



STAFF REPORT

Report No: CL 44-2023
Meeting Date: 19 Sep 2023
Department: Clerk's Department

SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee Resolution: Oxford County draft Water/Wastewater Master Plan

Recommendation:

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report CL 44-2023: SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee Resolution: Oxford County draft Water/Wastewater Master Plan as information;

AND FURTHER THAT the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford support and endorse Oxford County's 2024 draft Water and Wastewater Master Plan as presented to meet the Township's future growth needs until 2046, which includes prioritizing future development within the Township's only current fully serviced village, Mount Elgin, unless servicing becomes critically required by another village.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to bring forward a recommendation from the SWOX Housing Opportunities Committees in relation the County of Oxford 2024 draft Water and Wastewater Master Plan.

Background:

At the County Council meeting of July 12th, 2023, County Council received report PW 2023-33 in relation to the County's draft 2024 Water and Wastewater Master Plan. This report identified water and wastewater infrastructure requirements to accommodate projected population and employment growth to 2046 in accordance with the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement and the County's approved Phase I comprehensive review (2020), while ensuring service continuity to existing serviced settlement areas. **The County intends to focus future growth and development primarily in designated community settlement areas.** At this meeting, County Council passed the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in Report No. PW 2023-33, titled "2024 Water and Wastewater Master Plan", be received as information;

AND FURTHER THAT the draft report be circulated to area municipalities requesting their feedback within 75 days (September 25, 2023);

AND FURTHER THAT the draft report be posted to Speak Up Oxford for feedback from the public for 75 days (September 25, 2023);

AND FURTHER THAT all comments received be provided in a report for council's consideration when considering the draft report.

Drinking water system projects anticipated over this period of time within South-West Oxford include:

- Mount Elgin DWS – Water Treatment Plant Optimization, Ingersoll to Mount Elgin Water System Interconnection;
- Beachville DWS – New Well Supply and Water Storage;
- Brownsville DWS – Water Quality Improvements, Water Treatment Plant Filtration Addition;
- Dereham Centre DWS – Water Infrastructure Refurbishment.

Wastewater projects anticipated over this period of time within South-West Oxford include:

- Mount Elgin WWS – Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Expansion (Phase 3 / 4), Ingersoll to Mount Elgin Wastewater System Interconnection (Forcemain).

At the August 8th, 2023 Township of South-West Oxford Council meeting, this matter was referred to the SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee for discussion and consideration. Mayor David Mayberry advised Council that the County is not planning to service any additional villages other than those that are already serviced. It was noted that South-West Oxford is the only municipality within the County that has only one fully serviced village (Mount Elgin). Members of Council were encouraged to give consideration to future servicing needs within the Township so that comments may be provided to the County by the September 25th, 2023 deadline.

Discussion:

The SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee considered this matter at their meeting held on September 5th, 2023. The Committee reviewed the draft Water/Wastewater Master Plan, which recommends that priority be given to improving existing servicing, and not expanding servicing to other settlement areas in the County. Oxford County has requested comments from area municipalities by September 25th, 2023.

Discussion took place regarding the advantages and disadvantages of servicing another village within the Township. Currently, Mount Elgin is the only fully serviced village in South-West Oxford, and the water and wastewater system in place may be sufficient for many years to come. If needed, water and wastewater services may be expanded between Ingersoll and Mount Elgin.

The Committee questioned the need for servicing: They considered whether servicing is needed for growth and development? Does the Township want more homes or need to house more people for sustainability? Should servicing take place for environmental protection purposes? In considering one of the goals of the committee - to address affordable housing needs, it was noted that without servicing and future development, the Township will have little impact in relation to higher density development locally. The Committee discussed that in order to provide more affordable housing, higher density development is likely required. Higher density development requires servicing - this is consistent with the County's Official Plan and goals in relation to the preservation of agricultural land. Further discussion took place regarding the potential advantages and disadvantages of servicing another village within the Township. In summary, comments were noted as follows:

One Serviced Village

Advantages:

- Lessen the impact on prime agricultural land – lower quality soil in north-eastern quadrant of Mount Elgin;
- Township may focus on one village “hub” with a mix of housing, trails, parks, commercial development;
- Central location prevents potential future annexation by larger urban areas;
- Prevents and limits growth of other settlement areas – this is a priority for many residents in combination with the preservation of agricultural land.

Disadvantages:

- Cost to expand servicing (extension between Mount Elgin and Ingersoll) - projected 2034 to 2046 in excess of \$10 million;
- Residents in other communities may feel that Mount Elgin is the priority/favoured.

Multiple Serviced Villages

Advantages:

- Growth, more houses and living spaces throughout the community as a whole;
- Positive environmental impact/groundwater protection (replacement of failing septic systems);
- Cheaper to construct now versus in the future;
- Enables higher density in multiple areas throughout the community.

Disadvantages:

- More negative impact on prime agricultural land;
- Serviced rural land may expand into other urban areas (servicing may be done more efficiently by surrounding urban municipalities)
- Many existing villages to not have the capacity to grow without servicing.

Overall, in considering the potential advantages and disadvantages, the Committee expressed support for the continued growth of Mount Elgin to limit the loss of prime agricultural land to development and to continue to have influence

with respect to the need for higher density housing to address the need for affordable housing locally.

The SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee passed the following recommendation:

RESOLVED that the SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee recommend that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford support and endorse Oxford County's 2024 draft Water and Wastewater Master Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT the SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee endorse the recommended servicing strategies outlined in the County's draft Water and Wastewater Master Plan to meet the Township's growth needs going forward to 2046, which includes focusing any future development within the Township's current serviced village (Mount Elgin), unless servicing becomes critically required by another village.

Staff is seeking Council's support of the Committee's recommendation and direction from Council in relation to the comments to be sent to Oxford County Council from the Township with respect to the 2024 draft Water and Wastewater Master Plan.

Strategic Plan:

The Township will promote quality of life by protecting and enhancing our natural environment and create a sense of well-being, belonging and active engagement in the community.

The Township will maintain quality of services by demonstrating corporate and community leadership to enhance quality of life and to strive for excellence in stewardship of all resources.

The Township will support economic development by empowering the community to live, work and thrive in a changing environment.

Financial Implications:

There are no current financial implications to the Township in relation to this matter.

Julie Middleton

Approved by Chief Administrative Officer Mary Ellen Greb