

WATER AND WASTEWATER MASTER PLAN

OPEN HOUSE 2 (WINTER 2021)

SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In Winter 2021, The Regional Municipality of York (York Region) hosted the second of three rounds of community engagement for the 2021 Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update (Master Plan). The Master Plan sets out a long-term plan for water and wastewater services that support York Region's communities now and in the future. Regular updates to the Master Plan ensure long-term plans stay current with evolving needs. The first Open House occurred in fall 2019 to introduce the Master Plan Update.

As part of York Region's commitment to inclusive and transparent planning, the Master Plan team held a second Open House in February 2021. This virtual Open House provided opportunities for the public to express what matters to them and share their feedback on work completed to date. Participants were able to review Open House materials and provide feedback at their convenience at york.ca/waterplan

This report summarizes the second Open House, including how feedback York Region received is being considered in the project.

OPEN HOUSE PURPOSE, NOTIFICATION AND FORMAT

PURPOSE

As part of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process for Master Plans, three rounds of community and stakeholder engagements are planned at key project milestones. Each round of engagements includes public meetings and/or workshops with various stakeholders, partners, government agencies and the public.

The objectives of the second round of community engagement are to:

- Provide information on the Master Plan process and planned future engagements
- Summarize what has been heard from public and stakeholder engagement to date
- Describe the options and high-level strategies considered for servicing future growth
- Offer residents an opportunity to learn more about their water and wastewater system and York Region's public-facing water and wastewater programs
- Achieve the objectives of the MCEA process by providing the community with an opportunity to participate in the Master Planning process and collect meaningful input and feedback to be incorporated into the project and ongoing water and wastewater programs and initiatives

Participants were provided the opportunity to sign up for future project communications by being added to the Master Plan project mailing list.

EVENT NOTIFICATIONS

York Region used different channels to promote the online Open House event to reach our communities, including:

- Advertisements in community newspapers and publications
- Advertisements on social media including on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram
- yorkregion.com homepage takeover and digital ads
- Direct emails to all review agencies, stakeholders, partners and participants on the project mailing list
- [Splash](#) (a York Region e-newsletter)
- york.ca/waterplan (York Region's website project landing page)

Samples of event promotional materials are available in attachment A.

OPEN HOUSE CONTENT AND FORMAT

The Open House online format allowed participants to view maps, graphics and to provide feedback. The Open House included information about:

- The purpose of the Master Plan and why it is being updated
- The updated Opportunity Statement
- How the Master Plan is connected to other Regional planning documents and local planning documents
- The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process for Master Plans and associated project timelines
- How participants could get involved in Master Plan engagement opportunities and stay connected with project updates
- What was heard from engagement to date
- An overview of York Region's natural environment, water and wastewater system and sources of water supply
- Servicing options and the proposed servicing strategies
- A review of related programs including demand management, climate change, asset management, the 'One Water' approach and principles for decision-making

The full Open House content can be viewed at york.ca/waterplan. The online Open House included an opportunity for viewers to provide comments and ask questions through an online survey. Comments and questions about the Master Plan and how York Region is considering them in the Master Plan update are described further in this report.

RESULTS OF OPEN HOUSE AND FEEDBACK RECEIVED

RESULTS OF OPEN HOUSE 2

Eighty-three surveys were completed during online Open House 2, and 11 comments were provided for consideration by the project team. Forty new requests were received to be added to the project mailing list.

FEEDBACK RECEIVED ON THE MASTER PLAN

Throughout online Open House 2, participants were engaged by asking them questions and given them the opportunity to provide feedback. This included feedback related to the project, as well as feedback that would help inform the design and online experience for future engagement. This report focuses on feedback relevant to the update project. Participants' comments and questions were summarized and grouped into key themes:

1. Location of future servicing
2. Impact of growth on environment and water sources
3. Other

In addition, many participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about the Master Plan and water and wastewater services in the region. York Region would like to acknowledge and thank all who participated.

By theme, the following sections summarize the comments and questions raised in relation to the Master Plan and how York Region is considering the feedback. Planning for growth happens in a coordinated and integrated way through various regional and local municipal processes, plans and programs. This context is reflected as appropriate. A list of all comments received in relation to the project are included in attachment B.

1. Location of future servicing

What was heard: you want to know if a particular community, street or future employment land will receive municipal water and wastewater services, and when this might happen.

How this feedback is being considered:

- The Water and Wastewater Master Plan will service growth in areas identified for municipal servicing. Areas of growth will be outlined through the Regional Official Plan (ROP), which is currently being updated through the [Municipal Comprehensive Review](#)
- The ROP describes how York Region plans to accommodate future growth and development. It provides directions and policies that guide economic, environmental and community planning decisions and complies with provincial legislation such as the Provincial Policy Statement, the

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan

- These provincial plans contain policies that guide how York Region plans for municipal servicing and include restrictions on extending lake-based municipal servicing or extending partial servicing for specific areas
- York Region acts as a wholesale provider of water and wastewater services to towns and cities. Those towns and cities are responsible for the connection and distribution of services on a local level, directly to residents and businesses
- The Master Plan will identify water and wastewater servicing needs on a regional scale. This includes supply, conveyance and treatment requirements to meet 2051 demands
- As towns and cities are responsible for distribution of municipal water and wastewater servicing on a local scale, they will identify if/when a particular development/area/address will receive municipal servicing and generally do so in a Secondary Plan or servicing master plan
- Local towns and cities will be updating their Official Plans and supporting plans once the ROP update is complete to bring them into conformity with the updated ROP
- Please contact your local town or city for more information on servicing plans for a specific location

2. Impact of growth on environment and water sources

What was heard: you think managing growth is important to preserve existing farmlands and are concerned about agricultural runoff into lakes and streams. You are also concerned about phosphorus loading, emerging contaminants such as microplastics and impacts climate change may have on water quality and quantity.

How this feedback is being considered:

- Building on the information about the Regional Official Plan (ROP) provided above, provincial plans direct growth in a manner that protects agriculture, the natural heritage system (environmentally significant areas, aquatic and wildlife habitats, etc.) and the water resources system. The ROP update will include mapping that will identify these systems and policies to protect their ecological integrity in accordance with provincial plans
- There are also policies in the ROP that provide direction on source water protection and stormwater management, which are key policy tools to protect water resources. These policies — in combination with actions, policies and programs implemented by York Region, municipalities, Conservation Authorities and Provincial Ministries — work together to reduce and manage phosphorus loading on a watershed scale. For more information, visit lsrca.on.ca or trca.ca
- Source Water Protection is a program legislated by the Province of Ontario to protect municipal drinking water sources from contamination or over-use. York Region has a Source Water Protection program that works with municipalities, agricultural, industrial and commercial

industries, residents and developers to protect our water sources from threats like pollution within vulnerable areas now and into the future. Learn more at york.ca/protectingwater

- York Region staff go above and beyond government requirements and monitor water and wastewater for emerging contaminants to provide context to developing research and identify any potential future risks early. Staff work with world class researchers to determine if steps need to be taken to address new contaminants in the treatment process and advocate with other levels of government to reduce the amount of potentially risky chemicals from reaching drinking water supplies by reducing them at the source
- York Region has ongoing research projects with the Drinking Water Research Group to better understand the type and occurrence of microplastics and how they are removed through the treatment process
- To mitigate the impacts and improve climate resiliency, York Region has released a [Draft Climate Change Action Plan](#). Key actions include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and conducting a vulnerability assessment on natural systems and integrating adaptive actions into watershed planning

3. Other

What was heard: you want to know why your community is serviced using groundwater when other communities have lake-based supply.

How this feedback is being considered:

- As required by the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, York Region and local towns and cities regularly sample drinking water to ensure it meets high standards for quality. The water supplied complies with the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards, regardless of it being groundwater or lake-based supply
- As York Region does not have direct access to Lake Ontario, groundwater remains an important water resource in the central area of York Region. Using groundwater supply meets local drinking water needs and maintains appropriate water table levels in the Yonge Street Aquifer
- The Water and Wastewater Master Plan outlines a long-term infrastructure plan to service the growth identified through the Regional Official Plan (ROP) update, and complies with provincial legislation such as the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan
- These provincial plans contain policies that guide how York Region plans for municipal servicing and include restrictions on extending lake-based municipal servicing or extending partial servicing for specific areas
- According to the province's legislative long-term plan, [A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#), extending supply from a Great Lake's source is generally only permitted if the extension is required for reasons of public health and safety

- York Region completed a region-wide groundwater treatment study in 2020. The study recommended improved operations and maintenance practices and facility upgrades including upgrading groundwater treatment to remove iron and/or manganese at 10 facilities throughout the Region. A contract was awarded in late 2020 to begin preliminary design at these 10 facilities ([report](#) and [attachment](#) available here)

What was heard: a timely and long-term wastewater servicing solution is required to ensure growth and development can occur as envisioned in northern York Region.

How this feedback is being considered:

- York Region is forecast by the province to continue to accommodate the highest share of growth within the Greater Golden Horseshoe to 2051
- Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review, [York Regional Council have advised the province](#) that provincial support for this growth is required through timely infrastructure approvals for projects, particularly the Upper York Water Reclamation Centre
- York Regional staff will continue to work with the Province, Durham Region and affected Indigenous communities to determine an implementable solution to long-term servicing needs for the Towns of Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. In January 2021, [York Regional Council affirmed its support](#) for the Lake Simcoe Solution as documented in the Upper York Sewage Solutions Environmental Assessment

What was heard: you are eager to hear more about innovative concepts and ideas being developed as part of York Region's One Water approach.

How this comment is being considered:

- As population growth, rising infrastructure costs and impacts from climate change place increasing pressures on water resources, there is recognition that holistic, sustainable and integrated solutions are required
- The "One Water" concept is an integrated planning and implementation approach to managing finite water resources that has been adopted by utilities around the world
- York Region turned to One Water to help identify cost-effective solutions leading to a financially-sustainable system, reduce reliance on water sources beyond its borders and minimize its impact on the natural environment
- The Master Plan employs the One Water approach by using three principles of innovation, integration and infra-stretching in decision-making
- York Region maintains a number of strong partnerships with academia and industry research associations, allowing for participation in cutting edge research and benefitting from advice and information from some of Canada's and North America's leading experts to support York Region's water and wastewater program delivery

- The research and innovation undertaken at York Region enable the development and implementation of innovative solutions to complex problems, improving processes and services by anticipating future regulatory changes and mitigating potential challenges
- One Water is a key component to achieving York Regional Council's vision of building strong, caring and safe communities
- More information about the One Water approach will be shared in the next Open House and in the final Master Plan report

NEXT STEPS

Feedback from Open House 1 and 2 is being used to develop York Region's Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update. York Region is considering topics important to the community and stakeholders to help guide development of the long-term water and wastewater servicing strategy and draft infrastructure plan.

The final Open House is scheduled for summer 2021 and will present the preferred water servicing strategy and water and wastewater infrastructure solution under consideration. The Master Plan is planned to be completed and presented to York Regional Council for endorsement in early 2022.

For more information, please visit york.ca/waterplan

To connect with York Region about this project, please email water@york.ca or call Access York at 1-877-464-9675 (TTY: 1-866-512-6228).

ATTACHMENT A

OPEN HOUSE PROMOTION

Note: the following images are for illustrative purposes only and do not include every promotional item issued.

Newspaper ad

Two ½ page ads in Metroland Newspapers (January 28 and February 4, 2021). Half-page ads in monthly community newspapers (January and February 2021).

YOU'RE INVITED!

From the comfort of your own home, find out how York Region plans to continue providing safe, cost-efficient and reliable water and wastewater services to residents, businesses and communities. Visit our virtual Open House for an update on where we are in the planning process and learn more about servicing strategies that will meet the needs of our growing communities.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR ONLINE OPEN HOUSE | **FEBRUARY 16 TO MARCH 2, 2021**
YORK.CA/WATERPLAN

Please let us know if you require accommodations to participate. An accessible version of this notice and Open House materials are available upon request. To submit questions, comments or to be added to the project mailing list, please contact:

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The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket
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F: 905-830-6927
water@york.ca

2021 WATER & WASTEWATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE
Open House Round 2

The Regional Municipality of York is updating its Water and Wastewater Master Plan through the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment master planning process. The Master Plan Update will identify long-term infrastructure projects for future water and wastewater servicing needs to 2051. Your input will help inform the recommended servicing solution and future infrastructure that will be shared in the next Open House.

DID YOU MISS OUR FIRST OPEN HOUSE?
Get caught up at york.ca/waterplan

York Region's number one priority remains protecting the health and safety of staff and our communities. We continue to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation in York Region and remain committed to effective engagement and consultation with the public and stakeholders.

Personal information submitted (e.g., name, address and phone number) is collected, maintained and disclosed under the authority of the Environmental Assessment Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for transparency and consultation purposes. Personal information you submit will become part of a public record that is available to the general public, unless you request that your personal information remain confidential.

York Region

Social media

Instagram Story (February 16, 2021)

You're invited!
BE PART OF SHAPING YOUR WATER'S FUTURE.
2021 Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE

THIS ONLINE OPEN HOUSE WILL:

- ✓ Explain how York Region plans drinking water and wastewater services
- ✓ Outline proposed water and wastewater servicing strategies that will meet the needs of existing and future communities

Visit our Online Open House to learn more!

Swipe up

Facebook/LinkedIn (February 16, 2021)

You're invited! Be part of shaping your water's future.

Between now and March 2, visit York Region's online Open House **for an update on our Water and Wastewater Master Plan** at york.ca/waterplan

York Region's Water and Wastewater Master Plan is our long-term strategy for providing safe, cost-efficient and reliable water and wastewater services to residents, businesses and growing communities.

The Master Plan is updated every five years to ensure our long-term strategies and recommendations remain relevant to York Region's evolving needs.

This online Open House will provide an update on where we are in the planning process and outline proposed water and wastewater servicing strategies that will meet the needs of our growing communities from now to 2051.

You're invited!
**BE PART OF
SHAPING YOUR
WATER'S FUTURE.**

ONLINE
OPEN
HOUSE



ATTACHMENT B

ACTUAL COMMENTS RECEIVED BY THEME

Note: the following comments are focused on the Master Plan project. Feedback collected on ways to improve the online presentation format are not included here.

1. Location of future servicing

Comments received:

1. "My questions are all about future employment zones and associated servicing"
2. "Is Cedar Ridge Road in Stouffville planned to get municipal water and sewage? And when is that in the works to happen?"
3. "Is the Region looking at expanding the water and/or wastewater treatment capacities to allow for full development of the Sutton urban area, as well as urban expansion of Keswick?"
4. "Town of Stouffville has secondary plan for Vandorf since 1990's. When and how can you make services available? All maps on this open house ignore possible development possibilities in Vandorf Secondary Plan of Town of Stouffville from what I glean from your website. Am I correct you are ignoring Vandorf?"

2. Impact of growth on environment and water sources

Comments received:

1. "I worry about agricultural runoff into groundwater and streams and lakes. And I am concerned about phosphates and plastics in the water supply and in the sources. Any comments concerning removal of these would be helpful."
2. "I think controlling growth is important to preserve remaining farm lands and the existing Oak Ridges Moraine and green belt lands. We are saddened to see so much fertile farm land being developed. We should preserve these lands for future food supply and also to protect our environment. We appreciate the nature preserves and farm lands around Stouffville and York Region and hope that they would be better regulated and preserved to avoid unfettered growth in and around York Region."
3. "Perhaps not missed, but worth reiterating the importance of considering additional stress that climate change will have our water resources and therefor all options should be progress with latest climate projections, which currently show drier hotter summers which will likely increase demand and increase risk to supply."

3. Other

Comments received:

1. "How come in your master plans only the Nobleton area is getting screwed with ground water (super hard water) until 2051?? I can see from the proposed diagrams that lake water is all around us? Do we not pay the same taxes and extremely high water costs that all other residents of King pay? This is absolutely outrageous that the residents of Nobleton are getting screwed this way! I think it really is time for me to move out of king if they continue to treat Nobleton as a second class citizen! Update the plan so the residents of Nobleton are not getting and continue to be screwed by York Region!"
2. "Uncertainty around the availability of sanitary servicing capacity is a major risk that makes development in northern York Region less attractive than other municipalities, and may have something to do with the Regions recent underperformance on growth compared to the growth plan. The missed opportunities for growth will further exacerbate the regions undersupply of housing and hurt affordability. It's incumbent upon the Region (and the Province) to identify a clear path forward to resolve these servicing constraints in order to ensure the ongoing prosperity of York Region, the lower tier municipalities, and residents (both the rich and the poor - who are disproportionately impacted by housing affordability)."
3. "Continued collaboration with LSRCA on the one water approach is needed to ensure strengths and experience of both organizations are maximized for a full one water approach."
4. "What are some of the new concepts and ideas that have come up as part of the Innovation part of the One Water Strategy? Can you elaborate more on the Innovation?"