

**STAFF REPORT: CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**



**REPORT TO: Planning Council**  
**MEETING DATE: March 19, 2007**  
**REPORT NO.: CAO.07.08**  
**SUBJECT: Great Lakes and St. Lawrence  
Cities Initiative**  
**PREPARED BY: Paul Graham, CAO**

#### **A. Recommendations**

THAT Council does receive Staff Report CAO.07.08, "Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative; and

That Council authorize Mayor Ellen Anderson to join the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative as the Town of The Blue Mountains representative in this international group whose goal it is to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system.

#### **B. Background**

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is an organization of mayors and other local officials advocating for programs to improve the resources that are essential to the vitality of our cities and communities. This group was established in May 2005. The Mayors have turned their attention to the sustainability of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system. We attach a copy of a brief summary outlining this initiative including an Application Form.

The cost of joining this group is based on population and in our case the annual dues will be \$2,000.00.

Last year, Mayor Anderson and Shawn Everitt attended a series of meetings of this group in Parry Sound. Those meetings identified a diverse number of issues that are affecting the Great Lakes. We are aware that Lake Huron has now reached historically low water levels.

The health of Georgian Bay is vital to our long term sustainability. It is a key economic driver for the municipality. More importantly, it is our source of potable water including both the water supplied from our Thornbury Water Treatment Plant and the water purchased from Collingwood.

I recommend that the Town of The Blue Mountains join this initiative and that Mayor Anderson be our representative. The Town of Collingwood has joined this organization. Together the two municipalities will have a stronger voice in bringing forth the issues that face our region.

### **C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan**

One of the Town's Strategic Goals is "Preserving and enhancing natural and environmental features, and cultural heritage of the community".

As part of this goal we anticipate developing a Green Strategy to proactively protect air, water and land features and sites. Georgian Bay is one of the resources that must be proactively protected.

In addition to that this water resource is a key part of our Leisure Activity Plan and also a critical part of our economic well being.

### **D. Budget Impact** (cc: Treasury if required)

The annual membership dues for the Town of The Blue Mountains is \$2,000. This expense was not included in the 2007 Operating Budget. We therefore recommend that this 2007 expenditure be taken from the CCCL Water Operating Reserve Fund which has a current balance of approximately \$847,000. We recommend this water reserve as source funding because a primary goal of our involvement will be source water protection.

In subsequent years this membership fee will be included in the Town's Budget Process.

### **E. Attached**

1. Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative description
2. Membership Application Form

Respectfully submitted,

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Paul Graham, Chief Administrative Officer