

Consultation Activities 1997-2002

The Community Stakeholders Committee (CSC)

On July 9, 1997, an information session was held in order to provide interested groups with information regarding the IADP, the expressway planning process, the work program and the design schedule. At the information session, interest group representatives were asked how they would like to be involved in these efforts. As a result of the input received, the Community Stakeholders Committee (CSC) was formed in the fall of 1997.

The Committee was comprised of members representing organizations with diverse views about the expressway. Membership reflected a balanced representation of those who were against the expressway, for the expressway, and neutral about the expressway, and a broad range of perspectives, including economic, environmental and community interests. It was clear in the terms of reference that for members opposed to the expressway, participation in the CSC was not to be construed in any way as a condoning of the project.

The CSC provided a forum for community stakeholders to come together to work on the Expressway project in a constructive manner. Specifically, the goal of the CSC was to provide a balanced, inclusive discussion and advisory forum for community members and stakeholders to pro-actively collaborate with, and provide timely advice and recommendations to, the Region. Their focus was on developing and reviewing mechanisms to minimize the impact of the Red Hill Creek Expressway on the environment and the community. The results of their work would be considered by the Region when determining the modifications to be made to the approved alignment.

The CSC was supported by representatives of the Region as well as the technical consultants. CSC meetings were facilitated by a neutral third-party, whose responsibilities were to ensure that the business of the committee was achieved in accordance with the Committee's direction.

Terms of Reference Sub-Committee

Community stakeholders formed a balanced sub-committee to work on its Terms of Reference. In January 1998, consensus was reached by the CSC on the Terms of Reference. It includes details on items such as purpose, structure, membership and procedures.

Public Consultation Sub-Committee

An additional sub-committee was formed to provide CSC advice to the Region on effective ways to engage the public in the IADP process.

The CSC identified two different audiences of the Red Hill Valley Project: residents adjacent to the proposed Expressway, and the general community. The CSC felt that citizens who are either positively or negatively impacted by the expressway project should not only be informed and aware of the CSC's existence, but also have an opportunity to provide advice on issues such as:

- Connections (Melvin, Greenhill and the escarpment crossing);
- Air quality, natural environment, stormwater management, Burlington Street Interchange options;
- Minor expressway refinements; and
- Mitigation measures.

The CSC noted that efforts must be made to engage ethnic organizations in opportunities for participation and recommended that translation services be made available.

Several suggestions were put forward by the CSC to ensure that information about the Red Hill Creek Expressway IADP be available to the stakeholders and the general public, including:

- Posting information on the City's website;
- Distributing the CSC newsletter to the community;
- Preparing an advertisement and news release to inform the community about the formation of the CSC; and
- Using audio-visual media to inform community members about public meetings and information sessions in advance of the events taking place.

In addition, the CSC believed that those who were not comfortable with public speaking should have the chance to add their views and advice to the process. Furthermore, for people participating in meetings, there needed to be enough time for them to absorb the information and advise the City of their concerns at a later date. The CSC believed that communicating through existing networks such as the Riverdale Community Council, Centennial Ratepayers and Home and School associations would ensure that neighbourhoods could be involved.

Review of Technical Studies and Draft Summary Reports

Throughout its tenure, the CSC provided advice to the Region on the background conditions, projected impacts from the expressway and mitigation measures. This was undertaken through a review of Draft Summary Report Volume 1 (released in November 1997) and Draft Summary Report Volume 2 (released in July, 1998). For a complete set of CSC meeting records, please see Appendix IV.

Resignations and Disbanding of the CSC

In April 1998, several members of the CSC opposed to the Expressway resigned from the Committee due to irreconcilable differences over the need for the project. Remaining members of the CSC made numerous attempts to resolve the differences, and convened a sub-committee to address the concerns. Advice was provided to the Region to refer the matter of need to the City's

Vision 2020 Committee. This request was declined, and efforts to encourage resigned members to re-consider were not successful. The CSC decided to attempt to recruit new members, and continued its work until September 1998. At this time, the CSC unanimously resolved that its work was complete and disbanded the Committee.

Public Consultation and Communications

The City provided several discrete public consultation events/opportunities. A total of over 1,100 members of the public attended these events, raising numerous concerns and providing the City with suggestions and advice. This section provides a brief overview of the public consultation that occurred throughout the IADP, beginning with the most recent activities.

Newsletter

In December of 2002, the City of Hamilton released the first newsletter for the Red Hill Valley Program on its website. Topics addressed included an overview of the project and information on natural channel design.

Completing the Impact Assessment Process – Consultation Activities 2002

In October 2002, the City released ten additional reports to supplement the technical work completed in 1998. These reports covered a number of issues and topics that had not previously been addressed. Topics included:

1. King's Forest Golf Course Impact Assessment Study
2. A Stream Network Inventory, Fluvial Geomorphologic Assessment and Preliminary Natural Channel Design of Red Hill Creek
3. Southern Flying Squirrel Study
4. Land Use Assessment
5. Business Impact Assessment of the Red Hill Creek Expressway/QEW Interchange
6. Snowdrifting Assessment
7. Niagara Escarpment Expressway Crossing Alternative Designs Report
8. Pre-Construction Ambient Air Quality Monitoring
9. Post-Construction Air Quality Monitoring for Lincoln Alexander Parkway
10. Fisheries Existing Conditions and Predicted Impact

Stakeholders and the general public were informed of the opportunity to review and comment on these reports through advertisements and letters. The 60-day review period occurred from October 11 to December 12, 2002.

Key issues raised by the public and agencies as a result of this review were similar to the ones stemming from the first two Draft Summary Reports: air and water quality, wildlife habitat protection and noise mitigation during and after construction. In particular, some of those reviewing the ten reports mentioned the flying squirrel population and the impact that a loss of habitat would have on their welfare. As well, questions on water quality monitoring and fish relocation plans were all raised during this 60-day review period.

King's Forest Golf Course Open House (November 2, 2002)

This drop-in style session was composed of representatives of the golf course, municipal staff and consultants involved in the Red Hill Valley Project on hand to answer questions. Issues raised included the fact that Creek stabilization work should be undertaken whether or not the expressway is built, noting that the overall costs are lower with the Expressway driving the work. Timing of construction was also a concern, with a view to minimizing disruption of the golfing season.

Red Hill Valley Program Website

In August 2002, a Red Hill Valley website was designed as part of the City of Hamilton's Internet home page. This website, www.hamilton.ca/rhvp, provides residents with information about the Red Hill Creek watershed and the many studies and projects that the City has underway in the watershed. The website is frequently updated and provides such content as project updates, final reports, newsletters and media releases.

Stakeholder and Public Consultation on Draft Summary Report Volume II – (Impact Assessment) June – September 1998

Public Information Centres on Predicted Impacts and Mitigation Options

A series of public information centres were held on June 15, 17 and 18, 1998 at Carmen's Banquet Centre and the Renaissance Banquet and Special Events Centre. The purpose of the public information centres was to inform the community about the recommended changes to the design of the expressway, the predicted impacts and mitigation options, and opportunities for community involvement in the detailed design phase.

In total, 623 people attended the 3 information centres and 169 comment sheets were returned to the Region. The public's areas of greatest concern were: impacts on air quality and potential health effects, impacts to wildlife and habitat, noise increases, potential relocation of parks and pedestrian access to the valley. In particular, members of the public were concerned about the traffic volume and traffic mix data that was used in the air quality and noise impact prediction models.

Stakeholder and Public Consultation on Background Conditions and Impact Predictions (January – April, 1998)

Information Briefing Sessions

A series of information briefing sessions were held on April 2, 7 and 9, 1998 at the Lakeland Community Centre. The first session pertained to creek realignment and stormwater management. The second session dealt with vegetation, wildlife and site contamination, while the last session focused on air quality and noise.

Approximately 40 people in total attended the three information sessions, including several CSC members. The purpose of these assemblies was to provide people with background information so that they might better understand how predicted impacts are determined and reported. Videotapes of each session

were produced and made available at the Hamilton Central Library, the Hamilton Sherwood Library, the Stoney Creek Library and at the Region's Special Projects Office.

Neighbourhood Meetings

A series of neighbourhood meetings hosted by the CSC were held on February 18, 19, and 23, 1998. The meetings were held at Elizabeth Bagshaw Public School, Glendale Secondary School and Woodward Public School. On February 6, 1998, a Regional media release was issued to advertise the meetings, and advertisements were run in February 7, 11 and 14, 1998 issues of the Hamilton Spectator. Advertisements were also run on February 11, 1998 in numerous local newspapers. The purpose of the neighbourhood meetings was to provide an opportunity for the public to obtain information on the Region's progress to date, the expressway design options being examined, the schedule of activities that would lead to the selection of a preferred expressway design and the CSC. In total, 206 members of the public attended the three meetings. The public raised a number of questions, concerns and issues regarding:

- Impacts to the natural environment;
- Impacts to private property;
- Noise and traffic;
- Health and safety;
- Use of the valley;
- Costs;
- Compensation;
- Need for the expressway; and
- Alternatives to the expressway.

Mall Display

A mall display was set up at Eastgate Square in Hamilton from February 12-15 1998. The display contained information about the expressway project, the IADP and the formation of the CSC. People visiting the mall display were encouraged to fill out a comment sheet and return it to the Region. Over the duration of the display, 19 comment sheets were returned with requests for more information and people asking to be put on the Region's mailing list.

CSC Newsletter

A CSC newsletter was published and distributed in February 1998 to over 20,000 residents and businesses located approximately 1 kilometre on either side of the proposed expressway limits. The newsletter outlined the need for public input; notified people of the formation, role and membership of the CSC; contained pro, con and neutral articles; informed readers about upcoming meetings; and included a comment sheet that could be filled in and returned to the Region.

Burlington Street/QEW Interchange Meeting

A meeting regarding options for the Burlington Street/QEW interchange was held on January 19, 1998 at the Lakeland Community Centre. The event was

advertised in the Hamilton Spectator on January 10 and January 15. The purpose of the event was to provide an opportunity for members of the public to obtain information on the interchange options for Burlington Street and the QEW and to provide input on community priorities. Ninety-five people attended the meeting. Questions and concerns raised by the public included:

- The possibility of truck accidents and subsequent contamination issues;
- The timing of construction;
- Potential impacts to wetlands, the Lakeland Community Centre, and Hutch's restaurant;
- Stormwater management issues; and
- Air and water quality along the beach.

Visual Impact Assessment Workshop

A Visual Impact Assessment Workshop was held on December 11, 1997 at the Lakeland Community Centre. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss how the potential visual impacts of the expressway would be assessed. Eighteen people attended the workshop, including members of the CSC and representatives from other interest groups. Participants at the workshop felt that consideration should be given to both short and long-term impacts, that mitigation options should be applied further down the valley, and that monitoring take place during and post construction. Questions were raised about how the computer modelling was done, and about the safety and feasibility of pedestrian and wildlife crossings.

Consultations on the IADP and Community Consultation Process – June, 1997

Public Information Centres on the Impact Assessment and Design Process

On June 23 and 25, 1997; public information sessions were hosted by the. The first was held at Hillsdale Public School, and the second at Janet Lee Public School. In total, 152 people attended the two information centres. A Regional media release dated June 11, 1997 was used to publicize the event in advance, and notification of the event was included in the Red Hill Creek Expressway Information Brief for June 1997. The purpose of the event was to invite the community to provide input into the Impact Assessment and Design Process and to inform the public about how they could be involved in the process. 115 comment sheets were completed and returned at the information centres. Generally, people expressed concern for current traffic situations, and concerns about potential impacts the expressway would have on the natural environment, noise levels, and water and air quality.

Public Consultation Report

Government Input

Government agencies also had the opportunity to provide input to the City/Region throughout the Impact Assessment and Design Process. In particular, government agencies provided written advice and suggestions to the Region on the Draft Summary Report Volume 1: Impact Assessment and

Design Process from December 1997 to February 1998 and on the Draft Summary Report Volume 2: Impact Assessment and Design Process from August 1998 to December 1998. Meetings with individual agencies were scheduled in late 2002 to obtain input on the additional reports, and to discuss and resolve specific issues pertaining to the overall project.