

Dear Mayor Ferguson,

The Wellington Community Association (WCA) is thankful to you and to Shire Hall Staff for holding a Public Meeting on August 31, to discuss the Water Infrastructure Projects that have been proposed for Wellington and Prince Edward County. However, we are disappointed with the continued lack of clarity and information provided by staff.

The WCA has several concerns around these proposed Projects, and their potential impacts on Water Ratepayers:

- We agree that County infrastructure should be planned and built in advance of future demand, however the scale of the project is predicated on very ambitious population growth projections, a “Best, Best” case scenario, as it were.
 - QUESTION: Has The County prepared a sensitivity analysis of the financial implications of said projections falling short of ambitions, if so, can you kindly provide this information? What, exactly, are the implications of falling 20% short? 30% short?, etc.
 - Further to this question, we have seen 3 different population projections - please advise exactly which population projection is being relied upon?
- Toward the end of the public meeting and in response to a question, the CIMA engineer, Mr. Bradley Young, provided, albeit in a rather piecemeal fashion, the cost estimates for the proposed project.
 - QUESTION: Would you please provide us with a straightforward breakdown of each component of the project --- NOT just those expenditures approved by Council but the ENTIRE water infrastructure capital project, including timing of expenditures and sources of funding at each stage.
- The Financing plans for the Project are based on estimates and ambitions that, in some cases, are utterly implausible, regardless of whether they were prepared by qualified consultants or extrapolated from Federal and Provincial policy objectives and immigration aspirations. . For example, Shire Hall has indicated that \$30,000,000 for the project will come from Commercial Development Fees. This figure is based on an assumed 927,400 square feet of ICI Space in Wellington (Watson and Associates Report). This number appears to be unrealistically high – in fact our local Subject Matter Experts consider it to be approximately four times greater than most developers of this type of space would estimate, if given the same parameters.
- There is considerable heralding of the \$4.3 million Irrevocable Letter of Credit posted by Kaitlin that the County can seize “in a worst-case scenario” and use to service debt.
 - QUESTION: Is the Irrevocable Letter of Credit “money in the bank” or are there conditions that could impede its use by the County?

- QUESTION: How many months/years of debt servicing for the full debt incurred will the \$4.3 million cover?

- Permanent Loss of Greenspace. The proposed site for the new Regional Water Treatment plant would eliminate an important and much used Greenspace in Wellington. The 2021 Master Servicing Plan states “Consideration may be given to have the regional WTP on the west side of the new WTP to increase the distance between the facility and neighboring properties, once the existing WTP is decommissioned and demolished”. This potential solution allows for the retention of a full half of the existing green space.

- QUESTION: Is this alternative being given serious consideration?

- The Water Infrastructure Project(s) has lacked proper public consultation, opportunities for meaningful community engagement, and open sharing of information from its earliest planning stages. We request that residents and water ratepayers be invited to participate in a meaningful way in all future planning phases of the project.

In conclusion, it is obvious by the overwhelming positive response from the hundreds of residents who attended the meeting that there is a need for the County to “press pause” and undertake the following:

1. A Peer Review of the Watson Report by a reputable firm such as J.C Williams.

2. A Peer Review of the engineering with the objective of determining whether the project can be more efficiently staged with a view toward mitigating costs and the risks to ratepayers.

3. A Peer Review of the entire financing equation, with particular attention to the development charges formula and a thorough evaluation of the mitigation measures that have been considered for a slow growth scenario.

It is our view that the current Council has a fiduciary responsibility to undertake these reviews.

Respectfully,

Joanna Green,
Co-Chair
The Wellington Community Association