



York Region
Water and Wastewater Public Consultation Centre
Meeting Notes

Public Consultation Centre 1, Meeting 1
Our Lady of Grace Catholic High School
120 Aurora Heights Drive, Aurora
Aurora, Ontario

November 21, 2006

Opening

Mr. Dave Hardy (Facilitator, Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited) welcomed the 53 attendees, described the York Region and Durham Region Water and Wastewater Master Plan and Water for Tomorrow display boards and provided an overview of the agenda and purposes of the evening session.

Dave Hardy introduced political representatives and Region of York staff. Local municipal employees introduced themselves.

Dr. Hamid Hatami (Manager, Water and Wastewater, York Region) presented an overview of the York Region Water and Wastewater Master Plan study, growth projections and changes in Provincial legislation affecting the former Master Plan (see attached PowerPoint slides).

Mr. Stan Holden, P.Eng. (Manager, MacViro Consultants, a division of GENIVAR Ontario Inc.) presented an overview of York Region's current water and wastewater system (see attached PowerPoint slides).

Dialogue Session

Dave Hardy asked for comments and advice from residents and posed four questions: 1) *How can York Region improve its water and wastewater*

infrastructure? He stated, York Region has provided information about the purposes of their study and the issues they propose to study. 2) *Are there other matters they should be studying?* 3) *Have they missed anything?* The Region wants to develop sustainable infrastructure. They are thinking long-term and asking you: 4) *What would it take for York's Water and Wastewater Servicing infrastructure to be recognized as the standard of sustainability?*

A resident stated that he would support raising water rates. He stated we see many examples of water going to waste. It is so inexpensive as to be deemed free. To elicit strong conservation (through rain barrels, rebates etc.), price raises would be needed.

Responding to Stan Holden's presentation a resident stated that there should be a survey of wastewater management at Musselman's Lake / Ballantrae.

A resident referred to the water and waste water system in Aurora. He asked, in the south end of Aurora there are many properties that have their own wells/septic systems. Are there any plans to bring them online? The resident noted that the longer the issue is not addressed, the more costly it will be.

Ms. Debbie Korolnek, York Region, General Manager of Water and Wastewater stated that the Region is capable of bringing those properties onto the municipal system, however as the system is owned and run by the local municipality. Doing so would be the choice of the Town of Aurora. It is a matter of cost and the desire of residents.

A resident noted the projected population increase of 580,000 people in York Region by 2031. He asked whether the water and wastewater system is being designed to meet the 2031 goal or look beyond that?

Stan Holden stated that the Master Plan proposes to project growth to 2031 and also consider different levels of intensification.

The resident stated that it was important to think long term when planning for infrastructure and position the Region to have available capacity. Economies of scale should also be considered.

In response to a question about the current capacity of the wastewater servicing system vs. the projected population, York Region staff responded that the system is now able to accommodate 970,000 people. Staff explained that the Master Plan process involves analyzing how many people will be living in York Region in 2031 and beyond to an ultimate scenario, and to design infrastructure to meet those needs. The resident recommended providing information on the capacity of the current system.

A resident pointed out that York Region had asked for advice about the 'sustainability standard'. He stated that it will be important to develop criteria by which to measure sustainability. He asked, are there markers to indicate sustainability/ unsustainability? Do you have a ceiling (infrastructure/population growth) to indicate this? He recommended that the Region could do a better job in defining and establishing criteria/definitions, so that you can measure sustainability/ unsustainability.

Another resident observed that the discussion is about sustainability in the future, and asked about problems in the water and waste water system now. She observed that there is flooding in Newmarket, Aurora and other municipalities due to storm water. The resident pointed to the flooding of the Board of Education Building parking lot in Aurora that gets flooded twice a year. The resident suggested that flooding and sewer back-ups should also be addressed by the Master Plan.

York Region staff stated that the stormwater systems are not addressed by the Master Plan. Storm and sanitary systems are separate in York Region. Flooding is often due to older neighbourhoods built in floodplains.

A resident stated that the projected 600,000 increase in population in York Region seems to be an assumption rather than a fact. He asked whether anyone in the Region is thinking that we can't sustain these additional people or that lower numbers should be used in the modelling and assumptions?

Staff stated that York Region hasn't accepted the growth level advocated by the Province of Ontario through its '*Places to Grow*' legislation. York Region has instead approved an increase of 300,000 through the Official Plan. We've said to the Province that we can't take a higher level of population increase without investment from Province, particularly in transportation and human services.

The resident stated that York Region should plan infrastructure on the basis of the carrying capacity of existing watersheds. The Region should not make assumptions that even if these watersheds run dry we will get water from Lake Ontario. This would be an unsustainable approach.

Regional staff stated that, if the Region decided to cap development, policy makers would still be faced with the issue of where to located new immigrants. A decision in York Region has implications elsewhere.

A resident stated that stormwater should be examined at the same time as water and wastewater. Many issues of sustainability are stormwater related. What is Region doing to link the water system with the stormwater system?

A resident stated that he was concerned with water restrictions and asked if the Water and Wastewater Master Plan would provide an end to water restrictions? He stated that it would be acceptable to pump more water from Lake Ontario, if it meant that water restrictions would end.

Another resident stated that the Master Plan should complete water balance studies and watershed studies. The studies should be completed before future pipes are constructed and to assess the implications of future development. A consulting team member stated that the study will examine which watershed the Region is proposing to take water from and return water to. He observed that the Conservation Authorities are developing means and methods of looking at the water balance related to new development.

A resident asked whether development is being limited by infrastructure such as the new elevated tank in Oak Ridges. He observed that the capacity of the existing standpipe is about 1/3 of what is required for the current population base when the new facility comes online at the end of 2007. The resident observed that population growth probably exceeded the current tank capacity in 1999 or 2000.

He stated, it's a standpipe currently and it's going to be an elevated tank. Is this a unique example or are there broader implications? He observed, since we've exceeded the capacity of the existing population for a number of years, we might have needed to change the development charges 5-6 years ago.

A resident commented on water and wastewater economics. He stated that he understands the system to be a user pay system. If there is a cost associated with the new infrastructure, is new development paying the fair share of the new infrastructure?

Another resident stated that development should be limited by the infrastructure that is in place and development should pay for the costs of the new infrastructure. The resident suggested that Oak Ridges is an example of infrastructure has not kept pace with development.

A resident observed that the Region is building a new water tower on the north side of Bloomington Sideroad and tearing down the existing tank. Regional staff indicated that the new tank may not be in the same location.

Regional staff stated that York Region has development charges that pay for new water and wastewater infrastructure. The Region does not approve development that can't be serviced. The Official Plan governs where people will live. As an example, the Region has suggested that a new tank be built in Oak Ridges.

The resident opined that the amount of the development charge is determined by Master Plans and there is not a bank account that has development charges in place.

Another resident asked why Nobleton is discharging into the Humber River as a local discharge system? Have they opted out of the servicing system? Regional staff responded that Nobleton, as a tertiary treatment system, can discharge to the main branch of the Humber River. This is a unique case of a smaller population and a bigger receiving stream.

A resident suggested that the Master Plan review existing sewage pumping station infrastructure where there have been a lot of exceedances in the past. The Master Plan should take into consideration improving the quality and capacity of the sewage pumping station infrastructure.

Another resident suggested that the Master plan look at standards for leakage and infiltration levels. Regional staff responded that there is an ongoing program to look at leakage and infiltration with local area municipalities. The Region has also completed a study that has reviewed/looked at different standards. These matters will be addressed by the Water Efficiency Master Plan.

A resident pointed to the list of ongoing water and waste water EA's cited in Stan Holden's presentation. He asked Stan to reflect upon the big picture and asked: What are the EAs you mentioned telling you? When would some of these assessments be completed?

Mr. Holden responded that the EA's are about individual communities. Through the Master Plan we're looking at the whole system. We will start seeing results of the studies in about a year. Regional staff encouraged residents to follow the progress of the EA's and the Master Plan through updates on the York Region website.

Dave Hardy thanked the participants for attending and indicated that notes from the session, the presentation slides, and the panels would be put up on the website (www.york.waterwastewatermasterplan.ca).

Notes: Mr. Sanjay Coelho