

MIDHURST RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION - ISSUES LIST

MSP Class Environmental Assessment

Note: *The source water-related issues reflect the findings of MRA's independent hydrogeologist who analysed the relevant EA studies. MRA has repeatedly raised the other concerns.*

Source Water

1. Insufficient data was collected to ensure no negative impact on the groundwater available for existing private and municipal wells as a result of pumping 11 new MSP-related wells.
2. Should water quantity decrease in existing private wells, municipal wells or Barrie's three wells (all in the same watershed), the Township of Springwater will be liable for all remedial action. Potentially an enormous cost to taxpayers.
3. New Well Head Protection Areas (WHPAs) are extensive, capturing a wide swath of farm properties and other large land holdings, including some in neighbouring Oro-Medonte Township. Source water protection policies could lead to changes in permitted activities on those properties, such as requiring reduced fertilizer.
4. Assessed impacts of the 11 new wells on the Willow Creek Subwatershed are sketchy at best. In addition, the effects of existing private and municipal wells on the Willow Creek Subwatershed were not studied. Both, carried out in a comprehensive manner, are essential to determining the cumulative impact.
5. There is no water budget to provide an overall picture of the cumulative impact of capacity and usage.
6. The coldwater fishery in Willow Creek will be seriously threatened by both lower water levels and higher water temperatures. Groundwater maintains a constant 10°C (approx.) year round. With significant upstream pumping, less groundwater will be left to flow into the creeks. To compound the problem, huge quantities of tepid/warmish wastewater will be discharged into Willow Creek very near the Minesing Wetlands. Willow Creek will lose the cooling effect of sufficient groundwater in summer and its warming effect in winter. This scenario is antithetical to coldwater fish health. No studies were done on this threat.
7. Water quality will change and cost more to treat. Minerals found in the two water sources (old and new wells) are not the same. Water from the new wells will require more extensive treatment: high nitrate concentrations have been confirmed, thus necessitating expensive mitigation measures to make it potable.

Waste Water

8. Phosphorus levels in Willow Creek downstream of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) will exceed Provincial Water Quality Objective by 67%. The EA states that expected phosphorus levels in Willow Creek will be 0.05mg/L. However, the Provincial Water Quality Objective advises levels greater than 0.03mg/L result in unhealthy stream conditions. In 2013, the NVCA's Willow Creek Subwatershed health check report noted that the average total phosphorus in Willow Creek at low flow was only 0.018mg/L.

9. The gradient of Willow Creek at the point of wastewater discharge is too slight for adequate drainage. A 2014 report by Springwater Township's Drainage Superintendent revealed that for the next 4.5km downstream from the discharge point the grade is approximately **0.06%**. This compares poorly with the minimum ditch grade - 0.5% - the Township will consider for new development. Current flooding, already quite serious, will be exacerbated by the MSP.

Traffic

10. The EA proposes to widen existing village roads to 3 or 4 lanes to facilitate traffic passing through the residential area. The plan for the new bypass, however, will be only 2 lanes, thereby forcing MSP-related traffic into the old village and creating congestion and bottlenecks.

11. Arterial road capacity is woefully inadequate to handle the traffic volume generated by 25,000 additional residents, without negatively impacting built Midhurst. This is especially true on summer weekends when Midhurst Village streets become clogged. Increased traffic volume due to excessive growth will also be a major problem during lake effect snowstorms and when there are accidents on the 400 highway.

Agriculture

12. A 2008 report, prepared for an earlier phase of the EA by AgPlan Limited, negatively mis-characterised the soil around Midhurst. It is actually highly productive Class 1 vasey loam with a small amount of Class 2.

Financial Burden

13. Springwater's 2016 Long Range Financial Plan, prepared by Hemson Consulting, shows that MSP-related costs will far outweigh benefits promoted by the developers. This pattern is common in other municipalities, notably nearby Barrie where property taxes have risen substantially due to new or upgraded infrastructure and high levels of municipal debt.