



Central Transit Corridor Individual Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference Preparation

Public Meeting Information Handout

Wednesday, December 8, 2004

Purpose of this Public Meeting

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo, in consultation with the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, intends to prepare a full Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) for development of a higher order transit service in the Central Transit Corridor. The first step in this process is the development of a Terms of Reference for the Individual EA, which must be approved by the Minister of Environment before the Region can begin the EA preparation. The purpose of today's Public Meeting is to introduce the EA process for the Central Transit Corridor, and begin to collect public input on questions and issues that may be included in the Terms of Reference and addressed in the Individual EA.

The Central Transit Corridor

The Central Transit Corridor extends from the north end of Waterloo to the Galt City Centre in Cambridge, providing the backbone of the Region's new Regional Growth Management Strategy together. Approved by Regional Council on June 24, 2003, this Strategy identifies where, when and how future growth in the Region should best occur. It sets a firm countryside line as the edge of more compact urban areas in order to limit urban sprawl. Higher order transit service running along the Central Transit Corridor will act as a catalyst to attract investment in more intensified redevelopment, reshape our urban form and support and revitalize our core areas. The Corridor is also the location of the most used transit services currently operating in the Region.

Higher Order Transit

Higher order transit involves new forms of transit service designed to increase travel speed, reliability, passenger comfort and convenience in order to be more competitive with car travel. A number of technologies are available for high order transit in the Central Transit Corridor, along a number of alternative routes. The best choices for the Central Transit Corridor will be decided by the Individual Environmental Assessment to be conducted by the Region.

The Individual Environmental Assessment

An Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) is a process used in Ontario to determine the possible impacts of proposed municipal infrastructure projects, and how to avoid or lessen these impacts so that the best possible decisions can be made on where, when and how to construct such projects undertaken by municipalities. The Individual EA process must satisfy all applicable environmental assessment requirements of the Federal and Ontario governments. The process also requires the submission of a Terms of Reference for approval by the Minister of Environment documenting how the Individual EA will be conducted.

It is important to note that according to the EA Act of Ontario, the “environment” that is studied in this process includes not only natural conditions of air, land, water, plant and animal life and human beings, but also social, economic and cultural conditions affecting us and our communities.

The Individual EA Terms of Reference

A Terms of Reference to conduct an Individual EA is essentially a recipe or instructions on how the EA will be prepared. It defines the framework for the subsequent EA process, and makes commitments on the types of research that will be performed and the types of information that will be provided by the EA. The Region’s intended Terms of Reference for the Ontario process are also intended to be consistent with the applicable Federal environmental assessment requirements.

Note: The Terms of Reference do not actually provide detailed information about a proposed project, such as the Central Transit Corridor higher order transit service, but rather it describes how that information will be collected, analysed and evaluated.

The Terms of Reference must include a description of:

1. the proposed project;
2. the rationale or reason for the project;
3. the environment that will or may be expected to be affected by the project, the effects that will be caused and the actions needed to prevent, change, reduce or remedy these effects;
4. alternatives to the proposed project (higher order transit in the Central Transit Corridor), and alternative ways of constructing the proposed project (alternative routes and technologies); and
5. how the public and agencies will be consulted.

Once the Terms of Reference have been approved by the Minister of Environment, they cannot be changed. The EA process must be conducted as directed by the Terms of Reference.

Once the Individual EA has been completed, if a member of the public or an involved agency feels a serious issue or concern with the EA remains unresolved, they can request that the EA be subjected to a provincial hearing. This decision rests with the Minister of Environment.



Preliminary Schedule of Events

Completion of Draft Individual EA Terms of Reference – January 2005

5-Week Public Review Period – February 2005

Pre-Submission Public Meeting #2 – February 2005

Completion of Final Terms of Reference – March 2005

Minister's Decision on Approval – June 2005

What Happens Next?

Following this first Public Meeting, the project team will review all public and agency input received, and then prepare the Draft Terms of Reference with due regard to this input. As previously noted in the preceding schedule of events, the Draft Terms of Reference will be the subject of a second public meeting prior to submission to the Minister of Environment for approval.

Based on Minister approval of the Terms of Reference next spring, the Region of Waterloo plans to proceed with the Individual Environmental Assessment for higher order transit service in the Central Transit Corridor, in accordance with the framework established in the Terms of Reference.

How Do I Stay Informed?

If you wish to stay involved and informed about the progress of the Central Transit Corridor Individual EA Terms of Reference, and later in the actual EA preparation, please provide your name, postal address, e-mail address and any group affiliation to either:

Mr. David Durant, P. Eng. OR
Senior Transportation Engineer
Regional Municipality of Waterloo
150 Frederick Street
Kitchener, ON N2G 4J3
Phone: 575-4027
Fax: 575-4449
e-mail: ddavid@region.waterloo.on.ca

Don Drackley, MCIP
Senior Associate
IBI Group
31-130 Cedar Street, Suite 107
Cambridge, ON N1S 5A5
Phone: 620-8898
Fax: 622-3621
E-mail: ddrackley@ibigroup.com



YOUR NOTES: