

# Memorandum

**Date:** December 3, 2019

**To:** Members of Council

**From:** Ohi Izirein, Senior Policy Planner, Community Services Department

**Subject:** Update on the Preparation of a Rehabilitation Master Plan (RMP) for Aggregate Pits in the Caledon Village Area

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## Background

On June 18, 2019 staff provided an update on the ongoing Town of Caledon project to prepare a Rehabilitation Master Plan (RMP) for aggregate pits in the Caledon Village area. (see <https://pub-caledon.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=5595>)

Since the June 2019 update, the project consultant, Dougan & Associates, has revised the workplan and timeframe for the completion of the project based on comments received on the draft plan. This memo will provide information on the current iteration of the conceptual RMP and the next steps to complete the project.

## Conceptual Rehabilitation Master Plan

The process of preparing the RMP for the Caledon Village area has been iterative. Following comments on the draft RMP plan prepared in Spring 2019 by Dougan & Associates for consultation purposes, three plans - *Current Plan*, *Interim Plan*, and *Vision Plan* – have been prepared simultaneously for further review. It has been determined that the preparation of these three plans is a more realistic way to achieve the project's objectives given the current provincial and regional policy environments. These draft plans are posted on the project's webpage for review.

(see <https://www.caledon.ca/en/business/resources/Caledon-ARMP-Vision-Plan-Draft.pdf>).

## Current Plan

The *Current Plan* shows the potential maximum extraction scenario if all the licenced aggregate properties are fully extracted and rehabilitated according to the existing Site Plans that are approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).

The *Current Plan* will result in a landscape with a large number of open water bodies and no significant increase in the size of lands for agriculture, natural heritage, or “development”; however, through the amalgamation of all existing Site Plans, there could be opportunities for limited recreational uses, trails and wildlife corridors linking all the adjoining properties.

Since the provision of trails and other forms of linkages are usually not one of the requirements of most of the existing approved Site Plans, the cooperation of aggregate producers and landowners is critical to realizing the *Current Plan*; however, without appropriate fiscal incentives to be derived from their lands, there may be limited interest for aggregate producers and landowners to expend resources to amend existing Site Plans to connect with abutting properties to realize the *Current Plan*.

### The Interim Plan

The *Interim Plan* shows the potential outcome of the study area with coordinated rehabilitation undertaken in collaboration with landowners and aggregate producers to revise existing Site Plans. Revisions to the Site Plans would aim to increase and improve the natural heritage area; agricultural and rural lands; create limited forms of development; and improve recreational and tourism opportunities based on current provincial, regional and municipal policies.

The study area is located within the *Greenbelt Plan, 2017* which restricts the types of land uses that are permissible. The *Interim Plan* will allow for the rehabilitation of lands for agriculture, recreation, sports and tourism; enhanced ecological restoration to promote wildlife habitat mitigation; and development that may be permitted by the *Greenbelt Plan, 2017*. However, existing Region of Peel requirements related to settlement expansion and servicing could severely limit development options for the area.

The *Interim Plan* will allow limited forms of development and other value-added opportunities. These and other forms of incentives are necessary to encourage aggregate producers and landowners to revise their existing Site Plans to achieve the *Interim Plan*.

### The Vision Plan:

The *Vision Plan* illustrates the futurist outcome for the study area. This Plan anticipates changes to existing policies to permit land uses that are currently restricted by current provincial and municipal policies. The *Vision Plan* is premised on collaboration with landowners and aggregate producers to provide alternative uses in the already disturb areas (due to extraction activities) to achieve economic, community and environmental benefits.

The *Vision Plan* will provide opportunities to increase the size of lands for agriculture use, develop the lands for recreation, sports and tourism use; enhance ecological restoration to promote wildlife habitat improvement; and propose a variety of development abutting Caledon Village. The *Vision Plan* also contemplates a highway by-pass that will reduce traffic in the Village core as well as facilitate the development of the Caledon Village for residential and rural commercial uses. Associated intercity transit hubs are also proposed in the *Vision Plan*.

Working with the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) and Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), the *Vision Plan* has proposed land uses that are desirable alternatives for the heavily disturbed areas which will enable aggregate producers and landowners to realize economic gains while increasing opportunities to enlarge the natural heritage area, agriculture and conservation lands.

To realize the *Vision Plan*, it will be necessary to establish special policies in the Caledon Official Plan and site specific notwithstanding policies within the *Greenbelt Plan, 2017*. Through the current Future Caledon – Our Official Plan review process - the Town will work with the Province and Region of Peel to seek special consideration to establish specific policies to permit the uses proposed in the *Vision Plan*.

## Proposed Land Uses

The *Interim* and *Vision* plans contemplate a variety of land uses to achieve the Town's objectives to promote tourism, agriculture, and passive and active recreation; increase natural heritage; and varied forms of development. The uses proposed are described below:

- *Agricultural* lands are proposed where lands can be used for agriculture and food production as suitable after-use. Agriculture could include small-scale farming to increase local food production, aquatic agriculture (fish and production of wild rice), agroforestry, permaculture, and low-input crops like industrial hemp, particularly where soil volumes may not support conventional farming practices.

The proposed continuity of previous extraction area for agriculture land use for farming and food production will not require changes to existing Site Plans or existing provincial, regional and municipal policies as the Extractive Industrial land use designation allows aggregate operations only as an interim land use.

- *Natural Heritage System* includes ecological features and functions that can be enhanced and preserved to improve the Credit River and its tributaries' ecological health through planting layered vegetation and reconnecting them to their riparian floodplains.

The enhancement of the natural heritage system will promote passive recreation in the trails that will connect Caledon Village to the Elora-Cataract Trail and other trail networks. Indigenous features along these trails (with the involvement of local First Nations artists to design trailhead markers) will provide opportunity to highlight First Nations heritage.

- *Rural and Recreation* are proposed primarily in pit sites which have open water and rehabilitated to promote active recreational uses (such as non-motorized boating, fishing, skiing, trailhead amenities, and other active recreation uses) which are beneficial to the community and boost tourism. Other uses proposed may include boating & fishing, regatta-sized water facility for competitive rowing, equestrian facilities, and bread and breakfast and/or overnight camping opportunities along the newly formed 'lakes'. Uses currently permitted under the Town and Region's Rural Area policies are also proposed.

Rural and Recreation areas will have trailhead(s) to facilitate the parking of vehicles, washroom, rentals, and food & beverages. The *Greenbelt Plan, 2017* permits a variety of uses which preserve and protect groundwater resources as well as recreation and tourism uses in the Protected Countryside. However, significant changes to existing Site Plans would be required.

- *Development* will include appropriate and desirable uses around the existing Village including retirement living and long-term care facility for aging members of the community, centres for community, learning, and recreation, other forms of residential and/or local commercial uses which preserve and enhance natural heritage features, integrate features to maintain groundwater water quality, and enhance Caledon Village's community character. Low-impact development, net-zero parameters within which development including, agri-hood - agricultural-based neighbourhoods, complete communities may also be considered.

The by-pass proposed to divert truck traffic and move vehicular traffic more effectively is intended to improve the village core. The proposed by-pass and other forms of development on both former aggregate extraction site lands and non-licensed lands near Caledon Village will require additional studies and changes to existing Site Plans, local, regional, and provincial policies.

## NEXT STEPS

Dougan & Associates is preparing strategies to implement the proposed *Interim* and *Vision Plans* as part of the final project deliverables. The draft conceptual RMP and the Implementation Plan will be circulated for comments by agencies and the Community Liaison Committee in December 2019 and thereafter:

- Staff will continue to work with provincial, regional and agency partners to establish site specific notwithstanding policies in the *Greenbelt Plan, 2017* and Official Plan to implement proposed land uses as identified in the Rehabilitation Master Plan.
- The conceptual Rehabilitation Master Plan and draft Implementation Plan will be revised and used as the basis for seeking comments from First Nations' groups and areas residents. The third and final public meeting for the project will be held in early 2020.
- Final Rehabilitation Master Plan and recommendations will be presented to Council in 2020.