



Waterloo Region Rapid Transit Initiative Individual Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference Preparation

Input Public Meeting held on Wednesday, December 8, 2004 Eastwood Collegiate Institute

REPORT CONTEXT

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo, intends to prepare a full Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) for development of Rapid Transit service linking Waterloo, through Kitchener to Cambridge. The need for a Rapid Transit service was identified in *the Regional Growth Management Strategy* adopted by Regional Council on June 25, 2003. The corridor is intended to act as one of the key catalysts to influence urban form, support downtown core revitalization and control urban sprawl in the Region. It will also serve future travel needs in the Region.

This project will fulfil the requirements of the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA)* as well as the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*. For a Provincial EA, the EA Act requires that the proponent (Region of Waterloo) first prepare a Terms of Reference to define the framework of the proposed EA project. The Terms of Reference must then be approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment. In preparing the Terms of Reference and subsequent EA Project, public input and comment will be invited. The first opportunity for formal public input to the preparation of the EA Terms of Reference took place on December 8th, at a public information session held from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Eastwood Collegiate Institute.

The December 8th public meeting provided an opportunity for interested members of the public to hear a presentation on key elements of the Growth Management Strategy, opportunities for the Rapid Transit corridor and to learn about the process for preparing the Terms of Reference and subsequent EA study. The formal part of the meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with presentations by Graham Vincent, P. Eng. Director, Transportation Planning, Region of Waterloo and Don Drackley, MCIP, Senior Associate, IBI Group. Following the presentation, two discussion groups were formed to address the following:

- Issues and concerns that the public would like to see addressed through the Terms of Reference and subsequent EA Study
- Ways to consult with the public during the EA Study
- Ways to be informed about the Terms of Reference Preparation.

There were a number of questions on the presentation as follows:

Q/ What happens if the Ministry doesn't like the Terms of Reference? Response: MOE could raise some issues, which, the Region would respond to and make revisions as need be.

Q/ Who are the affected parties in the Region? Response: All of the residents and business interests in all three municipalities.

Q/ What other areas have done this? Response: City of Ottawa, City of Toronto York Region.

The Public Consultation Facilitator, Sue Cumming of Cumming and Company, has prepared this summary report which synthesizes the discussion points from the two breakout groups. It is not intended as a verbatim account of the discussion. Included in Appendix A is the summary from the comment forms received subsequent to the meeting.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS TO BE ADDRESSED THROUGH THE STUDY

The first part of the discussion identified issues or concerns that people would like to see addressed through the Individual Environmental Assessment and that should be included in the Terms of Reference. The following points were noted to be included in the Terms of Reference. These are listed in random order:

- Maintain bike trails with connections to the future transit system.
- Use already established rights of ways where possible – highway, hydro corridor, railway corridors.
- Evaluate technology to ensure that it can meet goals.
- Look at how to enhance various forms of transit and development of seamless system.
- Examine how to provide interconnections with a feeder system – how people connect to transit system should be addressed.
- Examine impacts beyond corridor should be studied. The EA could be too limited to corridor – need to consider impacts for example of feeder bus network and increased development along these areas – the impacts need to be acknowledged and quantified – for example - will it affect existing employment areas?
- Look at impacts to social environment and effect on people in the corridor.
- Address walk-ability and pedestrian connections.
- Look at impact on sensitive areas – older houses and stable neighbourhoods, heritage buildings, land acquisition or shutting down certain streets
- Undertake structural assessment for whatever corridor is looked at. Noise and vibration for structures along King Street in particular and residential homes is important.
- Ensure accessibility for handicapped is addressed.
- Determine ways to appeal to discretionary riders.
- Evaluate options based on ability to improve transit share (measured)
- Analyze new riders – how many cars can be reduced?
- Examine ways to promote increased ridership - Rider acceptance and use could cut down air pollution. Fare integration, smart pricing, free days to get

people to try it. Priority transit – x lanes, queue jumping. Cost of transit – fares, feasible to leave car at home, branches on transit are important connections. Look at strategy for employment areas and universities. For example Pinebush – Franklin service lacking – large employers.

- Review how the age cohort (i.e. seniors) affect future travel needs? How can transit better serve this market?
- Assess how the longer distance market could be better served by transit? Express service is a first start. Look at GO and movements to Toronto urban market. Connect higher order transit with other rail modes.
- Look at opportunities for public education is needed to change travel preferences - Why do people have to use their cars?
- Evaluate different alternatives on how they will contribute to and achieve planning goals and role as catalyst for urban form changes. The various alternatives must have a proven ability to anchor land use intensification – way to move people and rejuvenate cores. Compliance / non-compliance with municipal policy – will it promote growth for economic value. Where the stations are located could be a catalyst for change.
- Undertake an economic analysis of infrastructure and choices.
- Evaluate net improvement in air quality, reduction in carbon emissions per person over entire region by rider and energy use per passenger could be key indicators.
- Assess Salt reduction strategy and benefits of transit.
- When looking at costs be realistic – we have already sunk capital costs in roads – may need to subsidize transit.
- Focus on redeeming outcomes of transit – mitigating impacts and benefits – less pollution.
- Address seasonal impacts of various modes of transit and connections.

METHODS FOR CONSULTING THE PUBLIC DURING THE EA.

Public consultation is very important in the Environmental Assessment process. The break-out groups discussed what methods of consulting with the public they would like to see considered in the Terms of Reference, and used in the Environmental Assessment. The following points were noted. These are listed in random order.

- Notification for public meetings through the newspaper, through Rogers Cable, through special flyers distributed at schools, libraries in the Region, through write-ups in the student and community newspapers and through direct mailing to people in the corridor.
- Use of the Region of Waterloo and area municipal web-sites to provide information about the study and opportunities for public input
- Engage existing community neighbourhood associations along the corridor.
- Letters to community associations advising of the study and web-site link.

- Radio announcements at key study intervals and prior to public meetings
- Public meetings / workshop sessions with displays and handouts and presentation with opportunity to provide comments at microphone. Opportunity to learn others perspectives balanced with not having to rehash things.
- Hold meetings in convenient locations.
- Depending on what kind of input, look at what kind of opportunity. Shopping Center kiosks may be appropriate when modes or routes are being looked at.

When participants at the meeting were asked how they would like to be kept informed about the progress of the Terms of Reference preparation.

- Email
- Canada Post
- Web site
- Newspaper ads
- Radio advertising / TV
- Shopping centres
- Flyers and information posted at the Regional HQ building
- Transit talk

The meeting concluded at 9:00 p.m.

Appendix A – Summary of Input Received from Comment Sheets

Following the meeting, five comment sheets were completed and forwarded to the Region. The following captures the key points noted.

Question 1. What issues and concerns would you like to see addressed through the Rapid Transit Initiative Individual Environmental Assessment, and that should be included in the Terms of Reference?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One of the principal environmental factors in your project is the present movement and modes of people and yet after three public meetings, I have the impression that, other than ridership, nothing much has been done. To attract a market to new types and routes of transit requires assessment of existing actual vs. potential as well as but use markets for the expanded system. I may be naïve but I feel strongly about origin/destination surveys especially in major parking lots and along arterial routes such as Fisher/Hallman, Bridgeport / Erb Weber, Westmount, Ottawa, Frederick, etc. These are vital to the outcomes of your project. This would not be as difficult or time consuming as previously analysis through camera – captured license plate numbers and postal codes as is already done by 407ETR, photo radar, and intersection monitoring already demonstrates this technique.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Net improvement in air quality ▪ Use of already established rights of way for final routing – i.e. highway, hydro and rail easements ▪ Non-use of elevated system due to negative visual impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The higher order transit, whatever form it takes needs to have its fares subsidized in order to keep fares low and increase ridership. Lower fares = increased ridership. Perhaps free fares could be considered on certain special occasions (i.e. Oktoberfest, etc) to encourage people who never take transit to give it a try. It could be enough to tempt them in the future. ▪ Subsidized fares leading to increased ridership will reduce costs in a) health care due to air pollution, b) cost of gridlock, c) missed work days due to asthma etc, d) cost of accidents and fatalities and e) cost of lost work hours due to b, c, and d.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proven track record of anchoring land-use intensification ▪ Ability to attract the discretionary rider ▪ Low or zero curbside emissions ▪ Ability to use green power ▪ Efficient passenger km/kilowatt-hour ratio which considers passenger occupancy levels and mechanical efficiencies ▪ Does not contribute to increased salt intrusion into the aquifers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If we are to get people to move to public transportation – reduce pollution, conserve energy, and keep Canada self-sufficient with regard to transportation – we must have an efficient intermodal system. Develop a strategy for commuters to include efficient, convenient, financially feasible intermodal system with a passenger train system as a part of this goal.

Question 2. Public Consultation is very important in the Environmental Assessment process. What methods of consulting with the public would you like to see considered in the Terms of Reference, and used in the Environmental Assessment preparation?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public meetings ▪ Regional updates by mail or email ▪ Newspaper reports ▪ Video reports – use of Rogers TV Station ▪ Flyers in Natural Gas, Water and or Hydro billings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekday evening public meetings along corridor route ▪ Website for postings and PDF

Question 3. How would you like to be kept informed about the progress of the Terms of Reference preparation? Email and regional mailings

How did you find out about the meeting: Kitchener Waterloo Record advertisement (2 people), friend told me.