

Comment Form – Information to inform the Summary of Issues

Project: Georgina Island Fixed Link Project
Proponent: Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation
Canadian Impact Assessment Registry No.: 83539
Comments requested by: May 29, 2022

Municipality Name: Town of Georgina	
Primary Contact	
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The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada invites your municipality to provide information it has available at this time on the Project and its potential effects or impacts (both positive and negative) to the environmental, health, social and economic conditions of your community. Your comments will inform the Summary of Issues¹ with respect to the Project and will be provided to the Proponent to address. You may use this form or use another format of your choice.

All comments should be submitted via the **Submit a Comment** feature available on the Project's Canadian Impact Assessment Registry page (Reference 83539 at: <http://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83539?culture=en-CA>). Letters and forms can be uploaded using this feature. If you have any difficulties submitting this way, please contact the Agency at GeorginaIsland-IleGeorgina@iaac-aeic.gc.ca for assistance.

1. Changes to the environment

Describe how the Project could potentially cause changes to the environment that are important to your community.

The Town of Georgina Official Plan supports an ecosystem approach to planning to ensure that environmental, economic, social and cultural factors are considered and balanced in the decision making process that affects the use and development of land, water and air (Sec. 1.1). One of the key Natural Environment objectives in the Plan is to “to protect key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features from land uses and activities that may adversely affect those features and their associated ecological functions” (Sec. 2.2.4.2). As such, all potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures must be identified, considered and addressed in the study, demonstrating that there is no overall negative environmental impacts on the key natural and hydrological features and associated functions or on the community at large. The proponent must consider environmental impacts related to, but not limited to, construction activities, vehicle traffic, transportation infrastructure and winter operations and their impact on air quality, noise, lighting, fish habitat, wildlife, soils and water quality. The Town supports the engagement of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, as well as MNRF, as a reviewer of all environment work to ensure it is thorough and done to the highest standard possible in order to protect watershed from any adverse impacts.

¹ The Summary of Issues is a list of issues raised in the Planning Phase prepared by the Agency, as per section 14(1) of the *Impact Assessment Act*. This document provides the proponent with an understanding of issues and allows participants to see how their comments and concerns have been characterized.

2a. Effects to social conditions

Describe how the Project could potentially affect social conditions that are important to your community.

The Town of Georgina is committed to promoting inclusivity, diversity and equity. The fixed link will help further this mandate by ensuring access to programs and services on the mainland for the 200 households on Georgina Island.

The lack of a year-round safe passage for residents contributes to social isolation for elders residing on Georgina Island who are reluctant to travel when the ferry is not operational. Access to extra-curricular activities on the mainland is limited due to additional travel times and create a disparity for youth who are unable to participate.

Further, with the need to follow through on action items contained within the Truth and Reconciliation Report it is important that information sharing and education occur. The fixed link project will help to create additional opportunities for sharing/education to occur both on the mainland and on Georgina Island.

2b. Effects to health conditions

Describe how the Project could potentially affect health conditions that are important to your community.

The fixed link will ensure safe year-round access for Georgina Island residents who wish to access health services (Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Dentist, etc) in nearby Sutton and Jackson’s Point and reduce travel times to members who need to access health care services or visit friends and family who are being cared for at South Lake Regional Health Centre.

Currently, if emergency vehicles are called to assist on Georgina Island, the ferry travel serves as the only access and time from the mainland to the Island is approximately 15-20 minutes. The fixed link will naturally reduce response times for emergency vehicles and augment the emergency services available on the Island. The fixed link will also reduce travel times for Band members living on the mainland that are required to travel to Georgina Island to care for elderly family members and/or provide assistance to help ensure the elderly can remain in their homes. The fixed link will help improve access for personal support workers and health care professionals who provide services on Georgina Island.

The York Region Community Safety and Well-being plan has established a Community Action Table that address risks in the northerly portion of Georgina that are associated with employability and mental health. The fixed link will ensure that any programs offered can be provided to the residents of Georgina Island.

2c. Effects to economic conditions

Describe how the Project could potentially affect economic conditions that are important to your community.

Employability has been identified as a risk in northern Georgina. With limited opportunities for employment on Georgina Island and a desire to ensure that additional employment services are available, the fixed link would open a new market of opportunity and reduce barriers to obtain employment and/or accessing employment services. The fixed link will increase opportunities for band members contribute to the local economy by increasing their presence in the local workforce and increasing expenditures on the mainland. The fixed link will provide opportunity to increase the labour pool for local businesses, potentially in the hospitality industry that has faced challenges in attracting staff back to the workplace following the pandemic. Ferry schedules make it difficult for Georgina Island residents to work in sectors that require off-hours scheduling including evening/shift work and limits job opportunities for these residents.

The fixed link will provide the residents of Georgina Island with the opportunity to consider the benefits and challenges of developing the tourism sector, which, if developed, could have complimentary benefit to business on the mainland.

3. Potential powers, duties or functions

List the potential powers, duties, or functions, including any permits, authorizations or by-laws, which your municipality may issue to enable the Project to proceed. For each, provide a summary of your current activities with the proponent (e.g. have received an application from the proponent or expecting an application from the proponent). For each, explain why your municipality may issue the potential power, duty, or function. For each, please include a description of engagement activities that would occur with Indigenous groups and the public.

All items below have communication and consultation components:

Fill Permit – Town’s Site Alteration By-law, for importing fill materials, subject to the Municipal Act

Development Application –Consent/Minor Variance Application, subject to the Planning Act

Development Agreement –Construct the required infrastructure and the infrastructure improvements on Town Right of Way

Road Occupancy Permit – For occupancy of Road Right of Way by Contractor

Building Permit – for any supportive structures associated with any developments

4. Additional considerations under the impact assessment process

Are there any additional issues, operational policies such as those related to impact assessment or municipal by-laws (i.e. gender based analysis, sustainability, alternative means, traffic management, citizen engagement, and community knowledge) that you wish to note for the Agency’s consideration? ²

Town Council has committed to assisting with the dissemination of information via Town channels to the general public on the fixed link project and providing assistance with respect to public engagement opportunities/providing venues etc. to help inform the public on the opportunities and challenges of the project. The Town is also prepared to assist with mapping and ownership of affected properties.

A traffic assessment will be critical for determining the traffic impacts caused by the proposed project and if any transportation infrastructure improvements are required within the existing road network to support the proposal. This includes the impact to the local road network and associated maintenance, construction, increase of service levels, seasonal maintenance activities of causeways and structure, and development of same.

Development of fixed link would increase development on Georgina Island (both tourism related and residential/commercial development), which will increase heavy traffic and movement of goods on existing road network.

Ryan Cronsberry Print Name of responder	<Original signed by> Signature
Chief Administrative Officer Title of responder	June 1, 2022 Date

Please provide your comments on the Summary of the Initial Project Description using the *Submit a Comment* feature on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry **by May 29, 2022**. Thank you.

² A link to *Impact Assessment Act* text can be found here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/corporate/acts-regulations.html>