



# The County

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY ♦ ONTARIO

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**The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward  
280 Main Street, Picton, ON, K0K 2T0  
[www.thecounty.ca](http://www.thecounty.ca)**

**Garrett Osborne, C.E.T.**

Project Manager

The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward

332 Picton Main Street,

Picton, Ontario, K0K 2T0

Phone: 613-476-2148 Ext. 2002

Email: [gosborne@pecounty.ca](mailto:gosborne@pecounty.ca)

## **Public Consultation Centre - Comments and Questions**

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**A Public Consultation Centre (PCC) was held on August 17, 2023, to present and engage on the problem/opportunity statement and preliminary assessment for the Regional Water Supply Servicing Master Plan. The format of the PCC was a drop-in centre with display panels. Project team members including Prince Edward County staff and members of the consultant team, CIMA+, were available to speak one-on-one with the public. 140 people signed the attendance sheet, and 38 people returned comment sheets. A variety of questions and comments were received**

**both during and after the PCC. Alike questions and comments have been grouped together and addressed below.**

1. What are the impacts on green space specifically in Wellington?

The short-listed options or alternatives for the communities of Ameliasburgh, Consecon/Carrying Place, Rossmore, Peats Point and Bloomfield are not expected to have impacts on green space. The short-listed alternatives for Wellington and Picton propose new water treatment plants (WTP) for each community or a regional WTP located in Wellington.

Replacing the existing Wellington WTP with a new WTP and locating it adjacent to the existing facility was identified as the preferred alternative during the 2021 Wellington Master Servicing Plan (MSP). The size of the facility will depend on if it is for Wellington only or a regional facility as well as phasing options. Efforts will be made during the detailed design phase to minimize the site footprint and conserve greenspace for either the Wellington alone or regional WTP scenario. It is most appropriate to examine different possible site layouts during the detailed design phase as the current Master Plan and Schedule C Class Environmental Assessments (Class EA) do not go into that level of detail. The main objective of these studies is to ensure it is in fact possible to fit the proposed facility on the property.

The site layouts presented in the Schedule C Wellington Class EA for the regional WTP retained approximately 15 m or 50 feet of green space to the east of the proposed facility as well as the green space to the north of the facility. This site plan and footprint is sized for buildout population projections to ensure the facility fits on the site to support long-term growth on the chosen site as well as estimating purposes; however, implementation will be reviewed during the preliminary design phase. Typically, site plans and building renderings are available at the 30% detailed design stage. It is possible that during the early stages of the detailed design, different options could be explored such as a two-storey building that would reduce the plant footprint and maximize the available green space. These options would have to be investigated further during the detailed design phase.

The short-listed options or alternatives for Picton are currently undergoing evaluation and a new site will need to be selected for some of the proposed alternatives being considered. Impacts to green space will be a criterion that is considered during the selection process of a new site.

2. How were the population projections derived and what risk mitigation is there if growth does not occur?

The population projections for the Regional Water Supply Servicing Master Plan are focused on full buildout of the urban boundaries for those communities included in the study. Buildout refers to the full development of lands contained within an urban boundary. Buildout population projections are based on unit counts from active development proposals. Any lands that currently do not have an active planning application were accounted for by using medium and high-density unit counts as set out in the Wellington Urban Centre Secondary Plan.

Population forecasts that have recently been prepared by consultants such as Watson & Associates typically look at a maximum of a 20 to 30-year period. However, it is important when completing a long-range study such as this master plan that infrastructure improvements and projects be designed to have a service life of much more than 30 years or have the ability to be expanded/modified to satisfy buildout populations. For example, the expected lifespan of a newly installed PVC watermain pipe is 80-100 years. The 20 to 30-year population projections are used when examining how to phase proposed projects over their lifespan to ensure built infrastructure matches the rate of growth.

The communities of Ameliasburgh, Consecon/Carrying Place, Rossmore, Peats Point and Bloomfield are not projected to have significant growth at this time. Master plans are revisited typically every 5 to 10 years where updates can be made to the population projections and infrastructure recommendations of these communities if needed.

The urban centres of Wellington and Picton are experiencing a high demand for growth based on planning applications. The purpose of reviewing infrastructure at buildout is to ensure decisions made now can be serviced and are viable long-term where infrastructure life-span is expected to exceed 20-30 years (i.e. water intakes, transmission mains, etc.) or facilities where future expansions may be required.

The infrastructure improvements identified in the Regional Master Plan will be identified based on life-cycle requirements with timelines or growth requirements. Growth-related infrastructure will undergo additional sensitivity analysis for various scenarios and timelines will be developed for the key identified projects. The sensitivity analysis is intended to test the robustness of the recommendation for the technical, social and environmental considerations as well as financial.

The County also uses the tools available through development charges and upfront financing agreements to mitigate financial risk associated with the rate of development. Financial securities are collected as part of upfront financing agreements to make sure that where the municipality makes investments in infrastructure to support growth, that it

will not lay unused for years because a developer doesn't move forward. The securities can be used by the municipality to fund the growth portion of the infrastructure debt.

3. What is the source of funding for County-wide expansion? Who is paying for this and will our water rates increase?

The County, like other municipalities across Ontario, follows the principle that growth should pay for growth. Collecting development charges is the primary revenue tool for funding growth-related capital costs in Wellington. The Area Specific Development Charges Study for Wellington identified 82% of the new WTP cost to be funded by growth. If the regional facility is preferred, financial analysis of the projected cost of the facility, intake and transmission main, and share split per community will need to be performed. The results of this analysis will be used to establish development charges or connection charges calculations for the Picton/Bloomfield area.

The *Development Charges Act* allows for upfront financing agreements between municipalities and developers. Upfront financing is when the developer pre-pays the development charges at the draft subdivision approval stage, rather than when building permits are issued. These pre-payments will cover the County's debt costs for major infrastructure improvements in Wellington (including new water tower, water plant, wastewater plant and associated trunk mains) for at least the next 10 years. This arrangement protects the municipal rate payers by providing funding to pay for construction of new infrastructure upfront rather using tax dollars and waiting to recover those costs after homes are built and connected to the system. As mentioned previously, financial securities are also part of the upfront financing agreement to make sure that where the municipality makes investments in infrastructure to support growth, that it will not lay dormant for years because a developer chooses not to move forward.

The water rates are set every five years; most recently for the period of 2022-2026. The County is establishing a Water and Wastewater Rates Community Working Group. The Working Group will be made up of water and wastewater rate payers along with members from Council and will help inform the water and wastewater rates for 2027 - 2031. The Working Group and the County are working to stabilize rates for the next five-year rate study. As referenced in the financial aspects of the projects, the Regional Master Plan will identify projects and cost estimates to establish the cost-recovery policies for development.

#### 4. How will a Regional WTP benefit surrounding communities?

The Regional Master Plan is evaluating the option of a regional water treatment plant located in Wellington, which could provide treated water to other communities in the County. Wellington has been identified as a potential location for a regional facility due to the good water quality and supply security offered by Lake Ontario. In addition, the County currently operates six independent drinking water systems but consolidating some of these servicing areas into a single regional system would save on operating and maintenance costs. Finding efficiencies in the current operation of the existing water systems in order to help stabilize water rates over the long term is a key objective of the Regional Master Plan.

The Regional Master Plan also considered a regional water treatment plant located to the north in the County. This proposed new treatment plant would provide a centralized water supply to Carrying Place, Consecon, Ameliasburgh, Rossmore and Peats Point using the Bay of Quinte as the source water. Also, the option of constructing a single large trunk watermain from a regional water plant in Wellington to the north of the County and then branching smaller trunk watermains to each of the northern settlement areas was also considered. However, these two options were not carried for further consideration as the cost estimate (\$50-70M) rendered both options financially prohibitive considering the small customer base. This decision can be re-evaluated when the Regional Master Plan is updated in the future.

The Picton WTP needs significant upgrades, and likely replacement, due to the age, condition, and capacity limitations. The 2021 Wellington MSP identified that the Wellington WTP need to be replaced as well. A regional WTP located in Wellington would receive a higher quality of raw water from Lake Ontario that requires less treatment as compared to raw water from Picton Bay which requires a higher level of treatment. A key consideration of this alternative is the evaluation of both the capital and operating costs to identify the most economical solution over the long term. The comparison will be between two new water treatment plants with intakes, one located in Wellington and one located in Picton compared to a single new plant in Wellington with intake and a transmission watermain to Picton. Considerations will be given to capital and ongoing Operation & Maintenance requirements such as labour cost, energy, chemicals and replacement equipment.

A single water rate is set for all County water customers. Revenue generated by water rates is then used to operate, maintain and replace water and wastewater infrastructure across the County. Therefore, any efficiencies or cost saving measures achieved in any of the six different water systems will help to stabilize rates for all County water customers.

5. Will the area of Wellington-on-the-Lake benefit from new water infrastructure?

The newly constructed water tower in Wellington once connected to the existing water distribution system will provide a water pressure increase throughout all of Wellington including Wellington-on-the-Lake. The proposed Wellington trunk watermain project that is currently in the tendering phase will provide improved water flow rates throughout Wellington including Wellington-on-the-Lake.

6. Overall transparency and comments regarding the PCC format.

The format of the PCC was with project boards and project team members present to answer questions and guide attendees through the information boards. This approach allows a more accessible window of time for people to stop in and engage throughout the event rather than a fixed starting time. Additionally, the material is also posted online so that people who could and could not attend in person can view the information and provide comments or ask questions of the project team. This approach is an accepted format and preferred across many municipalities in Ontario.

7. What if more development occurs than has been accounted for?

The population projections considered for this Regional Master Plan were based on forecasts prepared by Watson and Associates, active planning applications, and urban area density calculations. The Watson and Associates projections included low, medium and high growth scenarios, all of which will be taken into consideration by the County when sizing and phasing infrastructure. Should the rate of growth or development change, Master Plans are typically reviewed every 5 to 10 years to capture both increases and decreases with respect to development and population.

8. How are study updates and notices for public meetings communicated for these ongoing Class EA studies?

The Regional Master Plan Public Consultation Centre notices are distributed to the public in the local newspapers (2 consecutive issues prior to a meeting), posted to social media sites, posted to the County website and emailed to residents that requested to be on the project contact list. The County also sends a public service announcement to local news agencies.

There are currently four (4) ongoing and closely related water and wastewater Municipal Class EA studies. These four Class EAs include the following:

- Wellington Wastewater Treatment Plant Schedule C Class EA
- Wellington Water Treatment Plant Schedule C Class EA
- Regional Water Supply Servicing Master Plan
- Picton Master Servicing Plan.

If you would like to be included on the project contact list to receive updates related to these studies, please send an email request to the following:

Garrett Osborne, Project Manager, Prince Edward County – [gosborne@pecounty.on.ca](mailto:gosborne@pecounty.on.ca)

Bradley Young, CIMA+ – [Bradley.young@cima.ca](mailto:Bradley.young@cima.ca)