

GTA West Transportation Corridor Planning
and Environmental Assessment Study -
Stage 2

Introductory Community
Workshop Summary Report

October 2014

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1. Introduction

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is undertaking Stage 2 of the GTA West Transportation Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study. Building on the recommendations from Stage 1, Stage 2 will identify the route, determine the interchange locations and complete the preliminary design for a new transportation corridor within the Route Planning Study Area. The new transportation corridor will include: a 400-series highway, transitway and potential goods movement priority features.

Stakeholder involvement is encouraged. The project team has prepared a comprehensive consultation program that features multiple opportunities for outreach, feedback and points of contact, including Public Information Centres (3 rounds), Community Workshops (4 rounds), First Nation and Métis Council/Community Meetings (3 rounds), stakeholder advisory group meetings, and working group meetings. Study information is also made available on the project website (www.gta-west.com) and the project Twitter site (@GTAWestStudy). A toll-free telephone line is also available (1-877-522-6916).

As part of the study's consultation program, a number of Community Workshops are being held at key milestones. The Community Workshops are opportunities for stakeholders to provide input on the direction and findings of the study, and are opportunities for the project team to gain a sense of the broader community reaction to the study. Together stakeholders and the project team can discuss how issues might be addressed as the study progresses.

Introductory Community Workshops were held at four venues across the study area to accommodate the large geographic area encompassed by the project and to meet the interest from the public. The introductory Community Workshops were held on:

- July 24, 2014 in the Renaissance Salon of the Le Jardin Conference Centre (8440 Highway 27, Woodbridge, ON) from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.;
- July 29, 2014 in the Hazel McCallion Ballroom of the Delta Meadowvale Hotel and Conference Centre (6750 Mississauga Road, Mississauga, ON) from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.;
- August 13, 2014 in Hall F of the Pearson Convention Centre (2638 Steeles Avenue East, Brampton, ON) from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; and
- August 14, 2014 in the Peel Junior Farmers Hall of the Region of Peel Agricultural Society (Brampton Fairgrounds) (12942 Heart Lake Road, Caledon, ON) from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Glenn Pothier of GLPi was the independent facilitator for the workshops. The following project team representatives staffed at least one workshop:

Table 1. Project Team Representatives That Staffed the Introductory Community Workshops

Ministry of Transportation	
Natalie Rouskov (MTO) – Project Manager	Rina Kulathinal (MTO) – Area Manager (Acting)
Sarah Merriam (MTO) – Environmental Planner and Consultation Team Lead	Chris Barber (MTO) – Environmental Planner
Mark Patterson (MTO) – Real Estate Officer	Yvonne Grossi (MTO) – Real Estate Officer
Astrid Poei (MTO) – Communications Coordinator	

Consultant Team – Management	
Neil Ahmed (MMM) – Consultant Project Manager	Katherine Jim (MMM) – Deputy Consultant Project Manager
Consultant Team – Highway Design	
Tim Sorochinsky (URS) – Highway Design Lead (West Area)	Brenda Jamieson (Aecom) – Highway Design Lead (Central Area)
Jim Dowell (MMM) – Highway Design Lead (East Area)	Sarah Hanson (URS) – Highway Design Team
John Newman (Aecom) – Highway Design Team	Jay Goldberg (MMM) – Highway Design Team
Consultant Team – Environmental	
Sandy Nairn (MMM) – Environmental Lead	Karin Wall (Aecom) – Environmental Team
Corrine Latimer (Aecom) – Environmental Team	Catherine Gentile (MMM) – Environmental Team
Consultant Team – Consultation	
Patrick Puccini (URS) - Consultation Team Lead	Britta Patkowski (URS) – Consultation Team
Benjamin Loucks (URS) – Consultation Team	Margie Akins (URS) – Consultation Team
Tyler Drygas (URS) – Consultation Team	Sarah Schmied (URS) – Consultation Team
Jacky Ho (URS) – Consultation Team	Leslie Leamen (URS) – Consultation Team
Joanne Wang (URS) – Consultation Team	Jeremy Greene (URS) – Consultation Team
Tim Cape (URS) – Consultation Team	

2. Notification

Notification of the Introductory Community Workshops was provided to members of the public who previously signed up for the project mailing list. Letters notifying the project mailing list of the workshops were sent on June 20, 2014. Follow up phone calls were also made to confirm attendance. Registration information was made available on the project website (www.gta-west.com) as of June 20, 2014, and the project team “tweeted” an invitation to the workshops on June 24, 2014. Please refer to **Appendix A** for a copy of the invitation letter. Due to the overwhelming demand for the first three workshops, a fourth venue was added in Caledon.

3. Purpose of the Introductory Community Workshops

The purpose of the Introductory Community Workshops was to provide members of the public with a project overview, an opportunity to provide feedback and also to seek participation in future study activities.

The workshops were organized in a manner that encouraged participation from the public. Each workshop was scheduled in the evening over two hours. The first part of the evening included brief opening remarks from the independent facilitator, Glenn Pothier (GLPi), followed by an overview presentation made by Natalie Rouskov (MTO), Neil Ahmed (MMM), and Patrick Puccini (URS) on the study philosophy, recommendations from Stage 1 and the focus of Stage 2.

During the second part of the workshop, attendees were invited to visit workstations to learn about the project, share information with the project team, and participate in interactive activities. The stations included information on:

- How to apply for membership in the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and Greenbelt Transportation Advisory Group (GTAG);
- The criteria and methodology for generating routes and interchanges; and
- Interactive activities such as providing input on existing features within the study area to be considered in the development of the route and interchange alternatives, as well as providing input on where the route should be located.

It was intended that timely input from the community would be helpful to the project team when developing route and interchange alternatives, to be presented at the first round of Public Information Centres in late 2014. Please refer to **Section 5** for information on how the project team will use the information collected at the workshops and **Appendix B** for the presentation and display boards from the workshops.

Station 1 – CAG and GTAG

This station included information about the mandates and objectives of the CAG and GTAG, and application forms for membership in the CAG or GTAG.

Station 2 – Criteria and Methodology for Generating Routes and Interchange Locations

This station included material on the planning methodology and criteria being used by the project team to generate routes and interchange locations. Attendees were asked to keep these criteria and principles in mind when suggesting their own routes and interchange locations at Station 4.

Station 3 – Existing Conditions and Constraints Within the Study Area

This station included an interactive exercise to map existing features within the study area that are noteworthy or of importance to attendees. Hard copy maps of the GTA West study area were available and participants were asked to identify features (e.g. residential developments, agricultural operations, natural areas, community facilities, etc.) they felt the project team should be aware of when developing and evaluating route and interchange alternatives. Participants were provided with comment sheets, each uniquely numbered with corresponding stickers. Participants would place the uniquely numbered stickers on the map and describe the feature and its importance on the corresponding comment sheet.

Station 4 – Route and Interchange Locations

This station included an interactive exercise to identify routes and interchange locations. Participants were encouraged to review the information from Station 2 before participating at Station 4, so that they understood the planning methodology and criteria for generating routes and interchange locations. Participants were asked to identify where they think the route should go or where interchanges should be located by either drawing suggestions on hard copy maps of the study area or utilizing mapping software on one of twenty available iPads. The iPads were useful to the process since the suggested routes and interchanges could be directly uploaded to the route generation software the project team is using without any interpretation required from the project team. The mapping software on the iPads also allowed participants to zoom in to specific areas so they could view the base mapping in great detail before drawing their routes and interchange locations.

4. Attendance and Input

A total of 314 stakeholders signed the visitor's register for the four workshops.

In addition to verbal comments, the project team encouraged visitors to write suggestions, comments or concerns that they had regarding the information presented. A breakdown of attendance, comment sheets, and application forms received for the CAG and GTAG by workshop date / venue is provided as follows:

Table 2. Breakdown of Attendance, Comments, and Advisory Group Application Forms

DATE/LOCATION	RECORDED ATTENDANCE	WRITTEN COMMENT SHEETS RECEIVED	APPLICANTS	
			CAG	GTAG
July 24, 2014 (Woodbridge)	78	23	9	7
July 29, 2014 (Mississauga)	77	15	9	0
August 13, 2014 (Brampton)	72	4	13	6
August 14, 2014 (Caledon)	87	14	4	2
TOTALS	314	56	35	15
Requests for Study Area Maps	54			

In general, key comments included:

- Routes should stay parallel to existing transportation infrastructure to minimize disruption;
- Suggestions to bypass specific areas;
- Minimize the number of interchanges;
- Interchange location suggestions;
- Protect agricultural lands;
- Inquiries about timing of construction;
- Requests to make a decision as soon as possible and alleviate landowner uncertainty;
- Inquiries about study schedule and when the preferred route will be presented; and
- General inquiries about how routes are being generated and evaluated.

Please refer to **Appendix C** for maps showing the locations of features that attendees identified at Station 3, along with descriptions of the features provided by attendees.

Please refer to **Appendix D** for maps showing the route locations suggested by attendees at Station 4 (either by drawing routes on hard copy maps of the study area or utilizing the mapping software on one of the iPads).

Please refer to **Appendix E** for tables summarizing the key verbal and written suggestions, comments and concerns raised by attendees.

5. How the Project Team Will Use the Information Collected at the Workshops

Consultation is an integral part of the study process. Throughout the course of the study, opportunities for stakeholder input are provided because of the important role that input from stakeholders plays in the successful completion of any transportation study. One of the primary objectives of this study is to promote, from the earliest planning stages, the consideration of natural, socio-economic/land use, cultural environment and transportation related opportunities and impacts. Consultation with stakeholders plays an important role in this regard, to identify potential opportunities and impacts, and to provide a medium to communicate the project team's findings to stakeholders.

The key features identified at Station 3 of the workshops will be verified and incorporated into mapping that identifies existing conditions within the study area. The project team will assess the sensitivity of each identified feature based on research and technical specialist judgment, and then reference these maps when generating and evaluating route and interchange alternatives.

In general, when generating route and interchange alternatives the project team will aim to meet transportation engineering design criteria and maximize opportunities while protecting significant environmental and land use features to the extent possible. The project team will develop route alternatives in accordance with principles including, but not limited to, the following where possible:

- avoid forested areas;
- avoid crossing rivers at sensitive areas (possibly at the expense of crossing them at less sensitive areas);
- avoid areas of prime agricultural land and high capital investment; and
- follow property lot lines to minimize disruption.

Routes suggested at the workshop will be reviewed by the project team. Elements of route suggestions that have merit will be incorporated into the long list of route alternatives. Some considerations in determining merit include:

- Were route generation principles generally adhered to by:
 - Allowing for feasible connections to other freeways and crossing roads;
 - Remaining within the study area;
 - Minimizing impacts to significant natural features and communities where possible;
 - Avoiding fragmentation of agricultural lands where possible;
 - Minimizing the length of crossings at rivers, streams, roads, and railroads; and
 - Consideration of topography (e.g. hills and valleys).
- Does the suggested route enhance the long list of route alternatives? Does it address problems or opportunities better than the long list of route alternatives?

The project team will make every effort to respond to written comments and inquiries. All information that is collected will be incorporated into the project as appropriate.

The project team will review the CAG and GTAG application forms to develop the initial membership for the advisory groups prior to Public Information Centre #1, where applications will still be accepted.