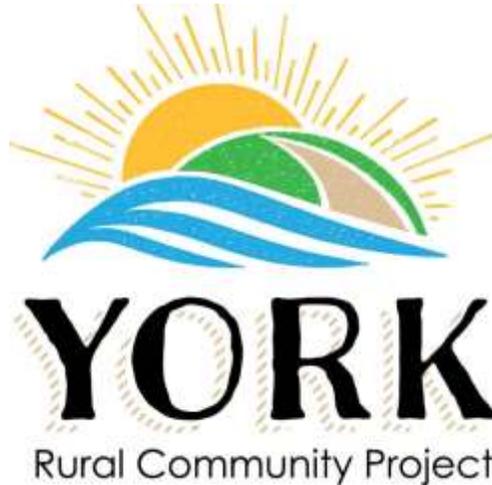


Community Restructuring in New Brunswick Frequently Asked Questions about the Proposed York Rural Community (YRC)



1. Why are New Brunswick residents being encouraged to consider a new form of local government?

A large portion of rural New Brunswick has been without a form of local government for the last 40 years. The citizens of several areas of the province have voiced their interest in acquiring the ability to make local decisions so they can plan the future of their communities and meet their local service needs.

Communities in New Brunswick currently have the opportunity to choose their own form of local government so that it is adapted to their needs and so that it allows them to assume responsibility for the delivery of local services at a pace they are comfortable with and at a cost they can afford.

2. Is community restructuring being imposed on New Brunswick residents?

The Rural Community model of local government will not be imposed on any area (i.e. if the area does not want it, the provincial government will not impose it). It is also important to note that the Province will continue to ensure the provision of local services in LSDs that do not wish to consider becoming a Rural Community.

3. Why would residents in the proposed York Rural Community Project area want to consider becoming a Rural Community?

With a Rural Community in the area we could:

- have local decision making by elected representatives from our area
- have a voice about upcoming developments in our area (Mactaquac Project, Sisson Mine Project)
- create an emergency plan for our area (to avoid a repeat of what we faced after Post Tropical Storm Arthur in 2015)
- pool our tax base, infrastructure, and services to save money
- be able to apply to funding programs (federal and provincial) such as the provincial gas tax and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities green municipal fund
- be part of any consultations about provincially led development
- make decisions about sharing existing resources and infrastructures with neighbouring municipalities
- have a seat on the Regional Service Commission 11 Board of Directors
- focus on a rural way of life

4. What qualifies an area to become a Rural Community?

A Rural Community is possible when a group of LSDs and an existing municipality or Rural Community, with sufficient population and property tax base to be viable (4,000 population or \$200 million tax base), wish to collaborate and restructure themselves. The group must make a request to the Minister of Environment and Local Government to begin the process.

5. Who would govern the proposed YRC and how would they be elected?

A Council would govern the affairs of the proposed YRC. Through the same process used for municipal elections and by-elections, citizens would elect a mayor and councillors to represent them on Council.

6. What would the YRC Council be responsible for?

The role of the YRC Council would be to ensure that the provision of local services would be in keeping with the community's needs, wants, and ability to pay. While the YRC Council would have to ensure the provision of administration, emergency measures and community planning services (e.g. development approvals, subdivision approvals, building permits and inspections), it would only take on the responsibility for additional local services (e.g. fire protection, street lighting, recreational facilities) when it is cost advantageous and the community is ready to do

so. Such a decision would be made through the passing of a resolution of council and the making of a by-law, which would provide an opportunity for all community members to have a say.

7. What services will the provincial government continue to oversee in YRC?

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure of the provincial government will continue to provide road maintenance and upgrades within YRC. The Department of Environment and Local Government will continue to provide the local services until or unless the YRC decides to assume them.

8. Would the YRC hire a staff?

The YRC must appoint a Clerk, Treasurer and Auditor. It is likely that one person would be able to carry out the functions of the Clerk and Treasurer. The YRC would also have the ability to appoint other officers as deemed necessary by Council for the administration of services to its residents.

9. Why is a Rural Community a good way to provide community planning services?

There are a number of reasons. All of them involve significant social, economic and environmental costs. For example

- **Social costs:** if residential developments are located next to farms, or if industrial developments are located next to residential areas, land use conflicts can occur.
- **Economic costs:** if development does not take place in designated areas where adequate services and related infrastructure exist or can be provided in a timely, economic manner, solutions can be expensive for everyone.
- **Environmental costs:** if too much development is occurring with unsuitable septic systems or in inappropriate locations, aquifers can be overdrawn, groundwater inadequately recharged or wells contaminated.

10. What community planning services will YRC be responsible for providing?

The YRC must adopt a rural plan within two years of incorporation. A rural plan would enable YRC to ensure that different types of development (e.g. residential, commercial, institutional, recreational, resource) happen in an orderly fashion and take place in appropriate locations.

Community planning services would include plan development and administration, development approvals, subdivision approvals, building permits and inspections, and a planning advisory committee.

The YRC may contract to Regional Service Commission 11 for the delivery of its planning services, or it could choose to provide community planning services by hiring its own planning staff or contracting a planning consultant.

The LSDs of Kingsclear, Keswick Ridge, Bright and Douglas already have a rural plan in place which will be used to develop the new YRC rural plan.

11. Will the partnering LSDs in the proposed YRC be able to keep their Advisory Committees?

A LSD and its Advisory Committee are dissolved when it becomes part of a Rural Community. Citizens of the partnering LSDs will gain the opportunity to elect representatives on the YRC Council. The feasibility study process will serve to define the composition of the YRC Council and whether councillors will be elected on a ward and/or at large basis.

The YRC Council will have the ability to establish citizen advisory committees to work with council to discuss any issue(s) of the community as a whole or part of the community.

12. How much will YRC cost and what will be the effect on property taxes?

The cost of having an elected council and staff will be minimal to taxpayers of YRC because it has a sufficient population and tax base and because the area is already paying an administration fee (to the Department of Environment and Local Government) which will be rolled in to the YRC budget. The feasibility study process will serve to define the initial governance and administrative costs associated with the establishment of YRC. Moreover, the pooling of tax bases will provide the opportunity to provide improved and/or more economical services.

The former LSDs within YRC may have different tax rates to reflect any differences in services and associated costs among them. For example, the property owners with street lighting services will pay a different rate than those without the service. Those that do not have certain services such as street lighting will not be required to take them on as a result of the creation of YRC.

13. Who will control the budget of YRC?

The YRC will have financial authority in keeping with its responsibilities. The YRC Council will establish a budget and set the required tax rate(s) for the services that it has decided to provide.

14. Will YRC receive the Community Funding and Equalization Grant?

Yes, the taxpayers of YRC will continue to benefit from the same Community Funding and Equalization Grant that they received in their former LSDs. Council will also be able to apply for other forms of provincial and federal funding that are not available to LSDs.

15. How does the Department of Environment and Local Government help?

The Department will work with the new YRC Council to train and prepare them to assume the responsibilities and authority provided by the creation of YRC.

16. How will the relationship between citizens of YRC and their Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) change?

Similar to the citizens of a Municipality, the citizens of YRC will have an elected council to represent their collective interests with their MLAs

17. What is the difference between a Rural Community and a municipality?

A key feature distinguishes a Rural Community from a municipality namely that a Rural Community will only have to provide community planning services while it gradually assumes the responsibility of providing other local services. This is of particular importance with regards to providing road maintenance and upgrades which is most cost advantageous to leave with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

In contrast, a municipality is responsible for all publicly provided local services (e.g. community planning, fire protection, community services, garbage and refuse collection and disposal, sewerage, water, parks, recreational and sports facilities, street lighting and road maintenance and upgrades) as well as policing services.