



407 East Environmental Assessment

RAG Meeting #3

Tuesday January 17th 2006



Purpose of today's meeting

- Receive comments on the Proactive Involvement Plan
- Receive comments on the Transportation Assessment and Problem Definition Report
- Overview of Alternatives to the Undertaking (Planning Alternatives) – Assessment/Evaluation

Today's agenda

- Project Status
- Proactive Involvement Plan (PIP)
- Transportation Assessment and Problem Definition Report
- Alternatives to the Undertaking
- Project Schedule Update
- Q & A
- Next Steps

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Follow up: October meeting

- The website was re-launched on November 29th 2005
- Overview of Problems and Opportunities Report
- Comments on the PIP have been received
- Newsletter #1 was distributed Mid-November to municipalities, agencies, libraries, clerks' offices, members of the public on the mailing list – Positive Feedback
- The Project Team met with TRCA and MNR on January 12th 2006, to discuss comments on the Planning Alternatives from the ToR, as requested.

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Project Status

- Draft Proactive Involvement Plan
- Draft Transportation Assessment and Problem Definition Report
- Draft Planning Alternatives, Assessment and Evaluation Factors, Criteria, Indicators and Measures

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Proactive Involvement Plan (PIP)

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Purpose of the Plan

- The PIP summarizes opportunities, processes and strategies for public involvement during the EA Process
- As the EA Process evolves, improvements and additional strategies will be considered and applied as required

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Comments Received on the PIP

- The PIP should more clearly recognize the differing levels of public involvement and interest.
- When known, should include CEAA related activities
- Elaborate on the Community Value Plan
- Length of Pre-submission review period needs to be clarified

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Next Steps: PIP

- Revise the Plan in consideration of comments received
- Post on the 407 Website for Public Review
- The Plan will remain a “living” document

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Transportation Assessment & Problem Definition (P&O)

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Purpose

- To develop a clear statement of the transportation problems and opportunities in the Analysis Area.
- Facilitate generation of planning alternatives
- Problems and Opportunities focused on:
 - Transportation / traffic
 - Economic Effects
 - Land Use
 - Environmental Effects

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Analysis Screenlines: East - West Travel



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Analysis Screenlines:

North - South Travel



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Future Conditions: 2031

East - West Travel



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Future Conditions: 2031

North - South Travel



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Problems: Transportation

- Traffic volumes will continue to grow on both arterial roadways and freeways, particularly in peak travel periods resulting in greater and longer periods of congestion.
- Even with planned roadway improvements in place, existing weekday congestion will increase and extend into Clarington.
- The volume to capacity ratios depicted in the document for 2011, 2021 and 2031 may be understated.

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Problems: Transportation cont'd

- Traffic volumes on the transportation network on summer and other major long weekends (eastbound on Fridays and westbound on Sundays/holidays) will increase over time, further increasing typical peak hour congestion levels.
- Major events, accidents, incidents and maintenance/construction activities on the congested area road network and in particular on Highway 401 compromises the operation of the transportation system and challenges effective emergency responses.
- Auto occupancy has declined in recent years, increasing auto-dependency.

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Opportunities: Transportation

- The Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH):
 - identifies an opportunity to protect for a future transportation corridor.
 - indicates the transportation system within the GGH will be planned and managed to provide for the effective integration of different modes of transportation to ensure that people and goods flow effectively through the area.
 - recognizes it is important to continue to invest in the road and highway system within the context of a balanced transportation system to better serve the needs of the traveling public.
- Urban Growth Centres (UGC) are important areas of intensification that will form a network of urban centres.
- Public transportation is an integral part of the Region's future transportation system plans.

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Opportunities: Transportation cont'd

- “Balanced” transportation and mobility strategies will assist in the management of growth and congestion, provide a framework for increased transit use, and optimize the current system through continued and necessary infrastructure investment.
- Implementation and adoption of advanced vehicular and system technologies provide an opportunity to increase system efficiency and capacity, and enhance safety, without major physical expansion of the road or transit network.
- The nature of the petroleum supply industry and the escalation in fuel costs will help drive the technology associated with the use of alternative fuels for automobiles and commercial vehicles.

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Problems: Economic/Goods Movement

- Congestion constrains trade, tourism, recreation and economic growth.
- Highway 401 is currently the only freeway route for commercial vehicles.
- The arterial and local road network between Brock Road in the City of Pickering and Highway 35/115 in the Municipality of Clarington, is required to accommodate the local and inter-regional auto, commercial and transit traffic that enters or leaves Highway 407 ETR.

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Problems: Economic/Goods Movement

cont'd

- Congestion levels, severely affects accessibility for existing and future industry.
- Differing responsibilities among all levels of government result in policy and regulatory challenges for goods movement.
- Current rail corridors through the Analysis Area have limited capability to accommodate a significant shift in goods movement from road to rail.
- "Just-in-time delivery" (JIT), critical to the manufacturing sector, is impacted by traffic congestion.

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Problems: Economic/Goods Movement

cont'd

- The growth of "e-business" will increase the volume of commercial vehicle traffic.
- Delay to motorists as a result of peak hour congestion on Highway 401, results in increased user costs for commercial vehicle, auto and transit traffic.
- Congestion caused by collisions has a disproportionately high economic and quality of life impact.
- Tourism and recreational travel is affected by congestion on the area roadways, especially Highway 401.

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Opportunities: Economic/Goods Movement

- Strategic upgrading of Highway 401 and development of a parallel relief facility represents opportunities to relieve existing and anticipated congestion levels.
- The provision of alternative, parallel freeway capacity (Highway 407) to Highway 401 to better serve inter-regional, inter-provincial and international trips, provides an opportunity to transfer/divert longer distance commercial vehicle and auto trips from Highway 401.
- A transportation corridor with a transit component provides an opportunity to increase transit ridership and reduce auto use.

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Opportunities: Economic/Goods Movement cont'd

- The provincial Growth Plan identifies a new transportation corridor in Durham as a key economic link within the GGH.
- Prevailing trip lengths and commodity types suggests that there may an opportunity for some goods or commodities to be moved by other modes, including rail and marine.
- Improvements to the transportation system will improve Just-in-Time (JIT) delivery strategies
- An efficient transportation system that provides for adequate freeway/transitway capacity supports the tourism and recreation sectors.

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Problems: Environmental

- Traffic congestion can result in adverse environmental health impacts to the residents of the Analysis Area.
- Uncontrolled urban sprawl consumes land resources and promotes an unsustainable future with respect to environmental conditions.
- Increased levels of congestion in the analysis area will result in travel behaviour detrimental to the social environment. i.e. traffic infiltration.
- Increased levels of congestion will result in impacts on various elements of the natural environment

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Opportunities: Environmental

- Provincial policy documents including the Provincial Growth Plan provide for opportunities to address resource protection and conservation relative to growth in the GGH.
- Promotion of alternative travel and shipping modes such as transit, rail, marine and air will reduce the growth of auto and truck trips on the transportation network.
- Improved transit service is acknowledged as the first priority to address existing and anticipated future congestion in the Analysis Area.

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Opportunities: Environmental cont'd

- The Growth Plan and Official Plans of jurisdictions within the Analysis Area articulate policies and principles that promote higher density, and transit supportive land uses.
- A freeway/transitway system with adequate capacity implemented in concert with other TDM and transit strategies provides an opportunity to reduce the pressure on local, collector and arterial roadways within the Region.
- The Provincial Growth Plan details strategies to ensure that appropriate land uses are planned for along both existing and new corridors.

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Problems: Land Use

- Without an improvement in live-work ratio in the Region of Durham, the trend towards out-commuting will increase.
- Population and employment densities in Durham need to increase to support increased transit service.
- Growth areas in Durham are generally to the north of existing urban areas resulting in pressure on north-south arterial facilities in the Analysis Area.
- Decisions by businesses to locate have higher propensity to be influenced by network congestion than individual resident choice with respect to home location.

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Opportunities: Land Use

- Changes in urban form within the Analysis Area, as contemplated in the Growth Plan, will affect both the demand for, and the supply of, transportation services.
- There are opportunities with a more efficient transportation system to promote sustainable growth, liveable communities and provide transportation choice, which is consistent with the policies included in the Provincial Growth Plan.
- Transportation initiatives, both road and transit based can be used to assist in managing growth and urban sprawl.

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Conclusions

- The eastern GTA including the Region of Durham and surrounding areas, requires a more efficient and reliable transportation system
- Arterial roadways within the Region of Durham, have been required to accommodate traffic that has been diverted from Highway 401
- A number of Regional roadways are operating at congested levels, resulting in unnecessary and undesirable social and natural environmental impacts that are difficult to mitigate

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Conclusions

- In order to facilitate flows that sustain the economy (people, employees, goods), it is critical that congestion in the eastern GTA and within the Analysis Area be addressed
- The current and anticipated system level of service, given a “business as usual” scenario, is not appropriate to support a sustainable economic environment in Durham
- There is a defined need to assess transportation requirements at a network level and evaluate the merits of several transportation network alternatives and modal shift opportunities relating to the future movement of people and goods

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Next Steps: Problems & Opportunities

- Final comments requested by January 28th
- Revise the Report in consideration of input received
- Post on the 407 Website for Public Review

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Alternatives to the Undertaking

Planning Alternatives

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Description of Alternatives

- Do Nothing (“Business as Usual”)
 - **Only currently planned road and transit improvements:** added to the existing infrastructure. Alternative maintains current transit mode split through Region of Durham of between 5%-10%
- Increased Transit/Auto Reduction
 - **Auto Reduction Alternative:** Application of Transit/TDM strategies to increase transit reliance and reduce auto trip making (transit mode split as practical between specific markets) to achieve regional objective of 15% auto reduction within Durham and achieve realistic transit mode shares to Toronto and West GTA markets. Requires improvements to transit infrastructure, but does not include road improvements beyond currently programmed.

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Description of Alternatives cont'd

- Expansion of Existing Corridors
 - **Improvements to Existing Infrastructure:** improvements to current facilities beyond those currently planned for long term horizon
 - Provincial Facilities – Additional lanes as required
 - Municipal Facilities – Additional lanes as required on east-west and north-south facilities
- New Provincial Highway/ Transit Corridor
 - **Highway 407 Corridor Improvement including Transitway**

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Assessment of Alternatives to the Undertaking: Overview

Building on the Approved ToR (November 2004):

- The alternatives will be assessed based on the four factor groups:
 - Transportation
 - Economics
 - Land Use
 - Environment
- The assessment will be at a broad and strategic level

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Assessment of Alternatives to the Undertaking: Overview

- The Planning Alternatives will be assessed using the above factor areas and criteria, indicators and measures which have been established based upon the policies, principles and objectives contained in, but not limited to, the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement and Official Plans and Federal Documents etc.

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Next Steps: Assessment of Alternatives to the Undertaking

- Revise the Draft Assessment Table in consideration of comments received
- Post on Web Site for public review
- Workshop with and expanded CAG
- Complete assessment / evaluation of Planning Alternatives

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Questions and Answers

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Next steps: Advisory Group Meetings

- February
 - Planning Alternatives Workshop
- March/April
 - 4th Round of MTAG and RAG Meetings
 - 5th Round of CAG Meeting
 - First Round of Public Information Centres at 4 separate locations within Durham Region

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