MUNICIPAL WATER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Water Strategy and Action Plan will be a living document that will be amended and improved in response to our changing environment and circumstances. The development of a Strategy and Action Plan does not preclude Council talking immediate steps to expand or improve existing programs, or to explore new programs. As an example, the Water Supply Upgrade Lending Program will be immediately evaluated to ensure it is meeting current needs and demands in the community.

THE ISSUES

A safe and sufficient supply of water is critical to ensuring a sustainable economy and way of life in the Municipality of Chester. In order for our existing surface water and groundwater resources to provide us with abundant clean water now and into the future, they need to be protected and managed responsibly to ensure their long-term sustainability. This will necessitate that we manage quantity and quality issues, address the needs of both the natural environment, and meet the economic and physical needs of our residents for safe potable water sources. Climate change, sea level rise, and future growth and development all place different demands and create complex issues that will require us to think proactively about our water resources. There is a need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to water management in the Municipality, which will be accomplished through the development of Municipal Water Strategy and Action Plan.

A Water Strategy and Action Plan for the Municipality may include a combination of education programs, voluntary and regulatory measures, policy development, investment in infrastructure, and other investments that can be used to address the following:

WATER SUPPLY

- Will take into account both water quality and quantity.
- Need to develop an understanding of the state of our current water resources.
- Our needs for a potable water supply, and for emergency services are critical to the future of our communities.
- Identify the clients – residential (single and multi-unit developments, new subdivision), institutional (healthcare, education), commercial (hospitality industry, industrial clients etc)?
- Explore alternate systems (e.g. cluster systems, on-site, central etc).

WATER CONSERVATION

- Water conservation plans focus on managing water demand, reducing consumption, and improving efficiency of water use.
- These plans extend beyond household water savings to include industrial, commercial, institutional and agricultural water users.

- Help MODC manage the impacts of water shortages that are less severe than drought conditions.
- Water conservation measures can aid in reducing the costs associated with developing new water supplies, drinking water treatment, drinking water distribution, wastewater treatment and associated pumping and energy costs.

WATER PROTECTION

- Addressing the needs of the natural environment (i.e. may include dealing with effects from human activity such as land development, disruption of water cycle through the development of land for residential/commercial/agricultural purposes)
- Stormwater management
- Also needs to address physical and economic needs of the businesses & residents in our communities

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Drought management plans are an important means of minimizing the impacts of water shortages and drought in a region.
- Plans must focus on managing demand, reducing consumption and improving efficiency of water use.
- Need to consider all water uses (including household, industrial, commercial, institutional and agricultural).

WATER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN TEAM

A Water Strategy and Action Plan Team will be created to oversee the development of a water strategy and action plan. The purpose of the Water Strategy and Action Plan Team is to develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan that contains tools and programs that the Municipality of Chester and its partners can implement to address water supply and water quality issues throughout the Municipality. Our Water Strategy and Action Plan will be based on a long-term vision and set of guiding principles. The Strategy and Action Plan will identify long-term goals to work toward when making management and operational decisions and will identify what actions should be taken to achieve these goals.

The program will include proactive measures to protect our water resources and to plan for our future development. This may include conservation measures, source water protection measures, or the development of alternative options for water supply (e.g. community wells). The Strategy and Action Plan may also include response plans for dry season/drought conditions, and programs to address private water supplies (e.g. expanded well lending programs, education programs for homeowners etc.).

The Water Strategy and Action Plan Team is an administrative working group that will:

- provide strategic leadership in the development and implementation of a Municipal Water Strategy and Action Plan
- engage stakeholders, our partners, and the public to develop a strategy and action plan that addresses current and future needs
- provide advice, support and assistance in the implementation of the program
- assist in the promotion of water conservation and education programs

WATER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN TEAM MEMBERSHIP

The team will consist of the CAO, Deputy CAO, the Village of Chester Clerk/Treasurer, the Director of Infrastructure & Operations, and the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator. Other staff provide support as needed, including the Emergency Management team, the Fire Service Coordinator, Communications, and members of the Community Development Team.

The team will use outside consultants, as appropriate, for technical and professional advice and project implementation.

VISION

The Vision of the Council is that the Municipality of Chester will have clean and healthy water in enough abundance to support the natural ecosystems, economic & community development and high quality of life for perpetuity. Accurate, up-to-date water information and scientific knowledge will support community and regional planning. Water will be managed in a spirit of cooperation, and a municipal-wide ethic of conservation will create a legacy of sustainable water resources for future generations

ENGAGEMENT

The Municipality will need to have an understanding of water resources and some of the programs and initiatives currently in place. Community engagement is a key feature to develop this understanding. Along with our partners, the municipality will initiate targeted discussions about water, how it's managed and protected, today and for years to come.

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS/PARNTERS

- Village of Chester Commission
- Development Societies
- Nova Scotia Groundwater Association
- Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation
- The Clean Foundation
- Nova Scotia Nature Trust
- Ecology Action Centre
- Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Housing Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Environment
- Environment Canada
- Assembly of First Nations
- NS Lands and Forests
- DNR
- Ducks Unlimited Canada

KEY REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Water for Life: NS Water Resource Management Strategy