



To: **Committee of the Whole**

Agenda Section: **Corporate Services**
Division: **Engineering, Planning and Environment**
Department: **Solid Waste Management**

Item Number: **CCW - 2019-052**

Meeting Date: **February 12, 2019**

Subject: **Environmental Resource Recovery Centre – Project Update**

Recommendation

That Item CCW 2019-052, dated February 12, 2019, regarding the Environmental Resource Recovery Centre – Project Update, be received.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this item is to provide:

- an overview of the Environmental Resource Recovery Centre project;
- status of the on-going land use approval process; and
- additional studies currently being undertaken and next steps.

It is noted that this item is presented in conjunction with *Item CCW 2019-058 – Notice of Appeal Regarding County of Simcoe Official Plan Amendment No. 2 (ERRC)* (February 12, 2019).

Background/Analysis/Options

What is the Environmental Resource Recovery Centre?

In 2010, the County's Solid Waste Management Strategy (SWMS) recommended development of two major infrastructure projects to support long-term waste management operations.

- The *Organics Processing Facility (OPF)* to provide a location where organics (green bin material including pet waste and potentially materials such as leaf and yard waste and diapers) could be processed locally and converted into other valuable products, such as compost or fertilizer. These end products would be available for our agricultural community.
- The *Materials Management Facility (MMF)* to provide a location for consolidation and transfer of waste, recycling, and organics from collection vehicles to larger trucks for more economical shipment to other disposal/processing locations outside the County.

Following a rigorous siting process (details provided further in this item), it was determined that both facilities and County waste operations would benefit from co-locating both the OPF and MMF on a single, centrally-located site – 2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West, Springwater. The complex is referred to as the *Environmental Resource Recovery Centre* – highlighting our continued commitment to work diligently and innovatively to recover divertible materials, such as organics, from our garbage and, in essence, to view our waste as an opportunity beyond the landfill.



2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West, Springwater (facing west)

What's driving this project?

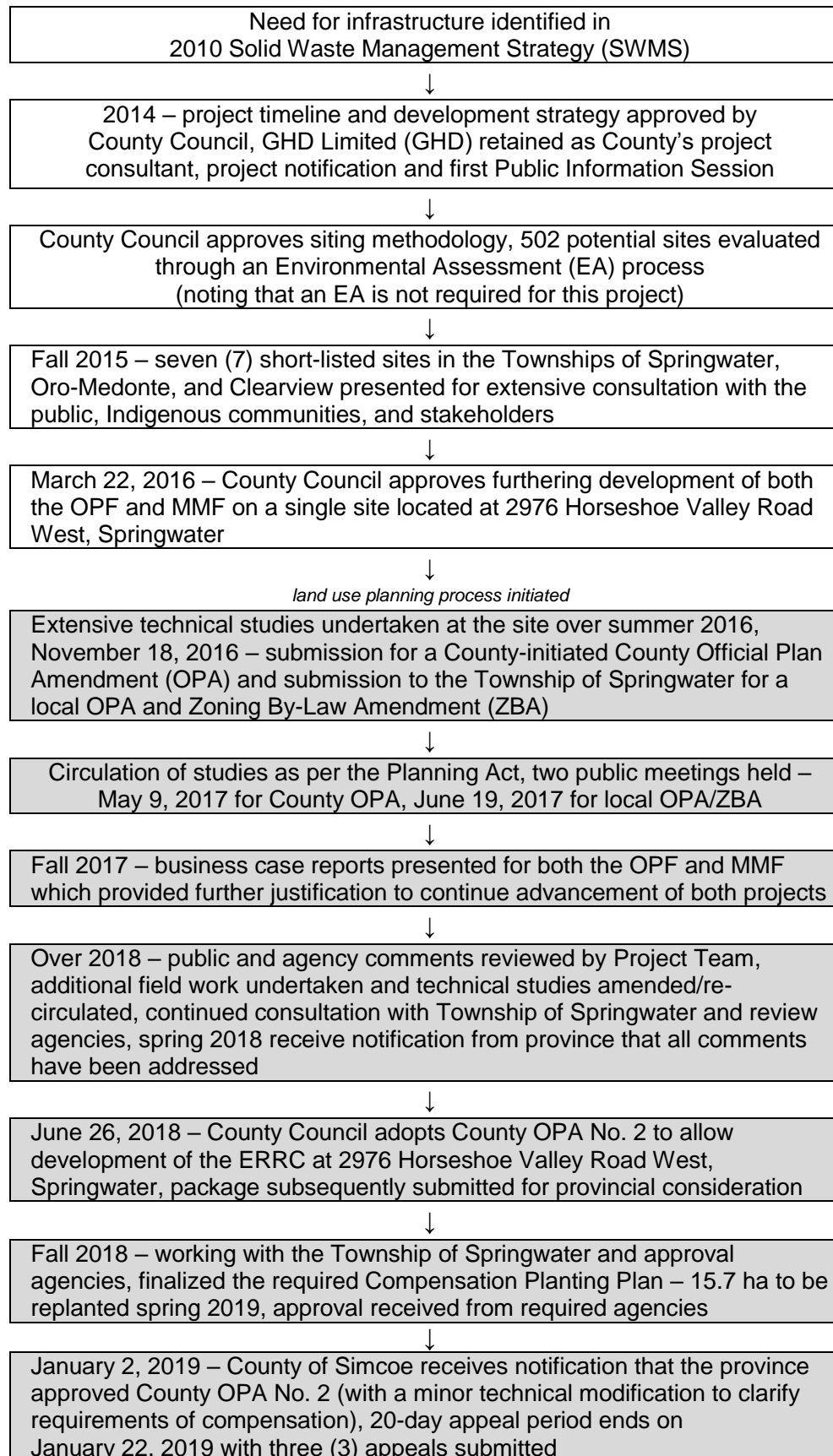
Siting waste management infrastructure is not easy – but necessary as we prepare to prudently manage County waste for the next twenty (20) years and beyond. Three major factors are driving the need to develop this infrastructure – preparation for growth and increased tonnages, the looming closure of County landfills, and changes in provincial waste legislation outlined in the *Waste-Free Ontario Act (2016)* and *A Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan (2018)*.

Business case reports prepared in 2017 indicate the benefits of developing both the MMF and OPF. Managing our own transfer operations would have the lowest total costs over a 20-year period, with considerable annual savings realized as greater tonnages of garbage are exported outside our borders with closure of County landfills (the last anticipated for 2029). With limited transfer capacity in this region, the County is extremely vulnerable to capacity issues and pricing increases. This is a notable risk. Interim transfer services for blue box recycling, for example, were procured in late 2018 – with only one proposal submitted with a significantly increased cost/tonne.

In regard to organics processing, a preliminary business case indicates that development of a County-owned facility is the most advantageous option – aligning with the SWMS and provincial direction on increasing the diversion of food and organic waste, providing ownership and control over our operations, and producing beneficial end products (such as fertilizer and compost) for our agricultural community. In considering risk, the report noted that while the option to transport waste is convenient in the short-term, it is expected that increasing pressure on municipalities could lead to market capacity and availability issues. This is happening now. Over summer 2018 with the shutdown of AIM in Hamilton, there was a subsequent ripple effect – noting that the County was hauling our green bin organics to any available processing capacity in Guelph, Kingston, Leamington, and London.

Where have we come from?

A project development plan and timeline were approved in early 2014 and since that time, significant progress has been made on both projects – with considerable County resources invested. For reference, the following flow chart is provided to summarize key milestones in project development.

The ERRC Journey – 2014 to 2019

Do we have a good site for the ERRC?

Yes. The County's consultant (a nationally-recognized firm specializing in these types of projects), determined that 2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West, Springwater, was the best site noting:

- large site size allows for good buffers to sensitive receptors and other environmental features (only 4.5 ha is required for the footprint on the 84 ha site)
- site is well-screened by existing vegetation and topography
- favourable groundwater and surface water conditions
- no net effects to Class 1-3 Agricultural Lands
- excellent access to efficient transportation routes to move material (Highway 400, Highway 26, and County Roads 22 and 27)

Since siting, over fifteen (15) environmental, technical, and engineering studies have been advanced at 2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West. Studies have been reviewed, numerous stakeholder meetings undertaken, and comments addressed from the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA), Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS), County Planning staff, and consultants/staff representing the Township of Springwater.

By approving the County's Official Plan Amendment in January, the province has indicated they are satisfied that the proposal meets their planning policies.

What about finding an industrial site?

Industrial sites were considered during the siting process. Fifty-three (53) County-owned landfill properties, for example, were assessed for viability and excluded for factors such as site size and groundwater conditions. Although current land use designation and zoning were considered during the evaluation of the over 500 potential sites (which included County-owned properties, those listed for sale, and sites submitted for evaluation), siting considered multiple environmental, technical, and social factors. This multi-criteria approach mimicked an Environmental Assessment (EA) process – although an EA is not required for this infrastructure. This was done with the understanding that siting would be a sensitive, difficult undertaking – and most likely challenged by neighbouring landowners regardless of location.

What about the trees?

This property, known as the Freele Tract, was purchased in 1948 by the County with the majority of tree planting completed in 1949. As with many similar properties, this planting was part of an effort to stop erosion and blowing sand on large swaths of barren, desert-like wasteland. Today, as a productive, working forest, plantations within this tract have since been thinned several times and are scheduled for further harvesting as part of regular forest management.

The majority of the host tract will remain unchanged as part of our maintained County forest – allowing for continued recreational use (including a snowmobile trail). To compensate for the 5.5 ha of forest that will be lost (noting that this includes the access road), work was undertaken recently to finalize a detailed Compensation Planting Plan. Undertaken in consultation with the County Forester, our ecologist, the NVCA, MMAH, MNR, and Planning staff from the County and Township of Springwater, this plan outlines the afforestation/restoration of more than 15 ha of land within the contiguous forested landscape feature as the ERRC facility.

The approved Compensation Planting Plan exceeds the 2:1 requirement for “ecological enhancement” detailed in the County Official Plan Amendment as approved by the province. We look forward to proceeding with planting at the Orrock Creek North and Museum Tracts this spring as led by our Forestry team.

How are we engaging the public and near neighbours?

The Project Team has approached consultation/engagement for this project as they would if undertaking an EA. Again, efforts have been with the understanding of the sensitivity of this project and that open, transparent, and meaningful engagement will be key to successful commissioning. Prior to initiating the formal land use planning process, this included hosting:

- six (6) Public Information Sessions;
- ten (10) Public Consultation Sessions;
- two (2) facilitated round table meetings with neighbouring landowners;
- numerous meetings with First Nations, Métis, and various stakeholders and approval agencies;
- meetings with the Community Engagement Committee, concerned residents, and with local municipal staff and Councillors, and
- tours of the short-listed sites and similar waste facilities with stakeholders (including near neighbours).

With submission of land use planning applications in November 2016, the engagement process was necessarily temporarily suspended to allow the formal, legislated process to begin as outlined in the *Planning Act*. It is the understanding of the Project Team that this should continue until the outstanding land use planning matters are settled. Following that, meaningful engagement with the public, near neighbours, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders will resume with further direction from County Council.



Siting Public Consultation Session – fall 2015



Public Information Session – April 2016

Where are we in the process?

On January 2, 2019, the County received notification that the province had approved County Official Plan No. 2. This was a notable success and project milestone – the result of five years of work and a significant investment in County resources. With that, however, came a 20-day appeal period ending on January 22, 2019 and the submission of three appeals from near neighbours. Discussion of these appeals is outlined further in *Item CCW 2019-058 – Notice of Appeal Regarding County of Simcoe Official Plan Amendment No. 2 (ERRC)* (February 12, 2019).

The Project Team (which includes staff from Solid Waste Management, Planning, and Legal) will be meeting over the weeks ahead to determine next steps in regard to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) process and the matter of the outstanding applications to the Township of Springwater.

What does 2019 look like for the ERRC project?

Although the land use planning appeals may impact our development timeline, some work continues on advancing design and additional studies to further guide the land use planning process and subsequent approvals. Supplementary studies were outlined in the COPA and, in addition, they will support future applications for Site Plan Approval (SPA) and the Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA). The County’s consultant, GHD Limited, has submitted a work plan and cost estimate for the next package of work required to advance the project noting that this includes more detailed design of the ERRC footprint and the MMF.

Of note, in addition to the *Compensation Planting Plan*, work related to fire protection planning was initiated last fall. It is anticipated that having further detail on these matters will assist in addressing near neighbours’ primary concerns and initiate “next steps” in our collaboration with the Township of Springwater (specifically working with their Fire & Emergency Services staff). In regard to fire protection, the County has retained the services of RJ Bartlett Engineering Ltd. – a specialized fire protection engineering firm. This team will work alongside GHD on various aspects of fire protection – from design considerations to a fire safety plan related to future operations at the ERRC complex.



On-going groundwater monitoring on the ERRC footprint

Financial and Resource Implications

To date, approximately \$1.23M has been spent on development of the ERRC project (to December 2018). A breakdown of these costs and received funding from the Continuous Improvement Fund (for the MMF) is as follows:

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| Siting process and consultation | \$260,000 |
| Site-specific technical studies and consultation | \$810,000 |
| OPF procurement and business case | \$220,000 |
| MMF functional design and costing | \$20,000 |
| Compensation planting – site preparation | \$15,000 |
| Received CIF funding | (\$95,000) |

It is anticipated that 2019 costs will include consulting services for the following:

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|---|-----------|
| Land use planning approvals process | \$25,000 |
| Technical studies outlined in the COPA | \$65,000 |
| Preparation of Site Plan submission (including ERRC design) | \$85,000 |
| Preparation of Environmental Compliance Approval submission for MMF | \$150,000 |

In addition, \$30,000 is anticipated to be spent on compensation planting this spring led by County Forestry and as per the Compensation Planting Plan.

It is noted that major delays in commissioning either the MMF or OPF could lead to significantly increased operational costs not considered in the Long Term Financial Plan. Long term waste management planning has considered that capital investment now in the ERRC complex will reduce operational costs over the next 20-year period.

Relationship to Corporate Strategic Plan

In regard to long-term processing of organics, the Solid Waste Management Strategy (Strategy) recommended development of a centralized composting facility within the County. Public input indicated support for in-County processing as well as for the addition of pet waste and diapers to the program. This item also supports the Strategy recommendation to develop transfer capacity infrastructure to manage garbage and recyclables generated within the County.

Reference Documents

Item CCW 2019-058 – Notice of Appeal Regarding County of Simcoe Official Plan Amendment No. 2 (ERRC) (February 12, 2019)

Item CCW 2018-320 – Request for Adoption – County of Simcoe Official Plan Amendment No. 2 (June 12, 2018)

Previous staff reports, consultants' technical reports, communication material from public information and consultation sessions, and minutes of Community Engagement Committee meetings can be found at www.simcoe.ca/errc.

Attachments

There are no attachments to this Item.

Prepared By: Stephanie Mack, P.Eng., Special Projects Supervisor

Approvals:

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|---|-------------------|
| Rob McCullough, Director, Solid Waste Management | January 28, 2019 |
| Debbie Korolnek, P.Eng., General Manager, EPE | January 30, 2019 |
| Trevor Wilcox, General Manager, Corporate Performance | September 5, 2016 |
| Mark Aitken, Chief Administrative Officer | February 6, 2019 |