



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Planning Committee
From: Kyle Davis, Risk Management Official
Date: Thursday, October 14, 2021
Subject: **Wellington Source Water Protection – Plan Updates**

Background

The County of Wellington is part of five Source Protection Regions established under the *Clean Water Act* for the purposes of protecting current and future sources of drinking water. The programme is currently focused, by regulation, on the protection of municipal drinking water sources. Wellington Source Water Protection is the partnership organization created by the County and its local municipalities to deliver and implement source protection. Staff are funded by the County and the local municipalities and employed by the Township of Centre Wellington to serve as the source protection staff, including the appointed Risk Management Official/ Inspectors, for all municipalities within the County. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on a number of initiatives and programme updates within or affecting the County.

Saugeen Plan Update

On June 14, 2021, the Saugeen Valley Source Protection Authority initiated pre-consultation with affected municipalities, provincial ministries and other implementing bodies on proposed changes to the Saugeen Valley Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report. In Wellington, the Saugeen Source Protection Plan applies to the Town of Minto and Township of Wellington North.

The proposed changes are a provincially initiated amendment under Section 36 of the Clean Water Act and therefore a resolution of support is not required from County or local municipal Councils. Staff reports were presented to the Town of Minto and Township of Wellington North Councils in August and September 2021 and Council and staff comments on the proposed amendments were forwarded to the Saugeen Valley Source Protection Authority. Public consultation on this amendment was completed in September 2021 and following that process, the Source Protection Committee will consider the amendment at their meeting scheduled for November 26, 2021.

A number of the amendments are being completed in anticipation of a pending update to Provincial guidance documents termed the Director's Technical Rules and the Table of Circumstances. The Province consulted on these pending updates in 2019 and 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the adoption of these updates has been delayed and is currently anticipated later this year or in 2022, however, a definite date has not been provided by the Province. It is likely that the Source Protection Committee will not be able to submit the amendments until the Province adopts the updates to the Provincial guidance.

The main changes proposed are related to mapping and policy updates to provide increased requirements for road salt application and storage and snow storage in close proximity to municipal wells. These updates will not take effect until the Province updates the Provincial guidance documents; however, include risk management plans within 100 metres of municipal wells, education policies and

updates to existing municipal road Salt Management Plans. The other update related to the Provincial guidance relates to lowering the risk management plan threshold for fuel storage from 2,500 to 250 litres. In addition, the Saugeen Plan is updating policy text to align with policies from neighbouring Source Protection Plans that will ensure consistency in implementation across the County. This includes edits to the Risk Management Official written direction policy that provides guidance on how planning and building applications are screened for review pursuant to the Clean Water Act. This guidance will allow the screening out of certain commercial and industrial applications that do not impact groundwater and allow for more efficient processing of applications. Staff are supportive of these changes.

Halton-Hamilton Plan Update

On September 3, 2021, the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region initiated pre-consultation with affected municipalities, provincial ministries and other implementing bodies on proposed changes to the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Plan and Assessment Reports. The Halton-Hamilton Plan applies to the Township of Puslinch

The proposed changes are a provincially initiated amendment under Section 36 of the Clean Water Act and therefore a resolution of support is not required from County or local municipal Councils. Staff reports were presented to the Township of Puslinch Council on October 13, 2021 and Council and staff comments on the proposed amendments will be forwarded to the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region. Initial staff comments have already been provided. Public consultation on this amendment is scheduled to begin in October 2021. Following public consultation, the Source Protection Committee will consider the amendment.

The main amendments that affect the Township and County relate to new mapping for the Freelon (City of Hamilton) municipal drinking water system that extends into the Township of Puslinch. Staff and the Township hydrogeologist have reviewed these proposed changes and have no concerns. Although the mapping does change, staff review indicates that no additional properties, based on current land use, will require risk management plans, prohibitions or septic inspections.

The Halton-Hamilton Plan is also updating policy text to align with policies from neighbouring Source Protection Plans that will ensure consistency in implementation across the County. This includes edits to the Risk Management Official written direction policy that provides guidance on how planning and building applications are screened for review pursuant to the Clean Water Act. This guidance will allow the screening out of certain commercial and industrial applications that do not impact groundwater and allow for more efficient processing of applications. Staff support these changes.

Grand River Plan Update

As previously reported to the Committee in March 2020, the Grand River Source Protection Plan proposed amendments related to new wellhead protection areas in Centre Wellington, Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch and policy revisions to address road salt application / storage, snow storage and stormwater management. This included the delineation of Issue Contributing Areas for Chloride in Centre Wellington and Puslinch which results in requirements for existing and future land uses related to road salt, snow and stormwater management. These amendments took legal effect on February 3, 2021 and staff have seen a subsequent increase in development reviews and risk management plans in these areas.

The Grand River Source Protection Authority and staff have also completed public consultation in winter 2021 and submitted a second amendment in July 2021 related to the delineation of water quantity wellhead protection areas (Tier 3) for Centre Wellington, Mapleton and Erin. Over 120 written comments were received during public consultation and were responded to via the Lake Erie Source Protection Committee. Details on the comments and responses can be found at:

https://calendar.sourcewater.ca/default/Detail/2021-06-24-Lake-Erie-Region-Source-Protection-Committee-Meeti/Agenda%20Package%20-%20Lake%20Erie%20Region%20Source%20Protection%20Committee_Jun17_2021.pdf

Overall, the public and agency comments assisted in strengthening the water quantity policies and summaries of the technical work in both the Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report. The amendment is now awaiting Provincial Minister approval and it is unknown when the amendment will take legal effect. If approval follows a similar timeline as the 2020 amendment, we can anticipate a legal effect date in winter 2022.

CTC and Maitland Plan Updates

Both the Credit Valley, Toronto and Region and Central Lake Ontario (CTC) and the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Source Protection Plans are in early stages of amendments. These draft amendments relate to a number of topics including new wells in the Town of Erin, revisions to various policy requirements including revisiting some prohibition policies and preparation, similar to Saugeen, for changes in the Provincial guidance documents on road salt and other threats. It is anticipated that amendments will move forward in 2022 to 2024.

Source Protection Staffing

As approved for the County 2020 budget, it is a pleasure to announce that the Source Protection Coordinator position has finally been filled (hiring was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Danielle Walker started with Wellington Source Water Protection at the end of June 2021. Danielle has over eight years of experience in the private and municipal sectors, most recently with the Region of Waterloo in their environmental laboratory and as an Environmental Officer. In her role as Source Protection Coordinator, Danielle has primarily been focused on development reviews and the education and outreach programme including support for the Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival. Wellington Source Water Protection has also continued to hire university co-operative education students, most recently from the University of Waterloo.

Groundwater Festival

In 2020, the Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival was cancelled due to COVID-19. However, in 2021 the Festival returned in a virtual format over four (4) days. The in person activity centres were reimagined as videos and broadcast through YouTube. Over 6,700 students from 178 schools attended over the four days which is actually higher than the in person capacity of 5,000 students. Mostly Grades 2 through 5 classes attended, but the Festival also attracted some Grade 1, 6 and 7 classrooms. The videos stay on YouTube and have had over 4,000 cumulative views since May. Staff including water operations staff from our Townships participated in the filming of the videos. The videos, which include greetings from Warden Linton, can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBKl7pcifQr9Atf_Z3eDrwA

The Festival Board is very grateful for the financial and in kind support provided from the County and our local municipalities. This is especially important going forward as the long time Executive Director Susan Reid retired in June 2021. The Festival Board is currently recruiting to fill the huge hole left by Sue's retirement. Sue had been involved with the Festival for over 20 years and was instrumental in the development and running of Water Festivals across the Province.

Tier 3 (Water Quantity)

As we reported to Committee in November 2020, there are a draft wellhead protection area – quantity (WHPA-Q) and Intake Protection Zone – Quantity (IPZ-Q) for the City of Guelph and Guelph/Eramosa Township that extends in the Township of Puslinch, Guelph / Eramosa Township and the Town of Erin. A project is ongoing related to the Guelph Guelph/Eramosa Tier 3 study, WHPA-Q and IPZ-Q and Wellington Source Water Protection and County of Wellington staff remain involved. This project is managed by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) and involves negotiations and discussions on policy wording between the County and our municipalities, the City of Guelph, Regions of Waterloo and Halton, GRCA and the Province.

In 2021, draft policies have been presented to the Lake Erie Source Protection Committee at meetings in January, April, June and September 2021. These policies were for Source Protection Committee comment and input. Not all of the policies are completed at this time due to ongoing discussions with the Province related to provincial approvals. It is anticipated that pre-consultation for these policies and the WHPA-Q and IPZ-Q will occur in 2022 followed by Council presentations / review and public consultation. A submission to the Province for approval would follow.

New Water Supplies and Water Supply Master Plans

A number of water supply and/or water supply master plan projects are ongoing across the County. Staff are involved, as needed, to support our local municipal Water Services staff and/or to provide comment on neighbouring municipality plans. Currently, the Guelph Water Supply Master Plan Update is nearing completion and City staff will be presenting to Township of Puslinch and Guelph/Eramosa Councils in October, followed by staff and Township consultant comments to the City. Staff are also providing support to new water supply projects in Erin and Centre Wellington as both municipalities are investigating new municipal well locations.

Conclusion

The report provides an update on a number of programmes and initiatives across the County related to source protection and the *Clean Water Act*.

Recommendation:

That the report be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,



Kyle Davis
Risk Management Official