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Minister of Transportation
Delegation, August 17, 2021

Good Morning

The Municipality of Temagami covers just over 1900 square kilometres and is situated at the north end of the District of Nipissing bordering the District of Timiskaming. Basically, we are half way between North Bay and Temiskaming Shores. While our full time population is between 800 and 900 (depending on which source you use), seasonally our population explodes as we have a multitude of lakes within our boundary. There are also four Provincial Parks and other tourist draws from the Temagami Tower to the White Bear Forest to the Old Growth Trails on Lake Temagami.

Historically, employment was through mining, forestry, and a significant number of provincial personnel mostly employed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. While prospecting still occurs from time to time, similar to most other historic mining areas, these operations no longer exist. The same can be said for the forestry. We are involved, along with many of our partners, in the Temagami Forest Management Group which is working through this Ministry to improve the state and harvest of the Temagami Forest. Even with this, the forestry industry will most likely not be restored to its former glory. As for the government workers? Well even if there was a policy change, the majority of government buildings are no longer standing. So we are not all 'doom and gloom' there are a few community groups as well as a dedicated core of individuals that work to promote Temagami as a place to live and do business, reality is that it will be some time before our full time population reaches past levels.

Recently, we were successful in CENGN's call for host communities to develop solutions to expand broadband in rural areas, especially those with considerable waterfront residences. Leepfrog Telecom Ltd. is the industry partner and the work that CENGN, Leepfrog, and Temagami, especially with extra effort by our Mayor, Dan O'Mara, is one example how Provincial funds are being well invested and, further, that the Municipality of Temagami is a willing partner in projects or programs that benefit the lives of our citizens and increase the economic development possibilities of our community.

Another example of this could be the return of passenger rail service to our area. The news of a pilot project was received with excitement and we would like to offer our assistance as you work towards the next step of retuning this desired service. A further group we are involved with is the Highway 11 focus group and the Mayors on this committee have been promoting the 2-1 highway concept for some time now and are very supportive of seeing the next phase of a pilot project being implemented. There is also a considerable amount of support in our area for the pilot project being completed for part of Highway 11, south of Temagami to Marten River.

While we believe we put a cooperative foot forward, we do not feel this is always returned. While the latest example of this is not directly 'Ministry' related, it is under the umbrella of the Ministry of Transportation. For a few years, we worked with Ontario Northland as the crossing at Spruce Drive. Each year this project was included in our plans with estimates provided by Ontario Northland and each year there were delays which pushed the project into the following year. In 2020, the project finally moved ahead with the actual cost of the project being about double what the estimates were and more reliance on municipal human resources than were initially estimated. Regardless of the intentions and the reasons for the delays, this situation was received as a lack of respect from the Province and its agencies for the municipal sector, municipal government decision making and our ratepayers. We are hopeful that by highlighting the need to include municipalities in the planning of projects, including reasonable estimates, that situations like this will become more isolated incidents than the norm.

This brings us to a drain that serves Highway 11. The drain is located in the entrance to the parking lot of Our Daily Bread and has been sinking for some time now. The entrance has actually been restricted through the placement of large pylons as regardless the remedial efforts, the effect of the sinking drain continues to pose a safety risk. As with most situations, they are not as simple as may be initially believed. This drain, runs along and under one of our streets for about half a kilometer as storm water is funneled towards the lake. Our Public Works Department has been involved with several discussions with Ministry Staff regarding this drain. Initially, the belief was that as it is a Provincial Drain that the costs would be borne by the Province. This cycles to being a municipal cost with the Province providing engineering services to nothing from the Province at all. Not only is this situation frustrating but, we are still left with a safety hazard in a high traffic area in the centre of our 'downtown'.

Simply put, we are not in a position to financially contribute to this road. While we have road projects in our future planning, we have yet to include our largest need being the Lake Temagami Access Road. We did commission an engineering study which estimated the cost of road reconstruction at \$32 million. Not only is this well beyond our means, but this road is the only access used by Temagami First Nation. If we were an unorganized territory, this road would be reconstructed by the Province with no local contribution but as it is, we are trying to slowly repair this road within our means. Items like the Provincial Drain or Ontario Northland Crossings, not only add to the frustration from an apparent lack of respect for municipal resources but also add to the stress of reconstructing a road where there should be Provincial support due to the First Nation use.

Our Public Works Superintendent attempts to remain in contact with your engineering department. While sometimes our emails go unanswered, we will continue to try to move the drain project forward. And yes, we would be more than pleased to talk about solutions that may be possible to ensure Temagami First Nation's access to their reserve remains uninterrupted.

The last issue we would like to address is the non-payment of the payment in lieu for the Ministry work yard just south of the hamlet of Temagami. In our request for this meeting we noted that we had not received a payment since 2018. We did receive a payment for the 2018 year after the request for this delegation was made and have received a copy of communication regarding the dispute on how the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) has classified this property. MPAC has classified this property under the CP – Commercial: Payment in Lieu Full: taxable tenant of the Province rather than the CG – Commercial Payment in Lieu: General. As it stands, there is still around \$28,000 owing on this property and, if this was owned by anyone other than the Province, registration procedures would have commenced.

We are bound to levy taxation, including payments in lieu, as assessed by the MPAC and, based on payments being received, we do not have an opinion on which is the appropriate assessment class as the amount we would receive is the same for both classes. This difference between the two classes is one pays the education rate and one does not. Presently, not only is the Municipality carrying a receivable but we have also paid to the school their share of the amounts billed. This has been done as required although we are not able to, in this instance, recover any amounts through penalties and interest on unpaid accounts as permitted through legislation.

While it appears that the Ministry is once again working on this file, we do have a solution which may be a multiple win situation. While our understanding of the operations hosted in this work yard may be incomplete, we believe that it has been leased to the Area Maintenance Contractor (AMC) in the Temagami area. It could be that there is space that is not presently used. Our solution is to enter discussions with the Ministry to purchase this facility with the understanding that the AMC needs to be accommodated in this yard. We do have a good working relationship with the AMC so this should be possible and would 'take the issue' off of your hands. The Municipality would benefit from an updated facility that is close to where most of our work is centred.

This Council has worked hard to ensure that our working relationship with different Ministries and neighbouring municipalities is positive and productive. We have addressed areas of deficiencies, most notably in the water and sewer service area, and are finalizing plans based on a Service Delivery Review and other reviews, plans and studies. We strive to be a reasonable, respected partner in governance and look forward to working with your Ministry as we resolve issues and collaborate for the betterment of the people of Temagami.

We thank you for your time and look forward to further discussions regarding this issue.