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June 21, 2021

Report to: Township of Ramara Committee of the Whole
Subject: Proposed Land Use Compatibility Guideline
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)

Recommendations

1. That the Committee of the Whole receive the Report, 'Proposed Land Use Compatibility Guideline', dated June 21, 2021, as presented by Mark Dorfman; and
2. The Township of Ramara shall submit this Report and Recommendations to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks under Environmental Registry of Ontario Number 019-2785, prior to July 3, 2021, to mecp.landpolicy@ontario.ca

At its meeting held on June 7, 2021, the Committee of the Whole passed a motion requesting "A report regarding the Aggregate sections of the proposed Land Use Compatibility Guidelines".

On May 4, 2021, MECP published the proposed Guidelines for public consultation. This is one of four initiatives that were issued at the same time. These initiatives are intended "to strengthen compliance tools that hold polluters accountable and create consistent guidelines to prevent and address noise and odour issues."

Submissions to MECP are to be made on or before July 3, 2021.

EXISTING D-SERIES GUIDELINES

The MECP intends to update and replace the D-Series Guidelines related to land use compatibility that has existed since July 1995. The existing Guideline D-6, "Compatibility Between Industrial Facilities and Sensitive land uses" applies to the land use planning process "to prevent or minimize future land use problems due to the encroachment of sensitive land uses and industrial land uses on one another".

The D-6 Guideline does not apply to pits and quarries if there are site specific studies related to an aggregate application. Otherwise, as I understand, when an official plan/ amendment and zoning bylaw/amendment are considered for new sensitive land uses encroaching on an existing pit or quarry, the D-6 Guideline should be used by the municipality. Although not clearly enunciated in the D-6 Guideline, I believe that the D-6 Guideline should be used when the municipality is considering planning applications for new and expanding pits and quarries.



THE PROPOSED LAND USE COMPATIBILITY GUIDELINE

Overview

The proposed Guideline focuses on official plan and zoning bylaw updates; applications to amend the official plan, the zoning bylaw, site plan applications, and plan of subdivision applications. It is clearly stated that the municipality should use the Guideline where a new or expanding sensitive land use is proposed near an existing or planned major facility and where a new or expanding major facility is proposed near an existing or planned sensitive land use.

A **Major Facility** includes Resource Extraction Activities. A **Sensitive Land Use** is a building, amenity area or outdoor space, such as dwellings, day care centres, health and education facilities, public parks, harbours.

The Guideline is used to enable certain land uses to coexist in the long-term. Compatibility is two ways: it means that adverse effects such as noise, dust, odour and vibration from Major Facilities on Sensitive Land uses can be achieved, and that complaints from nearby Sensitive Land Uses do not add costs to Major Facilities for mitigation after the fact.

COMPATIBILITY METHODOLOGY

- (a) Municipalities are guided to determine **Areas of Influence ("AOIs")** and **Minimum Separation Distances ("MSDs")** surrounding existing or planned Major Facilities that are established by the Province. The AOI for Aggregate Operations is 1,000 metres. The MSD for Aggregate Operations is 500 metres. **The AOI and the MSD only apply to new or expanding Sensitive Land Use proposals near a Major Facility aggregate operation.** (See Table 1, pages 23 to 25).
- (b) The Municipality is directed to undertake a **Compatibility Study** if a development proposal is in an AOI of 1,000 metres. The Compatibility Study assesses where potential noise, dust, odour and vibration adverse effects are very likely to occur and incompatible development should not normally take place in the minimum 500 metre MSD.
- (c) A **Demonstration of Need Study** is required by the municipality to determine whether there is an identified need for the proposed Sensitive Land Use in the proposed location in the AOI, and if alternative locations outside the AOI have been evaluated and there are no reasonable alternative locations. Mitigation Measures would be needed to ensure no adverse effects or potential impacts and no Sensitive Land Use in the MSD.

The Township of Ramara recommends:

1. **that the Land Use Compatibility Guideline should apply to new or expanding Aggregate Operations that are near existing and planned Sensitive Land Uses, as well as new or expanding Sensitive Land Uses.**



2. that the Minimum AOIs and the Minimum MSD should apply where there are new or expanding Aggregate Operations near existing or planned Sensitive Land Uses, as well as new or expanding Sensitive Land Uses.
3. that if the Municipality is required to undertake a Compatibility Study, the Municipality should not be required to pay for the total cost of a Compatibility Study where there are planning applications for new or expanding Aggregate Operations and new or expanding Sensitive Land Uses.
4. that if the Municipality is required to undertake a Demonstration of Need Study, the Municipality should not be required to pay for the total cost of a Demonstration of Need Study for proposed Sensitive Land Uses in the AOI and MSD of the existing Aggregate Operations.
5. that if the Municipality is required to pay for the required Compatibility and Need Studies, it is appropriate that the Municipality may deny the acceptability of planning applications.
6. that the Land Use Compatibility Guideline shall be used by the Municipality to assess the appropriateness of licence and planning applications under the *Aggregate Resources Act* and the *Planning Act* and approve or deny according to good planning, conformity and consistency.

AGGREGATE SECTOR CONSIDERATIONS (APPENDIX D)

In the existing Ramara Official Plan, Schedule "D" identifies in the order of 12,560 hectares of land as "High Potential Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas" (HPMARAS). This represents 30% of the Ramara's total land area. The total HPMARA consists of predominately bedrock resources. The HPMARA excludes designated Settlement Areas. The boundary of the HPMARA is located a minimum of 1,000 metres from existing and planned Sensitive Land Uses such as designated Settlement Areas, designated Shoreline Residential Areas, First Nation Reserve lands, and Provincially Significant Wetlands. The HPMARA is consistent with the spirit of the D-6 Guideline.

There are 14 licenced Quarries and 8 licenced Pits in Ramara that annually produce in the order of 3 million tonnes of aggregate on 1,660 hectares. Ramara is one of the top 10 producers in the provincial Growth Plan Area.

In Ramara, 13 of the 14 licenced quarries are located within the identified HPMARAs, thereby achieving the objective of land use compatibility with designated residential sensitive land use areas. The only quarry that is not within an HPMARA is currently proposing to expand its aggregate operation within the 1,000 metre AOI and the 500 metre MSD. This matter is scheduled to be heard by the Ontario Land Tribunal.



Following from the above recommendations, the following issues arising from Appendix D - Aggregate Sector Considerations raise several issues and recommendations for improvements to the proposed Land Use Compatibility Guideline.

Issues Regarding Noise, Dust and Odour Emissions and Other Adverse Effects

- (a) On page 77, it is suggested that municipalities “will also need to consider other potential *adverse effects*, such as the potential for groundwater and surface water contamination, which are not discussed specifically in this section”. This statement is very general and applies to all Major Facilities proposed in a municipality. Ramara understands that there are other adverse effects or impacts on Sensitive Land Uses and that these are not included as considerations in these proposed Guidelines. This raises confusion when considering Major Facilities in general and Aggregate Operations specifically.

7. The Township of Ramara recommends that the second paragraph on page 77 should be deleted.

- (b) On page 79, there is a caution addressed to municipalities when considering Aggregate Operations:

It is important to plan land uses surrounding aggregate resources in a way that both prevents adverse impacts to *sensitive land uses* and ensures the long-term protection of aggregate resources.

The Township of Ramara Official Plan policies implement this approach by keeping Aggregate Operations away from settlement areas, shoreline residential areas and First Nation Reserves and provides opportunities within the identified HPMARAs for continued Aggregate Operations in the long-term.

8. The Township of Ramara agrees with this caution and recommends that the proposed Guideline include the Ramara Official Plan case as one successful example for achieving this land use objective.

- (c) On page 79, the second sentence in the first paragraph, as stated, raises a major concern for the Township of Ramara:

Planning authorities must consider the potential for *adverse effects* from aggregate operations (including existing, planned and potential future operations), such as traffic to and from the facilities, and noise and dust from blasting, crushing or other operations, for properties that require a planning approval.

I interpret this to mean that the Municipality is directed when assessing a planning application for Sensitive Land Uses, such as residential, that the Municipality is responsible for determining adverse effects as defined in the *Environmental Protection Act*. It is evident from this statement that the province expects that existing, planned and potential Aggregate Operations should have priority over Sensitive Land Uses. The



direction to the Municipality is onerous since it implies that an environmental impact assessment is required for any planning approval including a consent, minor variance or even one dwelling.

9. The Township of Ramara disagrees that the Aggregate Operations should take precedence in municipal planning. Since the Aggregate Operation is the potential source of adverse effects, the adverse effect assessment must be undertaken by the aggregate proponent whether an Aggregate Operation is new or it is expanding near Sensitive Land Uses.

- (d) On page 79, the second paragraph reiterates the provincial interest in Provincial Policy Statement 2020. In particular, policy 1.2.6.1 in PPS2020 sets out the provincial interest to balance the planning and development of Major Facilities and Sensitive Land Uses in order to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects of Major Facilities. The effects are broader and include contaminants other than odour and noise and also the policy is to minimize risk to public health and safety, and to always ensure economic viability of Major Facilities.

Policies 2.5.2.4 and 2.5.2.5 in PPS2020 direct Municipalities to protect *mineral aggregate operations* and under certain “requirements” allow development and activities within identified mineral aggregate resource areas. These provincial policies are well understood. The paragraph continues with the caution that “these requirements are in addition to what is recommended in this Guideline.”

This is interpreted to always mean that Aggregate Operations and Aggregate Resource protection take precedence over development of sensitive uses.

10. The Township of Ramara reiterates that Aggregate Operations should not take precedence in municipal planning. Ramara has realized the balance between land uses and provides 12,560 hectares for protected Mineral Aggregate Resources.

- (e) On page 79, paragraph 3 confirms that the onus is on the Municipality to demonstrate that new or expanding Sensitive Land Uses conform with the provincial AOIs and MSDs for existing or planned Aggregate Operations. This implies that if the Municipality has identified protected provincial Mineral Aggregate Resources required for planned Aggregate Operations, these areas essentially are unavailable for other development such as residential.

In many Municipal Official Plans, Mineral Aggregate Resources are identified as an overlay of existing designated settlement areas and built-up areas. This Guideline should be clear that to avoid potential adverse effects, the Ramara Official Plan model should be encouraged in all Municipalities



11. The Township of Ramara recommends that paragraph 3 on page 79 should be modified to add an option that municipalities should identify protected Mineral Aggregate Resources in appropriate areas beyond designated settlement areas and residential clusters in order to avoid potential adverse effects and land use incompatibility.

(f) On pages 79 and 80, the first sentence in paragraph 4 clearly enunciates the provincial objective:

The AOI and MSD in the Guideline are not applicable to land use decisions for new or expanding aggregate operations proposed near *sensitive land uses*. *Planning authorities* are required to address land use compatibility with respect to new or expanding operations, as required by the PPS.

This means that when a Municipality receives a planning application to amend the Official Plan and/or the Zoning Bylaw for an Aggregate site, the Municipality cannot use the AOIs and MSDs to separate the new or expanding aggregate operation from existing residential areas. Simply stated, the new or expanding aggregate operation can locate within 1,000 metres or even 500 metres, or less from an existing stable residential area.

In Ramara's experience, this direction is not acceptable and this municipality has already made the planning decision when identifying Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas, that aggregate operations are not appropriate within 1,000 metres of existing and planned residential areas.

12. The Township of Ramara strongly disagrees with the provincial direction that existing and expanding aggregate operations are not required to consider land use compatibility and may locate within 1,000 metres of existing and planned residential areas that are sensitive land uses.

(g) On page 80, reference is made to the role of the MNR "to assess potential impacts on existing nearby land uses and whether it is feasible to mitigate potential impacts through that process". Under the *Aggregate Resources Act* and the aggregate regulation and standards, the proponent for a licence is only required to consider an area of 120 metres surrounding the proposed licenced area for most impacts.

13. The Township of Ramara disagrees that there should never be a distinction between land use compatibility addressed in the *Aggregate Resources Act* and under the *Planning Act*. The AOIs and MSDs should be applied in both directions.



- (h) The proposed Land Use Compatibility Guideline does not include an important contaminant emanating from Aggregate Quarries. The contaminant is fly rock. On January 1, 2022, Rule 22 of subsection 0.13 in Ontario Regulation 244/97 under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, comes into effect. It stipulates that an aggregate licensee shall ensure that the quarry is in compliance with the Rule as follows:

a licensee shall take all reasonable measures to prevent fly rock from leaving the site during blasting if a sensitive receptor is located within 500 metres of the boundary of the site.

Fly Rock discharge from a quarry blasting is a contaminant and it is likely to cause an adverse effect under the *Environmental Protection Act*. The Act requires that the licensee must report forthwith to the MECP if the contaminant may likely cause an adverse effect. The Ministry may issue an order for remediation and preventative measures. Currently, there is no provincial policy, regulation or guideline that protects the environment, people, property and natural heritage features on land and in the air and water from the discharge of fly rock from a quarry.

- 14. The Township of Ramara recommends that the MECP should modify the proposed Guideline to include land use compatibility provisions to adequately protect the environment beyond quarry sites from the possible adverse impacts of fly rock during blasting operations.**

Respectfully submitted.

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