



NIAGARA TO GTA CORRIDOR EA – Phase 1 Community Advisory Group Meeting # 7 Short Summary Report

The **Seventh Community Advisory Group (CAG)** meeting regarding the Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study was held on November 19, 2009 at the Casablanca Winery Inn from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Purpose:

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- (a) Receive CAG member's perspectives and input on the possible advantages and disadvantages of the four (4) Groups of combination Transportation Alternatives:
 - Group #1 – Optimize Existing Transportation Networks
 - Group #2 – New / Improved Non-Roadway Transportation Infrastructure
 - Group #3 – Widen Existing Highways, and
 - Group #4 – New Transportation Corridor(s)
- (b) Gain input regarding Public Information Centre (PIC) round three (3).

Attendance:

A total of 22 members of the CAG attended the meeting. With respect to the study team, Roger Ward, George Ivanoff and Terry Hilditch from the MTO attended the meeting. Representatives from the consultant team included Tyler Drygas, Jack Thompson, Sandy Nairn, and Michael Chiu. The team of independent facilitators from Lura Consulting included Jim Faught, Liz Nield, Barry Randall, Olav Sibille, Lisa Josephson and Jeff Garkowski.

Discussion Highlights:

Jim Faught (Lura) reviewed previous meeting minutes, which were accepted by the CAG.

Roger Ward (MTO) briefly introduced himself as the new study coordinator for the MTO and thanked everyone for attending the meeting and noted that he looks forward to working with the CAG over the course of the study.

Jack Thompson initiated the presentation, outlining the study progress, and discussing the input received from CAG and other advisory groups regarding the creative process in generation of Transportation Alternatives. Mr. Thompson went over the study area and vision and reviewed the stage the study is currently at: assessing the alternatives. He followed up with a detailed review of the individual alternatives (rail, air, marine, transit, inter-modal, TDM and TSM) and then discussed the combination alternatives.

Sandy Nairn continued the presentation by highlighting and reviewing the four combination Transportation Alternatives and their assessment in detail. He concluded by reviewing next steps in the study, including a brief overview of the upcoming third rounds of PICs.

Following the presentation by the consulting team, a brief question and answer (Q & A) period addressed various questions and comments by the CAG.



NIAGARA TO GTA CORRIDOR EA – Phase 1 Community Advisory Group Meeting # 7 Short Summary Report

Facilitated Round Tables:

Using break-out groups, a workshop session followed the presentation and Q & A. CAG members formed three groups to identify possible advantages and disadvantages of the four (4) Groups of Combination Alternatives. The following table presents highlights of the discussions. Please refer to the detailed CAG minutes for the full documentation.

Comments on the Combination Transportation Alternatives

Group #1: Optimize Existing Transportation Networks

Advantages

- Less impact
- Promotes increased density along routes
- Encourages transit
- Promotes new technologies
- Might not hurt the economy (taking into consideration congestion pricing and local traffic)
- Cost effective & supports Provincial Policy
- Politically acceptable

Disadvantages

- Limits to capacity without expansion
- Large dual trailers can be a safety hazard
- Implementation of guidelines challenging
- Short-term solution (doesn't solve the problem)
- Lacking in connections
- Concentrates on economic development in existing centres.

Group #2: New / Improved Non-Roadway Transportation Infrastructure

Advantages

- Positive improvement
- Frees up space on highways for goods movement
- Supports rapid transit
- Affordable for users (less cost/congestion)
- Timing
- Prevents urban sprawl
- Lower cost (in comparison to Groups 3 & 4)
- Efficient way of getting around
- Supports Provincial Policy

Disadvantages

- Needs vary and therefore hard to supply consistency
- Partnerships between multi-modal companies hard to establish
- Rail companies may not be willing to act as partner
- May not meet transportation needs
- Modes impact on capacity
- Supports lower density and urban sprawl
- Environmental impact (increased air traffic)
- Expensive

Group #3: Widen Existing Highways

Advantages

- Would like to see stacking and tunneling in addition to widening
- Cheaper and less impact than Group #4
- Takes care of projected growth (in relation to the Greenbelt and agricultural land)

Disadvantages

- Can significantly impact existing communities adjacent to the highway
- Impacts to air quality, community
- Lack of linkages to HOV lanes, toll roads
- Capacity will be met in the short term
- Promotes bedroom community, not live/work
- Limited space to expand
- Short-term benefits (local vs. regional)

Comment: Groups 1, 2 and 3 are sequential.

Group #4: New Transportation Corridor(s)



NIAGARA TO GTA CORRIDOR EA – Phase 1 Community Advisory Group Meeting # 7 Short Summary Report

Advantages

- Allows for further thought about what can be done with existing conditions/elements
- Potential to create a separate corridor for freight/trucks – goods movement

Disadvantages

- Promotes urban sprawl
- Most expensive alternative
- Implementation timing
- Provides no linkages to toll roads
- Increases development pressure
- Not most efficient route between GTA and Niagara Frontier
- Major impact on land
- Will not decrease traffic on existing roads (e.g. QEW) therefore not enough positive effect
- No effect on tourism
- Missing links to airport

Comments: Can make better use of the Hydro Corridors. Need better integration of municipal and regional planning. Potential use of rail existing corridors instead of building new roads.

Suggestions for Public Information Centre, round three

- Show examples of Group 4 corridors on maps
- Presentation slide #31 should be emphasized
- Demonstrate that this is still a thinking process, with no decision yet made
- Have the consulting team available to ensure feedback is taken into consideration

Other Business, Next Meeting and Adjourn:

Final questions and comments from the CAG were addressed, and Jim Faught reviewed next steps, including the upcoming third round of PICs. He requested that CAG members provide their comments from the meeting and PIC's by January 8, 2010 and mentioned that the next CAG meeting will take place in Spring, 2010.

[Attendees requested that one additional CAG meeting be included prior to the fourth round of PICs to discuss the Transportation Development Strategy. The study team will consider the need and timing for this meeting.](#)

Roger Ward thanked participants for their work, and restated that the key message resulting from round table discussions acknowledged that Groups 1 and 2 only partially address the transportation problems and opportunities and that the strategies found in Groups 3 and 4 need to be explored to address the future transportation needs of the area.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.