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Upper York Sewage Solutions Environmental Assessment

July 3, 2013 Georgina Public Information Forum Summary Report

**Prepared for:
The Regional Municipality of York**

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Executive Summary

At the request of the Town of Georgina (the Town), a Public Information Forum (PIF) was held at the Recreation Outdoor Campus (ROC) Chalet in Georgina on July 3, 2013. The results of the impact assessment for the preferred site for the proposed Lake Simcoe Water Reclamation Centre, including associated conveyance infrastructure and outfall, were presented at this PIF for public information and feedback during the PIF.

Eighteen people attended the Georgina PIF, including two Councillors from the Town. Comments and questions from attendees were noted from one-on-one discussions during the open house. This was followed by a short presentation and subsequent facilitated question and answer period.

Key comments from those attending the PIF included:

- Impact of pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors
- The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation have noted that they oppose the project - not the technology, but that it will discharge into Lake Simcoe; and that they would prefer to see the other existing Water Pollution Control Plants in Lake Simcoe use the same technology
- Request from the Town Councillors that the savings from the project be used to build a Water Reclamation Centre on the Holland River to treat runoff from the agricultural land
- Related to potential effects (flooding, erosion, temperature change) in the East Holland River



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Section 1.0 Introduction

This report summarizes the Public Information Forum (PIF) held at the request of the Town of Georgina on July 3, 2013.

The purpose of the UYSS EA is to develop a sustainable sewage servicing solution to accommodate provincially approved growth to 2031 in the UYSS service area. The service area consists of the growth portions of the Towns of Aurora and Newmarket and portions of the Town of East Gwillimbury, including Holland Landing, Queensville and Sharon.

The proposed Innovative Wastewater Treatment Technologies (Lake Simcoe Water Reclamation Centre) alternative with York Durham Sewage System (YDSS) Modifications has been identified as the Preferred Alternative To the Undertaking for the UYSS. Following confirmation of the Lake Simcoe Water Reclamation Centre as the Preferred Alternative, York Region proceeded with the next stage of the UYSS EA, Alternative Methods of Carrying out the Undertaking, in accordance with the Minister of the Environment approved (as amended) UYSS EA Terms of Reference.

Wastewater from approved growth in the Town of East Gwillimbury and a portion of the Town of Newmarket would be conveyed to the proposed Water Reclamation Centre for treatment, using environmentally sustainable wastewater purification and water recycling technologies.

As a result of extensive consultation between January 2012 and November 2012, a preferred site for the proposed Water Reclamation Centre was identified on 2nd Concession, approximately 1 kilometre north of Queensville Sideroad in East Gwillimbury, along with trunk sewer pipes to transport wastewater to the proposed Water Reclamation Centre for treatment and a pipe to carry treated water to the proposed outfall location in the East Holland River at Queensville Sideroad.

Wastewater resulting from approved growth in the Town of Aurora and the remainder of the Town of Newmarket would be conveyed to the existing YDSS for treatment at the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) and discharged to Lake Ontario. This growth would require an additional wastewater forcemain. York Region has identified a preferred route for this additional forcemain, adjacent to the existing YDSS forcemain alignment.

During the Impact Assessment of the Preferred Method stage of the UYSS EA York Region developed a preliminary design for the proposed Water Reclamation Centre in East Gwillimbury and proposed modifications to the YDSS in Newmarket to identify potential environmental effects, avoidance, mitigation, and compensation measures; identify appropriate monitoring requirements, and identify approval and permitting requirements.

Section 2.0 Public Information Forum Purpose, Format and Notification

The Minister-approved (as amended) UYSS EA Terms of Reference includes a consultation plan that identifies a number of key decision-making milestones when consultation would occur during the UYSS EA, including the recommended Alternative Methods. With this in mind, a Public Open House was held in the Town of East Gwillimbury on June 16, 2012. An additional PIF was held on July 3, 2013 in the Town in response to a request made to York Region. The purpose of this PIF was to present information and receive feedback on the preliminary design of the Water Reclamation Centre, including the avoidance, mitigation and other measures proposed to eliminate or reduce potential negative environmental impacts.

To fulfill this purpose, the PIF was held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the ROC Chalet in the Town of Georgina, offering an open house and brief presentation followed by a facilitated question and answer session. Eighteen individuals attended the event, including two Councillors from the Town.

The open house was held from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. to allow individuals to view display panels with project information and discuss the project one-on-one with members of the UYSS EA Project Team. A copy of these panels is included in **Appendix A**.

At 7:30 p.m. the independent facilitator, Sue Cumming, opened the presentation portion of the PIF and introduced Adrian Coombs (York Region Project Manager), who provided a short presentation on the background of the project, the preferred site for proposed Water Reclamation Centre and the results of the impact assessment of the proposed Water Reclamation Centre. A copy of the presentation is included in **Appendix B**.

Following the presentation, a facilitated question and answer period was held, with the UYSS EA Project Team members providing responses to the questions.

Comment forms were provided to participants for additional comments or questions they did not share during the PIF. A summary of the comments is included in **Section 3**.

Notification for this PIF was accomplished through the following:

- Notification to all review agencies and interested members of the public in the contact database by email and regular mail. Approximately 686 notifications were sent to individuals beginning on June 27, 2013.
- Newspaper advertisements in the *Georgina Advocate* on Thursday June 6 and Thursday June 20, 2013.

A copy of the notice is included in **Appendix C**.

Section 3.0 Feedback Received at the Public Information Forum

As discussed in **Section 2**, participants were asked to provide feedback on the project during the open house, question and answer period, and on comment forms. Key comments from those attending the PIF included:

- Impact of pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors
- The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation have noted that they oppose the project - not the technology, but that it will discharge into Lake Simcoe; and that they would prefer to see the other existing Water Pollution Control Plants in Lake Simcoe use the same technology
- Request from the Town Councillors that the savings from the project be used to build a Water Reclamation Centre on the Holland River to treat runoff from the agricultural land
- Related to potential effects (flooding, erosion, temperature change) in the East Holland River

Grouped by topic, a summary of the comments raised and how they will be considered by York Region is included in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Summary of Comments and Their Consideration in the Upper York Sewage Solutions Environmental Assessment

| Comments Received | Consideration of the Comment |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned about the impact and removal of pharmaceuticals. ▪ Concerned about pharmaceuticals that pass through bodies and cannot be removed through the source control measures discussed. ▪ Concerned that reclaimed water will have a higher level of pharmaceuticals since it will not be treated to as high a level. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is considerable literature on the impact of pharmaceuticals and personal care products (microconstituents) in drinking water on human health. The World Health Organization’s investigation into microconstituents has concluded that “Current observations suggest that it is very unlikely that exposure to very low levels of pharmaceuticals in drinking-water would result in appreciable adverse risks to human health, as concentrations of pharmaceuticals detected in drinking-water (typically in the nanogram per litre range) are several orders of magnitude (typically more and often much more than 1000-fold) lower than the minimum therapeutic dose.” ▪ If microconstituents exist within wastewater, each successive treatment level at a Water Pollution Control Plant provides an additional level of microconstituent removal. In particular, secondary biological treatment combined with the advanced wastewater purification technologies proposed for the Water Reclamation Centre have been proven to be extremely effective in reducing concentrations of these substances. These technologies exceed the removal efficiency of most drinking water treatment facilities. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The level of treatment used at the Water Reclamation Centre will affect other municipalities around Lake Simcoe such as Barrie, and their ability to develop. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The level of treatment used at the Water Reclamation Centre is not tied to the ability of other municipalities around Lake Simcoe to develop. Every Water Pollution Control Plant on Lake Simcoe has its own phosphorus cap to adhere to under the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan’s Phosphorus Reduction Strategy. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned about the application of reclaimed water on agricultural fields, as the Federation of Agriculture studied the application of sludge onto golf courses and sod farms and concluded that in every case, some of the effluent ended up in nearby watercourses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ York Region will develop project specific guidelines for customers irrigating with reclaimed water, including but not limited to application methods and application rates based on soil infiltration conditions, plant moisture and nutrient uptake, and separation distances from watercourses and sensitive land uses. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would this project exacerbate the recent flooding in Holland Landing? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No, the treated clean water discharge from the Water Reclamation Centre is not anticipated to exacerbate flooding in the East Holland River. The 2031 proposed 40 megalitre per day discharge from the Water Reclamation Centre would only increase water levels in the East Holland River approximately 1 mm during flood conditions. |

Table 3.1: Summary of Comments and Their Consideration in the Upper York Sewage Solutions Environmental Assessment

| Comments Received | Consideration of the Comment |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the Water Reclamation Centre going to improve in water quality in Cook's Bay? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Based on all studies undertaken for the UYSS EA, the treated clean water from the Water Reclamation Centre will have a positive but non-measurable effect on water quality in Cook's Bay or Lake Simcoe. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned that the water supply for East Gwillimbury is coming from Toronto. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently, East Gwillimbury (Holland Landing, Queensville, Sharon) is serviced by municipal groundwater wells drawing water from the Yonge Street Aquifer. ▪ When the sustainable limit of the Yonge Street Aquifer is met, additional water supply for growth in East Gwillimbury will come from the York Water System, which draws from Lake Ontario and local groundwater wells. ▪ This is set out in the 2009 Water and Wastewater Master Plan update. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the size of the property and footprint of the plant? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed Water Reclamation Centre site is 42 hectares (approximately 100 acres), and the anticipated footprint of the facility is 10 hectares (approximately 25 acres) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the diameter of the outfall pipe? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed outfall conveyance pipe will be 1.5 meters in diameter (approximately 4½ feet) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Town of Georgina has requested that the savings from the project be used to build a Water Reclamation Centre on the Holland River to treat runoff from the agricultural land. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are no "savings" from the UYSS EA Project as the capital cost associated with the project is being funded by development charges. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the elevation difference between the Water Reclamation Centre and the East Holland River? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is approximately 6 meters in elevation difference between the Water Reclamation Centre site and the East Holland River, with the site being at the higher elevation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will the water in the East Holland River be warmer in winter and will it cause ice melt? Will the temperature difference affect the fish? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The treated clean water from the proposed Water Reclamation Centre will have a moderating effect on the temperature of the water resulting in slightly cooler water temperatures in the summer and slightly warmer temperatures in the winter. The slightly warmer winter temperatures will cause localized open water in the area of the outfall. ▪ Based on a detailed aquatic community and habitat assessment, it was determined that the existing temperature regime of the East Holland River combined with the Water Reclamation Centre discharge will be within the preferred temperature range for all of the fish species present in the East Holland River for all seasons. The clean treated water is also expected to improve aquatic habitat conditions during the peak summer months by increasing stream |

Table 3.1: Summary of Comments and Their Consideration in the Upper York Sewage Solutions Environmental Assessment

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|--|--|
| | flow, reducing peak temperatures and increasing dissolved oxygen concentrations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is in it for Georgina? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed Water Reclamation Centre will service growth in East Gwillimbury and a portion of Newmarket. York Region has already provided several millions of dollars to upgrade the Keswick and Sutton Water Pollution Control Plants to service growth in the Town. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There will be additional capacity in the YDSS for developers south of the Oak Ridges Moraine, since the YDSS will not be used for East Gwillimbury's wastewater. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional capacity within the YDSS to the south of the Oak Ridges Moraine would be available, subject to the current expansion of the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant. The proposed Water Reclamation Centre may defer future expansion of the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant. Any additional wastewater allocation would require provincial approval of additional growth under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the proposed solution been shifted to Lake Simcoe to protect Lake Ontario? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The four alternatives identified and evaluated by York Region were <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Do Nothing 2) Discharge to Lake Ontario 3) Discharge to Lake Simcoe 4) Innovative Wastewater Treatment Technologies (later named the Lake Simcoe Water Reclamation Centre alternative) <p>The "Discharge to Lake Ontario" alternative was always one of the four alternatives evaluated.</p> ▪ The Lake Simcoe Water Reclamation Centre alternative was identified by York Region as the preferred alternative because it has a number of significant additional benefits over the Discharge to Lake Ontario alternative. Protection of Lake Ontario was not a factor. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation have noted that they oppose the project - not the technology, but that it will discharge into Lake Simcoe; and that they would prefer to see the other existing Water Pollution Control Plants in Lake Simcoe use the same technology. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comment noted |

Section 4.0 Summary

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Public Information Forum Panels

Appendix B

Public Information Forum Presentation

Appendix C

Notification of Public Information Forum



July 3, 2013
Georgina Public Information Forum Summary Report
Upper York Sewage Solutions EA



Appendix A

Public Information Forum Panels



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Appendix B

Public Information Forum Presentation



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Appendix C

Notification of Public Information Forum