



Report 2019-074

Council Recommend Report

To: Warden and Council

From: Kelly Pender, Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: Joe Gallivan, Director, Planning & Economic Development

Date of meeting: June 19, 2019

Re: **Planning and Economic Development -- Communal Services Study**

Recommendation

Resolved That the Council of the County of Frontenac approve the Communal Services Study dated June 2019;

And Further That the Council of the County of Frontenac direct staff to:

- 1) Present an overview of the recommendations of the communal services study to each of the four Township Councils;
- 2) Initiate before the end of 2019 an Official Plan Amendment to the County Official Plan to recognize that development on communal services for residential, commercial, and industrial land use can be applied across the entire Frontenac region;
- 3) Investigate financial models and utility models that can be used to significantly reduce the municipal financial risk of approving development on communal services and entering into a Municipal Responsibility Agreements (MRA) and report back to Council; and
- 4) Research funding opportunities from the Provincial and Federal Governments that can be used for new communal services, in particular communal services in existing villages and hamlets.

Background

Communal services are systems that provide water and wastewater treatment to clusters of residences or businesses. They can be a less expensive alternative to centralized municipal services and a more environmentally-friendly alternative to private on-site services. However, perceived obstacles have slowed the implementation of communal services in many jurisdictions. A key benefit of communal services is that they represent alternative water and wastewater servicing approaches that can provide the County and Townships with the innovative technology and flexibility to accommodate growth and achieve planning, environmental, and economic objectives.

County Council supported the initiation of the Communal Services Study as part of the 2017 budget process.

WSP Consulting was retained to prepare the Study. WSP employed a team comprised of planners, engineers, and financial risk analysts to create conditions that will support development on communal services throughout the region. WSP began work on the project in April, 2018 and met all of the project deadlines.

The Study is attached as an Appendix to this report.

Comment

The main purpose of this Communal Servicing Study is to demonstrate that the perceived obstacles - engineering, financial, risk management, planning - are just that, and to equip Frontenac with the tools necessary to enable redevelopment and new development on the basis of communal services. Communal water and wastewater servicing offers the potential to allow for new development and infill across the County, including on village and hamlet mainstreets, addressing some of the challenges associated with centralized municipal services and with private on-site services. Most importantly, communal servicing has the potential to support more compact, land-efficient development than is possible with private servicing, at a lower cost than is possible with centralized municipal services, and enable revitalization of the Frontenac's communities.

A Technical Advisory Committee was established to help guide the study and its recommendations. As well as County staff, members of the Committee were from the following organizations:

- South Frontenac Township
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs
- Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
- Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Health Unit
- Frontenac County Planning Advisory Committee (one citizen member)
- WaterTAP (Ontario Water Technology Acceleration Project)

Also, two meetings were held with developers who have experience building in Frontenac, including a meeting to review the final draft. The consensus from the development industry is that there is a strong market for residential housing built on communal services near existing villages - particularly in the southern half of Frontenac - as well as potential for commercial and industrial business parks.

As described in the Executive Summary of the Study, the implementation of development on communal services has many potential benefits for Frontenac.

For the Frontenac region, communal servicing enables:

- Increased development potential, growing the tax base;
- More water-sensitive design and other approaches to meet sustainability objectives;
- A broader range of housing typologies and commercial development to allow for complete communities;
- Reduced municipal service delivery costs to residents (e.g. garbage collection, snow removal); and
- A new approach to managing financial risk.

For developers, communal servicing allows for more:

- Flexibility to address different market segments;
- Feasible servicing approaches for developments in hard-to-service areas; and
- Guidance and certainty on servicing.

And citizens that have the potential to reside in a communal service neighbourhood can:

- Be confident in their water and wastewater treatment systems;
- Have a wider choice of housing options, allowing for aging in place; and
- Be confident that water resources are being appropriately stewarded.

Should Council endorse the Study, staff will begin the next stage of implementation including consultation with the Townships, reviewing best practices for financial risk management and possible utility operation, investigate Federal and Provincial funding opportunities, and the implementation of a County Official Plan Amendment that will support the creation of new development on communal services.

Sustainability Implications

The potential outcomes of Communal Services Study touch on all four pillars of the County sustainability plan (*Directions for Our Future*): social, cultural, economic, and environmental.

Financial Implications

None at this time.

Organizations, Departments and Individuals Consulted and/or Affected

Frontenac County (Finance, Planning, Chief Administrative Officer)

South Frontenac Township (Planning, Public Works)

Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks

Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Health Unit