

Session: **Public Information Centre #1 Summary**Date: **June 12, 2007**Location: **Rockton World Fairgrounds**Time: **4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

Introduction

The first of three events for the first round of Public Information Centres (PICs) for the Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study was held on Tuesday June 12, 2007 at the Rockton World 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 (Linda McAusland, John Slobodzian, Terry Hilditch, Darlene Proudfoot, Robin Ashdown, Sam Di Felice, and Will Mackenzie), URS Canada Inc. (Paul Hudspith, Steve Jacobs, Patrick Puccini, Tyler Drygas, Margie Gonzalez, Leslie Leamen), MRC (Michael Chiu), TSH (Mike Delsey, Paula Neto), and Ecoplans (Sandy Nairn) staffed the PIC.

Purpose of the PIC

The purpose of the PIC was to present and obtain feedback on the findings of the initial data gathering exercise that has been undertaken to obtain information about existing environmental and transportation conditions within the Preliminary Study Area. In addition, the Project Team presented key aspects of the Study Plan that has been developed for this study. These aspects included the study background, the EA process that is being followed, the policy context for the study and the proposed consultation program. The PIC also included an opportunity for attendees to apply for membership on the project Community Advisory Group (CAG).

The information presented at the PIC were grouped under the following headings

1. The Environment
2. Past Trends
3. Our Challenge
4. The Process
5. Community Advisory Group

Attendance and Comments

A total of 85 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. Three written comments were received at the PIC. Additional comment sheets are expected (via fax, mail) in the coming weeks.

Summary of What We Heard

The following summarizes the comments received verbally and in writing at the Rockton PIC event:

Verbal Comments

Multi-Modal Approach / Opportunities

- A number of attendees were surprised to find out that the Project Team is considering all modes of transportation (not just a highway solution).
- The contents of the PIC, the approach to developing a multi-modal Transportation Development Strategy was generally well received by event attendees.

- Many participants had come to the event expecting to see routes for a new provincial freeway.
- There are significant opportunities to divert freight from trucks to rail and marine.
- Suggest reinstating abandoned rail lines between Niagara and the Windsor-Detroit Crossing.
- Transit should be the top priority.
- Existing infrastructure should be used as opposed to any new infrastructure.
- The current mind set with regard to freight movement is focused on trucks. This should be changed such that other methods of freight movement are considered (marine, rail, etc.).
- Misinterpretation that the Growth Plan maps indicates a new highway corridor.

Timeframes

- What is the timeframe for Phase 1 of this study?
- How long before MTO has decided what types of transportation improvements to implement?
- Why does this process take so long?
- Is this project waiting on the outcome of the Peace Bridge?

Methodology

- How will environmental factors be weighted?
- Concern that the study team has not undertaken field investigations.
- Interested in the study process rather than a transportation solution.
- Concerns that the CAG would be too technical and that the level of effort may be too high.

Other Initiatives / Studies / Examples

- Relationship of this study to the Highway 24 project.
- This project should consider a transportation model similar to some of the major European cities in developing the Transportation Development Strategy.
- A number of people commented that they support the objectives of the Growth Plan in terms of focusing growth in urban centers rather than continuing to allow urban sprawl.

Written Comments

Multi-Modal Approach / Opportunities

- Need to extend GO Rail service to St. Catharines, Bradford and Cambridge.
- All goods on trucks from the states should travel on trains.
- The former Canada Southern railway line from Fort Erie to Detroit should be rebuilt with a new rail connection between Waterford and Bradford.
- Alternative transportation methods are needed to address the rising costs of gasoline.

Concerns & Suggestions

- Material presented does not address transportation issues in the Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph and Brantford area.
- Concern regarding the open house format of the PIC. Meetings should be conducted where citizens are free to discuss their opinions in an open forum.
- Need to eliminate at grade crossings



Media

Flamborough Review

Creative Environment Magazine