

Red Hill Valley Project
Re-Commencement of Design and Construction

Public Consultation Protocol

June 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

This Consultation Protocol outlines the project background and context for the current phase of work, the purpose of the consultation, as well as the overall approach and activities that will be implemented.

Background and Context

The City of Hamilton and its partner the Ontario Ministry of Transportation are in the design and construction phase of one of the most high profile development projects in Hamilton's history: the Red Hill Valley Project (RHVP), which includes the construction of the RHV Expressway. When completed, the Expressway will run through the Red Hill Valley, connecting the Lincoln M. Alexander Expressway with the QEW. The valley is a mix of wooded natural area, recreational areas and both light and heavy industry, and is populated on either side by residents.

To meet its commitment to work with affected stakeholders during construction, the City has **retained Nicole Swerhun of Lura Consulting to act as a neutral Community Facilitator** to consult with residents, businesses, institutions and schools that are impacted by the construction and the completed road. To date, extensive community consultations have been undertaken in earlier phases of the RHVP. This final phase of consultations will build on these previous efforts, encouraging affected stakeholders to provide feedback on both design and construction-related issues.

From a **design perspective**, the community will have an opportunity to provide input into a number of RHVP elements, such as naturalization opportunities, the design and alignment of multi-use pedestrian and cyclist trails, and the relocation of recreation sites and hiking trails. From a **construction perspective**, the community consultation will focus on primarily on opportunities to mitigate impacts related to construction and expressway operations through the identification of detour routes and the implementation of measures to relieve congestion, control noise and dust, etc.

Successful completion of the design and construction phase of the RHV project requires that the Community Facilitator work with the City to create and implement a credible consultation process that meets the public consultation requirements of the 1997 Exemption Order. Successful delivery of this process requires an understanding that:

- *The Expressway project is a highly charged community issue.* The Facilitator will work to anticipate and account for different perspectives and take a leadership role in enabling the resolution of concerns and issues. The Facilitator will work with specific groups and communities to enhance their understanding of the overall process and build support and lines of communications to facilitate their role in it.
- *The consultation approach will be tightly scoped to deliver targeted meetings on specific issues with particular stakeholders.* The City and former Region have already conducted extensive consultations with diverse stakeholder groups that have had considerable input into the decisions previously made. **This stage of the consultation process will not revisit any of these earlier decisions**, but will focus on seeking input into decisions that have yet to be made on detailed design, and on giving the community the information it

needs regarding construction impacts. There are also stakeholders in Hamilton who have been, and will continue to, use the RHV project as an example of why they have broader concerns about Hamilton's future. These city-wide issues will be tracked by the City's Project Office, and are not the responsibility of the Community Facilitator. However where appropriate, the Facilitator may work with the City to facilitate communication between stakeholders and other City staff and departments (e.g. opportunities to influence Hamilton's future infrastructure or economic growth strategies can be directed to the Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy project; concerns about social equity can be directed to the staff implementing Hamilton's Social Vision; etc.).

- *The progress and results of local consultations will serve as an important indicator to the broader Hamilton community of the City's commitment to engaging stakeholders in a meaningful way. People will look to the consultation to see what issues are being raised, and how issues are being addressed. When people outside the consultations can see that the issues of concern to them are being addressed - even if they are not directly involved - it builds the credibility of the process and demonstrates the City's responsiveness to local priorities. An important goal of the community relations program will be to maintain a strong link to the consultation program to ensure these types of important messages are communicated.*

Consultation Purpose

The primary purpose of the community consultations through the design and construction phase is to:

- INFORM LOCAL RESIDENTS and other area users (as required) of the design and construction work that will be implemented, including anticipated/actual impacts that they can expect to experience and mitigation plans;
- OBTAIN FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS and other area users (as required) regarding the issues, challenges, and opportunities associated with this project, and work with City staff to ensure that feedback is considered; and
- RESPOND TO THE ISSUES, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES RAISED by the community by demonstrating how their feedback was considered in the design and construction decision-making process.

2. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The Community Facilitator will abide by a strong set of operating principles throughout the consultation process. The Facilitator will:

1. **OPERATE TRANSPARENTLY** by sharing information with participants regarding all aspects of design and construction activity, focusing in particular on those activities which most directly impact their local neighbourhoods and uses.
2. **COMMUNICATE CLEARLY** by using lay language and ensuring all technical language is available and accessible so that local communities have a full appreciation and understanding of the complexities of the project activities that may impact them.
3. **OPERATE WITH INTEGRITY** by ensuring all stakeholders are very clear about the decisions which they can influence through this process (“open doors”) and others that will not be re-visited through this process (“closed doors”).
4. **RESPECT THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES** of all stakeholders, including but not limited to the general public, local communities, the private sector, non-profit groups, other organizations, the City of Hamilton and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.
5. **FACILITATE THE SHARING OF THOSE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES** among all stakeholders to enable a more comprehensive understanding of those perspectives and the rationale behind them.
6. **BE ACCOUNTABLE** to all stakeholders regarding information shared, discussions held and commitments made, so that at any point in time the facilitator, with the assistance of the City and its contractors, would be able to explain the status of project design and construction activities as well as the extent to which those activities have been shaped by the community feedback received.
7. Ensure the consultation process adapts to **MEET UNIQUE LOCAL NEEDS**.
8. **OPERATE IN A TIMELY WAY** to ensure local residents and all stakeholders have a reasonable opportunity to inform and be informed of design and construction activities **before** they take place.
9. **EVALUATE** the consultation approach and process on an ongoing basis, and adapt as necessary to changing stakeholder needs and project circumstances.

3. CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

There are two general streams of activity that will be underway through the design and construction phase of the RHVP: building of the expressway itself (and related infrastructure) and the final design and installation of the landscaping that will be constructed around the new expressway (see table below).

	DESIGN	CONSTRUCTION
Roadway and related infrastructure	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>(very few of these elements remain to be designed, since most are driven by provincial and federal road, pedestrian and cyclist safety requirements)</p>	✓
Landscaping around the roadway (as described in the Landscape Management Plan)	✓	✓

Rationale behind the Design

The consultation approach outlined here is designed to ensure that, at a minimum, all neighbouring residents and other area users (as necessary) will be introduced to all four elements of activity underway in their area (corresponding to the 4 checkmarks above). The following 12 step protocol has been developed to guide the consultation process. These 12 steps **will be adapted as necessary in response to local needs and circumstances**.

Preparation Steps (Currently Underway)

- i. Facilitator, working with the City and MTO, IDENTIFIES THE TIMING AND LOCATION of different construction and design activities, including the general dates by which decisions need to be finalized regarding different elements of work.
- ii. Facilitator, working with the City and MTO, IDENTIFIES THE COMMUNITY(IES) and stakeholders potentially impacted by the activities.
- iii. Facilitator, working with the City and the Expressway Implementation Committee, obtains insight from Councillors into the key stakeholders and issues to be addressed in their constituencies.

Consultation Begins

***These are general steps that will act to guide the consultation process. Implementation of these steps will be flexible depending on circumstances and local needs. All steps will be implemented in close collaboration with the City and/or MTO. ***

1. Facilitator IDENTIFIES THE AREA(S) where consultation needs to begin because decisions regarding construction and/or landscape management need to be finalized. The consultation will aim to take place a minimum of 4 weeks in advance of when a final decision is required.
2. Facilitator obtains a SUMMARY OF ISSUES received to date (if any) by the RHVP Office and local Councillor(s) in a particular area.
3. Facilitator is BRIEFED BY THE CITY/MTO regarding:
 - (I) **CONSTRUCTION**
 - The basic elements of construction work to be completed related to a particular contract, including the anticipated timing of each element
 - The anticipated impacts of those elements of work (e.g. noise, dust, congestion, change in access, etc.)
 - The planned mitigation activities
 - The negotiable (e.g. detour routes, time of day within which work occurs, traffic control mechanisms, etc.) and non-negotiable elements of the proposed construction and mitigation activities (e.g. design of noise barrier, ramp curvature, etc.)
 - The date(s) on which final decisions regarding the negotiable elements of work need to be made
 - (II) **LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT**
 - The landscape management plans for the contract area (and neighbouring areas, if applicable)
 - The negotiable and non-negotiable elements of the proposed landscaping plans
 - The date(s) on which final decisions regarding the negotiable elements of the plan need to be made
4. Facilitator PHONES a subset of stakeholders/community leaders to:
 - Introduce herself, the project and upcoming activities
 - Introduce the consultation approach
 - Seek early insight into issues and identity of local stakeholders
 - Identify an appropriate meeting place

5. PAPER FLYER DROP with/information pamphlet (with "Executive Summary" of upcoming events and consultation approach) - includes name of who to contact at the City (or the Facilitator's office) if local resident/stakeholder is interested in participating. Interested participants must register to find out the location of the meeting (likely sent via email a few days prior to the event).
6. City COLLECTS NAMES AND EMAILS, City/Facilitator set up meeting(s). Depending on the stakeholders and the issues, in some cases meetings will join different groups with different interests, and in other cases meetings will be issue-specific and involve particular stakeholder groups.
7. Facilitator (and/or City or MTO staff) HOLDS MEETING (sample locations include local library, community center, church, café, other public space), shares information and collects feedback on key issues/challenges/opportunities
8. **WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE MEETING**, the Facilitator writes up summary report of meeting results, and forwards results to City/MTO technical teams. Opportunities to ADDRESS/RESOLVE ISSUES are identified by the City/MTO.
9. **WITHIN TWO - FOUR WEEKS OF THE MEETING**, the Facilitator reports back to the participants of the original community. Depending on the nature and complexity of the issues, this report could happen by email, phone, flyer, or through another meeting (in every case, some type of written correspondence will follow with a summary of how issues have been considered/responded to).
10. ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP/ongoing liaison as necessary prior to construction.
11. FLYER DROP to indicate construction starting (including who on the construction site will be responsible for liaison with the public)
12. ONGOING MONITORING of feedback received from the community during construction, and responding to additional issues/opportunities/concerns as raised (building on steps #1-11 and following the same basic approach).

4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

In addition to local stakeholder meetings, three main mechanisms will be used to share information about the RHVP widely:

- a City-wide newsletter (that will be produced in both hard copy and posted on the City of Hamilton's RHVP website) which will be produced by the end of June and will be updated regularly throughout the duration of the project;
- a "Neighbours Guide to the Project" that will be distributed to everyone living in the immediate vicinity of the project area with a more detailed description of the consultation approach and anticipated activities (again, this will be produced both in hard copy and posted on the City of Hamilton' RHVP website); and
- two types of on-site signage (1) large font sign that can be seen at 60 km/hr that reads something to the effect of "This is part of the Red Hill Valley Project, for more information contact www.hamilton.ca/rhvp or 905-546-CITY (2489)", and (2) a large map mounted at access points to the site that outlines additional project detail.

When attending local neighbourhood meetings as part of the design and construction consultation, the following materials will be available:

- one page Executive Summary of project (including brief history, sequence of events, rationale); and
- map(s) of the area.

An intensive internal communications protocol has also been created and will be followed. It is designed to provide the community with "one-window" access to the City, with the subsequent distribution of that information through the community facilitator and the technical teams.