GTA North (York Region) Scoping Assessment Webinar

IESO Response to Feedback

The IESO hosted a public webinar on regional planning underway in GTA North (York Region) on September 12, 2023. The purpose of the webinar was to seek input on the draft Scoping Assessment Outcome Report and the most appropriate planning approach going forward to meet the future needs of the region. The presentation material and recorded webinar are available on the engagement webpage.

This document summarizes feedback received under the following key themes:

- Alignment with Community and Infrastructure Development
- Community Energy Planning Considerations
- Policy Considerations

The IESO appreciates the input, which will be considered as the GTA North Scoping Assessment Outcome report is finalized and planning progresses in the region. Feedback was received from the following parties and the full submissions can be viewed on the engagement webpage.

- City of Richmond Hill
- Eek Farms/Township of King
- Peter Miasek
- Power Workers Union

Note on Feedback Summary and IESO Response

The IESO appreciates the written feedback received from municipalities and other interested parties. The table below responds to the written feedback received and is organized by each topic. This document is provided for information purposes only. It does not constitute, nor should it be construed to constitute, legal advice or a guarantee, offer, representation or warranty on behalf of the IESO.

Theme: Alignment with Community and Infrastructure Development

Feedback	IESO Response
Will any transmission options be considered along the 400-404 Connecting Link (Bradford Bypass) highway corridor, where feasible, to support continued growth and requisite electricity needs for Northern York Region and Bradford West Gwillimbury, rather than potentially running hydro corridors through the middle of agricultural fields?	The Technical Working Group (TWG) has not yet considered any options to address the needs found in Hydro One's Needs Assessment Report. This work will be undertaken once an electricity demand forecast and needs have been established for the region that will be informed by input from local municipalities and other interested parties. The TWG will consider both wires and non-wires options in addressing the needs once they are identified. When considering potential wires (transmission) options, the IESO does consider opportunities, where possible, to co-locate electricity infrastructure with other linear corridors, such as a new or existing road or highway, consistent with provincial policy.
The City of Richmond Hill is forecasted to accommodate 322,300 people and 122,900 jobs by 2051. The current Official Plan sets out that a majority of the growth is anticipated to be addressed through infill and intensification. Updated policies guiding this development include direction to develop complete communities that are sustainable, low carbon, compact, mixed-use, and transit supportive, which are supported by policies relating to infrastructure, energy, natural environment, sustainable building design. Ensuring alignment of reliable electrical transmission and infrastructure will be critical to ensure the future demand and supply needs can be met in all existing and planned areas of the municipality.	The TWG understands that municipalities in York Region are expected to undergo significant growth in electricity demand as new communities are developed, and electrification measures take shape. These will be considered in developing the demand forecasts for the area that will be developed as planning for the region progresses, as noted above. The IRRP engagement process will provide York Region municipalities, stakeholders, and communities an opportunity to offer feedback on the demand forecast for these areas. The IESO will be asking LDCs to confirm that community growth and local municipal energy plans are considered in the IRRP demand forecast.

Theme: Community Energy Planning Considerations

Feedback:	IESO Response
As part of this cycle of regional planning, consideration should be given to the City of Richmond Hill's Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP), relevant themes within the Environmental Strategy, the Sustainability Metric Program, and the energy related net-zero emissions objectives/actions. Ensuring consideration, collaboration and alignment with the anticipated municipal growth, low-carbon solutions and diversified electrical needs within the IESO's future energy planning process will be critical to determining energy security, requirements, and reliability.	Thank you for providing the references to the City of Richmond Hill's strategies. As part of the upcoming IRRP, the TWG will be creating a high electrification forecast as referenced in the final Scoping Assessment Outcome Report and Terms of Reference available on the dedicated engagement webpage. This will allow the TWG to examine and evaluate the needs that arise on the electricity system in York Region under a more aggressive decarbonisation scenario and provide recommendations on near-term actions to facilitate this transition. The IRRP engagement process will provide York Region municipalities, and other stakeholders and communities, an opportunity to offer feedback on the high electrification forecast for these areas, informed by local energy plans and priorities.

Theme: Policy Considerations

Feedback	IESO Response
Existing provincial policy and supporting studies including the IESO's "Pathways to Decarbonization" and the Ontario Government's "Powering Ontario's Growth" are silent on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) as an add-on to transmission-connected natural gas generation (NGG) to reduce carbon footprint. What is the province or IESO doing about studying CCS as an add-on to NGG in Ontario?	Consideration of carbon emissions from grid connected resources are out of scope of regional planning. However, based on feedback from stakeholders during the development of the IESO's Pathways to Decarbonization study as well as other analysis and research conducted, no economic opportunities for carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies coupled with natural gas generation were identified in Ontario. Carbon capture and storage was determined to be ill-suited to peaking applications as the technology is unproven at large scales, and the capital investment required to build the CCS would have very few opportunities for the costs to

	be recovered through the market given the forecasted limited role for emitting supply. In addition, suitable geologic formations are also needed for effective carbon storage and Ontario's geology may not be well-suited as a mid to long-term solution.
The IESO should accelerate the regional planning processes to address the accelerated demand growth and urgent need to expand Ontario's Infrastructure. The proposed 18-month schedule and an IRRP completion date of 2025, is not adequately meeting the planning needs for Ontario. These timelines continue to put Ontario's system reliability at risk.	The timelines for the regional planning process steps are established by the Ontario Energy Board. This process sets out that an IRRP can take up to 18 months following the publication of the Scoping Assessment Outcome Report, with an option of a six-month extension. Historically, due to the complexity and scale of needs in York Region, the full 18-month timeline has been necessary to complete the planning work and also engage with local municipalities, other interested parties and the general public. The TWG has added two new activities to the IRRP Terms of Reference in this cycle of regional planning for York Region: • Creation and study of a high electrification forecast • Consideration of a scenario without York Energy Centre including providing recommendations on near-term actions to facilitate this transition. It is anticipated that accommodating these new activities will require at least the full 18-month timeline as allowed by the OEB. Communities and stakeholders will be kept abreast of the IRRP's progress throughout the engagement process.

The IESO should better coordinate the regional planning efforts with the evolution of its annual planning outlook. Planning for the impacts of significant economic growth and electrification from the energy transition (i.e. new non-emitting generation is embraced and gas-fired generation is phased out) cannot be done effectively on a region-by-region basis in isolation.	The Annual Planning Outlook (APO) undertakes an assessment of the bulk transmission system to identify potential transmission issues arising over the 20-year outlook and recommends bulk planning activities that should be initiated to address the identified issues. This assessment includes insights from community and customer engagement, and any recommendations from published IRRPs. As an example, the IESO is currently undertaking a bulk planning study for the GTA, identified as being needed in the 2022 APO, that will develop a coordinated plan to address growth and decarbonisation on the GTA bulk power system. This process will be coordinated with the findings and recommendations of the regional plans in the GTA. The IESO will continue to ensure that coordination exists between the APO, bulk system planning, and the various regional plans.