

**Complaints Protocol
Condition 6 of the
Declaration Order for the Modifications to the York Durham Sewage System (Forcemains
and Pumping Station) Project (YDSS Forcemain Twinning)**

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The Regional Municipality of York

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1. Introduction

On March 7, 2018, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry issued a Declaration Order to separate proposed modifications to the York Durham Sewage System (Project) from The Regional Municipality of York's (York Region) proposed Upper York Sewage Solutions project and declared that the undertaking is not subject to section 5 of the *Environmental Assessment Act*. This exemption applies to the construction of new sanitary sewer forcemains and alterations to the Newmarket and Bogart Creek sewage pumping stations in the Town of Newmarket.

Condition 6 of the Declaration Order required the preparation of a Complaints Protocol to manage all complaints that are received and related to the Project. The condition reads:

- 6.1 York Region shall prepare and implement a Complaints Protocol that sets out how it will address and responds to complaints regarding the forcemain undertaking.
- 6.2 York Region shall submit the Complaints Protocol to the Director at least 60 days before start of construction of the forcemain undertaking or such other date as agreed to in writing by Director.
- 6.3 The Director may require York Region to amend the Complaints Protocol at any time. Should an amendment be required, the Director will notify York Region in writing of the required amendment and date by which the amendment must be completed and implemented.

The Director referenced in Condition 6 refers to the Director of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's (MOECC), currently Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (Ministry), Environmental Assessment and Permissions Branch. Referenced below is York Region's project-specific Complaints Protocol that was prepared in accordance with the Minister's Declaration Order Condition.

2. Objectives

- To have a process to address all enquiries and complaints received on the Project before, during and after construction, as it relates to construction of the Project.
- To assess each enquiry and separate out complaints (Section 3 below) from general enquiries, including comments and recommendations about the Project and its implementation.
- To be accountable for Project activities by receiving and addressing all complaints directly.
- To promote project team contact information to the public through various communication channels.

3. Definition of “Complaint”

Based on previous experience on York Region’s other large scale construction projects, many public enquiries pertain to requests for additional project information on topics such as: construction methodology and techniques, timing and associated construction impacts. Sometimes the Project Team may receive enquiries unrelated to the Project’s activities (for example, York Region job postings and applications). As such, all unrelated informational enquiries will be re-directed to the appropriate York Region department/subject matter expert.

Project-related enquires will be addressed by the Project Team. Members of the public may also find answers to Frequently Asked Questions on the Project’s webpage: york.ca/forcemain twinning.

The Project Team defines a “**complaint**” as an expression of discontent or dissatisfaction pertaining to certain Project construction activities that physically affect the person making the complaint’s quality of life, belongings or business or otherwise relate to the Project.

All complaints received by the Project Team will be assessed and divided into the following categories:

- Noise
- Vibrations
- Traffic
- Alleged Property damages
- Odour
- Car accidents
- Dust
- Private wells
- Natural environment
- Spills
- Light
- Archaeological
- Indigenous
- Other (uncategorised)

4. Complaint Protocol Tools

York Region has committed to undertaking a comprehensive project-related Communications and Community Engagement Program to inform the public in advance of construction impacts. This Program will inform the public on how the Project Team can be reached to provide Project feedback (including complaints or concerns).

Project representatives/the Project Team are York Region staff dedicated to the York Durham Sewage System Forcemain Twinning Project. Working directly on the Project, the team will be knowledgeable of ongoing construction activities and are fully accountable and directly involved with the Project’s implementation. Specifically, Project representatives are York Region’s Project Managers, Project Technicians and the Communications Specialists.

Outlined below are a few ways the Project Team will engage parties affected by construction during the length of the Project:

- Project sign boards at each construction compound location will list York Region's toll-free phone number and project website.
- Notification letters will be mailed (door-to-door mail drops may also be used) to all residents and businesses identified within the vicinity of each compound work area to inform them in advance of impactful construction activities. Contact information (phone number and email address) will be included on all public notifications.
- Project newsletter(s)/flyers will be mailed out at various stages of construction to inform affected areas of Town of Newmarket on construction progress (key milestones) and will also include Project Team contact information.
- Project business cards will be distributed to the public, including businesses at any opportunity. These cards will have Project Team contact information.
- Enquiries will be collected by a York Region Access York Representative (Customer Service) or a Project Team member during regular business hours. York Region's regular business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.
- Individuals calling York Region after-hours will hear a message stating that offices are closed. Callers will be given the opportunity to call the Project Team's extension to leave a detailed message or contact York Region's after-hours Roads Dispatch Emergency line to speak to a live York Region representative. Emergencies will be dealt with immediately by on-call York Region staff.
- York Region's Twitter, Facebook and Instagram channels will be monitored by York Region staff to identify project-related enquiries, comments and complaints requiring follow-up action by a Project Team representative.
- The Project representatives will track enquiries (complaints and comments) along with their resolution and report back to the larger Project Team. The Project Team will engage and update York Region Senior Management as necessary to ensure continuous improvement.

5. Complaint Protocol Procedure

- All Project complaints received will be centralized into one complaint system by Access York or the Project Team.
- During daytime operating hours, an Access York member or a Project Team member will track and respond to enquiries and complaints.
- Individuals calling York Region after-hours will hear a message stating that offices are closed. Callers will be given the opportunity to call the Project Team's extension to leave a detailed message or contact York Region's after-hours Roads Dispatch Emergency line to speak to a live York Region representative. Emergencies will be dealt with immediately by on-call York Region staff.

- Enquires and complaints submitted via the Project's designated email (forcemaintwinning@york.ca) will receive an automated response acknowledging receipt of the email. The Project Team will review the inbox daily and prioritize enquiries/complaints based on importance and urgency. Urgent matters will be investigated immediately. As per York Region's Overarching Customer Service Protocol email general enquiries will be responded to within 5 business days.
- As per York Region's Overarching Customer Service Protocol, voicemails will be returned/acknowledged within 48 hours (2 business days). Enquiries and complaints received via correspondence (not phone or email) will be acknowledged within two business days.
- The Project Team will investigate all complaints in a timely manner. This may include meeting with the complainant to investigate the background and/or origin of the issue in order to reach a resolution or common understanding.
- York Region's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database software will be used to track and manage all complaints from the initial receipt to full resolution.
- During construction, the Project Team will review all complaints and will audit the complaints resolution process to ensure a high-level of customer service to the public and stakeholders. Lessons learned will be applied in the field to help minimize/mitigate the possibility of future complaints.
- A record of all project-related complaints received will be retained, and if required, can be made available for external audit by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks when requested by the Ministry.

6. Complaint Record Software and Database

In order to maintain a centralized record of all Project-related enquires and complaints York Region's CRM system will be used. The CRM database is used Region-wide and allows York Region to create, categorize and maintain enquiry and complaint information, including details of each enquiry, history of communication and resolution.

7. Conclusions

- This Complaints Protocol outlines how York Region will collect, record, investigate and address each enquiry and complaint received on the Project.
- The Protocol facilitates various means of communication and community engagement tactics to maximize public engagement.
- The Protocol assures York Region's standard of high-level of customer service is upheld on the Project.
- The Protocol outlines how enquiries and complaints will be managed, including how they will be tracked and made available for internal and external audits in a manner that generates continuous improvement.