

# PAVING THE WAY TO ZERO DEVELOPMENT IN LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Lac Ste Anne County (LSAC) has long resisted residential and commercial development, which has resulted in degraded roads, limited services, and double-digit tax increases. In LSAC, property taxes increased 16 % from 2018 to 2019!!

Development would increase the tax base and allow for improved services. For example,

- Tax on 160 acre farmland is around 150 \$ annually.
- Tax on forty 4 acre acreages (160 acre total) is over 100 000 \$ annually.

In November 2018, Lac Ste Anne Council implemented an insurmountable barrier to development: a Road Resurfacing policy requires developers pave the County roads to the nearest highway. This requirement is absolute, independent of any traffic study.

While LSAC Administration might naively believe this will get their roads paved, it actually kills development.

For example, a country residential subdivision costs around 50k per lot. Forty lots would cost 2M to build. Being 5 km from a highway adds 4M to the cost — *tripling* the total cost! For the consumer: the same lot would cost 250k in Lac Ste Anne and 150k in other municipalities. No developer will build in Lac Ste Anne, so the municipality loses tax revenue.

In my particular case, I want to develop a back-to-nature campground, where every campsite would have between 0.3 and 1.0 acres. The tax on this parcel of land would increase approximately 100-fold over bare land. Administration and Council expressed being “absolutely in favor of a campground and associated development” and lauded my proposal as “an excellent use of the land”, then they killed it. Then they passed the Road Resurfacing policy. If I reapplied, my development cost would increase from 2M to 10M, with the additional 8M being the cost to pave the roads. The Transportation Impact Assessment shows that the traffic would increase by only 12 % and remain well within the range of gravel standard, but Administration was adamant that the roads must be paved and that I must pay the entire cost.

No matter the intent of the Road Resurfacing policy, it effectively kills development in Lac Ste Anne County. Developers will go elsewhere. Lac Ste Anne’s policy creates a *DEATH SPIRAL* of stalled development, degrading roads, poor community services, and ever-increasing taxes.