

The York Rural Community Concept
Community Restructuring in the Local Service Districts of

**Douglas - Keswick Ridge - Bright
- Queensbury - Kingsclear**

January, 2017

Dear Residents,

In early 2016, the Local Service Districts (LSDs) Committees of Kingsclear, Keswick Ridge, Bright and Douglas, along with community leaders from Queensbury, met to discuss community restructuring in our neighbouring districts. This was in response to recent government announcements about municipal reform in the province. According to the New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government (NBDELG):

Community restructuring is a topic of significant interest across New Brunswick. As community leaders look at current financial and economic realities, consider resident and business group interests, and reflect on their community's future, restructuring is increasingly a topic of discussion. This is perhaps because while some of our communities are prospering, others are facing the challenges of increasing service requests (e.g. rec centres, arenas), aging infrastructure, decreasing population, and financial pressures. Regardless of the reason, communicating and collaborating with neighbouring communities, including giving consideration to community restructuring, can be worthwhile.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/elg/local_government/content/community_restructuring.htm

A Rural Community is a form of local government that involves collaboration to improve the planning and delivery of services. It promotes cost efficiencies and joint decision making. It focuses on the strengths of the individual communities involved.

A steering committee now exists to study the idea of having a Rural Community made up of the areas within Douglas, Keswick Ridge (including the fire coverage areas of Bright and Queensbury) and Kingsclear Local Service Districts. We are using a working name of the York Rural Community. As we work towards the future planning and development of York Rural Community, we recognize that our direction will be based on input from the community members of the LSDs, like you. The attached information will give you the framework of our project but we will be adding to it over the next months. Please watch for upcoming announcements about public consultation meetings about this matter.

Sincerely,

David Coburn
Chair - York Rural Community Project Steering Committee
YorkRuralCommunity@gmail.com

1. Participating Local Service Districts- Population and Tax Base

By joining the participating LSDs, the proposed York Rural Community would have a population of 9405 and a tax base of \$ 756,771,529, as itemized in the table below. This would allow York Rural Community to have a significant voice with various levels of government and a much greater financial capacity.

LSD	Approx Population	2016 Assessment
Bright (in Keswick Ridge fire department coverage area)	671	42,054,582
Douglas (DLSD)	3877	249,218,700
Keswick Ridge (KRLSD)	1526	158,918,550
Kingsclear (KLSD)	2781	268,970,900
Queensbury (in KR fire department coverage area)	550	37,608,797

2. Project Objectives

The main objective of York Rural Community is to combine our individual strengths as LSDs so that, in the future, we would be able to:

- establish a more representative structure (right to vote) that results in local decision making by representatives of our community
- increase our local capacity (tax base, infrastructure, and services)
- ensure the sustainable development of the entire territory (improved local management)

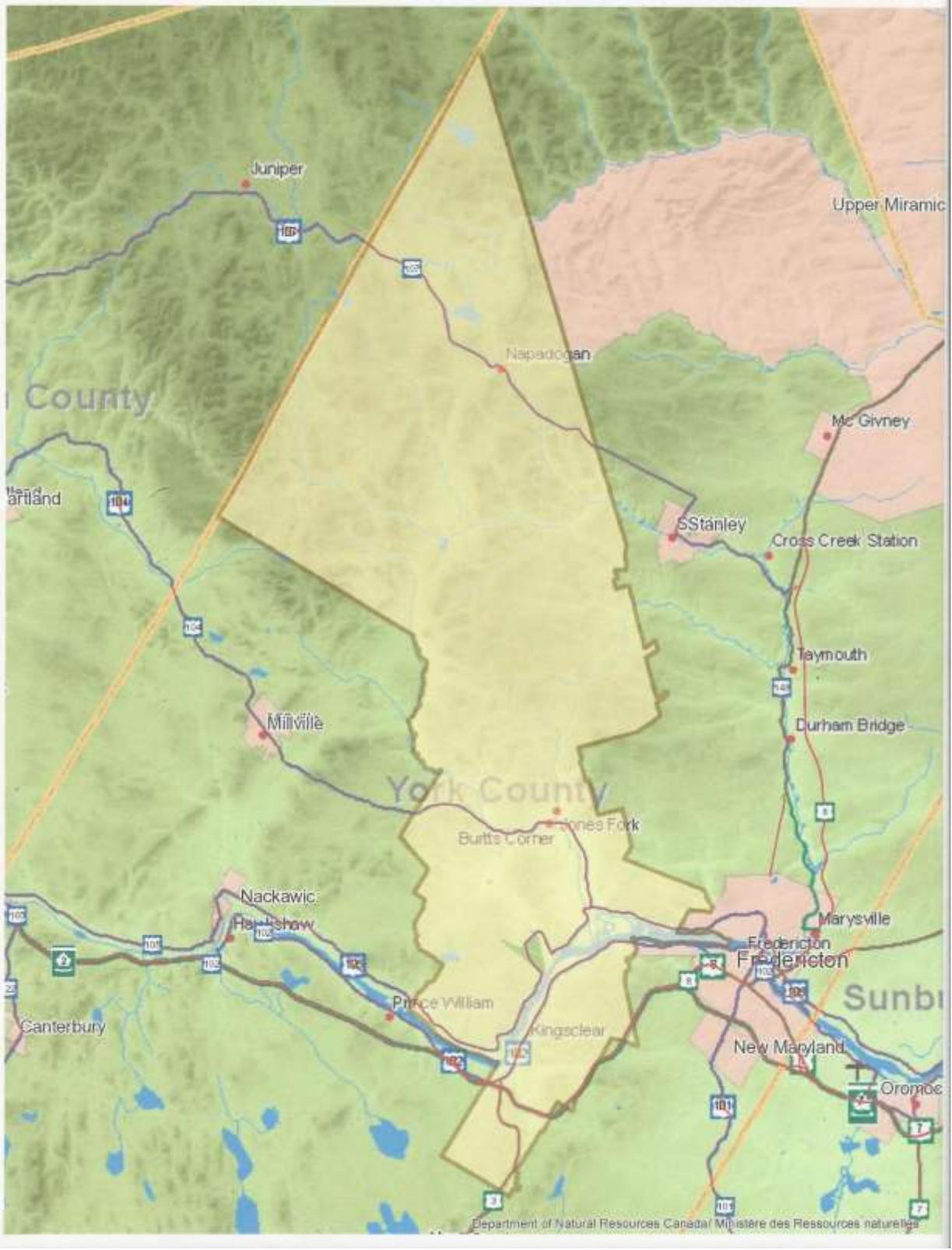
3. Our Common Characteristics and Interests

As neighbouring LSDs we share a number of common characteristics and interests. These include (but are certainly not limited to):

- the desire to have more local control over the spending of our tax dollars
- an interest in the Mactaquac Project and its potential impact on our area
- a commitment to respecting mix land use (farming, small business, the components of community identity)
- a dedication to rural ways of life
- placing great value on the natural environment and sustainable resource management

4. Location of the York Rural Community

The general location of the neighbouring LSDs in the York Rural Community project is illustrated below within the boundaries of Regional Service Commission 11.



5. Benefits of Forming the York Rural Community

The benefits to the participating LSDs in the York Rural Community Project are many, including:

- increasing accessibility to funding programs (federal and provincial) such as the provincial gas tax, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities green municipal fund
- applying locally appropriate conditions to public services (e.g. solid waste management, land use planning)
- maintaining a competitive tax rate to offer incentive to businesses wishing to open in our region
- having more control over economic development in our community with a focus on small and medium-sized businesses
- enabling the new municipality to be part of any consultations about provincially led development (together, we can better protect public services and local democracy)
- sharing existing resources and infrastructures
- having a seat on the regional service district commissions to monitor the delivery of such services as policing and solid waste management
- having the ability to encourage our residents to safeguard our water and our environment

6. Expected Challenges and Known Unknowns

We know that there will be a learning curve and yet-to-be determined aspects of managing our own affairs. However, our proposed rural community has exceptional human resource capacity within its boundaries. While we realize that we need to learn the principles and practices of municipal governance, we feel that we are more than up to this task based on the known skills of the residents that are committed to being involved with this process. Change is not always easy to accept and it is expected that there will potentially be resistance to modifying mindsets about the ways we have always done things around here.

7. Next Steps

The process of becoming a Rural Community has been established by NBDELG and is available for viewing at:

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/elg/local_government/content/community_restructuring/process.html

Currently we are in the feasibility study phase of our rural community project. Population, tax base, social and economic relationships will be examined in this review. Throughout this process, as frequently as possible, our working group will be seeking input from area residents. It will be important for everyone involved to remember that the final decision about whether or not to form York Rural Community will be that of voters. We will soon have a web site and other social media options through which regular communication can happen between the project's steering committee and the project area residents. As well, many project area volunteers will be working on sub-committees to examine and compare all aspects of the status quo (remaining as LSDs) versus moving forward as a rural community. The committees' findings will be shared in a final report that will be presented to the public.

York Rural Community Project Steering Committee Executive

David Coburn, Chair, (KRLSD)

Debby Peck, 1st Vice Chair, (KLSLSD)

David Duplessis, 2nd Vice Chair, (DLSD)

Tom Beckley, Secretary, (KRLSD)

Don Floyd, Member, (Lower Queensbury)

John-Michael McPhee, Member, (BLSD)

For more information about the York Rural Community Project or to share your opinions, please contact:

YorkRuralCommunity@gmail.com. Please feel free to share this with your friends and neighbours.