Yukon

Flood Hazard Mapping Public Engagement

What We Heard: Old Crow

May 2025

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Background

Flooding is becoming more common in the Yukon due to climate change and accompanying more extreme weather events. The Government of Yukon is working to better understand flooding in the territory to help build safer, more resilient communities.

This report summarizes the public input on the draft Flood Hazard Maps prepared for community of Old Crow in the Traditional Territory of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN). The project is being led by the Government of Yukon—Water Resources Branch (WRB). The engineering consulting firm, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants (NHC), was retained by WRB to complete the flood mapping study. Input was sought from community members and VGFN staff from February 2 to March 3, 2025.

This 'what we heard' report summarizes feedback and comments we heard regarding the draft maps. Other topics raised during engagement, also summarized in this report, included historical and potential future impacts of flooding in the community, desired next steps and other concerns.

Engagement process

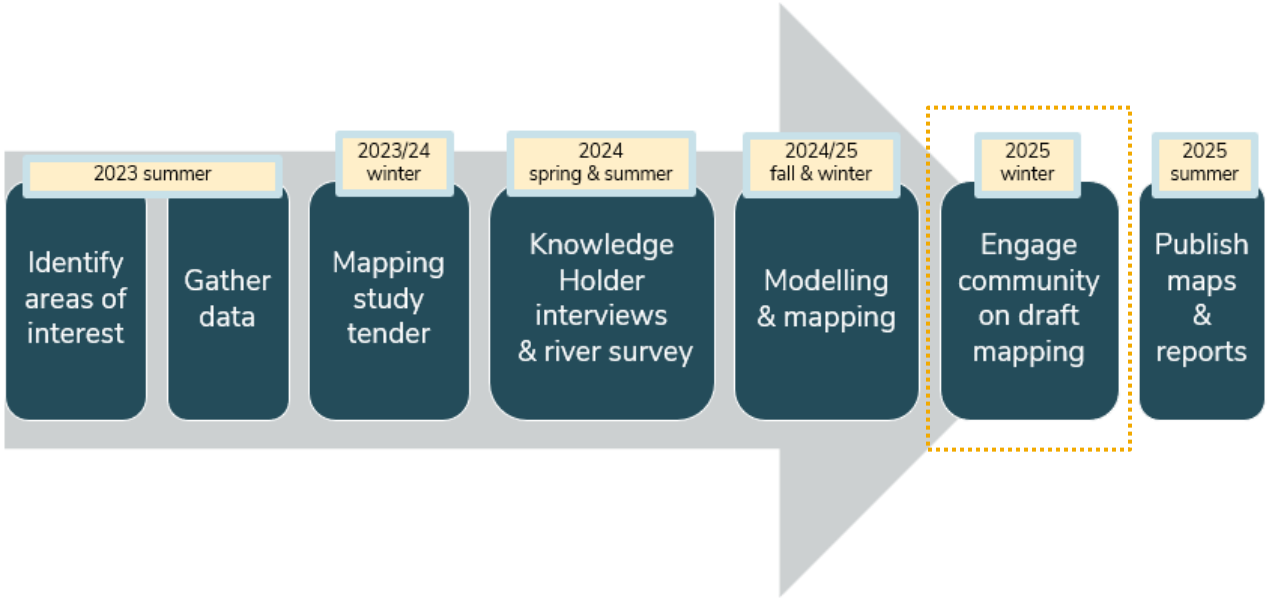
We received feedback from the community through the following engagement methods:

- Online survey from February 2 to March 3, 2025; and
- Virtual meetings with VGFN staff in February 2025.

Purpose

Engagement was completed to gather input on the draft maps that will help inform updates and improvements to the final maps. This engagement followed earlier meetings with VGFN staff and Indigenous Knowledge Holders which informed the study scope and analysis.

FIGURE 1: PROJECT OVERVIEW (HIGHLIGHTING STAGE AT WHICH ENGAGEMENT OCURRED)



How we engaged

We engaged the public using the following:

Engagement Launch

- The Old Crow draft flood hazard maps public launch was on February 2, 2025.
- The launch included a news release on the Government of Yukon website[1] and social media advertisements.
- The news release and advertisements included information about the project, public open house dates, and links to the Yukon Flood Hub website[2], where the draft maps were published with a survey for online participation.
- The draft maps were shared directly with VGFN, along with a notification of the on-going public engagement.

Flood Hub

- The Government of Yukon Flood Hub website was updated on February 2. Visitors to the site could view and download the draft maps, complete the online survey and see details on the in-person project open house planned in Old Crow.

Online Survey

- An online public survey was carried out from February 2 to March 3, 2025.

Open Houses

- An in-person presentation to community members was planned for February 28 (as part of a larger VGFN event), however, the event had to be postponed.

Government Notification

- A video-call meeting with VGFN staff was held on February 20, 2025, to review the study's draft maps and other details.

[1] https://yukon.ca/en/news/government-of-yukon-releases-draft-flood-hazard-maps-for-old-crow
[2] https://floods.service.yukon.ca/

Who responded?

The engagement had the following participation:

- Four respondents to the survey.
- VGFN staff shared feedback following the presentation of draft deliverables.
- A VGFN consultant provided additional comments via email.

What we heard

From the survey we heard comments on several topics, which are summarized below. Respondents included those who have knowledge of past flooding in Old Crow, live in Old Crow and/or were interested in the project for work-related reasons.

Key comments on the draft flood hazard maps

- Two survey respondents indicated that the maps fit with their experiences.
- One indicated that the maps differ a little from their experience – specifically, that the maps do not differentiate areas that have the highest probability of flooding.

How respondents will use information from the flood hazard maps

- Several respondents intend to use the information to increase their readiness for potential future flooding.
- One respondent indicated they were thinking differently about managing their home/property based on the information.
- One respondent indicated they were thinking about implications for emergency management planning and disaster recovery funding eligibility.

Comments on finalizing and sharing the maps

- One respondent proposed labelling neighbourhoods or highlighting building structures to help community members more easily identify their homes.

- One respondent identified that the floor elevation specified for an important community building is higher than the generator, which should be specified as it would be impacted by flooding sooner.
- One respondent mentioned some community members do not have internet access and suggested providing hard copy maps and offering a community dinner and presentation to explain the maps.

Discussions with VGFN staff

During discussions with VGFN staff, we heard the following comments:

- At least one building elevation has changed (building was lifted) since the project survey was completed in June 2024.
- Some VGFN assets of interest were not identified on the mapping and should be included.
- It is difficult to interpret whether an asset is inundated in a given flood event/map. A separate table should be provided for more clarity.
- Not all contour lines are labelled, which makes it difficult to judge in some places whether the ground is rising or falling.
- It's not clear why only some assets have elevations specified.

Next Steps

The public engagement on the draft flood hazard maps prompted constructive discussions and input from community members and VGFN staff.

The project team is thankful to everyone who contributed to this project. This input helped WRB and their technical consultant, NHC, as they finalized the maps. The feedback will also help the Government of Yukon and its partners with other initiatives informed by the flood maps.

The Water Resources Branch's commitments to the community going forward include:

- Informing Old Crow residents when the final flood hazard maps are released.
- Presenting project results in person and providing hard copy maps for the community.
- Continuing collaboration with VGFN to identify and assess risks to critical infrastructure.
- Maintaining communications with VGFN, including responding to any follow-up questions.