

## East Riverbank Stabilization Funding Option

Reserve funding of \$3.0 million is recommended to fund unexpected riverbank slope failures that put strategic public infrastructure including bridges, Saskatchewan Crescent and Meewasin Trail at risk. Since 2012, the Storm Water Utility funded approximately over \$1.0 million annually for East Riverbank monitoring and stabilization. Based on recent projects, slope and roadway restoration costs range from about \$1.5 million to \$3.0 million per project.

Responses to a survey sent to municipalities in 2016 indicated that riverbank stabilization is commonly funded by property taxes (e.g. Kelowna, Red Deer, Barrie, Markham), with provincial grants sometimes being available in British Columbia. Abbotsford was the only municipality responding that indicated use of their storm drainage fee to fund riverbank stabilization.

The Government of Saskatchewan will consider emergency funding through PDAP for municipal infrastructure that is damaged during a severe storm event but will not fund repairs due to the high groundwater levels which have recently triggered Saskatoon's riverbank slumping. No other provincial program funding currently is available for riverbank remediation.

If the City of Saskatoon were to fund the projected average \$1.0 million for annual riverbank monitoring and stabilization costs through property taxes, a tax increase of 0.5% would be needed.

Considerations for funding riverbank stability through the mill rate include the following:

### Advantages

- The current funding for storm water management charges is based on a user pay principle for the run-off generated to our storm water system. The riverbank instability is not caused by the storm water run-off.
- More funding from the Storm Water Management revenue would be available to use to maintain and preserve storm water infrastructure and improve drainage.
- Decisions to remediate Saskatchewan Crescent and Meewasin Trail would be evaluated against remediating other roadways and sidewalks throughout the City and would be based on priorities and available infrastructure funding.

### Disadvantages

- Slope stability is unpredictable and can happen quickly. Continued Storm Water Utility funding may provide more flexibility to fix the slumping more quickly which could reduce costs for taxpayers in the future.
- Saskatchewan Crescent and Meewasin Trail along the East Riverbank have a strategic importance that many residents throughout the City value. Remediation may not be completed as quickly if funding is competing against other planned infrastructure projects.

- A reduction in provincial contributions to the City has put pressures on property taxes, which makes adding additional expenses to the mill rate more difficult to absorb.
- Slope stability is impacted by rainfall and resulting groundwater levels, which can be considered part of storm water responsibilities.