

Staff Report

2025-028 - Building Services



To: Mayor Koetsier and Members of Council
From: Cody Avery, Building Inspector
Date: March 3, 2025
Subject: 2024 Septic Re-inspection Program Year End Report

Recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Committee of the Whole receive the report regarding the 2024 Septic Re-inspection Program Year End Report for information.

Report Highlights

- To provide the Committee of the Whole with a 2024 Year End Report on the Township's Septic Re-inspection Program.
- Provide information on the areas identified and inspected under the mandatory Septic Re-inspection program and discretionary Septic Re-inspection program.
- Information on future redesign of the Septic Re-inspection Program

Background

The Township of Georgian Bay has an established Septic Re-inspection program that outlines both mandatory re-inspection zones and discretionary maintenance programs in accordance with the Ontario Building Code.

From May to November 2024, staff conducted a total of 441 on-site septic inspections, primarily focusing on waterfront properties along Georgian Bay. Of these, 70 inspections were carried out in the Gloucester Pool, Whites Falls, and Six Mile Channel areas.

Septic Re-inspection Digitization

Prior to the start of the 2024 Re-inspection season the department moved forward with the digitization of Ministry of the Environment Septic Use Permits. The cost of this project was paid for from the Building Department Reserve as this was not in the approved budget which included the cost of hiring a contract employee to carry out this task.

A total of 4723 township property files were processed with 1415 Ministry of Environment records scanned and digitized into the Townships e-records.

This results in a total of 2516 MOE records now accessible online which has significantly reduced staff's time when searching for records.

Mandatory Septic Re-inspection

Under the Ontario Building Code, the Township has a requirement to complete mandatory septic inspections. These mandatory inspections are to be completed within 1 kilometer from a municipal water intake supply known as an "IPZ" (Intake Protection Zone) and must be completed every 5 years.

In 2023 staff completed 84 on site sewage inspection within the Port Severn Intake Zone.

A total of 24 mandatory septic re-inspections were completed in 2024 within the Ropes Subdivision Intake Protection Zone.

To date, all the mandatory inspections under the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan have been completed as required by the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks.

Discretionary Maintenance Program

The Ontario Building Code provides the Township with authority to conduct a discretionary Septic Re-inspection program to ensure sewage systems are functioning in a safe and proper manner.

The 2024 Septic Re-inspection program mainly targeted waterfront (boat access) properties along Georgian Bay. Staff leveraged data from the District of Muskoka, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), Ministry of Environment, and the Township's septic permit records.

Data was analyzed to create a list of 427 developed (MPAC) properties located on Georgian Bay (accessible by water only), ranging from Port Severn to Twelve Mile Bay. These properties either had no records of an onsite sewage system **or** had a record of a Ministry of Environment Use Permit, but lacked a septic system permit from the Township of Georgian Bay. The objective was to identify properties with non-existent or outdated sewage systems, particularly those installed before 1998 (28 years or older).

Enhancing public education was a key priority in 2024. Staff provided property owners with information about septic system maintenance, pump-out requirements, and water quality concerns. A door hanger was created and printed to be left on site, featuring details about the septic re-inspection program, along with a QR code and link to the Township's Septic Re-inspection and water quality webpages. This drove a substantial amount of online traffic to the Townships website.

Water quality inquiries were common, and staff directed property owners to the newly designed water quality webpage, which offers information on ongoing projects and past water quality monitoring reports.

Whites falls and Six Mile Channel

Following water quality studies conducted in the summer of 2024 by Dr. Pat Chow-Fraser, an increase in phosphorus levels was identified, prompting staff to investigate and inspect on-site sewage systems in the Whites Falls and Six Mile Channel areas. As a result, 70 septic systems were examined, and no issues were found.

2025/2026 Septic Reinspection Program

In the spring of 2024, residents received a letter notifying them that Septic Re-inspection would take place over the next two years on their property.

The 2025 Septic Re-inspection program will consist of completing the 93 remaining properties not inspected in 2024 as well as 257 developed properties with no records. Most of these properties are located in the northernmost areas of Georgian Bay. Weather will play a significant role in the timing of the inspections due to the location of these properties.

Staff are currently working to redesign the Septic Re-inspection program, introducing a 5 year Re-inspection cycle that will include options for revenue generation (dependent on the number of developed properties in each inspection zone). Under a redesigned program, all waterfront properties (Georgian Bay and inland lakes) will be categorized and inspected according to a risk assessment tier.

Upcoming reports will be presented to the Council at a later date in 2025 with the intention for this revised program to start in 2026. These reports will include proposed amendments to the Septic re-inspection and possibly Property Standard By-laws, along with options for a long-term Septic Re-inspection program that focuses on inspecting sewage systems based on site-specific factors.

Analysis and Options

Completed 2024:

24 Mandatory inspections completed

334 Discretionary inspections completed

61 Developed properties with no septic records (Township or MOE)

Total: **419**

Number of letters sent out: **427**

Number of discretionary inspections completed: **334**

Number of issues: **27**
Number of enforcement letters sent out: **31**
Number of orders issued: **3**
Number of dye test: **2**
Issue that not been resolved: **19** (to be inspected in spring 2025)

Developed property with no septic records total: **318** records
Developed properties with no septic records that have been inspected: **61**
Number of issues (developed no records): **5**

Hot Spot Areas:

Six Mile Channel inspections: **40**
Number of issues: **0**

Whites Falls / Old Mill Road inspections: **30**
Number of issues: **0**

Followed up required in spring 2025: **19**

MOE use permit scanning:

Files pulled and processed: 4723
MOE use permits scanned into Town suites: 1415
Total digitized MOE Use Permit Records: 2516 records

Remaining 2025:

93 Discretionary inspections (Georgian Bay waterfront)
257 Developed properties with no septic records

Environmental Consideration

Protect and preserve our natural environment.

Conclusion

That Committee of the Whole receive the report regarding the 2024 Septic Re-inspection Program Year End Report for information.

Report Supported By

This recommendation report is in alignment with the following strategic pillars:

Environmental Protection

- Fiscal Responsibilities and Technology Efficiencies
- Streamline Planning Policies and Procedures
- Customer Experience and Community Engagement
- District and Township Relationship
- Engage with Indigenous Communities

Relevant Background Report

[Development Services Report 2024-11](#)

Reviewed By/Collaborated With:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Chief Building Official
- Director of Corporate Services / Clerk
- Director of Finance / Treasurer
- Director of Fire and Emergency Services / Fire Chief
- Manager of Human Resources
- Director of Operations
- Director of Planning
- Director of Sustainability
- Other

Attachments

[Cognashene](#)
[Honey Harbour](#)
[Little Beausoleil- Deer Island](#)
[Macey Bay](#)
[Port Severn](#)
[Quarry Island](#)
[Roberts Island](#)
[South Bay](#)
[Webber Island-Bone Island](#)
[Copy Septic Re-Inspection Door Hanger \(2\)](#)
[Septic Reinspection letter 2024 \(general\)](#)
[Septic Reinspection letter 2024 \(Mandatory\)](#)

Reviewed By

Caely Nicholson, Chief Building Official
Karen Way, Director of Corporate Services / Clerk
Greg Mariotti, Chief Administrative Officer

Status:

Approved - 18 Feb 2025
Approved - 21 Feb 2025
Approved - 14 Feb 2025

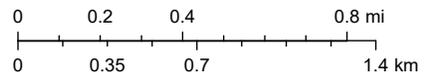
Cognashene



2024-10-09, 9:58:45 a.m.

1:36,112

-  Parcels: GBT* Assessment
-  Reinspection Rolls 2024
-  Developed Properties No Septic Records MPAC
-  Geographic Township
-  Area Municipality
-  District Municipality
- Civic Addresses

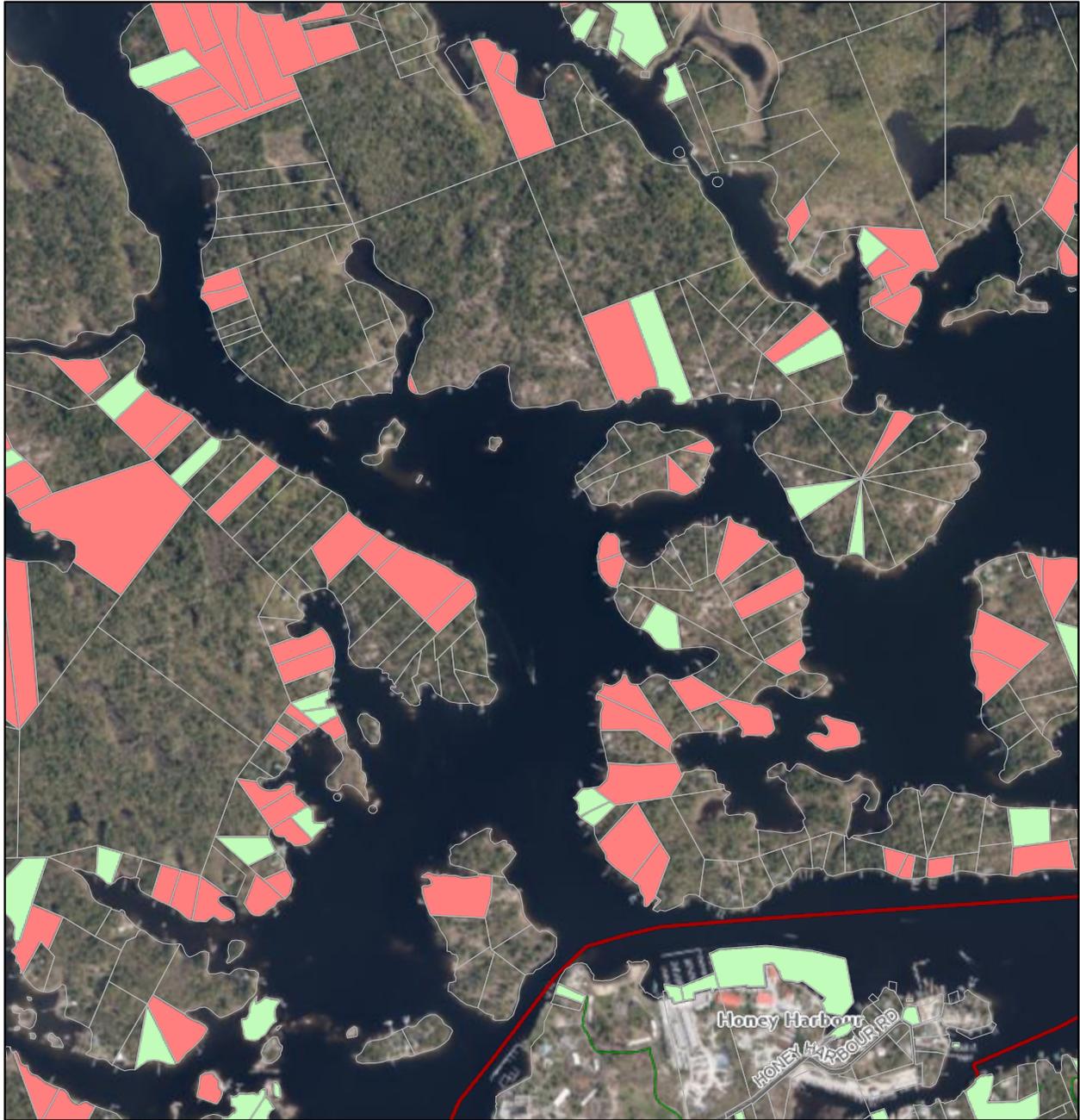


The District Municipality of Muskoka

District of Muskoka Geomatics

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Honey Harbor

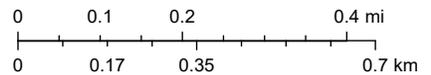


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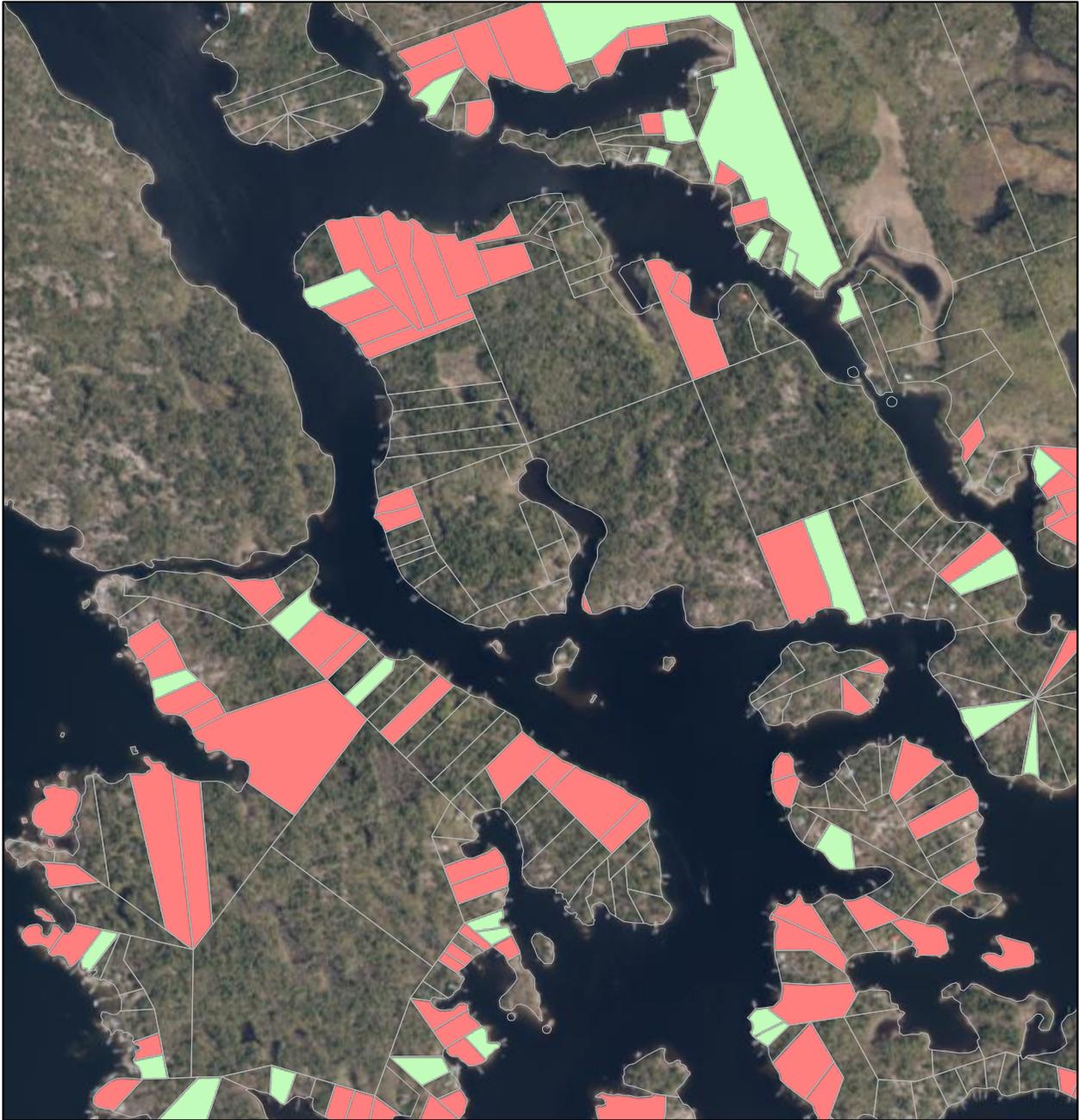
-  Parcels: GBT* Assessment
-  Reinspection Rolls 2024
-  Developed Properties No Septic Records MPAC
-  Settlement Areas
-  Community
-  Geographic Township

-  Area Municipality
-  District Municipality
-  Road Network
-  Township
-  Private
-  Civic Addresses



The District Municipality of Muskoka

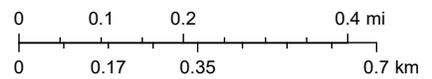
Little Beausoleil/ Deer Island



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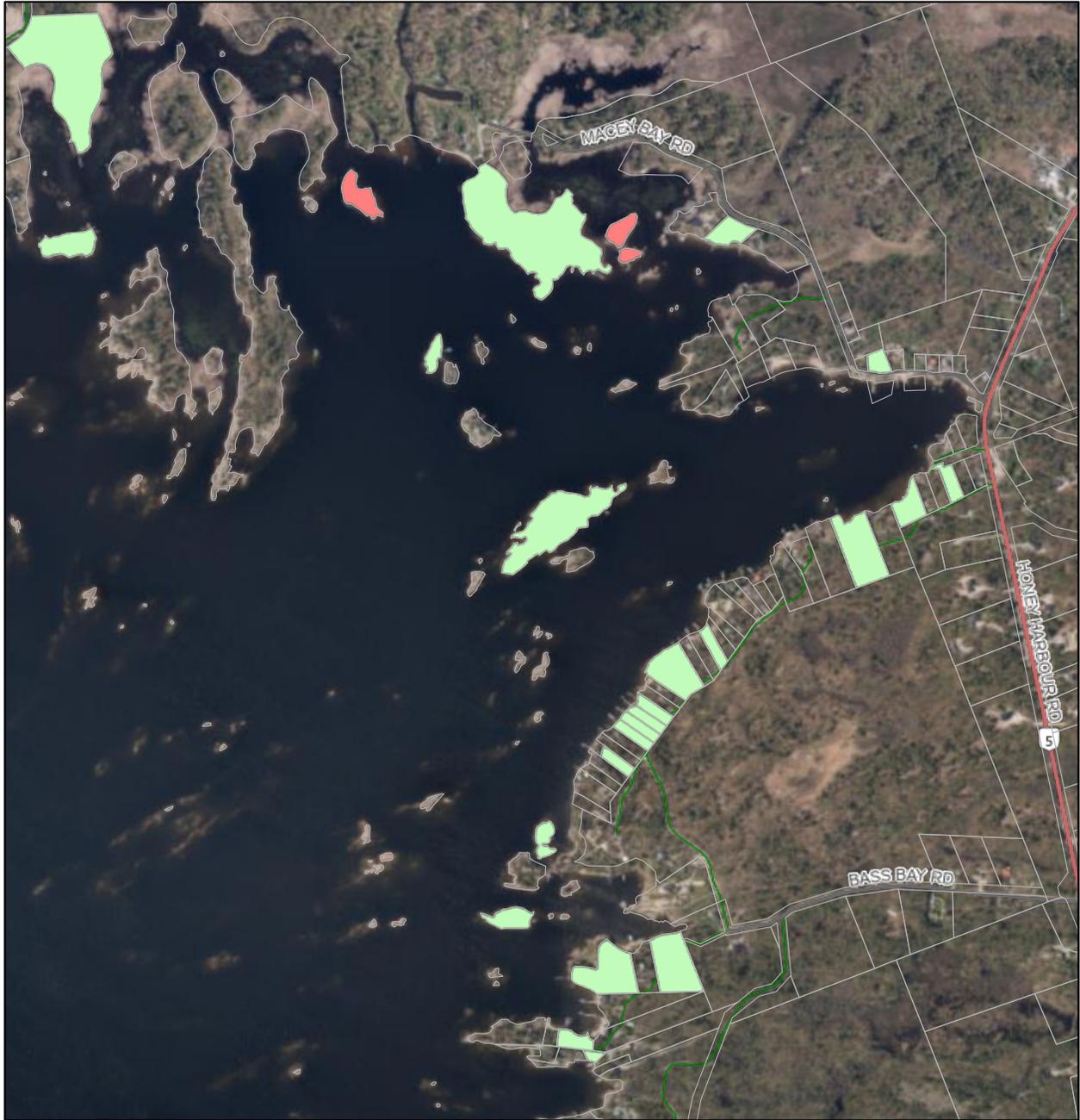
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Macey Bay

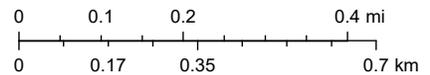


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-  Parcels: GBT* Assessment
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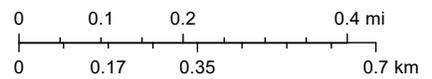
Port Severn



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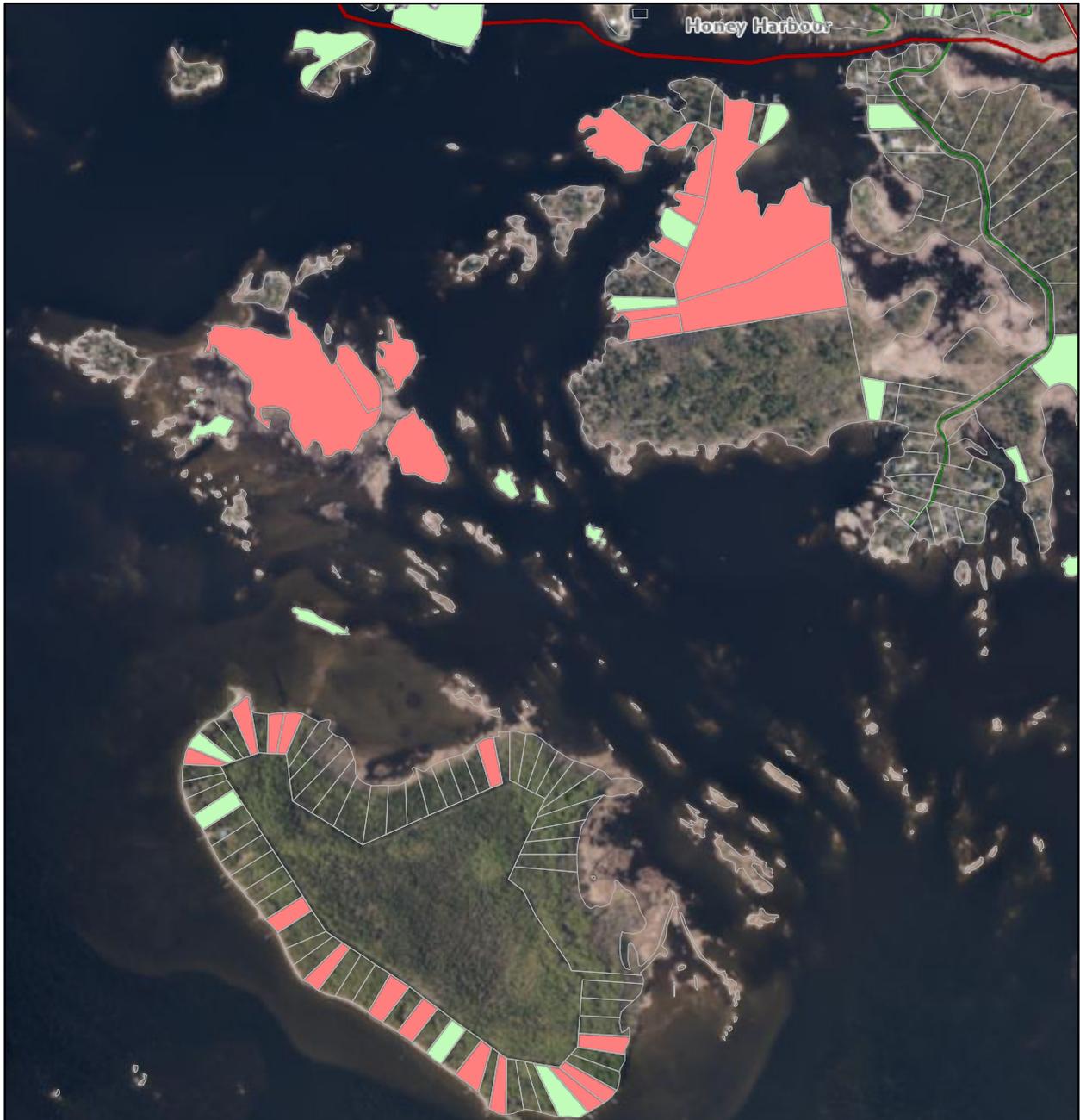
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- Parcels: GBT* Assessment
- Reinspection Rolls 2024
- Developed Properties No Septic Records MPAC
- Settlement Areas
- Urban Centre
- Geographic Township
- Area Municipality
- District Municipality
- Water Sample Sites
- Infrastructure Setbacks
- Intake Setback
- Intake Protection Zone
- Outfall Setback



The District Municipality of Muskoka

Quarry Island

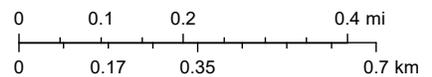


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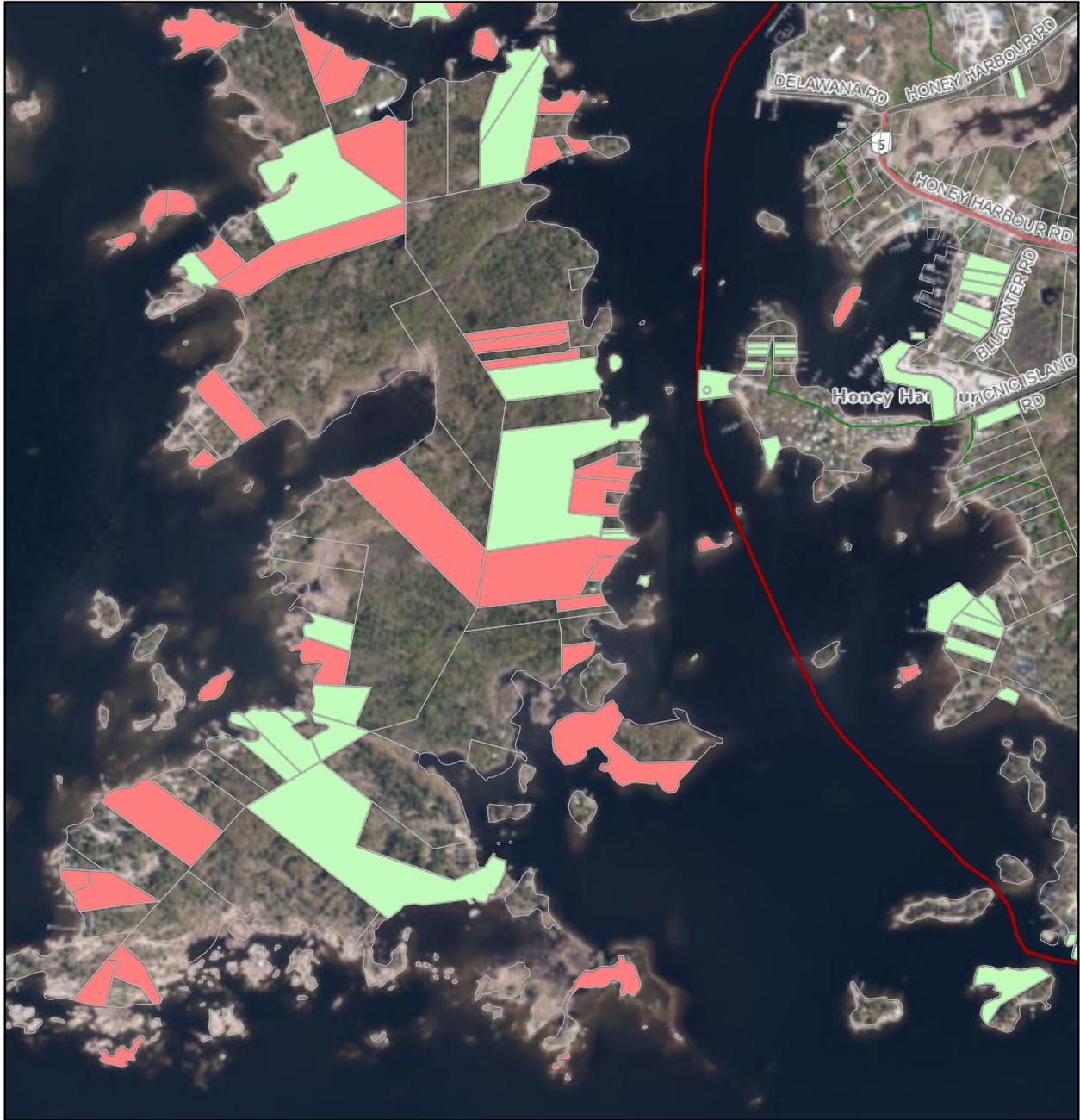
- Parcels: GBT* Assessment
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- Community
- Geographic Township

- Area Municipality
- District Municipality
- Road Network
- Township
- Private
- Civic Addresses



The District Municipality of Muskoka

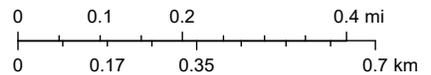
Roberts Island



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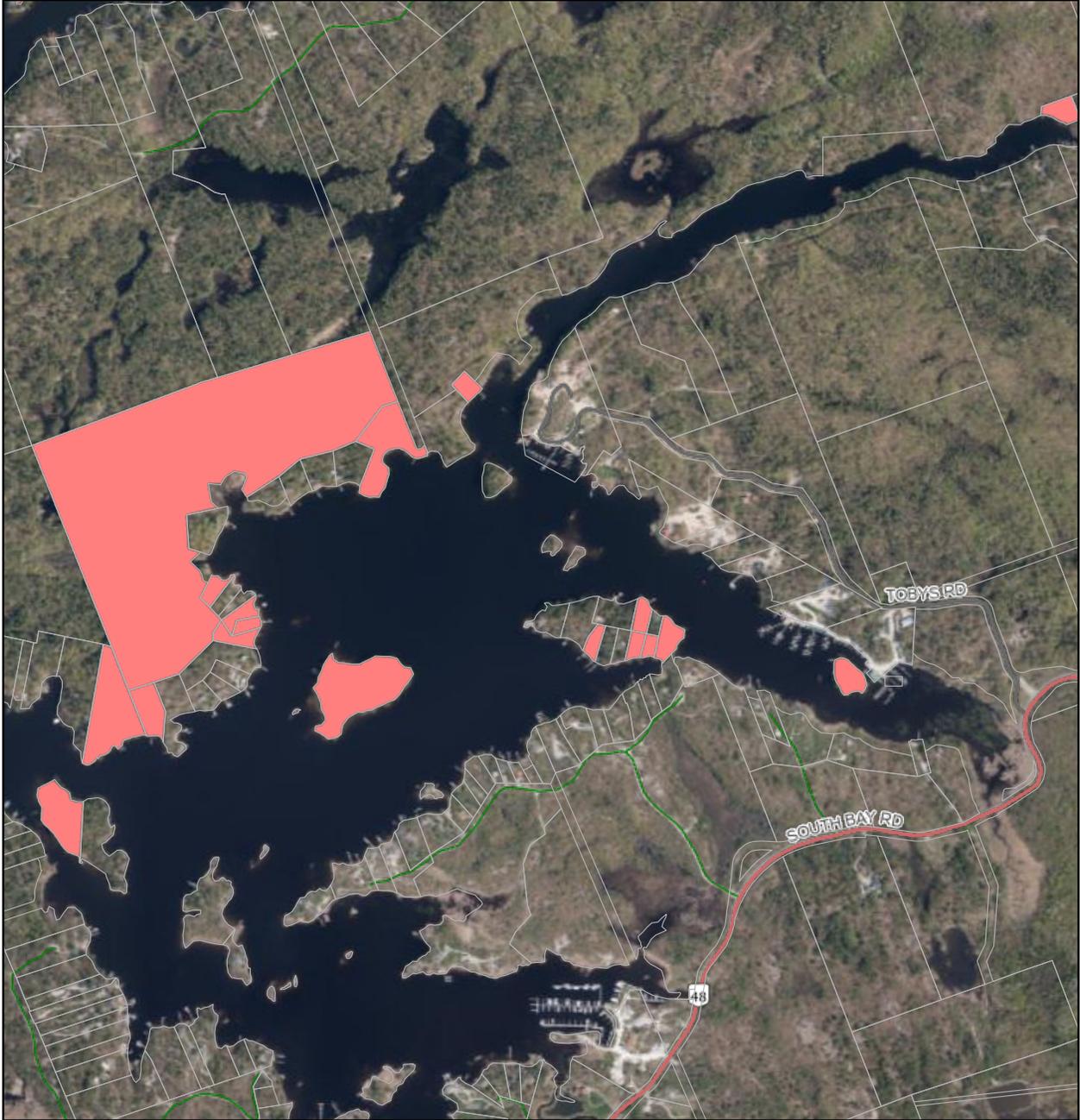
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| Reinspection Rolls 2024 | Road Network |
| Developed Properties No Septic Records MPAC | District |
| Settlement Areas | Township |
| Community | Private |
| Geographic Township | Civic Addresses |
| Area Municipality | |



The District Municipality of Muskoka

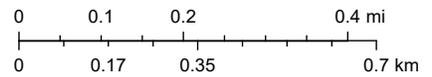
South Bay



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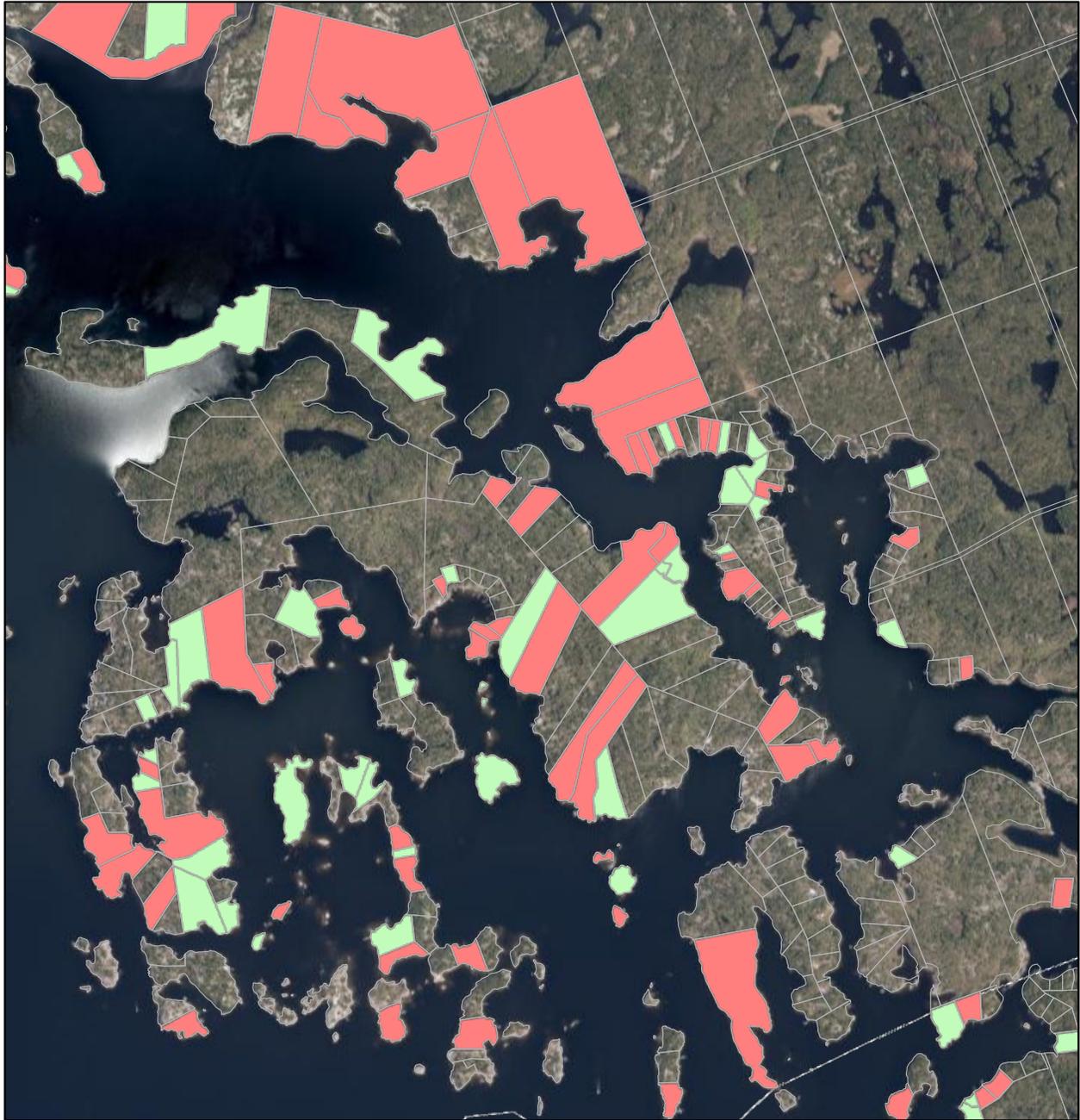
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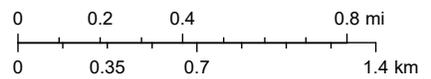
Webber Island/ Bone Island



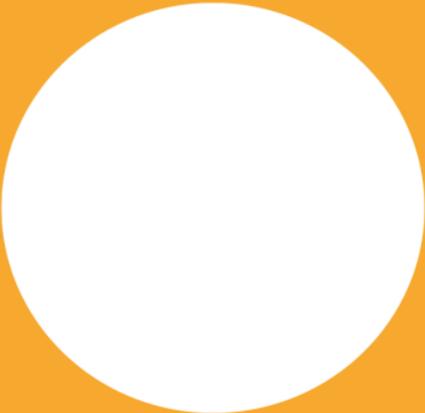
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**SEPTIC
RE-INSPECTION
PROGRAM**

**A Septic Inspection
Was Completed**

Based on the inspection completed your
sewage system appears:

- To be in good standing, or
- Requires further follow up

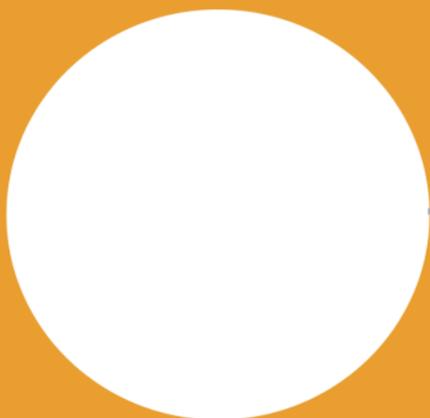
Reason for follow up:



**TOWNSHIP OF
GEORGIAN BAY**
99 Lone Pine Rd, Port Severn
705-538-2337 ext. 233
building@gbtownship.ca

follow us



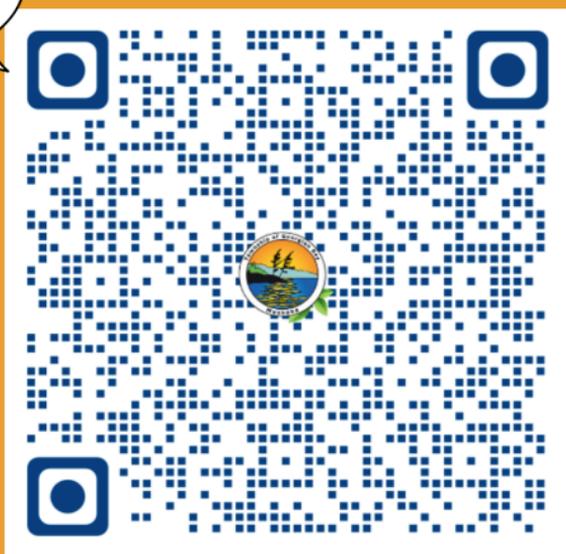


QUESTIONS ABOUT SEPTIC RE-INSPECTION?



Water Quality Reporting & Tips on
Maintaining a Healthy Septic
System

SCAN ME



visit www.gbtownship.ca/septicreinspection



**TOWNSHIP OF
GEORGIAN BAY**

99 Lone Pine Rd, Port Severn

705-538-2337 ext. 233

building@gbtownship.ca

follow us





The Corporation of the
**Township of Georgian
Bay**

Department of Development Services

99 Lone Pine Rd
Port Severn, Ontario • L0K 1S0
Phone (800)567-0187 or (705) 538-2337 ext. 233
Fax (705)538-1850
e-mail building@gbtownship.ca

May 2024

(OWNER NAME)

(OWNER ADDRESS)

RE: NOTICE OF ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEM RE-INSPECITON PROGRAM

Since 1998, the Township of Georgian Bay has been committed to preserving inland lakes, rivers, and groundwater by completing on-site sewage system re-inspections. In addition to provincial requirements, the Township has established a septic system re-inspection program to ensure existing septic systems are functioning properly.

If you are receiving this letter your property has been selected for an onsite sewage system inspection as part of the discretionary re-inspection program within the costal communities of Georgian Bay.

Inspections will take place during summer months over a three-year period from 2024-2026 (Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m-3:00 p.m.)

Prior to the Township's on-site visit, a search of records will be completed to obtain information on the septic system including location, size, and age. An Inspector may require further investigation at the time of inspection if signs of failure are present.

Below are some frequently asked questions regarding the Townships septic re-inspection program:

What is a septic re-inspection?

Township septic inspectors perform a non-invasive visual observation of the existing septic system for signs of failure, including ponding water, sewage break out, and malfunctioning systems.

Is there a cost for the re-inspection program?

No. Currently, there is no charge for the septic re-inspection program.

Are all properties being inspected?

No. If you are receiving this letter, your property lies within an area that has been designated for inspection within the re-inspection program. The Township has focused efforts on waterfront properties and hotspot areas.

Ministry of Environment Septic Use Permit data has been digitized and analyzed for properties within the costal community of Georgian Bay. As a result, the Township has focused re-inspection efforts on aged septic systems on waterfront properties.

What happens after the inspection?

A notice of inspection will be left on the property to provide confirmation that staff were on site and a septic re-inspection was completed.

Property owners will only be notified following an inspection if potential issues are found during the inspection. In some cases, additional investigation and testing may be requested by the Inspector such as:

- On site meeting with the owner to determine issue.
- Records or further information as requested by inspector (ex. pump out/third party inspection records).
- Dye testing or request tank lids to be exposed for further examination.

Do I need to provide transportation to my island property?

No. The Township will inspect the on-site sewage system. You do not need to provide transportation.

For more information regarding the septic re-inspection program scan the QR code below or visit our webpage at:
www.gbtownship.ca/septicreinspection





The Corporation of the
**Township of Georgian
Bay**

Department of Development Services

99 Lone Pine Rd
Port Severn, Ontario • L0K 1S0
Phone (800)567-0187 or (705) 538-2337 ext. 233
Fax (705)538-1850
e-mail building@gbtownship.ca

May 2023

(owner name)

(owner mailing address)

NOTICE OF MANDATORY ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEM RE-INSPECITON 2023

Dear Property Owner(s),

The Township of Georgian Bay is committed to preserving inland lakes, rivers and groundwater within the municipality. Additional, provincial regulations set out requirements for the Township of Georgian Bay to perform septic inspections within areas that can pose a significant threat to drinking water.

Changes have been made to the Ontario Building Code through Ontario Regulation 315/10 that require mandatory on-site sewage system inspections. Inspections are required under the Ontario Building Code to identify systems that aren't being properly maintained, and that therefore pose a threat to public health.

The Township will start conducting on-site inspections of existing sewage systems as part of a septic re-inspection program during regular office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Inspections will start in June and end in the fall of 2023. Property owners do not need to book inspections.

What happens during an inspection?

While on the property, Inspectors are performing non invasive visual observations of existing septic systems for signs of failure, including ponding water, sewage break out, and effluent.

Below are some frequently asked questions regarding the Townships septic re-inspection program.

Are all properties being inspected?

No. If you are receiving this letter, your property lies within an Intake Protection Zone and is considered a vulnerable area. For more information on Source Water Protection visit <https://www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca/>

Records Vs. No Records

Under the *Ontario Building Code*, a permit is required for the construction, maintenance or repair of an on-site sewage system. The Township does keep septic systems records including permits and use permits prior to the Township becoming the jurisdiction having authority over septic systems.

Prior to the Townships visit, a search of records will be completed to obtain info on the septic system including location, size, etc.. If the Township does not have any records available for the property or the septic system appears to be at risk of malfunction or failure, the Inspector may require further investigation.

What happens after the inspection?

Property owners will only be notified following an inspection if potential issues are found during the inspection. In some cases, additional investigation and testing may be requested by the Inspector such as:

- On site meeting with the owner to determine issue
- Provide records or further information as requested by inspector (pump out records)
- Die testing or request tank lids to be exposed for further examination

Is there a cost for the re-inspection program?

No. There is no cost for the septic inspection.

What if I have an Island property?

If your Island property lies within an area designated for inspection within the re-inspection program the Township will inspect the sewage system. You do not need to provide transportation.

For more information regarding the septic re-inspection program scan the QR code below or visit our webpage at: www.gbtownship.ca/septicreinspection



Cody Avery
Building/Septic Inspector
T. 705.538.2337 ext. 231
cavery@gbtownship.ca

