

Session: **Public Information Centre #3 Summary**Date: **November 26, 2009**Location: **Ancaster Fairgrounds, Marritt Hall**Time: **4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

### **Introduction**

The second of three events for the third round of Public Information Centres (PICs) for the Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study was held on Thursday November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in the Marritt Hall at the Ancaster Fairgrounds. The format of the PICs was an informal drop-in centre (open house) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Representatives of the Ministry of Transportation (Roger Ward, Shelley Tapp, Terry Hilditch, Robin Ashdown, George Ivanoff, Frank Williams, Mark Darovny, and Will Mackenzie), URS Canada Inc. (Patrick Puccini, Tyler Drygas, Margie Gonzalez, Leslie Leamen, and Joanne Wang), AECOM (Paula Neto, Alan MacDougall), MRC (Jack Thompson), Ecoplans (Sandy Nairn) and Lura (Jim Faught) staffed the PIC.

### **Purpose of the PIC**

The purpose of the PIC was to present the transportation alternatives under consideration in the Niagara to GTA Corridor and obtain feedback from the public.

The information presented at the PIC was grouped under the following headings:

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Background and Existing Conditions
3. Problems and Opportunities Overview
4. Transportation Alternatives
5. Next Steps
6. First Nations

### **Attendance and Comments**

A total of ninety-three (93) members of the public chose to sign the visitor's register for the PIC. Several additional members of the public attended the PIC but chose not to sign the register. In addition to verbal comments, the Project Team encouraged visitors to express, in writing, all suggestions, comments or concerns that they had regarding the information presented. Fifteen (15) written comments were received at the PIC.

### **Summary of What We Heard**

#### ***Road-Based Alternatives***

1. Attendees wanted more details with regard to the location of the new corridor alternatives.
2. Understanding that a decision on a preferred alternative has not been made.
3. Acknowledgement of the need to include Group 3 (Widening Existing Inter-Regional Roads) and/or Group 4 (New Road Infrastructure) alternatives in the TDS.
4. General support for Group 4 alternatives over Group 3 alternatives.
5. Concerns regarding the potential impacts associated with widening existing highways in and around Hamilton. A bypass of Hamilton is a more desirable solution.
6. Acknowledgement of significant congestion and need for improvements sooner than later.

7. Special accommodations for trucks and buses (e.g. alternate lanes or use of shoulders during peak hours).

#### *Multi-Modal Alternatives*

8. Attendees liked the amount of information on alternatives presented at the PIC and acknowledged that the study has comprehensively examined all modes of transportation.
9. There are more opportunities to expand the rail system in the study area than identified.
10. It is important to educate the next generation about the importance of sustainable transportation practices (i.e. using transit, ride sharing, etc.).
11. There were concerns regarding existing conflicts between freight rail and passenger rail.
12. The NGTA study should consider extending transit services to Brantford area.
13. Install more electronic message signs/cameras to inform drivers about traffic conditions.
14. Display bus schedule (arrival/departure time) at transit terminals for passengers.

#### *Mapping*

15. Attendees were trying to find exact locations on the maps (for example, the Freeman Interchange, the Townline Tunnel, natural/conservation areas, the Niagara Escarpment, etc.)
16. The NGTA study website should include a map of the natural features in the study area.

#### *Timing*

17. Inquiries regarding the timeline for the implementation/preferred strategy.
18. Some attendees felt that the process that the study is following is too long.

#### *Natural Environment*

19. Attendees wanted to know more about the Greenbelt and the types of development that are permitted.
20. Cynicism that regardless of the effort put into developing alternatives, government will build a new corridor through conservation lands.

#### *General Comments*

21. There were questions about the need for the NGTA study.
22. Include the Highway 24 study as part of the NGTA study as any consideration of new transportation corridor extending to Highway 401 could serve both study issues.

#### **Elected Officials**

The following elected officials attended the PIC:

- MPP Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk)
- Joanne Thomas (Six Nations Elected Council)

#### **Media**

No members of the media attended the PIC.