

York Region  
Municipal Comprehensive Review  
Indigenous Engagement Summary Report



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## 1 Introduction

In August 2019, Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI), Nbiising Consulting, and Incite Planning were retained by the Regional Municipality of York to facilitate engagement of First Nations and Métis regarding its Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) to update the York Region Official Plan (ROP). As part of the Region's MCR, this was extended to include the Water and Wastewater Master Plan (WWMP) in November 2019 and the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) in December 2020.

The Indigenous engagement program for the York Region MCR project followed the approach of separate and direct engagement with rights-bearing First Nations and Métis. A list of Indigenous communities or nations that have established or potential Aboriginal or Treaty rights within the Regional Municipality of York, or who have an established interest in the Region, has been consolidated from several sources, including contact lists maintained by York Region, ASI and recommendations from the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. Based on these criteria, 13 nations or communities were contacted about the project:

- Alderville First Nation
- Beausoleil First Nation
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation
- Curve Lake First Nation
- Georgina Island First Nation
- Hiawatha First Nation
- Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council
- Huron-Wendat Nation
- Kawartha Nishnawbe First Nation
- Métis Nation of Ontario (Georgian Bay Métis Council)
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Six Nations of the Grand River

## 1.1 Background of First Nations and Métis Engaged

**Anishinaabek.** York Region lies partially within the territory of Anishinaabe peoples, specifically the Chippewas and Mississaugas who have occupied this region since 1690. These nations signed the Williams Treaty in 1923. They are:

- Alderville First Nation
- Beausoleil First Nation
- Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation
- Curve Lake First Nation
- Hiawatha First Nation
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation

**Mississaugas of the Credit.** York Region lies partially within the Toronto Purchase, Treaty No.13, signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. It also occupies part of the Rouge River Claim submitted in 2015.

**Haudenosaunee.** The nations of the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora have historic ties to this region and specific agreements with the Crown. They are represented by:

- Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council
- Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council - Haudenosaunee Development Institute

**Huron-Wendat.** York Region is entirely within the territory formerly occupied by the Wendat Confederacy. The ancestors of the Huron-Wendat occupied York Region for millennia until they moved north to Wendake around A.D. 1600. They were dispersed by the Haudenosaunee and left Ontario in 1649. They are represented by the Huron-Wendat Nation.

**Kawartha.** The Nishnawbe are akin to the Anishinaabek and have a similar claim to the same territory. Though the community is unrecognised by the federal government, the courts have acknowledged them as signatory to the Rice Lake Treaty (Treaty 20) in 1818. They are represented by the Kawartha Nishnawbe First Nation.

**Métis Nation of Ontario.** The Métis have historic ties to the Georgian Bay region via the fur trade and often settled along the shores of the Great Lakes and associated waterways.

**Indigenous peoples residing in York Region.** In the 2016 census, close to ten thousand people living in York Region claimed North American Aboriginal origins. Of those, 5,915 identified as First Nation, Métis, or Inuk. As York Region does not have the equivalent a Friendship Centre, these peoples may have been engaged on the projects through existing public engagement channels.

## **2 Notices and Updates to all First Nations and Métis**

In total, there have been sixteen notices or updates circulated to all First Nations and Métis as it relates to the York Region MCR, WWMP and TMP. This includes a formal Notice of Study Commencement for each project, informal updates at critical points in the project in order to provide First Nation and Métis contacts with new information as it became available (Table 1) and Notices of Study Completion (anticipated mid 2022). All notices and update emails are provided in Appendix A.

**Table 1: Correspondence Between York Region and All First Nations and Métis**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Description</b>
Aug. 20, 2019	Notice of Study Commencement (WWMP)	Letter	York Region provides Notice of Study Commencement for the Water and Wastewater Master Plan (WWMP) Update. This notice describes the project, its goals and timelines, and also provides information about the project's first Open House planned for fall 2019.
Oct. 11, 2019	Notice of Open House Round 1 (WWMP)	Letter	York Region provides Notice of Open House Round 1 for the Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update. This notice describes the Open House, including its subject, dates and locations of events. It also acknowledges the Municipal Comprehensive Review and notes that a consulting team will follow up with communities to discuss both the Water and Wastewater Master Plan update and the Municipal Comprehensive Review.
Nov. 4, 2019	Notice of Study Commencement (ROP)	Email	York Region provides Notice of Study Commencement. This notice describes the project, its goals and timelines, as well as providing a contact for the Regional Municipality of York. Additionally, the notice provides a link to the Regional Official Plan (ROP) study and notes that a member of the consultant team will be in touch soon to discuss the project in greater detail and to schedule a meeting if desired.
Dec. 8, 2020	Project Update (ROP, WWMP, TMP)	Email	York Region provides project update on ROP and WWMP and initiation of engagement on Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Offer to arrange meeting if desired and answer any questions regarding the projects.
Feb. 2, 2021	Project Update (WWMP)	Email	York Region send Invitation to attend WWMP Update Virtual Open House Round 2, Feb 16 to March 2, 2021.
May 14, 2021	Project Update (ROP, WWMP, TMP)	Email	York Region provides an update on ROP, WWMP and TMP including what has been heard to date from First Nations and Métis.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Description</b>
May 15, 2021	Notice of Study Commencement (TMP)	Email	York Region provides Notice of Study Commencement for the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Update. This notice describes the project, its goals and timelines, and also provides information about the project's first Open House planned for summer 2021.
June 10, 2021	Project Update (WWMP)	Email	York Region send Invitation to attend WWMP Update Virtual Open House Round 3 (Final), June 24 to July 8, 2021.
July 13, 2021	Project Update (TMP)	Email	York Region send Notice of Public Information Centre #1 for TMP Update held on July 15, 2021
Oct 18, 2021	Project Update (TMP)	Email	York Region send Notice of Public Information Centre #2 for TMP Update held on October 20, 2021
Nov 10, 2021	Project Update (ROP, WWMP)	Email	York Region provide an update on the ROP and Technical Summary of the WWMP.
April 12, 2022	Project Update (TMP)	Email	York Region send Notice of Public Information Centre #3 for TMP Update held on April 22, 2022
June 2022 (anticipated)	Notice of Study Completion (ROP, TMP, WWMP)	Email / Mail	This notifies recipients that the project has been completed. It also describes major deliverables and engagement tasks and provides links to the final documents as well as a description of next steps.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Description</b>
June 2022 (anticipated)	Notice of Study Completion (WWMP)	Email	This notifies recipients that the project has been completed. It also describes major deliverables and provides links to the final documents as well as a description of next steps.
June 2022 (anticipated)	Notice of Study Completion (TMP)	Email	This notifies recipients that the project has been completed. It also describes major deliverables and provides links to the final documents as well as a description of next steps
July 2022 (anticipated)	Notice of ROP Adoption	Email	This notifies recipients that the ROP has been adopted by Regional Council. It provides links to the final documents as well as description of next steps.



### **3 Specific Correspondence with First Nations and Métis**

In addition to the notices and updates sent to all First Nations and Métis, York Region and the ASI/Nbiising/Incite team corresponded directly with designated contacts for each of the First Nations and Métis identified in Section 1. These individual points of contact included emails, phone conversations and in-person meetings. Individual correspondence for each community is presented in Appendix B. All emails and meeting minutes are on file at Archaeological Services Inc. and at York Region.

### **4 Engagement Summary**

The following eight nations chose to participate in consultation:

- Alderville First Nation
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation
- Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation\*
- Curve Lake First Nation
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Huron -Wendat Nation

\*The Chippewas of Georgina Island chose to participate, however were not able to attend scheduled meetings.

While some communities have chosen not to respond, this does not imply any sort of agreement or disagreement with York Region's plans. It may represent a lack of time, capacity, concern, or deference to other interests.

In-person meetings were held with the following nations (prior to the pandemic):

- Curve Lake First Nation with Hiawatha First Nation
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Engagement continued through the pandemic and meetings moved to a virtual format. Virtual meetings were held individually with the following nations:

- Curve Lake First Nation

- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Huron-Wendat Nation
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation

The meetings were 1.5 hours in length with Bob Goulais of Nbiising Consulting acting as facilitator. The meetings began with a presentation on the ROP, WWMP and TMP by York Region staff and involved lively dialogue and questions throughout. One additional meeting was held with Six Nations of the Grand River as it was determined that more time was required for discussion. Meeting minutes are available in Appendix C.

#### **4.1 What Was Heard**

Generally, those engaged expressed concern regarding environmental protection, the sacredness of water and the health of Lake Simcoe. More specific comments are summarized in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Summary of Comments**

<b>Regional Document</b>	<b>Comment</b>
ROP, WWMP and TMP	<p>Land Acknowledgement concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What nations are included and in what order</li> <li>• Which treaties are included</li> <li>• Inclusion of treaty maps</li> </ul> <p>General consultation practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily on a project-by-project basis through Environmental Assessments</li> <li>• Engagement is last-minute</li> <li>• Time not taken for relationship building</li> <li>• Lack of capacity for genuine participation (time and money)</li> <li>• Engagement often feels like a process requirement, rather than sincere interest in listening, learning and accommodating Indigenous interests</li> </ul> <p>Plan Creation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider including First Nation perspectives &amp; seven-generations timeframe</li> <li>• Concern with overpopulation of Region and ability of natural systems to support growth</li> <li>• Consider mix of land uses and more intensification versus sprawl</li> </ul>
ROP	<p>Archaeological Management Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor archaeological practices</li> <li>• Include Indigenous nations when updating</li> <li>• Enforcement of archaeological practices</li> <li>• Co-ordination with official plan</li> <li>• Coordination with lower tier municipalities</li> </ul> <p>Improvement to referencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical presence</li> <li>• Rights of First Nations and Treaty holders</li> <li>• Story marking of trade routes and trails</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural heritage policies and public art</li> </ul> <p>Impacts to the landscape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway-led sprawl design &amp; climate emissions</li> <li>• Development on protected areas</li> <li>• Disturbance &amp; extirpation of species</li> <li>• Ability to harvest sustenance species</li> <li>• “missing middle” housing needs to be addressed</li> <li>• No habitat replacement ratio &amp; tree planting ratio</li> </ul> <p>Impacts to the watershed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of headwater protection</li> <li>• Occupation of floodplains that need to flood</li> </ul> <p>Interest in renewable energy investment opportunities and economic development opportunities.</p>
WWMP	<p>Concern with emerging contaminants (such as pharmaceuticals, personal care products, etc.) and using sewage sludge as fertiliser.</p>
TMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting waterway travel routes and trails</li> <li>• Story marking of travel routes and trails</li> <li>• Proposed Bradford Bypass impact on archaeological resources</li> <li>• Public transit safety</li> </ul>

## 5 Recommendations for Relationship Building

1. Maintain the contacts created during the engagement and continue relationship building.
2. Follow through on offers of help and agreed to future changes of the Plans.
3. When it is safe to do so, arrange for members of York Region Council and planning staff to visit the nations engaged.
4. Provide capacity and participation funding, facilitation training to collaborate in the updates of the Plans.
5. Develop a Regional Land Acknowledgement.