

# The York Rural Community (YRC) Project

Community Restructuring in the Local Service Districts of

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

March, 2017

Dear Residents,

In early 2016, the Local Service District (LSD) Advisory 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](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.

For the past year the YRC Project steering committee has been working towards making the York Rural Community concept a reality. Now that we are in the feasibility study phase of the project, this steering committee is meeting every 3-4 weeks and sub-committees are meeting even more often. The Executive of the YRC Steering Committee meets weekly. The purpose of the feasibility study is to reach out to citizens of the project area to gather input on their opinions about the pros and cons of restructuring our LSDs in to a Rural Community form of local government. We encourage all project area residents to participate in this process as we discuss the future of the communities that we live in.

Sincerely,

David Coburn  
Chair - York Rural Community Project Steering Committee

[yorkyuralcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:yorkyuralcommunity@gmail.com)

[www.yorkruralcommunity.ca](http://www.yorkruralcommunity.ca)

<http://yorkruralcommunity.blogspot.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 10,171 and a tax base of \$805,781,000 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	2011 Census	2016 Assessment	2017 Assessment
Bright (BLSD)	1,542	\$ 96,677,200	\$100,470,050
Douglas (DLSD)	3,877	\$249,218,700	\$ 248,844,950
Keswick Ridge (KRLSD)	1,526	\$158,918,550	\$156,554,950
Kingsclear (KLSD)	2,781	\$268,970,900	\$268,993,100
Queensbury (Partial up to but not including Bear Island)	445	\$30,470,090	\$30,917,950
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,171</b>	<b>\$804,255,440</b>	<b>\$805,781,000</b>

### Notes:

Prorated 2016 Census figures from the Census Subdivision to the LSD not yet available at the time of the printing of this information.

Queensbury is estimated at 35% of the total LSD population and assessment and is subject to change.

## 2. Project Objectives - WHY are we proposing this change?

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)
- have a voice about upcoming developments in our area that have the potential to impact our project area significantly (Mactaquac Project, Sisson Mine Project)
- ensure the sustainable development of the entire territory (improved local management)
- to create an emergency plan for the local area (to avoid a repeat of the challenges faced by residents after Post Tropical Storm Arthur in 2015)

## 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. Benefits of Forming the York Rural Community

The benefits for the participating LSDs in the York Rural Community Project are many because the YRC Council will be able to:

- have accessibility to funding programs (federal and provincial) such as the provincial gas tax, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities green municipal fund
- apply locally appropriate conditions to the delivery of local services (e.g. solid waste management, land use planning)
- strive to maintain a competitive tax rate to offer incentive to businesses wishing to open in our region
- have more control over economic development in our community with a focus on small and medium-sized businesses
- 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 RSC 11 Board to monitor the delivery of such services as policing and solid waste management
- have the ability to encourage residents to safeguard our water and our environment

## 5. Expected Challenges

The YRC Project Steering Committee knows that there will be a learning curve for the future Council for the yet-to-be determined aspects of managing the future affairs of the York Rural Community. However, there are exceptional people within the proposed YRC boundaries who are up to the task and residents will have a vote for the Council members who are selected from those exceptional people.

## 6. 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](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, input will be sought from area residents at public meetings, neighbourhood meetings, open houses and special events as well as via the project website, Facebook Page, Blog, questionnaires, surveys etc. Both a preliminary report (to be released after the first round of public meetings) and a final report (released in August, 2017) of the feasibility study results will be made available for public viewing. It will be important to remember that the final decision about whether or not to form York Rural Community will be that of residents through a plebiscite vote (tentatively planned for late October, 2017).

York Rural Community Project Steering Committee Executive

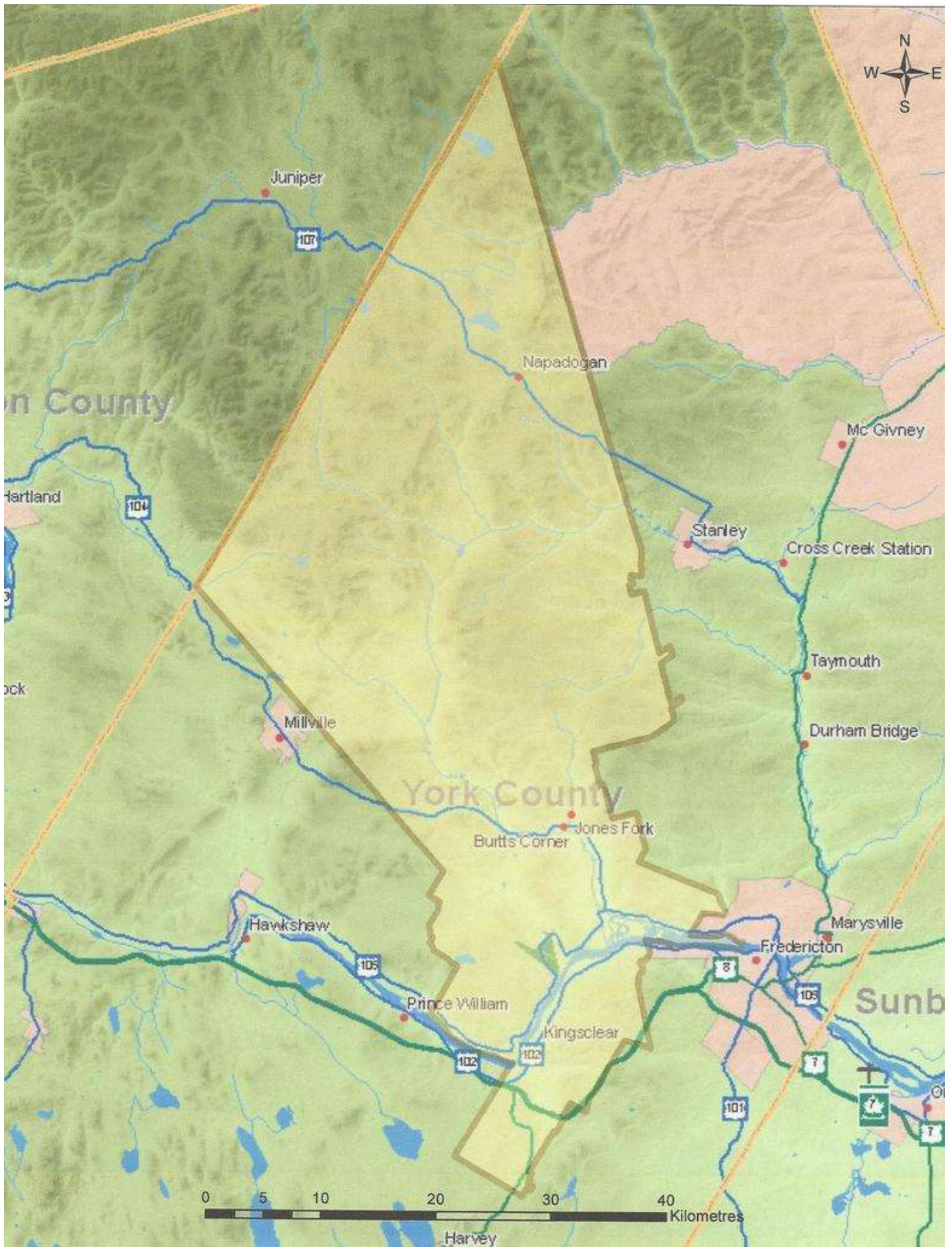
David Coburn, Chair, (KRLSD)  
 Debby Peck, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, (KLSLSD)  
 David Duplessis, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, (DLSD)  
 Tom Beckley, Secretary, (KRLSD)  
 Don Floyd, Member, (Lower Queensbury)  
 John-Michael McPhee, Member, (BLSD)

For more information about the York Rural Community Project or to share your opinions, please contact: [yorkruralcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:yorkruralcommunity@gmail.com). Please feel free to share this with your friends and neighbours.

[www.yorkruralcommunity.ca](http://www.yorkruralcommunity.ca)

<http://yorkruralcommunity.blogspot.com>

Check us out on Facebook: York Rural Community Project



**The Proposed York Rural Community Project Area**