

This is the latest information available about the Howson Dam. **Note** that some of the costs are not from Engineering sources.

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Council considers all available options for the Howson Dam

Wingham Advance Times

By [Kelsey Dunbar](#)

Council voted in their Feb. 17 budget meeting to include an Environmental Assessment (EA) at the cost of up to \$80,000 in the 2016 budget, with funds to come out of the Howson Dam reserve fund. An EA process will continue upon approval of the 2016 budget.

Ultimately council voted to take the EA route to ensure they are making the best decision possible before taking on the costs of repairs.

“We have only heard one alternative so far, and that is repair,” Coun. Trevor Seip said. “That is all we have ever talked about ... it doesn’t give me a warm fuzzy feeling not knowing what all the alternatives are. As much as somebody might say you can spend \$80,000 on the EA and get all the alternatives, or you can spend \$80,000 on the repair, I don’t know if repair is the right answer.”

Seip’s motion was seconded by Vodden and carried by majority vote.

The cost of approximately \$80,000 for the EA was compared to the over \$3 million cost of a repair project. The repair project would include:

- \$60-\$80,000 for stability and dam break analysts, which are both required by the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- A initial repair cost of approximately \$458,000.
- Repair contracts for about \$50,000 every 15 years for a 35-50 year period, or to the extended useful life of the structure.
- Conservative two per cent inflation costs for the eventual removal of the structure at the end of its useful life.

The cost of simply removing the dam is approximately \$1.1 million and would be inflated by two to three per cent every year moving forward.

The EA process will provide council with the best recommendation to move forward from a third party.

The EA process does include extensive engagement process where the public has the

chance to provide written comment. Public information centers will share results of all the studies with the public that will be carried out through the process and at the end of the process, all of the results will be in a report presented to council.

EAs have a 10 year shelf life. That means council would have 10 years to implement the suggested project once the process is completed and the EA report is published.

There is also a process where the public can appeal to the minister if they don't like the final decision. If granted by the minister, the appeal would involve additional study of the problem to see if there are any other suitable options and it would add to the original cost. These costs would come from taxpayers if continued with the appeal process.

We will soon have a website and include Howson Dam history and pictures.

Click on the links below and forward this message to others and sign up to receive updates.

Thanks

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