

Community Liaison Group Meeting #6 Summary



Centre Wellington Scoped Tier 3 Water Budget Community Liaison Group Meeting #6

Wednesday, September 2, 2020
6:30pm – 8:30 pm
Zoom Webinar & YouTube Livestream

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Martin Keller, Program Manager, Lake Erie Source Protection Region, welcomed attendees to the sixth and final Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting in the Centre Wellington Tier 3 Water Budget Study, where the draft policies will be presented.

Susan Hall of LURA Consulting also welcomed attendees as the lead facilitator for this meeting. She thanked the CLG members for their involvement in the project over the past four years, and provided an overview of the meeting's purpose. She reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the various groups involved in the Tier 3 study and then led a round of introductions for the project team members and CLG in attendance. A list of the CLG and project team members in attendance is located in Appendix B.

Ms. Hall reviewed the meeting's agenda, found in Appendix A. She requested that attendees remain on mute for the duration of the presentation portion of the meeting, but invited them to ask questions and provide comments in the chat thread at any time before the discussion portion of the meeting.

Presentations

Mr. Keller gave a general presentation to situate the current policy development stage of the Tier 3 study within the context of the overall Tier 3 process. He explained that although the Tier 3 study would be transitioning into part of the Section 34 Grand River Source Protection Plan update process (led by the Lake Erie Source Protection Committee [SPC]), there would continue to be opportunities for the CLG to provide input over the coming months through the SPC's consultation process for the general public.

Mr. Keller reviewed the risk assessment results that were presented earlier at the May 20, 2020 CLG meeting. He noted specifically that the Wellhead Protection Area for Quantity (WHPA-Q) for the Centre Wellington Tier 3 study area was assigned a risk level of "significant." He then summarized the results from the threat analysis that contributed to this significant risk level and concluded with a summary of how these key findings had implications for policy development.

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Kyle Davis, Risk Management Official, Wellington Source Water Protection, presented an overview of how water quantity policy development works in Wellington County (e.g. which activities under the Clean Water Act the policies address, where they apply within the WHPA-Q, who carries out policy development, etc.).

Mr. Davis then showed a map of the four WHPA-Qs within Wellington County (Centre Wellington, Acton, Georgetown, and Guelph-Guelph/Eramosa), noting that currently policy development is only focused on the Centre Wellington and Acton WHPA-Qs. Next, he reviewed the provincial regulatory “toolbox” provided by the *Clean Water Act, 2006* as it relates to policy development, and considerations taken when developing a policy suite to address water quantity. Specifically, the policy suite should be comprehensive yet avoid regulatory duplication, be consistent with neighbouring Source Protection Plans (SPP’s), and, following provincial direction, only use prohibition as a tool of last resort.

Before presenting the draft policies for the Tier 3 study, Mr. Davis listed the three major themes into which the policies can be grouped: management through existing Provincial Prescribed Instruments (i.e. Permits to Take Water, Aggregate Resources Act approvals and / or Environmental Compliance Approvals), Growth and Development/Land Use Planning, and Municipal Water Management. He explained that the policies are designed to work together through an iterative adaptive management framework.

Mr. Davis explored the new Tier 3 draft policies in-depth and encouraged the CLG members to follow along in the [Lake Erie Source Protection Committee Report No SPC-20-06-04: Centre Wellington Tier 3 Draft Water Quantity Policies](#). He covered points relating to the three policy themes listed above, then finished by clarifying why the policies do not contain any prohibitions or risk management plans as described under Sections 57 and 58 of Part IV of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

Facilitated Discussion

Ms. Hall invited CLG members to provide questions or comments.

A summary of the questions of clarification is provided below. Parts of the discussion are marked by letters as indicated in the key below. Please note this is not a verbatim summary or transcript.

Q – Question

C – Comment

A – Answer/Response

Q: If part of the municipality is designated as employment lands already (e.g. a serviced and an unserviced industrial park in Fergus) and there are existing data on the water usage requirements of those lands, is there a need to repeat the water budgeting process?

A: Under the Clean Water Act, there are two prescribed drinking water threat activities that need to be addressed: recharge reduction and consumptive water taking. The Tier 3 study modelling looked at recharge reduction and determined that it minimally contributed to the water quantity risk (or threat) to municipal water systems, even under a scenario where all the employment/industrial lands and new residential development is fully developed according to the Municipality’s Official Plan. With regard to water taking, recall that the Tier 3 study is connected to the Municipality’s Water Supply Master Plan (WSMP), which examines future water need to service growth in the area and therefore that is built into the Tier 3

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assessment. Privately serviced, non-municipal groundwater takings could potentially negatively impact the municipal water supply, depending on the volume and location of the taking. Therefore, the draft Permit to Take Water policies and the draft planning policies that complement the Permit-to-Take-Water policies address this specific risk.

C: I look at the matter from a business perspective. I want to make sure that local economic development is not impeded by these policies and that the construction of new private enterprises that use a lot of water (like a new factory) can be expedited.

A: Source protection staff participate on the development review committee in Centre Wellington. Economic development is an important consideration. We work closely with local economic development staff.

Q: I am happy to see that these policies are “means” policies as opposed to “ends” policies, in that they call for continued monitoring and modelling. I think it is important to ensure that water demand does not drastically exceed municipal supply and to address pressures from economic development. Timing matters: If the policies are accepted by the Source Protection Committee and go to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP) for approval in April 2021 but the County does not release its updated Official Plan with new growth projections until much later in 2021, does that allow sufficient time for a thorough and accurate scenario and trade-off analysis to develop the new growth figures vis-à-vis water supply?

A: Wellington County’s Official Plan review is currently in progress and has a deadline of July 2022. But in light of the provincial election cycle, the provincial government is requesting that the completed Official Plan Amendment be submitted by December 2021, or January 2022 at the latest, so certainly there is a timing issue. The province already approved Wellington County’s growth forecast to 2051 this past August 28, 2020 as Amendment 1 to the *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* from 2019, which was also consolidated on August 28. The province has already allocated growth to all the upper- and single-tier municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area. The growth figures are now considered minimums instead of maximums. We had asked the province for an extension to the review of our Official Plan submission, but they declined. This process is called a Municipal Comprehensive Review, and originally our work plan called for one amendment to the Official Plan to cover many different items, but now the province has allowed us to split them into separate amendments. This could potentially let us adjust the timelines for working on and submitting individual items so that they occur concurrently but not necessarily in tandem.

C: This is unfortunate, because I feel there is a disconnect between the environmental policies and the growth figures.

C: I am surprised that recharge rates are not being considered in the policies. Even in the Tier 3 report, it said that in 2036 the water demand will be within 10% of the projected recharge rate. I think that recharge rates are the crucial factor that we are missing. There should be consideration in the policies to review recharge rates going forward. If we run out of water, that will not work out well for anybody, and the younger generation will have to deal with the consequences of not having enough water after they were promised all kinds of developments.

A: There could be quite a number of developments in Centre Wellington, and according to the modelling, there would be little impact to the quantity of water available in the municipal wells. Areas of recharge reduction according to planned development in the Official Plan had a negligible effect on water levels in the municipal wells according to the Tier 3 groundwater flow model. Obviously, this will need to be reassessed and re-examined going forward as part of the adaptive management approach but the current understanding is that to safeguard the supply, we do not necessarily need to look at the development or “paving” of the landscape as much as in other jurisdictions.

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A: Although that is the result from the technical analysis, we still have policies that address recharge rates and reduction of recharge rates (all policies under Activity #20). That includes the environmental compliance approval policies and the planning policies, 20(a) through 20(g) in particular. Although recharge rates are not a significant driver of the risk, we are still putting policies in place that protect recharge.

C: Despite what policies might be put in place to address recharge, the real question is the balance between recharge and demand. The Tier 3 results may indicate that this balance is okay now, but it is my understanding that in 2036 the numbers show that this picture will change. At some point, demand will exceed recharge rates. I think there should be something in the policies saying that this will be examined.

A: We will certainly look at the comments that you provide and see what we can do. Future municipal demand and water availability is evaluated through the Water Supply Master Plan and technical studies completed by the Township.

C: I keep championing scenario analysis because there is a difference between accommodating absolute growth and density. Densification policies can reduce per-capita water consumption rates. Relative to the absolute water consumption, the recharge effects are small, but maybe by densifying growth more we can reduce potentially negative impacts to the recharge rates.

C: I agree about the growth issue. If we have a water supply risk, we should address it on the demand side, namely growth. In the spirit of the province's new groundwater management framework which will have its own public database, I think the Groundwater Surface Monitoring Program should also publish its data publicly (currently the data is only available to the province, municipalities, and conservation authorities). Part of the work that was done for the WSMP was to determine how much groundwater discharge would be reduced in wetlands. There are two wetland complexes (Salem and Irvine Creek), and analysis showed that their discharge may potentially be reduced by up to 12% or 13%, which is considerable. That is why I think surface water monitoring is important and associated data should be publicly accessible.

Q: The zoning on the Middlebrook property appears on the urban map for Centre Wellington, and there was some discussion about who controls the zoning on the property, and I was told it was Wellington County. But in that zone as an industrial land use, the "dry industrial use wording" would be applied to it. The water-taking prohibition on that land right now is rather distinct. Will it stay that way in the policies if the approach as mentioned is to employ water-taking prohibitions as a last resort?

A: You may be confusing the rural employment land use designation under the County's Official Plan with zoning, which is controlled by the Township of Centre Wellington. The Tier 3 policies do not speak specifically to rural employment land use. We will take this question back to the Township and County Planning Departments for a response.

Response from County and Township Planning Departments:

In municipal planning there are two key documents which address land use in different ways: an Official Plan (policy document) and a Zoning By-law (a regulatory document).

Official Plan

An official plan describes policies and objectives for future land uses, which are organized by different "land use designations". In the rural areas of Centre Wellington, the County of Wellington Official Plan applies and it designates the Middlebrook Road property as a "rural employment area". There is not a specific definition of dry industrial use in the Official Plan but Section 6.8.1 includes this statement:

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In all cases, rural employment areas will be used by “dry” industrial and limited commercial uses which do not use significant amounts of water in their operation and which do not produce significant amounts of effluent, consistent with rural servicing levels which rely on private water and sewage systems.

The above policy does not define a water taking volume threshold for a use to be determined either dry or wet industrial. The Tier 3 policies do not speak specifically to the rural employment area land use and do not apply a Part IV, Section 57 Clean Water Act prohibition to any properties in the WHPA-Q.

Zoning By-law

A zoning by-law regulates the use and development of building and lands, which are organized by different “zones”. To clarify, the authority for the implementation and enforcement of a municipal zoning by-law is the local municipality. The current zoning of the Middlebrook property is M1 (Industrial) within the Township’s Zoning By-law and the industrial uses allowed are those listed as “permitted uses” within the M1 zone.

However, it should be noted that despite municipal planning policies or zoning regulations, potential commercial water taking at this site will be subject to the Provincial PTTW process and could result in significant restrictions or prohibition.

Q: How is some of the impact of the decrease in recharge and leakage going to be measured outside of the urban boundary so the impact on private rural properties with livestock (particularly agricultural wells) can be assessed? We are already seeing impacts at my property, having to drop our submersible pump deeper to get the same flow that we had a few years ago. With increased urban use and recognizing that municipal wells will have to be deeper, how will leakage along casements through aquitards and potentially decreases in the flow of water in private wells be monitored?

A: From a municipal point of view, the main monitoring network is in the urban area because it surrounds the municipal wells, but we also monitor private wells if they are in close proximity to the municipal wells and we install multi-level/multi-aquifer observation wells. The WSMP has identified some new well locations that will have an upcoming Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process to site them. As part of that program, the wells would be naturally outside the urban area (likely the immediate rural area surrounding Fergus and Elora), so there would be monitoring associated with that. That monitoring could potentially include private well monitoring, the installation of observation wells, surface water monitoring, etc. There is also monitoring that the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) conducts as part of their baseline environmental monitoring.

A: There will be collaboration between the different agencies, be it the municipalities, conservation authorities, the province, etc. to determine what kind of monitoring is needed to address these issues and obtain better data. None of these areas have been explored in detail yet to determine what this monitoring will look like, due to current financial circumstances and the pandemic. But the policies do speak to a collaborative effort vis-à-vis monitoring of surface water and groundwater interactions.

C: We will need to look at salt entering the groundwater at the Haylock site, but I realize that tonight’s discussion is more about water quantity than quality. We have done everything that we can do at the Haylock site given the conditions, to promote recharge through a groundwater management system. It is a fairly simple yet new type of management system that will be assumed by the Municipality, whereby the water is collected and discharged at a defined part of the site (which the soil conditions necessitate). This may be a model for other parts of Centre Wellington. The development industry needs and wants to implement this type of system. It would be interesting to know if the policies being developed have anything to do with this management system.

A: The policies do speak to Environmental Compliance Approvals for those systems and request that the

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Ministry consider adding monitoring conditions to the approvals – Policies 20(a) and 20(b). But of course this does not preclude any additional monitoring that could be done.

C: Currently all our municipal wells are inside the urban boundary but in the near future will need to be several kilometres outside the urban area and will potentially affect rural and private wells to a greater degree than they do now.

A: The Tier 3 study concluded that the potential impact of livestock operations on municipal system was based on existing systems and wells. That is certainly an analysis that could be redone in the future when/if the municipal well system is closer to livestock operations.

Q: The Region of Waterloo has dug monitoring wells for many years and prioritized them to monitor their water. We have some monitoring wells but not many. How do we prioritize monitoring wells here? I would like to see some monitoring wells outside the urban area because there are risks associated with private rural wells being used for monitoring.

A: It is indeed multifaceted; the Municipality definitely has a role to play. New monitoring wells would be needed as new municipal wells come online. This is something that can be examined as part of the EA process for the new municipal wells. The province also maintains a provincial groundwater monitoring network, although there are none in this area. Monitoring can be addressed by multiple levels of government. Legally, it does rest on the lower-tier municipalities - the Township of Centre Wellington - to conduct monitoring on the municipal water supply. There is definitely a risk/reward balance to consider with regard to using private wells for monitoring. Monitoring takes a creative and collaborative approach. It is expensive but worth it since data is important for decision making. There are monitoring collaborations taking place with the University of Guelph and the Ontario Geological Survey.

Next Steps and Adjournment

Mr. Keller reviewed the next steps:

- Section 34 Grand River Source Protection Plan (SPP) revised policies update for Source Protection Committee (SPC) – October 2020
- Pre-consultation with municipalities (including request for council resolutions) and ministries on the SPP revised policies update (CLG members comments will also be addressed as part of pre-consultation)
- Revised policies and comments discussed at SPC meeting – January 2021
- Formal public consultation period for SPP revised policies update (CLG members can comment as well)
- SPC meeting – early Spring 2020
- Submit updated SPP to the province – May 2020

Mr. Keller asked CLG members to provide their comments on tonight's meeting by September 16, 2020 and comments on the meeting summary by September 23, 2020. He concluded by thanking the CLG members for all their participation and input in the Tier 3 process over the past four years.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30pm.

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Appendix A – Agenda

Centre Wellington Tier 3 Water Budget Study

Community Liaison Group Meeting #6

Wednesday, September 2, 2020

6:30pm – 8:30 pm

Zoom Webinar & YouTube Livestream

Meeting Purpose:

- Provide a refresh of the study process, scope and key participants
- Provide an overview of the draft policy and process
- Receive feedback and discuss the draft policy
- Address any questions about the process overall.

AGENDA

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| 6:15 p.m. | CLG Members Log In, Set Up, Informal Chat |
| 6:30 p.m. | Welcome, Agenda Review and Introductions
Martin Keller, Project Team Lead, GRCA
Susan Hall, Facilitator, LURA Consulting |
| 6:45 p.m. | Overview of the Draft Policies and Process
Martin Keller, Project Team Lead, GRCA
Kyle Davis, RMO, Wellington Source Water Protection |
| 7:30 p.m. | Discussion
What questions and/or feedback do you have on the draft water quantity policies? |
| 8:15 p.m. | Next Steps and Closing Remarks
Martin Keller, Project Team Lead, GRCA |
| 8:30 p.m. | Adjourn |

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Appendix B – List of Attendees

A. Community Liaison Group Members

Member	Organization
Jan Beveridge	Save Our Water
Dave Blacklock	Wellington Water Watchers
Jeremy Grant	Haylock Farm Ltd. (Granite Homes)
Janet Harrop	Wellington Federation of Agriculture
Christopher Neville	S.S. Papadopoulos & Associates, Inc., on behalf of Nestle Waters Canada
Tom Nudds	N/A (Public Interest)
Don Vallery	Highland Pines Campground
Jim Wilton	Save Our Water

B. Project Team Members

Core Team	Support Team	Organization
Martin Keller Sonja Strynatka		Grand River Conservation Authority
Kyle Davis		Wellington Source Water Protection
Sarah Wilhelm		County of Wellington
Susan Hall	Amitai Zand	LURA Consulting
Kathryn Baker		Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks

In addition to the participants listed above, a total of 5 public observers viewing the YouTube livestream simultaneously was reached, although the total number of public observers tuning in to the livestream and clicking off over the course of the meeting may have been higher.