



February 2007

## Media Backgrounder

### YDSS Facts

The Regional Municipality of York continues to make every effort to be accessible, accountable and transparent with respect to the twinning (expansion) of the York Durham Sewage System (YDSS). This has entailed extensive public involvement, engagement and consultation.

**Fact:**

Deep gravity sewers are routinely installed in aquifers, using safe and modern tunnelling and dewatering techniques. Deep gravity sewers are common across North America, and are often located within aquifers.

YDSS trunk sewers are constructed with six to 12-inch thick concrete walls. Within an aquifer, groundwater is under pressure, and as such, any leakage would be into the pipe in relatively minute quantities.

Sewers are regularly inspected using closed circuit TV cameras, in addition to constant monitoring of sewage flow rates. There is no danger to drinking water.

**Fact:**

Regional trunk sewers do not leak sewage out into the environment when designed and maintained properly. If leakage does occur, it is from groundwater outside of the pipe leaking into the sewer; in relatively minute quantities. This occurs because the groundwater outside of the pipe is under greater pressure than the free-flowing sewage inside the pipe. Groundwater simply follows the path of least resistance. As mentioned, pipes are routinely inspected by closed circuit TV cameras, in addition to regular monitoring of flow rates.

**Fact:**

The YDSS is a modern sewage transmission and treatment system which safeguards the environment and public health. It has enhanced the environment and public health in areas that are connected to it.

**Fact:**

Sewage servicing can be provided through both local treatment options and centralized treatment, such as the YDSS. York Region has both types of systems. Centralized systems such as the YDSS promote intensification of development. When the YDSS was originally constructed by the Province of Ontario in the mid-1970s, effluent from more than 30 treatment plants was removed from local streams, demonstrably improving water quality.

**Fact:**

All YDSS projects have undergone extensive Environmental Assessments and either meet or exceed stringent Ontario Ministry of the Environment guidelines and regulations. York Region takes these guidelines and regulations seriously. Our due diligence requires that we obtain all necessary approvals and permits prior to construction. During construction, projects are carefully monitored and monthly reports are submitted to the regulatory agencies.

**Fact:**

Although the 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue project has required an extensive amount of dewatering, it represents only two to four per cent of the aquifer storage. The aquifer is continuously replenished through natural recharge. Once construction dewatering is complete, some dewatering will continue in order to meet supplementation needs under the current PTTW. Monitoring has demonstrated that water levels are returning to normal where construction has been complete.

**Fact:**

The environmental monitoring program for the 16th Avenue project includes extensive monitoring of aquifer water levels, stream flows, creek levels, fish species surveys, vegetation surveys, wetland surveys and more. Dewatering discharge is directed into local streams, up to the safe carrying capacity of the streams. The balance is discharged into the YDSS. Creeks near the 16th Avenue project are monitored for water chemistry, fish and water levels. Discharge water temperatures into local streams are controlled to minimize adverse impacts to fish. All indications are that fish are thriving.

**Fact:**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue project, York Region has committed \$30 million to a comprehensive environmental monitoring and mitigation program to protect the environment and provide alternate water supplies to residences that are temporarily affected. As anticipated, dewatering has temporarily impacted some private wells. The Region has a Proactive Mitigation Program to ensure appropriate water supplies are provided to affected residences. York Region has established a 24-hour hotline – 1-888-445-4418 – for residents to call if they have well issues. Further information is available on the Region's Web site, [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

**Fact:**

The Province's Greenbelt legislation – which covers 69 per cent of York Region, including the Oak Ridges Moraine – limits growth. Therefore, a large part of future development will occur through intensification. Growth is also limited by York Region's Official Plan. Growth is managed, focused, controlled and sustainable.

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**For more information, the media should visit the York Region Web site: [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) or contact:**

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