

**Preliminary Issues Report
Township of Whitewater Region Official Plan Policy Review
(Draft)**

Prepared for the

**Township of Whitewater Region
Official Plan Steering Committee**

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1.0 Introduction

This Preliminary Issues Report presents a list of issues and concerns that will be investigated as part of the "Background Review/Issues Analysis" Stage of the Township of Whitewater Region Official Policy Review. The issues presented in this Report are based on the review of background information and the Analysis of Growth and Development Opportunities and Constraints prepared by Jp2g Consultants Inc. as well as input and direction from the Official Plan Review Steering Committee. The issues identified in this Report will be presented at a public meeting in order to obtain input from the public on these and any other issues to be addressed during the Issues Analysis stage of the Work Plan.

For convenience purposes, the identified issues have been summarized into four (4) categories including:

- a) Growth and Settlement
- b) Natural Heritage and Resources
- c) Servicing
- d) Implementation

2.0 Growth and Settlement

Issue #1: Need for Growth

It is clear from discussions with the Steering Committee that there is a consensus on the need to encourage growth and development in the Township of Whitewater Region in order to create employment opportunities and maintain a healthy economy. Rural residential development, tourism and four season recreational/resort development are considered to be the types of development that will provide the greatest opportunities for growth and development. The Steering Committee has also identified a need for more control over decision making at the local level. The Citizens Association for the Future of Whitewater Region has indicated that a Strategic Development Plan should be encouraged for the Municipality.

Recommended Action:

- a) Establish goals, objectives and policies for promoting growth and development.
- b) Identify options and opportunities for developing policies which will allow more local control over decision making.

Issue #2: Rural Areas

The Analysis of Growth and Development Opportunities and Constraints has identified potential for residential, estate residential, recreational and resort development in rural areas of the Township. The Steering Committee has identified need to promote rural residential development. However, the Steering Committee feels it is important that new rural residential development should not detract from the quality and character of the rural area.

Recommended Action:

- a) Identify Rural areas of the Township where growth and development can be promoted.
- b) Establish policies that will promote rural residential development and criteria to protect the rural quality and character of the rural area.

Issue #3: Ottawa River Corridor

The Analysis of Growth and Development Opportunities has identified the Ottawa River corridor as an area of considerable potential for residential, estate residential recreational, tourism and resort development. There is potential for development on the basis of condominium and fractional ownership. The Ottawa River is also an area that has numerous constraints to development including floodplains, topography, access, archaeology, water setbacks, wildlife habitats and habitats for threatened and endangered species.

Recommended Action:

- a) Review condominium and fractional ownership development requirements.
- b) Analyze options for promoting growth and development along the Ottawa River and minimizing constraints.

Issue #4: Urban Areas

Provincial policy requires urban areas to be the focus of growth and development. Future growth and development in Beachburg will be limited due to the absence of a municipal sewer system. Future development in Cobden may require sewer plant upgrades. A servicing strategy would be required in order to maximize the development potential of Beachburg and Cobden.

Recommended Action:

- a) Analyze policy options for growth and development in urban areas.
- b) Develop a servicing strategy for new development in Beachburg and Cobden.

3.0 Natural Heritage and Resources

Issue #1: Muskrat Lake

Muskrat Lake is designated as a Highly Sensitive Lake by the County of Renfrew Official Plan. The Sensitive Lake policies of the County Plan limit the potential for shoreline residential, commercial and urban (Cobden) development along the Lake.

Recommended Action:

- a) Review the basis of information used to determine that Muskrat Lake is a highly sensitive lake.
- b) Identify options for the development of official plan policies that would allow development around Muskrat Lake.

Issue #2: Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI's)

ANSI's are a concern as they place unwanted development restrictions on property owners.

Recommended Action:

- a) Identify policy options to address concerns about ANSI's.

Issue #3: Water Setbacks:

The County Plan requires a 30 metre water setback. This is considered to be too restrictive. A 20 metre water setback should be implemented.

Recommended Action:

- a) Research standards and practices for water setback requirements.
- b) Analyze information in support of the 20 metre water setback option.

Issue #4: Archaeological Assessments:

Archaeology is a matter of Provincial interest under the Provincial Policy Statement. Archaeological Assessments are required for development in areas that have potential for the discovery of archaeological artifacts. The Steering Committee feels this requirement discourages development.

Recommended Action:

- a) Analyze the policy options to address concerns about archaeological requirements.

Issue #5: Flood Plains:

There is a concern about the flood plain elevation levels used to control development on some of the lake sections of the Ottawa River. It is felt that development should be permitted on lake sections where the risk of flooding is minimal and proper engineering is followed.

Recommended Action:

- a) Analyze the policy options to address concerns about allowing development in lake sections of the Ottawa River where flooding is minimal and proper engineering is followed.

Issue #6: Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW's):

There are 9 PSW's in Whitewater Region. The need and basis for classifying these areas as PSW's should be reviewed.

Recommended Action:

- a) Determine the basis of information for classifying the 9 PSW's in Whitewater Region.
- b) Analyze the policy options for identifying and controlling development in PSW's.

Issue #7: Protection of Agricultural Lands

The Provincial Policy Statement is very restrictive on development in areas designated for the protection of high capability soils for Agriculture. The PPS requires all Class 1, 2 and 3 soils for agriculture to be protected. The Steering Committee feels that the PPS is too restrictive and that some flexibility should be allowed for retirement severances and development on poorer agricultural soils in areas designated Agriculture. Some Steering Committee members feel that the Agricultural designation should only apply to Class 1 and 2 soils for Agriculture.

Recommended Action:

- a) Analyze policy options for Agricultural areas and designations.

Issue #8: Fish and Wildlife Habitat/Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species.
The Steering Committee feels that these requirements discourage new development.

Recommended Action:

- a) Analyze the policy options available to address concerns about the requirements for fish and wildlife habitat, and habitat for threatened and endangered species.

Issue #9: Mineral Aggregate Resources

Aggregate resource designations and their associated influence areas restrict the potential for long-term growth and development, particularly in the Jeffrey Lake and Beachburg Areas.

Recommended Action:

- a) Assess the mineral aggregate resources within the municipality. The study would assess the quality and regional significance of the resources within the Municipality.

4.0 Servicing

Issue #1: Private Roads

The Steering Committee feels that development should be allowed along private roads in rural and waterfront areas provided agreements are entered into with the municipality to ensure that the road will remain private and that minimum standards are met for emergency service and fire access.

Recommended Action:

- a) That policy options and standards for allowing new development along private roads be reviewed.

Issue #2: Private Communal Sewer and Water Services:

Residential and resort communities can be developed on the basis of private communal services. The sewer and water servicing for these developments would require approval from the Ministry of the Environment. The MOE would require the owner and the municipality to enter into a "Responsibility Agreement" to ensure the long-term provision and maintenance of these services.

Recommended Action:

- a) That the policy options for allowing residential and resort development on the basis of private communal services be reviewed.

Issue #3: Rural Cluster Residential Development

The concept of allowing small clusters of rural residential development on private roads has been implemented in other areas. This concept minimizes strip development along existing Township roads.

Recommended Action:

- a) Assess the policy options for allowing small clusters of rural residential development on private roads.

Issue #4: Servicing Strategy

Growth and development will have an impact on the provision of future sewer, water, roads, fire, police and waste management services. The scale of these impacts will depend upon the desired “Vision” for future urban, rural, residential, tourist commercial, and resort development.

Recommended Action:

- a) That the impact of future development on the provision of municipal services be reviewed.

5.0 Implementation

Issue #1: New Official Plan vs. Amendment(s) to the County of Renfrew Official Plan

One of the important issues to be addressed by the Steering Committee is to decide if the recommendations of the Stage 1 Work Plan will be implemented through a new Township Official Plan or an Amendment to the County of Renfrew Official Plan. The factors affecting a this decision include matters such as the cost to prepare the Plan, control over planning decisions, long-term administration and staffing for planning services, Plan approvals and amendments and whether or not the Township wish to pursue the delegation of approval authority for consents.

Recommended Action:

- a) That the policy approaches desired by the Steering Committee be evaluated to determine whether they should be implemented through a new Township Official Plan or by an Amendment to the County of Renfrew Official Plan.