



WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP STAFF RECOMMENDS OFFICIAL PLAN AND RE-ZONING APPROVAL

A staff report prepared for Woolwich Township Council is recommending approval of an Official Plan amendment and re-zoning application for the proposed Shantz Station Pit. The report also recommends that the Township notify the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) that it is withdrawing its objection to the pit proposal under the Aggregate Resources Act.

In its conclusion, the 85-page report states “Township staff have determined through the review of the application and the technical information provided along with the

various peer reviews that were completed that the proposed operation minimizes the impacts in a manner that no unacceptable impacts will occur...” The report goes on to say that the pit application conforms to the Provincial Policy Statement, A Place to Grow plan, the Regional Official Plan and the Township Official Plan, subject to the recommendations in the report and the proposed site plan documents being approved by the MNRF.

Highlights of the staff report include:

HYDROGEOLOGY:

- “As the operation is an above water extraction there should be no reason that wells would be impacted by the operations as there will be no drawdown of the water table.”
- “The assumption from the rate payers [Hopewell Creek Ratepayers Association] peer review is that there will be impacts, but this was made in the absence of reviewing all of the comments related to the Regional peer review...Staff are not satisfied that the concerns from the ratepayers can be substantiated.”

TRANSPORTATION (TRUCK TRAFFIC) IMPACT:

- “The proposed operation, at maximum capacity (500,000 tonnes per year) would generate about 9 truck trips...in each direction per hour at peak times, for about 60 trucks entering and leaving the operation each day.”
- “The estimated increase of truck traffic from the aggregate operation are considered to be acceptable and will not create an adverse impact...”
- “There will be more trucks than is currently using the [Shantz Station] road, but noise will be similar to existing sounds from trucks or car traffic that is already taking place.”
- “The [truck traffic] numbers suggested by some of the community would not add up to the size and operation of the site.”

AGRICULTURAL IMPACT:

- “The ultimate goal is to have the site rehabilitated (as much as possible) back to an agriculture state and to have the soils achieving its average existing agricultural capabilities.”
- “There should be no unacceptable impact to the adjacent farms...”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

- Regarding the portion of the internal haul route through a woodlot and wetland area, “Staff note that the MNRF, Region of Waterloo, Region EEAC [Ecological and Environmental Advisory Committee], Regional peer reviewer and GRCA [Grand River Conservation Authority] have...no concerns. Township staff are satisfied that the study and recommendations completed adequately addresses the Provincial, Regional and Township policy frameworks and are acceptable.”

VISUAL IMPACT:

- “As the land use is temporary, in that there is a life to the operation, the impacts will also be temporary on a phase-by-phase basis and only for the life of the operation.”

- “The [Township] peer reviewer also noted that the proposed berms will not be out of character with the surrounding area and are acceptable measures in addressing the potential visual impacts.”
- “Staff and the peer reviewer are satisfied that visual impacts have been addressed...”

CULTURAL HERITAGE:

- “The [Township] peer reviewer is satisfied that the [Capital Paving’s cultural heritage] study and subsequent responses to the peer review are adequate and...heritage items have been adequately addressed...”

NOISE:

- “The berms and tree planting, which will be installed to mitigate the visual impacts, will also serve to address noise.”
- “...noise levels to nearby homes will be within acceptable limits.”
- “The increase, given the background traffic, is considered nominal even in the area of the [Ontario Aerobics Centre] clinic.”

DUST/AIR QUALITY:

- “As part of the Operational Plan, the applicant has addressed the Township Official Plan requirements and addressed any concerns to the satisfaction of the Township in regard to dust and air quality.”

REHABILITATION:

- “The pit will be rehabilitated back to agricultural use...The phasing will reduce the amount of land being disturbed at any one time and out of agricultural production.”

CUMULATIVE IMPACT:

- “Based on the information in the applicant’s reports and the information from the operations on the Wellington County side there is no overlapping water/hydrogeological areas (both sites are above water table extraction) or noise to suggest that a cumulative impact exists.”

The report also reviews and summarizes various concerns expressed by the community and finds there will be no unacceptable impacts as a result of the proposed pit, and that the application complies with provincial, regional and local planning policies.

As for the appropriateness of a gravel pit at this location, it states “Gravel is required for various road works, construction of homes, etc., that are needed to support construction needs of the community. There is also only so much material available. The more we can use gravel in close proximity to the areas of need is beneficial to the environment, reduces the need for more trucks or longer haulage routes along our roadways. Pushing the extraction elsewhere just moves the issue to another backyard and would increase the costs to truck the material from a greater distance.”

The report and staff recommendation to approve an Official Plan amendment and re-zoning application for the proposed Shantz Station Pit will be considered by Council at its Committee of the Whole meeting on June 22, 2021. Any decisions or matters regarding the report will then be ratified by Council at its meeting on June 29.

The full report is available on the Proposed Shantz Station Pit website, under the “Planning Reports” section, as well as on the Woolwich Township website.