



# Town of Newmarket Council Information Package

## Index of Attachments

Date: April 29, 2020

	Pages
<b>General Correspondence Items</b>	
1. <b>Resolution regarding Time of Use Billing</b>	1
Town of Essex March 24, 2020	
2. <b>Resolution regarding Request for Provincial Government to waive the restrictions on electronic participation in Council Meetings</b>	3
Town of Fort Erie March 24, 2020	
3. <b>Support of the Resolution of the Municipality of West Nipissing regarding Provincially Significant Wetlands Designation</b>	5
Township of North Stormont April 14, 2020	
4. <b>Support for the Resolutions of the Municipality of West Nipissing, the Village of Merrickville-Wolford and Norfolk County regarding Provincially Significant Wetlands Designation</b>	7
Township of Perth South April 16, 2020	
5. <b>Resolution regarding Regional Fire Service</b>	15
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville April 16, 2020	
6. <b>Support for the Resolution of the County of Haliburton regarding Tourism Orientated Destination Signage Fee Increases</b>	17

Township of North Dumfries  
April 17, 2020

7. **Support for the Resolution of the Town of Grimbsy regarding Suspended Time of Use Electricity Billing** 19

Township of North Dumfries  
April 17, 2020

8. **Resolution regarding Adding Community Gardens, Garden Centres and Nurseries as Essential Services** 21

District Municipality of Muskoka  
April 20, 2020

9. **Resolution regarding a Request the Province of Ontario Review the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme in Light of Economic Competitiveness Concerns between Rural and Urban Municipalities** 23

Township of Mapleton  
April 21, 2020

10. **Resolution regarding Adding Community Gardens, Garden Centres and Nurseries as Essential Services** 37

Town of Gravenhurst  
April 22, 2020

### **Proclamation, Lighting Requests and Community Flag Raising**

There were no requests for this period.

### **Information Reports**

The following Information Reports were distributed during this period:

- INFO-2020-12: Provincial Policy Statement, 2020
- INFO-2020-13: Innovative Housing



March 24, 2020

Honourable Minister Greg Rickford  
Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines  
Whitney Block  
Room 5630, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
99 Wellesly Street West  
Toronto, ON M7A 1W1  
Email: greg.rickford@pc.ola.org

Re: Time of Use Billing

Dear Minister Rickford,

During these unprecedented times with thousands of Ontarians unable to work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial difficulties facing families and municipalities is immense. On behalf of those who are and will be struggling to provide for their families, the Council of the Town of Essex discussed the cost of energy and specifically the "time of use" billing. With many families quarantined at home their energy costs will sky rocket, and with funds already scarce it will create a great hardship for them. With that in mind the Council of the Town of Essex passed the following resolution respectfully requesting that the electricity rates be adjusted to aid Ontarians at this time,

Moved by Councillor Verbeek  
Seconded by Councillor Bondy

(SP20-03-010) That Council send a letter to the Minister of Energy, Greg Rickford, to suspend "time of use" billing during the quarantine period as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and;

That this letter be sent to the Ontario Energy Board, the Premier, and our local member of parliament Taras Natyshak and all Ontario Municipalities.

**Carried**

Thanking you for your attention to this matter,



Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "RWA".

Robert W. Auger, L.L.B.  
Town Solicitor, Legal and Legislative Services/Clerk  
Email: [rauger@essex.ca](mailto:rauger@essex.ca)  
Ext. 1132

RWA/lam

c.c. Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario

Ontario Energy Board

Taras Natyshak, MPP

Ontario Municipalities



## Community Services

### Legislative Services

March 24, 2020  
File #120203

Sent via email: [clerk@callander.ca](mailto:clerk@callander.ca)

Elaine Gunnell, Municipal Clerk  
Municipality of Callander  
280 Main Street N., P.O. Box 100  
Callander, ON P0H 1H0

Dear Ms. Gunnell:

**Re: Request for Provincial Government to waive the restrictions on electronic participation in Council Meetings, at least for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Please be advised the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie at its meeting of March 23, 2020 received your correspondence dated March 16, 2020 and supported the motion passed by the Council of the Municipality of Callander requesting the Provincial Government to waive the restrictions on electronic participation in Council Meetings, at least for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trusting this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours very truly,

Carol Schofield,  
Manager, Legislative Services/Clerk  
[cschofield@forterie.ca](mailto:cschofield@forterie.ca)

c.c. The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario *Sent via email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)*  
The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing *Sent via email: [steve.clark@pc.ola.org](mailto:steve.clark@pc.ola.org)*  
Wayne Gates, MPP-Niagara Falls, Legislative Assembly of Ontario *Sent via email: [wgates-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:wgates-co@ndp.on.ca)*  
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP-Niagara West-Glanbrook, Legislative Assembly of Ontario *Sent via email: [sam.oosterhoff@pc.ola.org](mailto:sam.oosterhoff@pc.ola.org)*  
Jennifer Stevens, MPP-St. Catharines *Sent via email: [JStevens-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:JStevens-CO@ndp.on.ca)*  
Jeff Burch, MPP-Niagara Centre *Sent via email: [JBurch-QP@ndp.on.ca](mailto:JBurch-QP@ndp.on.ca)*  
Ontario Municipalities *Sent via email*

Mailing Address:

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie  
1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie ON L2A 2S6

Office Hours 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Phone: (905) 871-1600 FAX: (905) 871-4022

Web-site: [www.forterie.ca](http://www.forterie.ca)



## **Resolution Regarding Provincially Significant Wetlands Designation**

At the regular meeting of April 14, 2020, the Council of the Township of North Stormont passed the following resolution:

“ Res. # 143-2020- Be it resolved that Council supports the resolution from the Municipality of West Nipissing in requiring that MNRF provide supporting evidence prior to designating new Provincially Significant Wetlands.”

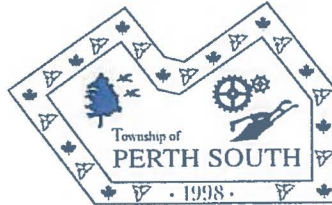
**Mary McCuaig, A.M.C.T**

Acting CAO/Clerk

The Township of North Stormont  
15 Rue Union St., P.O. Box 99  
Berwick, ON. K0C 1G0







**Corporation of the Township of Perth South**

3191 Road 122  
St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0  
Telephone 519-271-0619  
Fax 519-271-0647  
[lscott@perthsouth.ca](mailto:lscott@perthsouth.ca)

April 16, 2020

*Sent by Email*

Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Premier's Office, Room 281  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7Z 1A1

Honourable Premier Ford;

**Re: Provincially Significant Wetlands Designation**

At the regular meeting of Perth South Council held on March 17, 2020 correspondence was received from the Municipality of West Nipissing, the Village of Merrickville-Wolford and Norfolk County (attached hereto) regarding the above noted issue. As a rural municipality, we share the same concerns raised and thoroughly support the resolutions passed and information provided by these municipalities.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and please contact our office if you require any further information.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lizet Scott".

Lizet Scott  
Clerk

Attachments



**West Nipissing Ovest**

**Joie de vivre**

The Corporation of the Municipality of West Nipissing  
La Corporation de la Municipalité de Nipissing Ovest  
101-225, rue Holditch Street, Sturgeon Falls, ON P2B 1T1

P/T (705) 753-2250 (1-800-263-5359)  
F/TC (705) 753-3950

March 3, 2020

**SENT VIA E-MAIL**

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Premier's Office, Room 281  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Honourable Premier Ford:

**SUBJECT: PROVINCIALY SIGNIFICANT WETLANDS DESIGNATION**

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At its regular meeting held on February 25, 2020, Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing passed resolution **2020/080**, attached hereto. The resolution supports a request circulated by the Village of Merrickville-Wolford, asking the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to respectfully review its practices and procedures to include a requirement to provide supporting evidence, to impacted municipalities, when designating Provincially Significant Wetlands within their boundaries.

We trust the enclosed is self-explanatory.

Respectfully,

Deputy Clerk / Assistant to the  
Chief Administrative Officer

\Encl.

cc: Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)  
Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)  
Ontario Municipalities

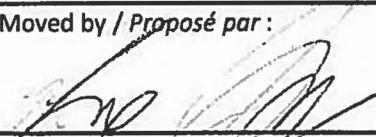


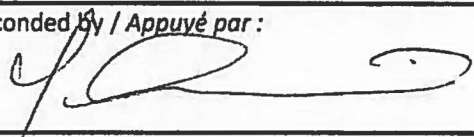
The Corporation of the Municipality of West Nipissing /  
La Corporation de la Municipalité de Nipissing Ouest

Resolution No.

2020 / 0 8 0

FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Moved by / *Proposé par* :  


Seconded by / *Appuyé par* :  



**WHEREAS** the Municipality of West Nipissing received resolution no. R-029-20 from the Village of Merrickville-Wolford, attached hereto; pertaining to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's practices and procedures when designating of Provincially Significant Wetlands;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing supports the Village of Merrickville-Wolford requesting that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to respectfully provide supporting evidence with respect to the expansion of wetlands designations within their boundaries;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing calls upon the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to respectfully review its practices and procedures to include a requirement to provide supporting evidence, to impacted municipalities, when designating Provincially Significant Wetlands within their boundaries;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) and all Ontario municipalities.

	YEAS	NAYS
DUHAIME, Yvon		
FISHER, Christopher		
LARABIE, Roland		
MALETTE, Léo		
ROVEDA, Dan		
SÉGUIN, Jeremy		
SÉNÉCAL, Denis		
SÉNÉCAL, Lise		
SAVAGE, Joanne (MAYOR)		

CARRIED:  \_\_\_\_\_  
 DEFEATED: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DEFERRED OR TABLED: \_\_\_\_\_

Established 1793  
 Incorporated  
 Wolford 1850  
 Merrickville 1880  
 Amalgamated 1998



Telephone (613) 269-4791  
 Facsimile (613) 269-3095

## VILLAGE OF MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD

February 5, 2020

**The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario**  
 Premier's Office, Room 281  
 Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
 Toronto, ON, M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

**Re: Provincially Significant Wetlands Designation**

Please find attached the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford's Resolution No. R-029-20, with respect to the Village's concerns surrounding the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's practices and procedures while implementing designations of Provincially Significant Wetlands.

While the attached resolution is tailored to a Village-specific issue, it is Council's position that the concerns expressed therein are being experienced by municipalities Province-wide.

Thank you in advance for the consideration that you give this matter.

Yours truly,

Doug Robertson  
 CAO/Clerk/Director, Economic Development

c. Honourable John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
 Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
 Andy Brown, CAO of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  
 Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
 Rural Ontario Municipal Association  
 All Ontario municipalities

Established 1793  
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Telephone (813) 269-4791  
Facsimile (813) 269-3095



**VILLAGE OF MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD**

For Clerk's use only, if required:  
**Recorded Vote Requested By:**

Cameron	Y	N
Foster	Y	N
Halpenny	Y	N
Molloy	Y	N
Struthers	Y	N

Resolution Number: R - 029 - 20

Date: January 27, 2020

Moved by: Cameron Foster Halpenny Molloy

Seconded by: Cameron Foster Halpenny Molloy

WHEREAS the Village of Merrickville-Wolford is endeavouring to adopt a new Official Plan as required per Section 17 of the *Planning Act* and the Village is required to incorporate the Provincial Policy Statements of the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Policy Statements require the Village to provide in its Official Plan the updated provisions of new and expanded Provincially Significant Wetlands designations;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford is concerned that the expansion of these wetlands is detrimentally affecting certain landowners and the Village's assessment base;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford is concerned that designations of Provincially Significant Wetlands have occurred throughout the Province of Ontario without the provision of supporting evidence;

Established 1793  
Incorporated  
Wolford 1850  
Merrickville 1860  
Amalgamated 1998



Telephone (613) 289-4791  
Facsimile (613) 289-3095

## VILLAGE OF MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford is concerned about the expansion of the Provincially Significant Wetlands in the Northeast quadrant of the Village;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford is concerned that these wetlands designations have been expanded without the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry having provided to the Village supporting evidence to justify said expansion;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford does hereby respectfully request that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry provide the Village with supporting evidence with respect to the expansion of these wetlands designations;

AND THAT the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry re-evaluate the subject properties without delay;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Honourable Premier Doug Ford, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and all Ontario municipalities.

Carried / Defeated

  
J. Douglas Struthers, Mayor





# Norfolk County Office of the Mayor

March 1, 2020

Ontario Municipalities

Dear Heads of Council and Councillors:

**Re: Issues regarding the mapping of Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs)**

Norfolk County Council is working to address significant issues that have come to our attention regarding the mapping of Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs).

Following the Ministry's updated mapping related to PSWs, the County updated its Official Plan to bring its policies in line with the new mapping. Following that, the County planning staff introduced a Zoning By-Law amendment to update the zoning to reflect the new mapping and to provide consistency between the Zoning By-Law and the Official Plan. Though the mapping is wholly outside the County's process and control, the zoning by-law amendment was not approved by Council, flowing from significant public concern about the updated mapping affecting people's properties. In some cases, some of these changes were very significant.

The County submitted comments to the province as part of the review of the Provincial Policy statement requesting that the process for PSW mapping be significantly improved to allow for transparency and better land owner engagement, including, for example, a right of appeal or formal dispute resolution process. This will allow for land owners to be properly informed and engaged where land use designations that affect their property may result. The current process appears to be severely underfunded and without any meaningful way for affected residents to engage.

The County is seeking support from other rural municipalities who may be affected by this to address this issue with the province.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours Truly,

Mayor Kristal Chopp  
Norfolk County

cc. The Honourable Steve Clark,  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing







**Customer Service Centre:** 905-640-1900  
 Toll Free: 1-855-642-TOWN (8696)  
**Automated:** 905-640-1910  
 Toll Free: 1-855-642-TOWS (8697)  
**Fax:** 905-640-7957  
**www.townofws.ca**

**VIA Email** <[regional.clerk@york.ca](mailto:regional.clerk@york.ca)>

April 16, 2020

The Regional Municipality of York  
 17250 Yonge Street  
 Newmarket, ON  
 L3Y 6Z1

**RE: Regional Fire Service**

Please be advised the above-noted matter was placed before Council at its meeting held on April 7, 2020, and the following resolution was passed:

- 1) That Council support proceeding with a study on the potential creation of a Regional Fire Service.

Carried

Regarding the above-noted matter, Council at its meeting held on April 7, 2020, also passed the following resolution:

- 1) That Council support a Regional Automatic Aid Agreement by neighbouring Regional municipalities.

Carried

Yours truly,

Kristina Soolepp, Council Coordinator  
 (905) 642-4130

cc. City of Markham  
 City of Richmond Hill  
 City of Vaughan  
 Town of Aurora  
 Town of East Gwillimbury  
 Town of Georgina  
 Town of Newmarket  
 Township of King





*The TOWNSHIP of*  
**NORTH DUMFRIES**

2958 Greenfield Road  
PO Box 1060  
Ayr, ON N0B 1E0

April 17, 2020

**RE: Tourism Orientated Destination Signage Fee Increases**

This letter is to advise that at its meeting of April 14, 2020, the Council of the Township of North Dumfries received a copy of the County of Haliburton resolution (as attached) specific to the Tourism Orientated Destination Signage Fee Increases.

Please be advised that Council of the Township of North Dumfries hereby supports the resolution as presented.

Sincerely,

Ashley Sage  
Clerk

cc. all Ontario municipalities



## County of Haliburton

P.O. Box 399 – 11 Newcastle Street  
Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0

705-286-1333 phone 705-286-4829 fax

Warden Liz Danielsen

Michael Rutter, CAO  
[mrutter@county.haliburton.on.ca](mailto:mrutter@county.haliburton.on.ca)

February 3, 2020

All Ontario Municipalities

Dear Sir/Madame:

Re: Tourism Oriented Destination Signage Fee Increases

Haliburton County and our local municipalities recently became aware of a significant increase in fees being charged to businesses by Canadian Tourism Oriented Destination Signage Limited. In a time when every effort is being made to remove barriers to prosperity, this change will take money directly from the “bottom line” of small and medium sized businesses and not-for-profits across the Province.

At their most recent meeting, Haliburton County Council passed the following resolution:

***Whereas the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture and the Ministry of Transportation supervise the delivery and maintenance of tourism oriented destination signage through a third party – Canadian TODS Limited;***  
***And Whereas our tourism stakeholders and other enterprises rely heavily on this signage to direct customers to their businesses;***  
***And Whereas Canadian TODS Limited recently advised their customers that fees will be doubling, beginning in 2020;***  
***And Whereas this will result in significant financial hardship for those business owners:***  
***Now therefore, be it resolved that the Haliburton County Tourism Committee and Haliburton County Council request that the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Minister of Transportation reconsider or phase in this fee increase, allowing an appropriate amount of time for businesses to adjust;***  
***And finally that those municipalities that support the resolution be requested to advise the Ministers noted above and their local MPP of their support.***

All of the municipalities in the County of Haliburton recognize the value of this signage and the need for cost increases to meet inflation; however, we are asking that this fee increase be reconsidered and phased in to ease the burden on our stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Yours truly,

Liz Danielsen  
Warden



*The TOWNSHIP of*  
**NORTH DUMFRIES**

2958 Greenfield Road  
PO Box 1060  
Ayr, ON N0B 1E0

April 17, 2020

**RE: Suspend Time of Use Electricity Billing**

This letter is to advise that at its meeting of April 14, 2020, the Council of the Township of North Dumfries received a copy of the Town of Grimsby resolution (as attached) specific to suspending the time of use for electricity billing. Please be advised that the Council of the Township of North Dumfries hereby supports the resolution as presented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ashley Sage". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ashley Sage  
Clerk

cc. all Ontario municipalities



**Town of Grimsby  
Administration**

Office of the Town Clerk

160 Livingston Avenue, P.O. Box 159, Grimsby, ON L3M 4G3

**Phone:** 905-945-9634 Ext. 2015 | **Fax:** 905-945-5010

**Email:** [skim@grimsby.ca](mailto:skim@grimsby.ca)

SENT VIA EMAIL

**RE: Suspend Time-of-Use Electricity Billing**

Please be advised that at the Special Council Meeting of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, The Council of the Town of Grimsby passed the following resolution:

Moved by Councillor Sharpe; Seconded by Councillor Dunstall;

*Resolve that during the circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak, that the Council of the Town of Grimsby supports the Premier's recommendation to suspend time-of-use electricity billing; and,*

*That the Council of the Town of Grimsby request that the Ontario Energy Board suspend time-of-use electricity billing to support lower electricity bills for residents who may be isolating at home during the day, and to support businesses who continue to operate, via lower power rates during the day-time peak period; and,*

*That this time-of-use billing suspension take effect immediately until such time that the COVID-19 outbreak has been contained; and,*

*That this resolution be forwarded to:*

- *Premier Doug Ford*
- *MPP Sam Oosterhoff*
- *Ontario Energy Board OEB*
- *Ontario Municipalities*
- *Grimsby Energy Inc.*

If you have any questions with regard to the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Sarah Kim  
Town Clerk

**District Council – Electronic Meeting  
April 20, 2020**

**The District Municipality of Muskoka**

---

Moved By: S. Cairns

Seconded By: K. Terziano

WHEREAS Muskoka District Council fully understands, upon the direction of the Provincial Government, that only businesses and services deemed to be essential are to remain open during the COVID-19 Pandemic;

AND WHEREAS our Not for Profit Community Partners rely on Community Gardens for the ability to grow vegetables that assist in meeting the food related needs as well as providing physical and mental health benefits for our most vulnerable citizens;

AND WHEREAS physical distancing measures would still be needed for those working in Community Gardens;

AND WHEREAS Garden Centres and Nurseries could be required to provide curb-side car drop off service only to reduce the risk;

AND WHEREAS the Medical Officer of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, supports the continuation of Community Gardens throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Muskoka District Council requests that the Province of Ontario add Community Gardens, Garden Centres and Nurseries as essential services;

AND THAT this resolution be circulated to Scott Aitchison, MP for Parry Sound-Muskoka, Norm Miller, MPP for Parry Sound-Muskoka, and all Ontario Municipalities requesting their support.

Carried ✓

Defeated \_\_\_\_\_

W. Back  
District Clerk





**A Resolution to Request the Province of Ontario Review the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme in Light of Economic Competitiveness Concerns between Rural and Urban Municipalities**

Good afternoon

Please be advised that at its March 10, 2020 meeting, the Council of the Township of Mapleton carried the attached Resolution 2020-04-14 concerning the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme.

Also attached is the County of Wellington's corresponding Committee Report.

Regards



**Larry Wheeler**  
**Deputy Clerk**

Township of Mapleton  
7275 Sideroad 16, Drayton, ON  
519.638.3313 x 045

[www.mapleton.ca](http://www.mapleton.ca)







April 21, 2020

To: Municipalities of Ontario – by email

**Re: A Resolution to Request the Province of Ontario Review the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme in Light of Economic Competitiveness Concerns between Rural and Urban Municipalities**

Please be advised that at its March 10, 2020 meeting, the Council of the Township of Mapleton carried the following Resolution 2020-04-14:

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario implemented changes to property assessment and introduced taxation reform which came into effect in 1998;  
AND WHEREAS prior to 1998 farm properties were subject to taxation at the base residential tax rate and qualified farmers applied annually to the province to be reimbursed 75% of the farm portion of the taxes paid to the local municipality;  
AND WHEREAS the province changed the method of delivering farmer's rebates by creating the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA);  
AND WHEREAS rather than apply annually and wait for property tax rebates, the delivery of the programme shifted to local municipal governments and onto the property tax system;  
AND WHEREAS eligible farmland assessment values are now locally subsidized by 75% of their full current value assessment (CVA) to produce a lower weighted assessment base which is used for tax rate setting purposes;  
AND WHEREAS the effect of the locally subsidized weighted assessment shifts an increased burden of tax onto all other property classes within the municipality;  
AND WHEREAS these taxation reforms were originally supposed to be revenue neutral and offset by funding from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) and its predecessor the Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF);  
AND WHEREAS the province has been reducing support from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund while the cost of the farm tax rebate programme is continuously increasing;  
AND WHEREAS an economically competitive agricultural industry provides affordable food and agricultural products to all Ontarians and is a provincial objective that should be cost shared amongst all of its citizens;  
AND WHEREAS the cost of this programme disproportionately falls upon property taxpayers in rural municipalities;  
AND WHEREAS higher property taxes in rural municipalities is creating economic competitiveness issues between rural and urban municipalities;

(over for page two)



Page 2 of 2, Mapleton Resolution

Re: Prov. Review of Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme

AND WHEREAS the province hasn't undertaken a review of this programme since it was implemented in 1998;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Township of Mapleton requests that:

1. The Province of Ontario undertake a review of the Farm Property Tax Class Rate Programme to determine:
  - a. The appropriateness of the cost of the Farm Property Tax Class Rate Programme falling disproportionately amongst rural residential and business property owners when the benefit of an economically competitive agricultural industry and affordable food and agricultural products is a provincial objective that should be shared amongst all taxpayers in Ontario;
  - b. The adequacy of funding being provided to rural municipalities to offset the cost of the Farm Property Tax Class Rate Programme;
  - c. The differences between the amount of property taxes paid in rural and urban municipalities and the root causes of those differences;
  - d. Economic competitiveness concerns with disproportionately higher average property taxes being paid in rural municipalities;
  - e. Other methods of delivering the farm tax rebate programme to farmland owners where the cost can be shared province-wide.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this motion be sent to Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance, Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs, MPP Randy Pettapiece, Hon. Ted Arnott, all Ontario Municipalities, Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

Attached you will find the County of Wellington Committee Report dated January 16, 2020 regarding the 'Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme' for review and consideration.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely

Larry Wheeler  
Deputy Clerk

Attach. (1)



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Chair and Members of the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee  
**From:** Ken DeHart, County Treasurer  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2020  
**Subject:** **Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme**

### Background:

The Province of Ontario implemented changes to property assessment and introduced taxation reform which came into effect in 1998. Prior to this, farm properties were subject to taxation at the base residential tax rate and farmers applied annually to the Minister of Finance to be reimbursed 75% of the farm portion of taxes paid to the local municipality.

As part of assessment reform, the Province changed the method of delivering farmer's rebates by creating the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). Under the new programme, rather than apply annually and wait for property tax rebates, delivery of the programme shifted to local municipal governments and onto the property tax system. Eligible farmland assessment values are now discounted by -75% of their full current value assessment (CVA) to produce a lower weighted assessment base which is used for tax rate setting purposes. With residential tax rates being the benchmark ratio of 1.0, farmlands have been set in legislation to have a 0.25 ratio or lower. The effect of the discounted weighted assessment shifts an increased burden of tax onto all other property classes in the County by way of increasing the benchmark tax rate. Doing so has a pronounced effect on the residential sector which comprises 78% of the County's levy base. By comparison, farmland taxes comprise 7% of the total levy base.

	2019 CVA	% raw CVA	WTD CVA	% Wtd CVA	2019 Levy	% of Levy
<b>Residential</b>	<b>12,584,607,345</b>	<b>68.02%</b>	<b>12,584,474,157</b>	<b>77.91%</b>	<b>77,709,877</b>	<b>77.91%</b>
Multi Residential	86,932,592	0.47%	165,171,925	1.02%	1,019,946	1.02%
<b>Farmland</b>	<b>4,499,862,369</b>	<b>24.32%</b>	<b>1,124,965,592</b>	<b>6.96%</b>	<b>6,946,730</b>	<b>6.96%</b>
Commercial	863,761,038	4.67%	1,287,867,708	7.97%	7,952,660	7.97%
Industrial	368,081,028	1.99%	882,959,280	5.47%	5,452,326	5.47%
Pipeline	41,303,954	0.22%	92,933,897	0.58%	573,872	0.58%
Managed Forest	55,959,714	0.30%	13,989,929	0.09%	86,389	0.09%
County Total	18,500,508,040	100.00%	16,152,362,486	100.00%	99,741,800	100.00%

### Challenges facing Rural Municipalities

Shifting of farmland discounted assessment onto residential taxpayers is specific to rural municipalities. Schedule A shows the difference between raw (unweighted) assessment roll values and resulting weighted assessment in Wellington County as compared to a typical urban municipality. In 2019 the residential tax class comprised 68.02% of Wellington County's assessment base, but the residential class pays 77.91% of property taxes once tax ratios are factored in. The farmland ratio of 0.25 has the effect of increasing the residential tax burden by approximately 10% across the County.

Conversely, in an urban municipality with very little farm tax class, the residential assessment base of 78.50% is reduced to 66.27% of total weighted assessment used for tax rate setting purposes. A reduction of more than 12% off the residential tax burden. This causes Wellington County economic competitiveness issues for the County's southern municipalities that border a number of urban municipal centres. Tax policy treatment greatly favours urban municipalities in Ontario.

Since the cost of providing the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme was downloaded by the province in 1998; provincial funds have been allocated annually to rural municipalities to offset the tax loss. This was supposed to be a revenue neutral allocation. However, each year transfer amounts from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) continue to decline. The Table below shows that a total tax levy of \$34,669,691 was necessary in order to provide the farmland tax incentive rebate benefiting 5,807 farm property owners in Wellington. The OMPF allocation county-wide in 2019 was \$7,065,800 leaving a shortfall of more than \$27 million in levy which is shifted onto every other property owner in Wellington County. This translates to \$754 per property in the County or 15.7% of total taxes for the typical homeowner. This is a significant amount of additional property tax burden that our residents continue to bear annually and which are subject to increase depending on market value of farmlands.

In essence, County residents are providing the -75% rebate instead of the Province for the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme, creating significant financial hardship amongst our ratepayers and limiting the County's economic competitiveness with neighbouring jurisdictions.

**WELLINGTON COUNTY - 2019 FARMLAND PROPERTIES  
OMPF FUNDING TO MITIGATE COST OF FARM PROPERTY CLASS TAX REBATE**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Municipal Rebates</b>	<b>Municipal OMPF Grant</b>	<b>Municipal Levy Impact</b>	<b>County Rebate* Distribution</b>	<b>Total Additional Levy Required</b>
Puslinch	\$ 232,040	\$ 415,700	\$ (183,660)	\$ 2,846,353	\$ 2,662,693
Guelph/Eramosa	\$ 1,137,235	\$ 490,300	\$ 646,935	\$ 3,120,713	\$ 3,767,649
Erin	\$ 890,468	\$ 593,300	\$ 297,168	\$ 2,852,697	\$ 3,149,866
Centre Wellington	\$ 1,987,127	\$ 319,600	\$ 1,667,527	\$ 5,553,231	\$ 7,220,758
Mapleton	\$ 5,235,570	\$ 837,400	\$ 4,398,170	\$ 1,961,338	\$ 6,359,507
Minto	\$ 1,446,483	\$ 1,604,600	\$ (158,117)	\$ 1,153,001	\$ 994,884
Wellington North	\$ 2,900,554	\$ 1,296,800	\$ 1,603,754	\$ 1,844,780	\$ 3,448,534
Wellington County	\$ 20,840,213	\$ 1,508,100	\$ 19,332,113		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 34,669,691</b>	<b>\$ 7,065,800</b>	<b>\$ 27,603,891</b>	<b>\$ 19,332,113</b>	<b>\$ 27,603,891</b>

**Additional levy required to provide farm rebate after OMPF grant**

<b>Total Properties **</b>	36,607	<b>Tax per property</b>	<b>\$754</b>
<b>Less # of Farms</b>	5,807		
	30,800	<b>Excluding farms</b>	<b>\$896</b>
<b>Population</b>	<b>97,610</b>	<b>Tax per resident</b>	<b>\$283</b>

\* County farm rebate distribution based on local municipal levy % share

\*\* excludes special/exempt properties

### Farm Application Deadline Requirements

Another challenge faced by rural municipalities is how the farm application and deadline requirements are administered by OMAFRA (now by AgriCorp). In any given year, many farm owners do not submit their applications within the specified deadline. The result is that many bona fide farm properties end up 'flipping' out of the discounted farm class and into the full residential tax class upon the next roll return. The assessment of these farm values are no longer discounted when calculating total weighted assessment, which is used for tax rate setting purposes.

This creates two distinct ongoing problems for rural municipalities. One is that the benchmark residential tax rate is lower than it otherwise would be; and two, upon approval of the late applications by OMAFRA, municipalities must refund the -75% difference in farm taxes retroactive to January of the current or sometimes even the preceding taxation year. There is no administrative or monetary penalty for late applications. Each year Wellington County finds approximately \$20,000,000 of farmland valuation excluded from the farmland discount programme due to late applications.

This year staff identified a major anomaly with farmland assessment loss of close to \$90,000,000. Upon enquiry, it was reasoned that the extremely high change in farm CVA was due to administrative changes as programme delivery shifted from OMAFRA to AgriCorp. County staff expect that most of the outstanding farm applications will be approved and revert back to the farm tax rate during 2020. Staff have included an additional \$300,000 in estimated property tax write-offs into the 2020 budget to set aside additional funds in preparation for the County's share of potential write-offs as tabled below:

#### 2019 FARMLAND CVA CHANGE OVER TO RESIDENTIAL RT CLASS

(Between September 25 in-year growth and final November 2019 growth)

Possible write-off amounts IF all properties revert back to AGRICORP approved FTIP

	PUSLINCH	GET	ERIN	CTR WELL	MPLTN	MINTO	WN	COUNTY
Est Prop Count	-20	-24	-26	-18	-22	-19	-28	-157
Farm CVA Loss	8,500,000	17,500,000	13,000,000	10,000,000	19,000,000	5,000,000	16,500,000	89,500,000
Res Tax Rate	0.00167135	0.00260652	0.00295749	0.00321969	0.00476387	0.00544891	0.00481749	0.00617506
Res Taxes	14,206	45,614	38,447	32,197	90,514	27,245	79,489	552,668
Farm Tax Rate	0.00041784	0.00065163	0.00073938	0.00080492	0.00119097	0.00136223	0.00120437	0.00154376
Farm Taxes	3,552	11,404	9,612	8,049	22,628	6,811	19,872	138,167
<b>Potential w/o *</b>	<b>(\$10,655)</b>	<b>(\$34,211)</b>	<b>(\$28,835)</b>	<b>(\$24,148)</b>	<b>(\$67,885)</b>	<b>(\$20,433)</b>	<b>(\$59,616)</b>	<b>(\$414,501)</b>
							<b>Grand Total*</b>	<b>(\$660,285)</b>

\* excludes Education Tax Component

### Farmland Property Assessment Valuation

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is responsible for placing current market value assessment (CVA) on all properties in Ontario. The most recent province-wide reassessment updating the base year to January 1, 2016 was returned for the 2017 tax year. As mandated by the Province, any assessment increases are phased-in over a 4-year cycle. MPAC reported the average farmland increase province-wide was 64% and residential CVA increased by 18%. By comparison, Wellington County CVA has increased by 68% and 13% respectively.

In the 2016 Assessment Update Summary, MPAC reports they have strengthened the accuracy and equity of farm valuations by improved sales verification processes of bona fide farmer-to-farmer sales along with undertaking a comprehensive review of vacant farmland sales as far back as January 2008. They report that upward trends continue to increase provincially as demand for farmland outweighs the supply and non-agricultural buyers continue to purchase farmlands creating competition. Agri-Food Canada reported the net worth of an average farm was expected to reach \$2.8 million in 2017.

Staff conducted a preliminary review of open market farm sales in Wellington County during 2018 and 2019. The data reveals that the current 2016 base year CVA of farm properties sold continue to be under-assessed by 27.43%. Sale prices ranged from \$26,000 to \$4,200,000.

<b>Wellington County</b>	<b>2019 Farm Sales</b>	<b>2018 Farm Sales</b>	<b>Total Sales</b>
Number of valid farm sales	97	108	205
Total CVA of farm sales	90,515,500	89,366,400	179,881,900
Combined sale prices	130,333,790	117,533,356	247,867,146
Difference sales to assessment	39,818,290	28,166,956	67,985,246
As a percentage	30.55%	23.97%	27.43%

\* source MPAC Municipal Connect

### **Assessment Act Considerations**

Current value assessment is defined as “the amount of money the fee simple, if unencumbered, would realize if sold at arm’s length by a willing seller to a willing buyer.” For farm properties, the province has clearly indicated that farm properties are to be treated different from the concept of current value. Section 19(5) of the Assessment Act requires that current value of the land and buildings should only be used when sales are for farm-purposes only and reflect the productivity of the land for farming purposes.

MPAC assessment methods must only consider farmer-to-farmer sales. In this case, the Assessment Act requires MPAC to exclude any sales to persons whose principal occupation is other than farming. This has the effect of excluding any other type of buyer and highest and best-use considerations from current value assessment.

From a land productivity perspective, land classes are adjusted for their productivity. For example, Class 1 farmlands are the most productive for crops, while on the other end of the scale, Class 6 is for swamp and scrublands that are the least productive. Lands in Wellington County and in particular, the southern portion of the County sell for far more per acre than what farms are assessed at for farm purposes. Analysis undertaken with regard to current assessment appeals shows that the best lands (Class 1) are currently being assessed in the \$14,000 to \$16,000 per acre range for farms. Sales of larger land holdings are selling in the range of \$20,000 to \$25,000 per acre range.

The intent of Section 19(5) of the Assessment Act is to limit and protect farm property from current value considerations outside of farming. This means that generally speaking, farms are naturally under-assessed from general market considerations – providing favourable assessments to the farming community in comparison to true market value.



### Other Assessment Considerations

- Farm owners who reside on the property do pay a residential tax component for their home plus one acre of land at the farmland rate. However, the valuation is based on a replacement cost method that produces a much lower value (\$223,125) than non-farm residences (\$424,187) as shown here on the average (County) property value and tax comparison.

#### Average 2019 Farm and Residential Value and Taxes

2019 farm house CVA	223,125	<b>2019 Average Residential Property CVA</b>	<b>\$424,187</b>
2019 Farmland CVA	901,900		
<b>Average 2019 total farm CVA</b>	<b>\$1,125,025</b>		
2019 farm house taxes	\$2,526		
2019 farmland taxes	\$2,553		
<b>2019 total farm taxes</b>	<b>\$5,079</b>	<b>2019 Average residential taxes</b>	<b>\$4,803</b>

- As seen above, while the average farm value is assessed at over 2.6x the value of the average residential property, overall taxes are comparable.
- According to MPAC's 2019 Market Change Profile report, of the 6,465 properties classified as farms, 1,892 are owned and/or occupied by non-farmers. Although the property owners are not engaged in farm activity or business, their properties are valued as if they are. These non-farmers benefit from lower residential structure values and lower land values, which translate to lower taxes simply by nature of leasing their land to a bona fide local farmer. This treatment can be perceived as rather unfair to typical residential property owners in Wellington County.
- Many owners of farmland also enjoy other property tax discounts if they are eligible to enter into either the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Programme (0.25 ratio) or the Conservation Land Programme which is fully exempt from property taxes.
- In order to receive the farm class tax discount, the owner must have a Farm License and be in the business of farming. Municipal taxes paid are then able to be written off as a business expense on annual income tax returns. Whereas residential property owners are not able to do so.

### Impacts of Assessment Increases on the Farming Community

Being predominantly a rural community with strong roots planted in farm trades, Wellington County farmers observed significant increases in their farmland valuation. It is acknowledged that farmland values have increased significantly in the County of Wellington. In the 2012 base year valuation, farmland made up 19.8% of the County's assessment base and 5.4% of the taxable assessment base. For the 2016 base year valuation, farmland now makes up 25.1% of the Wellington County assessment base and 7.2% of the taxable assessment base.

Recently, groups such as the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (see correspondence received on this agenda) and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture began approaching local Councils to lower the farmland ratio below 0.25 in order to help offset property tax increases. Their efforts have been successful in some municipalities. Schedule B lists the municipalities that have implemented farmland ratio reductions in Ontario as reported to BMA Consultants in the 2019 Municipal Study Report.

When reviewing the list of municipalities on Schedule B, the majority of those municipalities have very little farmland valuation. Many of the urban municipalities that have granted farm ratio reductions have a much higher commercial and industrial base and farmland makes up a much lower percentage of their assessment base than Wellington County.

Many of the other Counties and rural municipalities that have granted ratio reductions (Brant, Chatham-Kent, Dufferin, Grey, Lambton and Oxford) are located further away from the GTA. These municipalities generally have lower residential assessment values and are not competing with GTA municipalities for business to the same extent as Wellington County.

### Property Taxes as a Percentage of Income

- OMAFRA reported that in 2018, Wellington County farmers generated \$804,000,000 of revenue at the farm gate. The table below shows farm property taxes as a percentage of farm income to be 1.49%. Average household income in Wellington County for the same period was \$118,474. Average property tax as a percentage of residential income was significantly higher at 4.02%.

<b>Average Farm and Residential Assessment and Taxation</b>	<b>2018</b>
County average residential value	409,368
Total average property taxes *	4,764
Average income	118,474
<b>Portion of residential income devoted to property taxes</b>	<b>4.02%</b>
Total farm taxes paid in Wellington County *	11,971,488
County farmers income **	804,000,000
<b>Portion of farm income devoted to property taxes</b>	<b>1.49%</b>

\* total taxes include County, local and Education

### Closing Comments

Farmland values have been increasing significantly in the County of Wellington, much like other areas of the province. However, there does not appear to be an imbalance in the level of property tax burden shared by the local farming community in comparison to the average residential taxpayer in Wellington County. Under current legislation, farmland benefits from favourable property tax and assessment treatment.

The County's current assessment base cannot bear a further shift from farmland taxes onto other property types and maintain its economic competitiveness. Wellington County does not have a comparable commercial and industrial assessment base to neighbouring urban municipalities that would support such a shift without significantly burdening our residential and business class owners. Provincial grants such as the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, which were originally setup to compensate rural municipalities for the loss in farm taxes has been declining, leaving Wellington County taxpayers to support the industry without adequate province-wide cost sharing.

Wellington County is supportive of its local farming community. We recognize the importance of the agricultural industry on the County and in the Province of Ontario. Wellington supports the farming communities' interests in remaining economically competitive. The County is supportive of returning

the responsibility of funding the farm property class tax rebate programme back to the Province where it could be shared province-wide. Residents in urban municipalities, while retaining the benefits of cheap food and agricultural products, are not contributing financially to the economic competitiveness of the industry.

**Recommendation:**

That the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme report be received for information; and

That Wellington County support agricultural industry efforts in lobbying the Province to provide adequate funding to rural municipalities; and

That County Council pass a resolution in support of returning the responsibility of administering the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme back to the Province.

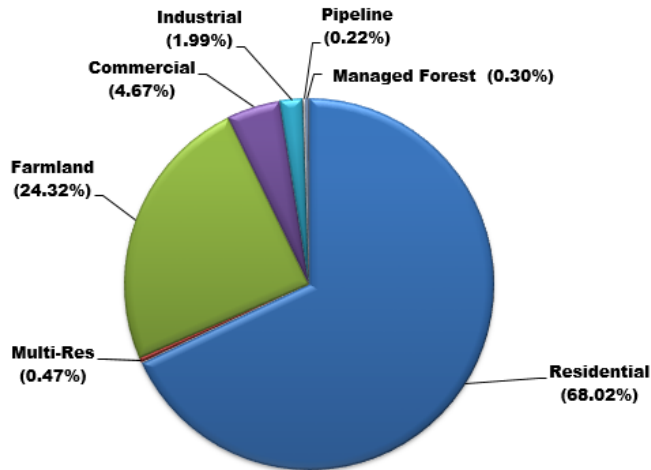
Respectfully submitted,



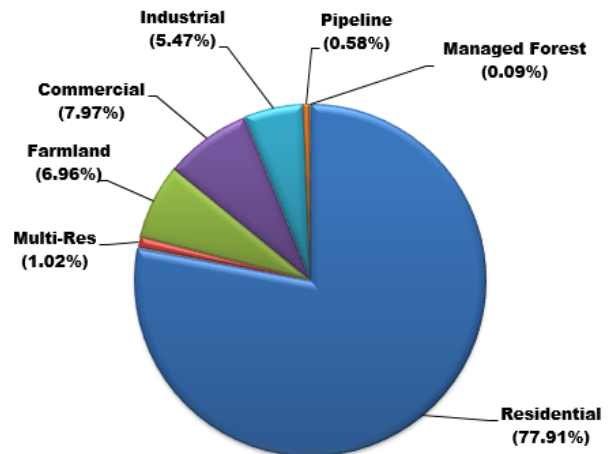
Ken DeHart, CPA, CGA  
County Treasurer

### SCHEDULE A Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme

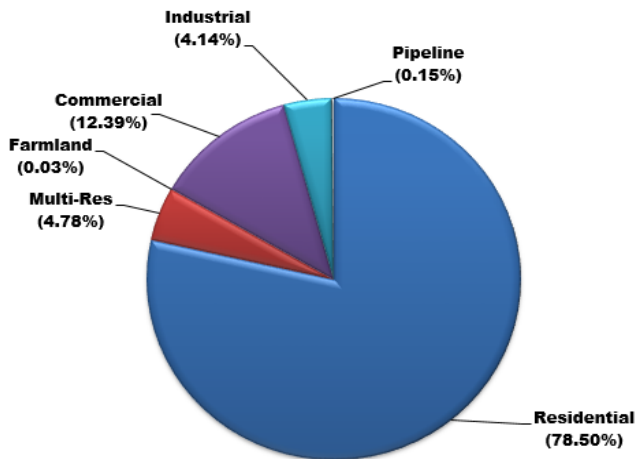
**Unweighted Assessment by Property Tax Class 2019  
(Share of Property Value - Wellington - Rural)**



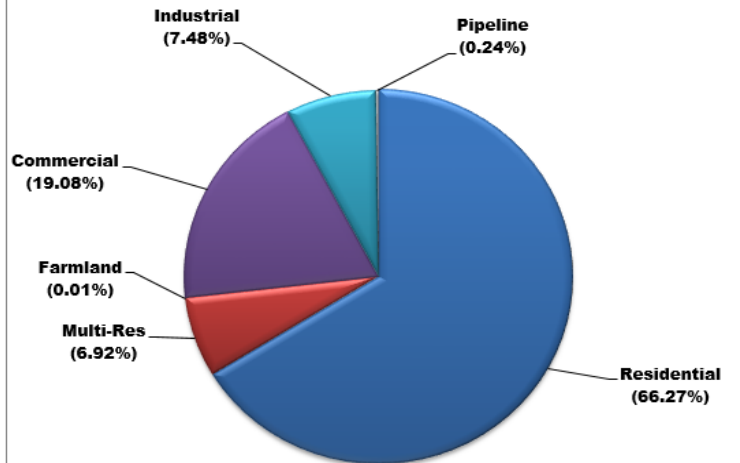
**Weighted Assessment by Property Tax Class 2019  
(Share of Property Taxes - Wellington - Rural)**



**Unweighted Assessment by Property Tax Class 2019  
(Share of Property Value - Urban)**



**Weighted Assessment by Property Tax Class 2019  
(Share of Property Taxes - Urban)**



**SCHEDULE B****Farm Property Class Tax Rate Programme****Municipalities with Farmland Ratio Reductions Implemented - 2019**

Municipality *	Ratio	Farmland CVA **
Brant County	0.2400	1,319,886,818
Caledon	0.1708	998,099,123
Chathan-Kent	0.2200	5,281,633,220
Dufferin County	0.2300	1,174,945,084
Durham Region	0.2000	2,416,491,305
Greater Sudbury	0.2000	30,618,833
Grey County	0.2400	2,659,127,624
Halton Region	0.2000	971,078,709
Hamilton	0.1767	1,390,781,027
Kingston	0.2125	81,575,403
Lambton County	0.2260	4,794,630,528
London	0.1028	425,488,846
North Bay	0.1500	605,465
Ottawa	0.2000	1,561,813,865
Oxford County	0.2350	5,665,102,027
Prince Edward County	0.2319	401,646,726
Sarnia	0.2260	181,579,114
Average Ratio & CVA	0.2036	1,726,770,807
<b>Wellington County</b>	<b>0.2500</b>	<b>4,464,961,956</b>

\* 2019 BMA Study Report - participating municipalities

\*\* from MPAC Provincial Market Change Profile Report





***Transmitted via Email***

April 22, 2020

**RE: TOWN OF GRAVENHURST RESOLUTION – Province of Ontario add Community Gardens, Garden Centres and Nurseries as essential services during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

At the Town of Gravenhurst Committee of the Whole meeting held on April 21, 2020, the following resolution was passed:

Moved by Councillor Cairns  
Seconded by Councillor Morphy

**WHEREAS** the Town of Gravenhurst Council fully understands, upon the direction of the Provincial Government, that only businesses and services deemed to be essential are to remain open during the COVID-19 Pandemic;

**AND WHEREAS** our Not for Profit Community Partners rely on Community Gardens for the ability to grow vegetables that assist in meeting the food related needs as well as providing physical and mental health benefits for our most vulnerable citizens;

**AND WHEREAS** physical distancing measures would still be needed for those working in Community Gardens;

**AND WHEREAS** Garden Centres and Nurseries could be required to provide curb-side car drop off service to reduce the risk;

**AND WHEREAS** the Medical Officer of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, supports the continuation of Community Gardens throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Town of Gravenhurst Council requests that the Province of Ontario add Community Gardens, Garden Centres and Nurseries as essential services;

**AND FINALLY THAT** this resolution be circulated to Scott Aitchison, MP for Parry Sound-Muskoka, Norm Miller, MPP for Parry Sound-Muskoka, Premier Ford and all Ontario Municipalities requesting their support.

**CARRIED**

We trust the above to be satisfactory.

Sincerely,

*Melanie Hakl*

Melanie Hakl  
Administrative Clerk 2, Legislative Services