC Cares Program Repairs in Hamilton

Repair Location	Completed	Repair Total
Landsdale - Ward 3	January 2020	\$ 3,400
Crown Point East - Ward 4	September 2021	4,600
Industrial Sector D - Ward 3	December 2021	4,100
		<hr/>
		\$ 12,100

Further details of the extent of the repairs can be found in the Background Section of this Communication Update. Staff will continue to identify potential SLWC Cares candidates to SLWC for consideration.

The SLWC Cares experience in Hamilton will be shared by SLWC to other partner municipalities in Ontario with the anticipation of the program helping to address emergency plumbing issues in other Ontario locales.

## **Background**

In April 2014, Council endorsed the awarding of a contract with Service Line Warranties of Canada, Inc. (SLWC) to offer Hamilton residents an optional water and sewer line warranty program that provides emergency repair coverage for residential water service lines, sewer laterals and interior plumbing and drainage (for details refer to Report FCS12044(a)).

The SLWC warranty program has expanded across Ontario, particularly with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Local Authority Services' endorsement, as 64 Ontario municipalities have joined Hamilton in becoming SLWC partners. The partner list includes other large municipalities such as Peel, Ottawa, Kingston and Windsor. Additionally, there are a few smaller partner municipalities near Hamilton such as Brant County, Town of Lincoln and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

With its growing presence in Ontario and its desire to action corporate social responsibility, in late 2019, SLWC contacted City staff to advise of its plans to establish a SLWC Cares program. Modelled on its parent company's HomeServe Cares program, the SLWC Cares program objective is to assist eligible homeowners with free repairs when they are faced with a plumbing service emergency. SLWC will arrange for emergency repairs, at no cost to the homeowner, through SLWC's network of local, licensed and qualified contractors.

As SLWC's first Canadian partner, staff expressed interest for Hamilton to act as lead municipality to assist SLWC's efforts establish the program in Ontario as the SLWC Cares program may be able to complement an existing provincially funded program that provides home repairs assistance. Municipalities are responsible to administer the Homeowner Ontario Renovates program within an annual funding allocation received from the Province (Housing Services within the Healthy and Safe Communities Department manages the program locally).

The Homeowner Ontario Renovates offers financial assistance to low-income households who own and occupy substandard housing to enable them to repair their dwellings to a minimum level of health and safety (for further details refer to the City's website: <https://www.hamilton.ca/social-services/support-programs/ontario-renovates-program-homeowners>).

Unsurprisingly, the demand exceeds available Homeowner Ontario Renovates funding. Hence, the SLWC Cares program can possibly bridge funding challenges for those applicants with plumbing emergency repairs that need immediate attention. Over the past two years, SLWC has completed three pro-bono plumbing repairs for Hamilton homeowners experiencing significant hardship and unable to address plumbing issues affecting their health and safety. The extent of the repairs in each case has been fairly significant:

1. January 2020, Landsdale neighbourhood, Total Repair \$3.4 K
  - 3" Cast stack replacement - stack is leaking from roof to the basement (3 stories approximately 25 feet)
  - 40 gallon hot water tank replaced
  - Run cold water feed to the water tank
  - Install ½" ball valve for the hot side of water tank
  - Run water lines up to the upstairs toilet
  - Toilet flange broken and replaced
  - New toilet in the upper level bathroom - remove existing / non-functioning toilet, supply and install new comfort fit toilet
2. September 2021, Crown Point East neighbourhood, Total Repair \$4.6 K
  - Replaced building control valve
  - Removed cast iron pipes and replaced with abs plastic
  - Rebuilt toilet flange, drain and overflow for the bathtub
  - New water line for sink
  - New subfloor to remount the toilet and bathtub
  - Cast iron stack replaced with new abs
  - Removed and replaced the old laundry tub and faucet
3. December 2021, Industrial Sector D neighbourhood, Total Repair \$4.1 K
  - Replaced an old cast iron stack
  - Rebuilt new drains to the washrooms and kitchen

JS/dt