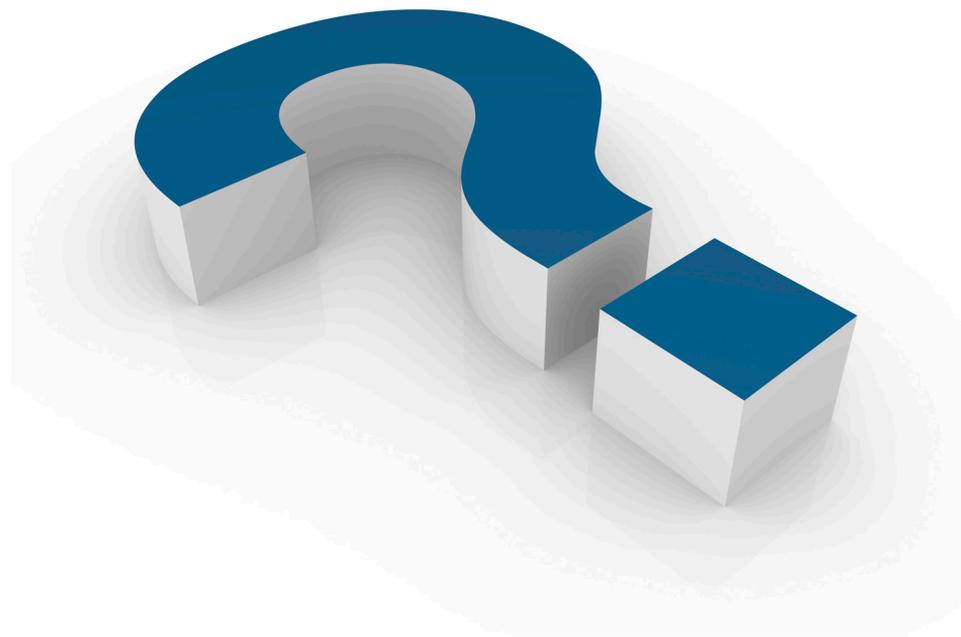


Midhurst 20/20

Frequently Asked Questions
Midhurst Secondary Plan



May 2013



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Over the past few months residents have provided feedback to the Township. From the feedback received, three major themes emerged: Finance, Environment and Agriculture.

Finance

Q: Will the existing residents of Springwater have to pay for the new development?

A: No. All of the costs related to the new development will be financed by the developers. All new streets, sewers, storm sewers, park land and equipment in the new subdivisions including storm water management, waste water treatment and the water distribution system will be paid for by the developers. If residents on wells and septic systems elect to connect to the new water and sewer systems then there will be a connection charge.

The Township of Springwater has a letter of undertaking that commits the developers to the costs of development. After the environmental assessment process and related engineering work is complete, a new agreement will be created that ensures the developers pay all development related costs. If the developers do not agree to pay for all expenses, Council will not allow the developers to move forward.

Q: We have heard that several areas in Barrie were required to hook into the sanitary sewer system creating additional cost to the ratepayer. Will we be forced to hook up to the new sewer system?

A: No. The Township of Springwater is not requiring the residents of Midhurst to hook up to the new water or sanitary system. The option will be available if the new water and sewer mains pass by a property currently serviced by well or septic.

Q: If the developer is not able to finish a project will the Township take on additional debt load leaving residents with additional expenses?

A: No. The Township always holds financial securities to ensure that the subdivision will be completed. There will be no additional cost to the residents.

Q: Will existing residents have to pay development charges in the Midhurst Secondary Plan?

A: No. Existing homeowners do not pay development charges. Development charges are applied to new construction.

Q: Will existing residents have to pay for the new waste water treatment plant?

A: No. The developer and all future developers have to pay for the new treatment plant.

Q: Who will be paying for the fire station in Midhurst?

A: There have been plans since 2002 to build a new fire station to serve the existing community. Funds have already been saved to pay for the Midhurst fire station. It is anticipated that 72% of the costs of the new fire station will come from development charges and the remainder will come from the Township's fire reserve.

Q: Who will pay for transit services in Midhurst?

A: There are no plans to bring transit services to Midhurst or Springwater. However, the Secondary Plan outlines specific considerations if there is a demonstrated need for transit services.

Q: Is it true that the Midhurst Secondary Plan will not create any new jobs?

A: No. The Midhurst Secondary Plan will create more opportunity for the creation of new jobs. In addition to construction jobs associated with building the new infrastructure and homes, additional commercial and industrial lands can be serviced with municipal water and sewer which is a typical requirement for larger commercial and manufacturing operations. In general terms, Springwater needs serviced land and a highly trained, educated workforce in order to attract business. The Midhurst Secondary Plan will help create jobs in Springwater.

What is a Development Charge?

When new development comes to a community, a developer is required to pay the direct costs of their development. New development also impacts facilities and services outside of their development and “development charges” are designed to pay for the impact that new growth has on existing services. For example, if new growth increases the use of the library by 20%, the increased capital costs to service the new development will be paid by development charges. As another example, if the Township has planned to reconstruct an existing road and the reconstruction is in-part to accommodate new development then the proportion of the cost associated with new development will be paid by development charges.

Q: Will the Plan result in a double-digit tax increase?

A: No, the MSP will not result in a double-digit tax increase. Tax increases typically arise in order to keep up with the rising cost of providing service, to pay for additional services requested by residents or to increase funding for municipal projects.

Q: Is the MSP financially viable?

A: All three levels of government are satisfied that the MSP will provide a net economic benefit.

Environment

Q: Is the new waste water treatment plant going to damage the water system?

A: No. The waste water quality will be of a higher standard than the receiving water body. The Township will also be consulting with the conservation authority about opportunities to enhance the quality of the natural water entering the Minesing wetland.

Q: Will the development of Midhurst create a situation where the water system was compromised as in Walkerton. Will our water continue to be safe?

A: The Walkerton tragedy brought needed attention to municipal standards for water source protection and distribution. Standards were developed to ensure that this would not happen again. The Ministry of the Environment will be approving the water and waste water systems designed for Midhurst. This will also include controls noted in the Township's Source Water Protection Plan to further protect the water being provided to the Township's residents.

Q: What will happen if there is an overflow of capacity at the Sewage Treatment Plant?

A: Sewage treatment plant overflows or bypasses can occasionally occur as result of clear water getting into sanitary sewer lines as a result of illegal connection of sump pumps and roof leaders to the sanitary system or from the infiltration of groundwater into the sanitary mains (often as a result of storms impacting aging infrastructure). New construction techniques dramatically reduce the infiltration of clear water flows and it is not anticipated that this will be a problem at the new plant. Phases three and four of the environmental assessment will look at ways to minimize overflow to ensure that the sewage treatment plants operate at their optimum level.

Q: Will drawing water from new municipal wells impact groundwater?

A: Studies completed to date on the new proposed municipal wells indicate that there will not be a negative impact to the ground water users in the vicinity of the new wells. This is a matter which the Ministry of the Environment closely scrutinizes at the time of issuing environmental compliance approval certificates for new water wells.

Q: Is the ecosystem protected?

A: Yes. Development cannot move forward without the approval of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and the Ministry of the Environment. These two authorities were involved in the creation of the Midhurst Secondary Plan.

Agriculture

Q: Will the Midhurst Secondary Plan take too much good agricultural land out of production?

A: Provincial Policy supports the concept of restricting growth to settlement areas. By restricting growth to settlement areas the remaining agricultural area in Springwater will be protected. The Midhurst Secondary Plan anticipates the displacement of 1.6% of Springwater's Class 1 to 4 lands.

Q: Will the new development have an impact on existing agricultural operations as farmers will have to travel on Township roads to reach production areas?

A: Lands within the settlement area located in immediate proximity to intensive livestock operations were designated as Future Development Potential (set aside for future consideration). The nature of farming has changed over the years where each farmer is often in control of numerous farms and already travels from road to road to reach owned and rented farms.

Q: How does the MSP protect farmland?

A: New development will now be on both sewer and water services. For efficient use of services, higher densities are required. Higher densities will also reduce the need for unnecessary consumption of farmland.

General

Q. With the growth expected in Midhurst, will the voters in the rest of Springwater not have as much say or decision making power?

A: The Township of Springwater regularly adjusts ward boundaries to account for changes in population. Springwater adjusted its ward boundaries in 2013. Changes will be made in the future to ensure that wards contain an urban and rural mix as well as ensuring all ward populations are similar.

Q. Why did the County express concern in 2008 about the Midhurst Secondary Plan Boundary and do they have this concern now?

A. The County of Simcoe approved the MSP with modifications. The County determined that the MSP with modifications achieved good planning and conformed to provincial policy. The modifications required phasing of development in the Midhurst area. The phasing alleviated the County concerns.

Where are we going from here?

Now that the Midhurst Secondary Plan has been approved and 300 hectares have been released for development consideration, the following steps will be taken:

1. A liaison group will be created to communicate information more effectively to residents and receive feedback on matters that relate to the implementation of the Midhurst Secondary Plan.
2. In order to ensure development continues in conformity with the Official Plan of the Township of Springwater, a blanket “Hold” designation will be established across lands designated for development along with site plan control over the Industrial and Commercial lands. This will be done through a Zoning By-law (public process required).
3. The completion of the Environmental Assessment Process (Phase 3 & 4) will be undertaken for water, sewer, and transportation systems.
4. A Neighbourhood Design Plan is needed to provide connectivity between park blocks, trails, stormwater management and street connections between proposed plans of subdivision.
5. Funding agreements will be established between the developer and Township to ensure all up-front capital costs are paid for by the developer and not the current residents or taxpayers of Springwater.
6. Applications from developers are required for Zoning By-law Amendments and Plans of Sub-division. These will be processed in accordance with the Ontario Planning Act (public process required).
7. Use of an enhanced communication strategy to inform residents (web site portal, newspaper notifications, email distribution, open houses, direct mail when appropriate).

