



NIAGARA TO GTA CORRIDOR PLANNING AND EA STUDY – Phase 1

Meeting: Regulatory Agencies Advisory Group (RAAG)
 Location: Ministry of Transportation, Downsview Meeting No. 1
 Purpose: **RAAG Orientation Session** Date: April 11, 2007
 Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Present: **NGTA Project Team**

John Slobodzian, MTO	Terry Hilditch, MTO
Sam DiFelice, MTO	Darlene Proudfoot, MTO
Cindy Mitton-Wilkie, MTO	Sandy Nairn, Ecoplans Ltd.
Mike Delsey, TSH	
Paul Hudspith, URS	

RAAG Representatives

Mike Kim	Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal
Tracey Desjardins	Ministry of Tourism
Mike Eckersley (teleconference)	Ministry of Natural Resources
Marion Plaunt	Niagara Escarpment Commission
Michelle Moretti	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Drew Crinklaw	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Dave Bell	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Solange Desautels	Ministry of the Environment
Cora Sheppard	Ministry of the Environment
Barb Ryter	Ministry of the Environment
Denise Fell	Environment Canada
Liz Duval	Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministry of Culture / M Health Promotion, Sports and Recreation Branch
Lorraine Hogan	Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministry of Culture / M Health Promotion, Sports and Recreation Branch

<u>Items</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Action by:</u>
1	<p><u>Introductions</u></p> <p>J. Slobodzian introduced the MTO members of the Study Team in attendance. RAAG members present introduced themselves.</p> <p>It was noted that a summary of the meeting would be prepared and distributed to the Study Team and RAAG members.</p>	URS
2	<p><u>RAAG Orientation Session Presentation</u></p> <p>J. Slobodzian, P. Hudspith, and M. Delsey presented the following study topics (refer to the attached presentation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study Team Structure ▪ Study Overview ▪ Existing Policy Context ▪ Approved EA ToR ▪ Study Process and Objectives ▪ Study Plan ▪ Function of the Regulatory Agency Advisory Group (RAGG) and other Stakeholder groups ▪ Stakeholder Consultation and Outreach ▪ Process for Generating and Evaluating Transportation System Alternatives <p><i>Summary of Questions and Issues Raised</i></p> <p>The following outlines the comments and suggestions provided during the presentation:</p> <p>Dave Bell (CEAA) inquired whether the study area included all of the Niagara Peninsula. J. Slobodzian responded that the presentation slide identifies more of an “influence area” than a study area, although the Region of Niagara is included in this general area. It was noted that both Fort Erie and the Bridge Authorities at the international crossings in Niagara are involved. Reference was made to a Bi-National Transportation Group and J. Slobodzian confirmed MTO is participating on this group.</p> <p>Marion Plaunt (Niagara Escarpment Commission) asked if the Transportation Service Providers (TSPs) will be integrated into any other stakeholder groups and if the TSPs will be providing the project team existing information on their networks and their future expansion plans. J.</p>	

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	<p>Slobodzian noted that the project team prefers a separate forum to address the TSPs, therefore they will not be meeting with the RAAG or Municipalities, however the project team will consider the logistics of cross-communication between stakeholder groups at strategic points in the study where it may be beneficial. The logistics of hosting such an event are challenging given the large number of stakeholders represented throughout the large geographical area. J. Slobodzian noted that the project team will find a way to provide this opportunity and suggestions are welcomed from the RAAG to accommodate this.</p>	
	<p>In answer to M. Plaunt’s second question, Mike Delsey noted that the project team is going to try and obtain as much information as we can from the TSPs, however they are not obligated to provide the project team with all relevant information as some information may be proprietary or confidential.</p>	
	<p>Tracey Desjardins (Ministry of Tourism) noted that Niagara is contemplating formation of a Tourist/Economic group specifically related to transportation issues in the fall of 2007. She indicated that she would keep the project team apprised on any further progress in regards to this.</p>	Ministry of Tourism
	<p>M. Plaunt inquired whether the Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Model being developed will consider the goal of reducing urban sprawl. J. Slobodzian noted that the model will reflect the provincial Growth Plan objectives for population and employment targets as well as its sustainability objectives related to containment of urban sprawl. The GTA West study will also be using the same model and approach.</p>	
	<p>J. Slobodzian requested that in addition to technical comments, RAAG also consider and provide comments on the study’s consultation program.</p>	
	<p>M. Plaunt asked if the project team is addressing climate change under the objectives and problems for this study. J. Slobodzian noted that alternatives will be assessed in regards to air quality and emissions which in turn are related to climate change. Climate change itself is not a stated objective of this study as this is a global issue more appropriately addressed at a larger policy level.</p>	
	<p>Denise Fell (Environment Canada) inquired whether the project team could consider assessing environmental impacts of the long list of combination alternatives. J. Slobodzian indicated the project team will assess alternatives from the perspective of their ability to address the problems and opportunities. Alternatives that do not address the problem or opportunities will be screened out</p>	

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	<p>from further, detailed consideration. It is important to note that multiple combinations will be carried forward for more detailed evaluation against environmental factors.</p> <p>M. Plaunt asked if air quality will be considered part of the problems to be addressed for this study. J. Slobodzian noted that alternatives will be addressed in regards to air quality, although air quality is not a stated objective of this study.</p> <p>T. Desjardins asked whether we are still collecting data (e.g. Tourism data). S. Nairn confirmed the project team is still collecting data and data from the Ministry of Tourism could be provided to him.</p> <p>D. Fell suggested adding “stakeholder support and buy-in” as a goal for measuring EA success. D. Bell noted CEEA has a post-environmental assessment questionnaire for coordinated EAs. He will send a copy of this to Darlene Proudfoot and Terry Hilditch.</p> <p>J. Slobodzian noted that as part of the project, the project team will identify the policy issues that are potentially limiting certain TSPs from pursuing recommended options. J. Slobodzian noted that this is a partnership exercise and highlighted the need to have the Federal team on board with respect to recommendations that fall within their regulatory jurisdiction.</p> <p>M. Delsey noted there is a project website for this project (www.niagara-gta.com) and an office in St. Catharines at Totten Sims Hubicki (36 Hiscott Street, Suite 200 St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1C8, Tel: 905-682-0212 • Fax: 905-682-4495).</p>	CEEA
3	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>P. Hudspith provided the following, regarding next steps in the study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Late April and early May 2007: Stakeholder Orientation Sessions. ▪ First round of PICs will take place in June 2007. 	