



**For Immediate Release**

**RE: Whitewater Region Water and Wastewater Task Force**

**Whitewater Region, Ontario - October 17, 2024**

The Council of the Township of Whitewater Region has received the final report from the Water & Wastewater Task Force, which was formed to address concerns about increasing water and wastewater rates. The Task Force was tasked with offering recommendations and guidance on managing the operational and long-term costs of these systems, including a review of existing programs, policies, and potential solutions. The final report can be viewed on the Township's website at <https://www.whitewaterregion.ca/services/water-wastewater-services/>.

The Task Force was comprised of five community members, two Councillors, and key Township staff and convened seven times, focusing on operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and system improvements. Following its comprehensive review, the Task Force developed 45 recommendations, including public education initiatives, improved communication during water-related incidents, exploring alternative funding options, and carrying out an independent review of the Cobden Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade.

Key immediate actions from the Water & Wastewater Task Force are already being considered, with several recommendations included in the 2025 budget. These include, among others, continuing to explore funding opportunities beyond user-pay models, such as the redistribution of the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF), enhancing public education on proper storm and wastewater, revising bylaws to implement controls and establish fines, investigating commercial effluent impacts, engaging the public in major projects and reevaluating rate classes.

The Township is working with its legal team, which has retained a third-party expert, to inform the Township's on-going decisions regarding the Cobden wastewater treatment plant technical aspects including design, construction, operations, and performance. This includes all the parties. The Township is engaged in this ongoing process in accordance with the construction contract. This process is confidential to not prejudice any potential legal positions of the Township and, to protect the rights of all parties.

The final report serves as a roadmap for sustainable water and wastewater management, focusing on long-term financial resilience and community engagement. Council has directed staff to consider these recommendations in the departmental work plan moving forward to ensure these vital systems remain reliable, affordable, and capable of supporting future growth.

-30-

Additional information:

Ivan Burton, Dipl. M.M., RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer  
613-646-2282, Ext. 124  
iburton@whitewaterregion.ca

Neil Nicholson  
Mayor  
613-646-2282, Ext. 173  
nnicholson@whitewaterregion.ca

Lane Cleroux  
Manager of Public Works  
613-646-2282, Ext. 128  
lcleroux@whitewaterregion.ca

Chris Olmstead  
Councillor (Finance Lead)  
Chair, Water and Wastewater Task Force  
colmstead@whitewaterregion.ca