

Session: **Public Information Centre #2, Summary**Date: **February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009**Location: **Welland – Royal Canadian Legion**Time: **4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

### **Introduction**

The first of three events for the second round of Public Information Centres (PICs) for the Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study was held on Tuesday February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the Royal Canadian Legion in Welland. 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 (John Slobodzian, George Ivanoff, Terry Hilditch, Robin Ashdown, Sam Di Felice, Liza Tharratt, Frank Williams, Frank Pravitz and Will Mackenzie), URS Canada Inc. (Paul Hudspith, Tyler Drygas, Margie Gonzalez, and Christine Darson), AECOM (Mike Delsey, Paula Neto), MRC (Jack Thompson) and Lura (Liz Neild) staffed the PIC.

### **Purpose of the PIC**

The purpose of the PIC was to present: the process for predicting and forecasting future transportation conditions; the transportation problems identified through the forecasting exercise and opportunities identified through the Goals and Objectives Discussion Paper; and to obtain feedback on information relating to the problems and opportunities within the NGTA corridor. The PIC also included an opportunity for youth to apply for membership on the project Community Advisory Group (CAG).

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

1. Welcome and Overview
2. Background and Study Process
3. How are future transportation problems predicted
4. What are future transportation problems
5. What are transportation opportunities
6. What's Next
7. First Nations

### **Attendance and Comments**

A total of 110 members of the public signed the visitor's register for the PIC. Several additional members of the public attended the PIC but chose not to sign in. 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. Eleven 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 are highlights of the verbal and written comments received at this event:

#### ***Verbal Comments***

##### ***Multi-Modal Approach / Opportunities***

- General agreement and understanding with the content/nature of the study and the intent to recommend a multi-modal Transportation Development Strategy
- Need to focus on marine solutions
- Need to focus on rail solutions

- Need for regulations and / or incentives / subsidies for rail/marine/transit improvements
- Clearer messaging regarding the multi-modal nature of the study is required
- Need for integration of bicycle networks, including: bike racks at car pool lots and inter-modal facilities; and an updated cycling policy with a focus on cycling routes

### ***Stakeholder Consultation & Participation***

- Consider additional notification approaches for study (consultation) events
- Suggest presentations to local schools to get more youth engaged in the study
- Questions asked related to the level of First Nations involvement in the study
- Displays were excellent

### ***General Comments, Concerns & Suggestions***

- Inquiries made regarding the relationship of the “Mid-Pen Study” to the NGTA Study
- Concerns articulated regarding “completeness” of the multi-modal data; specifically, the lack of detail regarding marine and rail analysis
- Frustration voiced regarding MTO’s insufficient influence over other modes of travel
- Suggestion made that other initiatives (e.g., NAFTA Highway) should be considered
- Regional transit options need to be analyzed
- Tourism and goods movement data
- Concerns expressed regarding the current economic outlook for the region
- Misconception regarding regulations / development restrictions within the Greenbelt
- Concern regarding potential impacts to agriculture and the economy
- Abandoned rail lines should be included in the inventory and analysis
- An error was noted regarding ports (Port Dalhousie)
- Various suggestions offered regarding alternatives that should be considered
- Concerns expressed regarding drainage issues in the Welland/Fort Erie Area
- Questions raised regarding opportunities in the CP Rail corridor
- Questions asked and frustration expressed regarding the length of time required to complete the study

### ***Written Comments***

#### ***Multi-Modal Approach / Opportunities***

- Support offered for the development of inter-regional infrastructure and inter-modal opportunities
- The key transportation problem/issue is the movement of goods across the international border to the growth areas
- No new roads are required; the existing roads are sufficient for intra-provincial traffic
- An inter-modal shipping industry across Lake Ontario would be cost effective and minimize impacts to the Niagara Escarpment and not adversely contribute to air quality
- Various suggestions offered for locations of a new highway in the Preliminary Study Area Rail should be a key area for expansion

#### ***General Comments, Concerns & Suggestions***

- Timeframe for study completion is unacceptable (too long)
- Main concern / focus of the study should be on economic improvement

- Transportation over the Peace Bridge to ensure continued Canada-U.S.A. trade is important
- Congestion relief is a temporary solution; over time it will re-occur
- Concern expressed regarding the accuracy of the data
- The focus of the study should be on Smart Growth and local industry
- More identification of current and future tourist areas is required
- Consideration should be given to the impact of congestion on migratory fauna
- Additional information is required regarding potential impacts to fruitland areas

### **Media**

No members of the media attended this event.