

Erin's portion of new wastewater treatment plant cost set at between \$22M to \$32M

Keegan Kozolanka Mar 17, 2021 7:00 AM



Rendering of the wastewater treatment plant planned for Erin.

ERIN – The Town of Erin's proposed wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is getting close to finished with the design phase, but some in the community continue a push against it.

At Tuesday evening's meeting, Erin council was provided with an update on costs and the design associated with the WWTP.

The plant is intended to be built at the corner of Wellington Road 52 and 10th Line. A previous cost estimate in 2017 was \$118 million.

Nick Colucci, director of infrastructure services, said it will cost approximately \$126 million adjusted for inflation.

He said the town's share of this cost will be between 40-50 per cent with developers taking on the rest.

However, Colucci explained the town's share has been further reduced from developer "over-contribution." The town's share has now been estimated to cost somewhere between \$22 to \$32 million.

Funding opportunities to reduce cost for residents to hook-up are still being explored with the province and federal governments.

Ministers have told Colucci this opportunity is "imminent."

"Hopefully imminent means in the next month, not the next year," he added.

Gary Thorne, from WSP group who are designing the WWTP, said in his presentation to council the design is around 60 per cent complete and should be finished by the end of April.

The system is meant to be built in three phases with much of the structures built during the first phase.

"A lot of the plant will be up and running around October of 2022," Thorne said.

Thorne said this design is rather compact based on the layout but there is room for expansion in the future if necessary.

This plant has become a point of contention for many members of the community, even resulting in a [car rally protest](#) against the plant.

Much of this has been driven by [concerns for the coldwater brook trout population](#) near where the effluent will be dumped into the West Credit River.

The Belfountain Community Organization (BCO) has continued to express opposition to the site through a letter sent to WSP group.

The letter was sent on behalf of the group by lawyer David Donnelly, asking the designer to confirm in writing that they reviewed and considered a technical submission by the Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA).

The ORA report concluded the effluent dumped in the West Credit River would have a serious impact on the temperature of the river and therefore the vulnerable coldwater brook trout population.

“The conclusions provided in the ORA report appear to compel WSP to advise Erin that, very likely, a status quo sewage plant will discharge warm effluent now, and much warmer effluent in the future,” the letter reads. “This would very likely damage the ecology of the West Credit River.”

At the meeting, Thorne did not mention this letter but stressed Ontario has some of the most stringent effluent standards in North America especially when it comes to phosphorus limits.

Mayor Allan Ails said the presentation was excellent adding he “hoped some of our detractors of this project were watching or listening.”

Councillor Michael Robins pushed the topic of people with environmental concerns asking: “If you were to have a cup of coffee with some of the — as mayor Ails called them — detractors, what would you say to them to address some of the fears they raised?”

Thorne said a lot of numbers and values are put out by these groups but “every site is different.”

He stressed the effluent dumps at near drinkable quality and they have been looking at what the river has been doing through climate change.

“The river itself actually now, it sort of goes above the temperatures people are talking about,” Thorne said. “Our effects will have little effect, I believe, on what’s going on in the river as it stands at the moment.”

He further said WSP and the Town of Erin will continue to monitor the temperature to see if any adjustments to the plant need to be made in the ongoing phases.