



Staff Report

Operations – Engineering and Capital Projects

Report To: Council Meeting
Meeting Date: November 18, 2025
Report Number: OPS.25.050
Title: Drainage Master Plan - Follow up on EA Process, Risk, Benefits and Historical Context
Prepared by: Pruthvi Desai, Manager of Capital Projects

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report OPS.25.050, entitled “Drainage Master Plan - Follow up on EA Process, Risk, Benefits and Historical Context” for information;

AND THAT further to Staff Report OPS.25.003, entitled “Drainage Master Plan Notice of Completion and PIC 3”, Council approves the issuance of the “Notice of the Completion” for the 30-day review period for the Drainage Master Plan.

B. Overview

This report provides supplementary information requested by Council through a Council Resolution during the Operations section of Committee of Whole Meeting on October 28th, 2025, following presentation of Staff Report [OPS.25.003 Drainage Master Plan Notice of Completion and PIC 3](#) . Specifically, this report addresses council concerns, as per the Council Resolution:

That, with respect to Staff Report OPS.25.003, entitled “Drainage Master Plan Notice of Completion and PIC 3”, Council requests additional information, including:

- 1. Overall Environmental Assessment process**
- 2. Identified risks**
- 3. Any other elements that could be helpful to Council**
- 4. Historical context to enhance decision making of Council**

to be provided to the November 10, 2025, Council Meeting in order to secure Council’s confidence in approving the issuance of the “Notice of Completion” for the 30-day review for the Drainage Master Plan.

C. Background

The Town initiated the Drainage Master Plan (DMP) in 2021 and retained Tatham Engineering Ltd. to complete a Town-wide study under Approach 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process (*Approach 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) is a **master planning process** that integrates Phases 1 and 2 of the Class EA which includes problem identification and evaluation of alternative solutions at a broad, system-wide level with sufficient consultation and documentation to satisfy Schedule “B” project requirements.*). The DMP fulfills Phases 1 and 2 of the MCEA, addressing problem identification, evaluation of alternatives, and selection of preferred solutions. The DMP fulfills the Environmental Assessment requirements for all Schedule “B” drainage projects identified in the DMP (***Schedule “B” projects involve works with potential for moderate environmental impact, requiring public consultation and a 30-day review following a Notice of Completion; whereas Schedule “C” projects involve major works with greater potential impacts, requiring completion of all four EA phases and the preparation of a full Environmental Study Report (ESR) for public review.***).

The study area includes Lora Bay, Thornbury, Clarksburg, Craigleith, Camperdown, and the Blue Mountain Village, extending from Christie Beach Road in the west to Grey Road 21 in the east, and from Georgian Bay south to the settlement boundary.

The project has undergone extensive public consultation, including three Public Information Centers and multiple stakeholder meetings between 2021 and 2024.

D. Analysis

The following section provides an expanded discussion on the information requested by Council: the overall Environmental Assessment process, identified risks, additional elements and benefits of the Drainage Master Plan, and the historical context used to inform its recommendations.

1. Environmental Assessment (EA) Process

The Drainage Master Plan has been undertaken in accordance with *Approach 2* of the *Municipal Class Environmental Assessment* process, fulfilling Phases 1 and 2 of the MCEA for Schedule “B” projects. Phase 1 of the process focused on identifying existing drainage deficiencies, flooding risks, and infrastructure gaps throughout the Town’s settlement areas. This was achieved through hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, field assessments, and consultation with regulatory agencies such as Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Ministry of Transportation. Phase 2 involved the development and evaluation of alternative solutions to address these deficiencies, considering technical feasibility, environmental impact, social and economic factors, and feedback from the public and stakeholders.

Public consultation formed an integral component of the EA process. Three Public Information Centers were conducted during the study period:

- Public Information Centre #1 was held on February 24,2022 and it focused on gathering local knowledge and identifying problem areas
- Public Information Centre #2 was held on March 30,2023 and presented alternative solutions and sought feedback.
- Public Information Centre #3 was held on October 29,2024 and presented the preferred solutions and final recommendations.

Additionally, any comments received from the public outside of the PIC consultation periods were still accepted and addressed throughout the project. The Notice of Completion, once issued, will mark the conclusion of Phases 1 and 2 of the Class EA process and initiate a 30-day public review period for the study. During the review period, public comment and input will be received and incorporated into the final Project File. During the review period, a request to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for an order imposing additional conditions or requiring a comprehensive environmental assessment may be made on the grounds that the requested order may prevent, mitigate or remedy adverse impacts on constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Once the 30 days public comment period ends, the Town may proceed with implementation of all Schedule “B” projects identified in the DMP, at the Town’s discretion and subject to available budgets. Any projects categorized as Schedule “C” within the DMP will need to proceed through Phases 3 and 4 of the EA process, culminating in the preparation of an Environmental Study Report prior to detailed design.

2. Identified Risks

There are no identifiable risks to the Town in proceeding with issuance of the Notice of Completion. In fact, proceeding with the Drainage Master Plan provides several risk-reduction benefits. The Plan establishes a proactive framework to address long-standing drainage deficiencies and reduces the Town’s exposure to potential flood damage, infrastructure failure, and reactive maintenance expenditures. It also positions the Town to take advantage of external funding opportunities and coordinate planned works with other agencies such as MTO and Grey County.

Conversely, deferring approval of the DMP could prolong existing issues and limit the Town’s ability to act strategically. Without the DMP in place, drainage upgrades would continue on a project-by-project basis, leading to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for cost sharing. The DMP also strengthens the Town’s ability to assess new development applications by establishing a watershed-based development framework that ensures no adverse downstream impacts occur. Additionally, the Town has a heightened responsibility to act towards addressing the deficiencies identified in the DMP now that they are documented in a study undertaken by the Town. By implementing this Plan, the Town will improve its long-term resilience to climate change and future rainfall events while protecting both municipal and private assets.

3. Additional Elements and Benefits

Beyond meeting regulatory requirements, the Drainage Master Plan provides several strategic and community benefits. It establishes the Town's comprehensive hydrologic and hydraulic models for both the minor and major drainage systems creating a unified technical foundation for design, asset management, and capital planning. The Plan identifies 80 drainage improvement projects across the Town, including 14 high-priority projects for the next decade with an estimated cost of \$20.19 million. These projects target culvert upgrades, storm-sewer expansions, and localized flood mitigation measures that can be coordinated with other infrastructure renewals. The DMP also introduces a watershed-based Development Framework that modernizes Town policy by requiring the use of a watershed-based approach to stormwater management design, Low Impact Development (LID) techniques where feasible, enhanced water-quality and erosion controls, and volume-reduction measures to restore the natural hydrologic balance. Climate resilience is embedded in the Plan through a 10 percent increase in rainfall design intensities and an ongoing streamflow-monitoring program that extends through April 2026 to improve model calibration and enhance the accuracy of infrastructure sizing.

As noted above, without the Notice of Completion the DMP has no status, and the Town's ability to implement the Development framework, or prescribe DMP findings to MTO or the County will be greatly reduced.

4. Historical Context

The DMP reflects an in-depth understanding of the Town's drainage history gathered from decades of Town staff and resident experience and previous studies. From the outset, PIC #1 in February 2022 was designed to document drainage deficiencies identified through the DMP analysis and collect input on observed drainage deficiencies from residents. Input was received from 20 respondents to PIC #1, and the public identified drainage issues including the following:

- Flooding at the east end of Sunset Boulevard;
- Obstruction of the relief pipe between Watercourse 7 and Outlet 8, and flooding at the outlet of Watercourse 7;
- Spill from Watercourse 1 causes flooding on Monterra Road and adjacent private properties;
- Flooding on Hoover Lane adjacent to Watercourse 32;
- Flooding of private properties adjacent to Watercourse 6 near its outlet to Georgian Bay; and
- Several private property drainage issues (i.e. lot grading deficiencies) outside the scope of the DMP.

Each of the reported issues were reviewed, verified through field observations, and considered in the models used to analyze the drainage systems and identify priority projects.

The study also drew from prior municipal and conservation-authority reports, such as the 2019 Thornbury West Drainage Master Plan (TWDMP), Drainage Act assessments for Watercourses 7, 8, and 9, and the 1993 Craigleith Camperdown Sub-watershed Study (CCSS). The 2019 TWDMP was a study completed through the same MCEA master planning process as the current Townwide DMP. The TWDMP identified drainage deficiencies and solutions in the Thornbury West study area and has informed drainage improvements which have been implemented as part of ongoing road and infrastructure renewal projects in the Thornbury West area. The 1993 CCSS assessed drainage basins across the Craigleith and Camperdown areas and outlined a high-level plan for watershed management. By integrating this historical information with modern modeling, the DMP connects past drainage challenges to current system performance and provides actionable, long-term solutions that address both legacy and emerging concerns.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The Drainage Master Plan has been completed in accordance with all environmental assessment requirements and includes thorough technical, historical, and public consultation inputs. Staff and the consultant are confident that the Plan provides a balanced, future-ready framework for managing stormwater and mitigating flood risks across the Town.

The next step is to proceed with issuing the Notice of Completion, initiating the 30-day public review period as required under the Class EA process. Following this period, the Town will finalize the Master Plan and may proceed with implementation of the 10-year priority projects as resources and budgets allow. The ongoing streamflow monitoring program, which continues through April 2026, will further refine the Town's storm models and support future capital decisions.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council authorize the issuance of the Notice of Completion for the Drainage Master Plan. Proceeding with this step will formally conclude Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process and allow the Town to begin implementing prioritized drainage improvements.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

The DMP enhances water quality, reduces flooding risks, and restores natural drainage functions throughout the Town. It incorporates climate resilience measures including a 10% increase in rainfall design intensities, erosion and sediment control practices, and integration of LID techniques. These measures ensure the Town's infrastructure is adaptable, environmentally sustainable, and aligned with provincial environmental objectives.

G. Financial Impacts

The Drainage Master Plan identifies approximately \$47 million in total drainage improvements, with \$20.19 million prioritized for implementation over the next 10 years. Funding will be derived from Development Charges, capital reserves, and annual tax-supported capital budgets. Importantly, issuing the Notice of Completion does not bind the Town to spending on these improvements. Rather, the DMP is an important document to informing the preparation of the budget and Council will have discretion as to whether these improvements proceed.

Staff will continue to explore the feasibility of a stormwater utility rate structure as a dedicated funding mechanism for future infrastructure needs. All project budgets will be brought forward through the annual capital budget process for Council's consideration.

H. In Consultation With

Brian Worsley, Manager of Development Engineering

Jacob Macdonald, Tatham Engineering

Daniel Twigger, Tatham Engineering

Alan Pacheco, Director of Operations

Adam Smith, CAO

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report is consistent with the public consultation approach for the Townwide Drainage Master Plan, which has included three Public Information Centers (PICs) to date, executed as follows:

PIC #1 – February 24, 2022

- December 2, 2021 – Notice of Study Commencement advertised in the Collingwood Connection;
- December 2, 2021 – Notice of Study Commencement mailed to stakeholders;
- January 13, 2022 – PIC #1 Notice mailed to stakeholders;
- January 13 and January 27, 2022 – Notice of PIC #1 advertised in the Collingwood Connection;
- January 18, 2022 – Committee of the Whole – Initial staff report CSOPS.22.002 with recommendation to proceed to public consultation;
- January 31, 2022 – Council – Recommendations from January 18, 2022 Committee of the Whole confirmed;
- February 1, 2022 – Virtual Drop-In posted on the Town of The Blue Mountains website;
- February 24, 2022 – Virtual Question & Answer session(s);

PIC #2 – March 30, 2023

- February 21, 2023 – Committee of the Whole – Initial staff report CSOPS.23.007 with recommendation to proceed to public consultation;
- March 6, 2023 – Council – Recommendations from February 21, 2023 Committee of the Whole confirmed;
- March 7, 2023 – Public Meeting Notice posted;
- March 9 and March 23, 2023 – Public Meeting advertised in the Collingwood Connection;
- March 29, 2023 – Virtual Question & Answer session at 5:00 p.m.;
- March 30, 2023 – Public Meeting at 5:00 p.m.;

PIC #3 – October 29, 2024

- October 1, 2024 – PIC #3 Notice advertised in the Collingwood Connection and posted on the Town's website;
- October 1, 2024 – PIC #3 Notice mailed to stakeholders and agencies on the project mailing list;
- October 1, 2024 – PIC #3 materials posted to the Town's website for a four-week virtual public review period;
- October 29, 2024 – In-person Public Information Centre Question & Answer Session held at Town Hall Council Chambers from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Pruthvi Desai, Manager of Capital Projects pdesai@thebluemountains.ca .

J. Attached

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

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Alan Pacheco
Director of Operations

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

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Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 10, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Alan Pacheco - Nov 10, 2025 - 11:31 AM

No Signature found

Adam Smith - Nov 10, 2025 - 12:44 PM