



Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting
From: Robert Brown, Planner
Date: 2025-05-01
Subject: Wastewater Treatment Capacity & Growth

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from Robert Brown, Planner on the current wastewater treatment capacity and growth in West Elgin, and

That West Elgin Council directs administration to initiate the process to engage a consultant to undertake the necessary modelling to determine future wastewater treatment needs and develop solution options to expand treatment capacity, including shared services with neighbouring municipalities.

Purpose:

To provide Council with information on the current capacity of both the West Lorne and Rodney wastewater treatment plants and how it relates to future growth and outline steps that will be needed moving forward to accommodate future growth

Background:

In the last several years West Elgin has seen a growing interest in residential development in both Rodney and West Lorne. More recently some of this interest has started to materialize into actual development such as the townhouses on Ridge St. and Jane St. and several new single detached dwelling on MacLeod Court all in West Lorne. In recent weeks we have witnessed the start of works at 12450 Furnival that will see the development of 32 townhouses and 4 semi-detached units in Rodney. In total there are 80 new units either complete or in the process of being constructed.

This is however only part of the overall development picture in West Elgin. There are a number of other projects that are in various stages of consideration ranging from approved but have not yet started to high level initial discussions. Approved projects include the KLM subdivision (R) (28 single home lots & eight townhouse units) Creeks Edge (WL) (66 single home lots), Munroe St (WL) (5 townhouse units) and Elm St. (WL) 116 single home lots, 10 semi-detached and possible low rise apartment blocks (60+/-units).

The final piece of the overall picture is the remaining residential lands within West Elgin that could be developed. These fall into two categories, 1) development that is in the pre-consultation phase,

and 2) lands that could be developed but no discussion or pre-consultation has started. These lands could potentially accommodate up to 1,994 dwelling units of various types.

Implications:

Growth and development are something that all communities seek out and encourage. However, with growth comes certain needs to support what is being built and what will come in the future. This leads to the point of this report to Council. What are the implications of the current and future growth in West Elgin? At present the two settlement areas in West Elgin are serviced by two wastewater treatment plants, one in Rodney and one in West Lorne. Each of the plants are designed with a maximum treatment capacity which includes a margin of safety for unexpected volumes. Basically, treatment plants are not supposed to operate at 100 % capacity.

The Rodney plant, which is actively undergoing refurbishment but not to increase capacity, has the ability to take on waste from an additional 207 dwellings. However, once you remove committed capacity for approved development that capacity is reduced to 135.

The West Lorne plant has somewhat more capacity at 289 dwellings, however there is more active or pending development that if fully built out would reduce that number to approximately 18.

On the surface these numbers would appear to highlight that we are moving close to a position where we may not be able to continue to support development. At our current growth rate West Elgin does have capacity to accommodate short to medium term growth. Where the issue of concern raises is with future development and how to approve it. At present staff are actively cautioning any new developers that we are not able to guarantee wastewater capacity particularly since we know that much of it is unofficially committed.

The issue of committed capacity raises an issue that does require more immediate attention. At present wastewater treatment capacity is only allocated to a development once the developer enters into a site plan agreement or subdivision development agreement in which the municipality outlines its commitment to provide capacity for that given development. Because development has not occurred at a rapid pace this method of allocation has worked fine to-date. This is however going to need to change by implementing an allocation by-law. This approach would commit capacity to a given development, but it would have a timeline. The reason for this is that it prevents speculation development which can negatively impact on growth as it ties up usable capacity for other developers that are eager to move forward in the short-term. This would also make planning for and approving future development easier as staff would have a clear picture of allocated capacity rather speculate on when a given development is going move forward. An allocation by-law would also allow the Municipality to appropriation capacity. Rather than allocate 100% of the needed capacity to one single development, capacity can be divided among several developers particularly if they are each providing different forms of housing.

As a final note it is important to highlight that the current capacity in the wastewater treatment plants is solely anticipating residential development and perhaps some small commercial users but no significant industrial users. To actively support industrial growth additional treatment capacity needs would have to be considered in a future solution.

Next Steps:

Knowing where the municipality is currently at leads to the question of what must happen to accommodate growth moving forward? West Elgin is not alone in terms of servicing capacity issues. As Council likely knows Dutton Dunwich currently has a moratorium in place on new development as they do not have any remaining capacity in their wastewater treatment plant. The reason for noting this fact is that the upper levels of government who will need to provide financial support to address servicing needs in many other communities are encouraging those communities to look at creative solutions including shared or regional facilities. The purpose of this is to hopefully put limited financial resources to the best use by sharing services and servicing larger populations. The more creative the solution and the more impact it has can have a beneficial result when making application for infrastructure funding.

What do we need to do? Quite simply, determine what is needed and what is the best solution for West Elgin by:

1) Implementing an Allocation By-law

Comment: This is an initial step that is necessary to best track and allocate the current limited capacity in a fair and equitable manner.

2) determining the best solution by undertaking modelling to investigate different options and potential costing.

Comment: This will investigate a number of different approaches that could be considered and provide both costs and which solution will work best in the long term to accommodate growth and potentially best position the municipal either individually or jointly to secure the necessary financial resources through the available infrastructure funding grants.

Financial Implications:

The Municipality will initiate the process to undertake modelling of different solutions and then report back to staff and Council. It is anticipated that this may be a joint effort with Dutton-Dunwich.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

| Infrastructure Improvement | Recreation | Economic Development | Community Engagement |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To improve West Elgin's infrastructure to support long-term growth. | <input type="checkbox"/> To provide recreation and leisure activities to attract and retain residents. | <input type="checkbox"/> To ensure a strong economy that supports growth and maintains a lower cost of living. | <input type="checkbox"/> To enhance communication with residents. |

Respectfully submitted by,



Robert Brown, H. Ba, MCIP, RPP
Planner
Municipality of West Elgin

Report Approval Details

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Document Title: | Waste Water Treatment Treatment Capacity and Growth - 2025-12-Operations (Infrastructure Development).docx |
| Attachments: | |
| Final Approval Date: | May 2, 2025 |

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Robin Greenall