

# Niagara to GTA Corridor

## Planning and Environmental Assessment Study

Community Advisory Group

*Charter*





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## 1. Purpose of the CAG Charter

This document outlines the background and purpose of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) for the Niagara to GTA (NGTA) Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study. Once approved by the CAG and the Study Team, it will form the operational basis for the CAG for the length of the Study. It can be amended as needed as the study progresses.

## 2. Public Consultation and Outreach

Public consultation is a key component of the NGTA Planning and EA Study. It is recognized that members of the public and stakeholder groups will have varying levels of knowledge to contribute, and interest in the study process. Public Consultation and Outreach activities have been designed to reach all interest levels, and to provide maximum opportunity for the dissemination of information and discussion as the study progresses.

There are a number of activities that can achieve this goal:

- Orientation sessions and workshops;
- Public Information Centres;
- Meetings with specific interest groups; and,
- A Community Advisory Group, comprising individuals from the Halton, Hamilton and Niagara areas that will function throughout the study process.

This draft Charter has been prepared to guide the activities of the Community Advisory Group for the NGTA Planning and EA Study.

## 3. Mandate

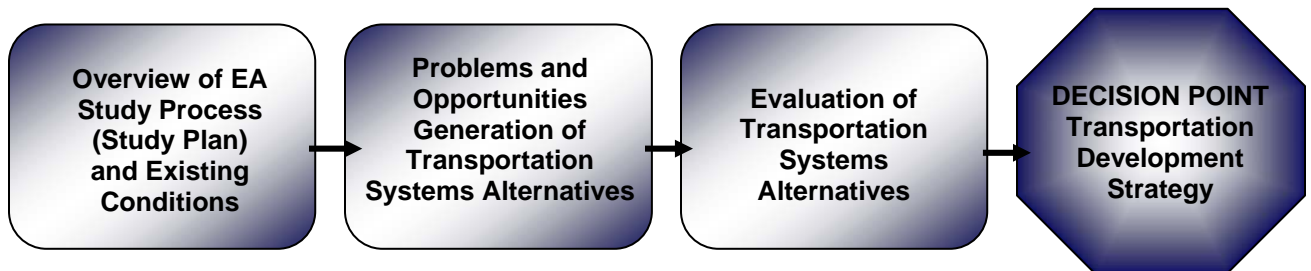
A Community Advisory Group is a forum that provides ongoing advice to the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) and the NGTA Planning and EA Study Team. It will meet at key points throughout the study. Its main purposes are to:

- Develop a Project Charter and Work Plan and monitor achievements;
- Act as a working group where the CAG and the Study Team can test ideas and findings;
- Provide advice, critiques and suggestions on project ideas, study findings and data;
- Provide a sense of the broader community reactions and concerns and how these might be addressed;
- Provide a direct, face-to-face channel of communications between and among CAG members, residents, the environmental community, developers and the Study Team; and,
- Identify and discuss potential issues, challenges and opportunities in a timely fashion, and assist in developing mechanisms to identify satisfactory outcomes.

## 4. Work Plan

The Study Team has planned for a minimum of five meetings with the CAG. The following work plan has been developed to provide maximum opportunity for input and advice at key stages of the Study Team's work plan:

### *NGTA Phase 1 Study Process*



### **Input to the Study Design**

- Meeting #1: Orientation and CAG Organization; Key Issues/Considerations for the Study Design; Draft Study Plan, Draft working papers.
- Meeting #2: Review results from the first round of Public Information Centres, final Study Plan, and briefing on the Transportation Needs Assessment process.

### **Input and Feedback on the Transportation Needs Assessment Process**

- Meeting #3: Identification of Transportation Problems and Opportunities. Review and input on draft working paper.
- Meeting #4: Review results of the second round of PICs and discuss criteria for evaluation of Transportation System Alternatives.

### **Input and Feedback on the Evaluation of Alternatives**

- Meeting #5: Input to the generation and evaluation of alternatives. Review and input on working paper. Review results of the third round of PICs.
- **Optional additional meeting to review the draft Transportation Needs Assessment Report (details of the Transportation Development Strategy).**

Additional meetings can be scheduled at the request of the CAG, and with approval provided by the Study Team due to budget implications. The CAG, together with the Study Team, may determine that additional topic specific, geographic, or sectoral meetings should occur within Phase 1. The CAG, together with the Study Team, may determine that sub-groups may be needed to assist with the CAG's work.

## 5. Membership

The membership of the CAG is based on the following principles:

- ❑ Members are reflective of the geographic study area;
- ❑ Members reflect the various interests and demographics within the study area;
- ❑ Member knowledge is reflective of the multi-disciplinary approach being followed by the Study Team; and,
- ❑ Additional members can be added as key interests are identified throughout the study.

Recruitment of the CAG will be conducted in a transparent fashion. A list of members will be attached to the Charter.

## 6. Term of Membership

Membership in the CAG is for the duration of the Phase 1 Study (April 2007 – Spring 2009).

## 7. Meetings and Attendance

It is important that members try to attend all meetings to ensure consistency in the discussions. Members should advise the Independent Facilitator's Office if they anticipate experiencing difficulty in attending meetings. Members can recommend substitutes to attend in his/her place.

## 8. Meeting Times

Meetings will be held in the evenings for a duration of 2-3 hours. When more discussion time is required, the CAG may consider holding a meeting on a weekend.

## 9. Decision Making, Roles and Responsibilities

### Decision Making

It is understood that the CAG is an advisory body, and is not responsible for making decisions regarding the Niagara to GTA Corridor Study. This responsibility is within the MTO's jurisdiction as the proponent of the project. CAG members are invited to provide advice on any aspect of the work within the scope of the Study Plan, and may make specific recommendations to the Study Team as needed. Participants in the CAG will have the opportunity for full and open discussions on study topics, and topics that are identified by CAG members that are within the scope of the study. Where differences of opinion occur within the CAG, participants will make all reasonable efforts to achieve consensus. Where this is not possible, differences of opinion will be documented with a rationale and provided to the Study Team. The CAG may determine to use voting as a method of moving forward or closing an issue.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The CAG reports its advice and recommendations to the Study Team through the Independent Public Facilitator. The following are the roles and responsibilities of each of these sectors.

### Community Advisory Group Members

- ❑ Advise the CAG of community perspectives relating to this project;
- ❑ Provide advice and perspectives on proposals/reports tabled by the Study Team, CAG members, or others;
- ❑ Help CAG operate effectively by offering suggestions and alternatives to issues, concerns and problems;
- ❑ Communicate CAG discussions back to members' stakeholder organization and community;
- ❑ Attempt to anticipate potential problems and offer options for resolving them;
- ❑ Prepare for meetings in advance and consult with members organizations if possible;
- ❑ Attend all meetings;
- ❑ Declare a statement of interest if there is a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter under consideration; and,
- ❑ Declare a statement of interest if there are other, non-pecuniary types of interest (such as direct benefits obtained by relations, close friends, or associates) in a matter under consideration.

### Study Team

- ❑ Keep CAG members up to date with study progress, through sound communications;
- ❑ Listen carefully to the advice and perspectives of members. Where possible, incorporate advice into the study;
- ❑ Help the CAG function effectively by providing information, and offering suggestions and alternatives to issues, concerns and problems being discussed;
- ❑ Try to anticipate potential problems and advise the CAG;
- ❑ Provide study materials well in advance of CAG discussions;
- ❑ Provide clear and straightforward information and answers where possible; and,
- ❑ The Study Team will not be formal members of the CAG. However their participation is required at CAG meetings, and as such, their function will be as "ex officio" members.

### Independent Public Facilitator

- ❑ Provide secretariat function, prepare agendas in consultation with CAG/Study Team, and manage all communications between the CAG and the Study Team;
- ❑ Facilitate the CAG meetings in an open and fair manner. Keep the sessions on time and on track in accordance with the CAG work plan;
- ❑ Prepare and distribute draft and final meeting summaries;

- ❑ Track action items arising from meetings and provide/assemble required technical documents/specialists relating to these action items;
- ❑ Ensure that CAG results and minutes are communicated to the broader public;
- ❑ Communicate CAG results and minutes through the Study Team to the Municipal Technical Advisory Group, and the Municipal Executive Group; and,
- ❑ Communicate CAG results and minutes through the Project Team to existing municipal advisory groups as required.

## 10. Meeting Management, Agendas and Reporting

To the extent possible, meetings will be a combination of presentations and working sessions. The format of meetings will be discussed with CAG members in advance of their upcoming meetings.

- ❑ Meetings will be scheduled at the second meeting, and subject to confirmation based on the study team's schedule;
- ❑ The Facilitator will develop agendas, and coordinate accompanying materials; with the exception of the Orientation Session, materials will be sent out 10 days in advance of meetings;
- ❑ The Facilitator will prepare draft and final reports from CAG meetings. Action items will be reported within 2 business days. Reports will be prepared within 10 business days of each meeting for review and finalization by the CAG;
- ❑ Meetings locations will rotate around the study area. Flexibility will be maintained. CAG members will determine the locations, based on work requirements, in consultation with the Study Team;
- ❑ CAG meetings will be open to the general public; and,
- ❑ To the extent possible, meeting locations will be accessible by public transit; car pooling will be arranged through the facilitators' office.

## 11. Advisors and Experts

The CAG may request additional advisors and experts to attend at various points during the study. Consideration will be given to these requests, and subject to MTO budget considerations.

## 12. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Please note that the personal information provided will form part of the public record, as per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and will not be protected from disclosure.