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TIMELINE: Erin Wastewater Treatment Plant

The plant has been a concept for more than a decade

By [Tabitha Wells](#) Orangeville Banner

Saturday, June 26, 2021

Discussions surrounding the development of a wastewater treatment plant in Erin have been ongoing for more than a decade. But as the project is closer to being realized, more details have become available. Many of these details have caused

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The town and developers such as Solmar have indicated that a plant is necessary to allow for growth, and that growth has been mandated provincially.

Here is a timeline of events so far:

May 9, 2017

Council discusses Hillsburgh sewer plant

Councillors were split during a town meeting about whether they should move toward one or two wastewater plants – one in Hillsburgh and one in Erin.

June 27, 2017

Population projections questioned at Erin wastewater meeting

Concerns about major additional population growth in Hillsburgh and Erin – beyond the 10,000 new residents already considered feasible in the next 20 to 30 years – were expressed at a public meeting.

Jan. 15, 2018

Erin wastewater plan needs public input

“Providing wastewater services within our community is no longer a matter of if, but when – the status quo is no longer an option,” said Mayor Al Alls in an open letter to residents.

Jan. 29, 2018

Erin rejects wastewater cost cuts

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The possibility of scaling down the system was discussed previously, and council had

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Feb. 6, 2018

Skeptical crowd reviews Erin wastewater plan

Many Erin residents were not convinced that a wastewater system costing \$118 million was the best course of action for the town, venting their doubts at a public meeting.

Feb. 20, 2018

Erin mayor issues wastewater warning

Mayor Al Alls predicted dire consequences if the Erin community failed to deal with the need for sewage treatment.

April 3, 2018

Erin gets wastewater pep talk

The Town of Erin got an enthusiastic endorsement of the benefits of developing a wastewater system from a similar community that is “now dealing with a growth explosion.”

April 10, 2018

Erin dips into reserves for unbudgeted costs

The Town of Erin used reserve funds to cover an operating deficit of \$62,924 for 2017, plus an unbudgeted total of \$693,388 to complete the Wastewater Environmental Assessment.

April 18, 2018

Mixed messages on Erin wastewater cost sharing

Residents who would not get wastewater service for their homes continued to get conflicting messages about whether they would have to help pay for the system.

May 1, 2018

Ministry to mediate on Erin wastewater objections

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Environmental Assessment (EA).

June 19, 2018

Erin wastewater study appealed

An appeal to the province could delay the completion of Erin's wastewater environmental assessment (EA) by a few months, but the town continued developing plans for new growth.

Nov. 20, 2018

Solmar Developments files appeal to province against town of Erin

More than six years ago, Solmar Developments came to the Town of Erin with a proposal to build a subdivision on a 116-hectare parcel of land in the village of Erin.

"They presented the town with an application that was premature," Mayor Alls said. "We didn't have wastewater."

March 19, 2019

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry warns Erin about impact on brook trout with wastewater plans

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry warned the Town of Erin about the potential impact of wastewater run-off on brook trout populations in the West Credit River.

Sept. 4, 2019

Province gives Erin wastewater green light

The Town of Erin was given the go-ahead from the province to build a wastewater system that would accommodate growth of up to 14,000 residents by 2041.

Oct. 16, 2019

Erin hears options for wastewater financing

The preliminary numbers were in, and while it was unclear how much it would cost existing homeowners, wastewater servicing to new homes would cost anywhere

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Nov. 5, 2019

Belfountain residents petition to halt Erin Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Belfountain Community Organization launched an online petition calling on the town to cease plans for a wastewater system and ease up on their development projections.

Dec. 17, 2019

Belfountain resident files ombudsman complaint following Erin wastewater closed session

A Caledon resident filed a complaint with the Ontario Ombudsman against the Town of Erin following a closed-session meeting on plans for a wastewater treatment plant.

May 5, 2020

Town of Erin poised to award \$1.5M contract for wastewater treatment plant design

The tender for designing the wastewater treatment plant came back, and council looked at awarding the contract to WSP Canada Group Limited for the design portion, for a bid of \$1,533,553.73.

May 13, 2020

Erin residents calling for referendum on wastewater plant decision

Some residents had concerns about the capacity of the river to accept the effluent, as the town was projected to grow to up to 14,500 residents by 2041.

Sept. 20, 2020

Breaking down the municipal and personal costs of Erin wastewater treatment plant

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development.”

However, residents would have to pay for the personal costs of hooking up to the system, a portion of the costs of the system and to decommission their current septic tanks.

Oct. 28, 2020

Erin drafts agreement with 10 developers to pay for entire wastewater treatment plant and trunk lines

“Essentially, the money will be enough to build the wastewater plant and the major trunk lines,” said Mayor Alls, explaining that the developers are paying development charges now, which would regularly be expected closer to starting their projects.

Nov. 16, 2020

Ontario River Alliance says town has ‘dismissed’ plan to protect Credit River brook trout from Erin wastewater plant

“We are really concerned about whether the brook trout could survive,” said Linda Heron, chair of the ORA.

Nov. 23, 2020

ANALYSIS: In the budget, not the tax bill: How wastewater plant will impact 2021 Erin budget

The wastewater project was the town's heaviest capital expense, but it wouldn't be reflected on the proposed one per cent tax levy increase for 2021, which equated to a hike of about \$18 for the average property owner with a home valued at \$600,000.

Jan. 18

Locals take a stand against wastewater plant

“When this idea for the initial studies was first brought up, there was a town meeting, and there’s not one Erin resident that spoke in favour of this,” said Ed Delaporte.

Environmental groups concerned about Erin wastewater plant

A change.org petition garnered 13,146 signatures, as of the time of writing, against the plant.

Feb. 19, 2021

Car rally Saturday against Erin wastewater treatment plant

"I think it's despicable what these people have proposed because it's unnecessary," said Ken Cowling, a resident of the town for 41 years. "I'm going to keep on fighting."

Feb. 21, 2021

Protest urges Erin council to flush plans for wastewater plant

"I can barely afford to live in this town as it is," said Tom Feeney, a resident who was with Cowling at the property during the car rally. "It's already too expensive to live in this town. We all have our reasons to be out here, whether it's for the environment or the cost of living. I'm out here for both."

Feb. 23, 2021

Dufferin-Caledon Greens, Conservatives file petition against waste water treatment plant

Stefan Wiesen, president of the Dufferin-Caledon Green party, and Kyle Seeback, Conservative MP for Dufferin-Caledon, has agreed to sponsor the petition to the federal government and will work together to solicit the 500 signatures required to present it to parliament.

March 18, 2021

Erin council has first look at design of wastewater treatment plant

Council had its first look at the facility design in a WSP Canada Group presentation, which is 75 per cent complete.

Erin issues statement to quell rumours around wastewater project

The Town of Erin has issued a statement to dispel what they call rumours circulating in the community about the project.

April 13, 2021

Local coalition highlights concerns about Erin wastewater plant

“When you pay two dollars for a piece of extremely valuable land it leads, correctly in my opinion, to the suspicion this is a quid pro-quo deal here, or this is a gift,” said environmental lawyer David Donnelly at a virtual meeting on March 27. “There is no justification or rationale whatsoever for a two-dollar purchase.”

May 18, 2021

Erin Waste water treatment plant review forthcoming from federal government

It is rare Ottawa steps in to override provincial approvals, especially for municipal projects. The coalition notes there was no impact assessment act or mechanism in place allowing the residents to appeal a provincial minister’s decision after a Part II Order request was denied.

May 26, 2021

Federal government approves Erin wastewater treatment plant

Jonathan Wilkinson, federal minister of environment and climate change, has determined the project does not warrant designation under the impact assessment act.

May 31, 2021

Ottawa's decline of Erin wastewater treatment plant review quashes 'best chance to make real change'

Groups concerned with the health of local waterways say the Canadian government's decision that will pause Erin’s proposed wastewater treatment plant review dashes the best hope they had to protect a fragile ecosystem.

Coalition of West Credit River proposes alternative option for Erin wastewater treatment plant

The Coalition for the West Credit River recommends an in-ground, indirect infiltration of the final effluent through an extensive underground perforated pipe system.

According to the Town of Erin, the practice has been looked at, but it has not deemed it necessary to adopt at this time.

— *With files from Joshua Santos, Alexandra Heck, Tabitha Wells, Kelcey Wright Johnson, and Phil Gravelle*

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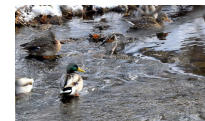
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