

Regional Municipality of York

Appendix 7A

Consultation and Communication Plan

Prepared by:

AECOM
Cumming + Company

Project #

60114489

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1. Context for the Consultation and Communication Plan

The purpose of the Western Vaughan Transportation Improvements Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) is to identify transportation improvements in southwest Vaughan to support planned growth to the year 2031. The Study Area includes the western portion of the City of Vaughan from Highway 400 to the east, Highway 50 in the west, Highway 407 to the south and Teston Road to the north.

The Western Vaughan Transportation Improvements IEA is being undertaken in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) approved by the Minister of the Environment in February 2006. The Regional Municipality of York (York Region) has retained UMA|AECOM (UMA) in conjunction with Gartner Lee Limited (GLL) and other sub consultants to carry out this project in accordance with the IEA process. The ToR describes, among other things, the consultation program for the IEA. Consultation with the public and stakeholders is essential in carrying out the environmental assessment. Agency/public consultation will meet or exceed the requirements of the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act.

The following principles will guide the communication and consultation program that will be undertaken over the next three years.

- a) the process will be clear, open and inclusive;
- b) stakeholder concerns will be identified early in the process, and addressed in the IEA;
- c) there will be multiple consultation opportunities, using a number of techniques throughout the IEA; and
- d) issues and concerns, and responses to them will be documented as part of the IEA.

This document outlines the Consultation and Communication Plan that will be implemented for the Western Vaughan Transportation Improvements IEA. This Consultation and Communication Plan has been developed for the Western Vaughan Transportation Improvements IEA Study. It addresses York Region's requirements for this study and fulfills the IEA mandatory points of agency/public contact as required by the approved ToR.

The purpose of this Communication Plan is:

- a) to outline the objectives for consultation and communication activities;
- b) to outline how and when the consultation and engagement of stakeholders will take place as well as to identify those to be consulted;
- c) to develop a project contact list based on initial interviews with stakeholders and other background research;
- d) to identify what types of consultation activities will occur and when (e.g., public meetings, notifications, etc.);
- e) to identify the key project activities to be presented during each round of consultation; and,
- f) to identify the number and type of meetings to be held.

The consultation and communication program outlined in this document will remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the public and stakeholders in order to abide by the principles that guide the consultation and the stated objectives.

2. Consultation and Communication Objectives

The Consultation and Communication Plan has been developed to meet the following objectives:

Build and Enhance Awareness and Information

- a) Enhance awareness of the IEA process and the opportunities for people to get involved;
- b) Provide people with timely, clear and understandable information so that they can be meaningfully involved in the IEA;
- c) Establish two-way communication between the Region, the project consultant team, and the public and stakeholders with the view to having a better understanding of challenges and opportunities;
- d) Utilize a variety of communication techniques to seek input including verbal (face to face, telephone) written (letters, e-mail, comment sheets) and meetings;
- e) Utilize both web-based and print materials to ensure ready access to information and study reports; and,
- f) Educate the community and stakeholders about the transportation challenges and opportunities within the Western Vaughan Study Area and the connections between sustainable growth management, their own lifestyle choices, transportation infrastructure planning and the overall quality of life in York Region.

Provide Multiple Consultation Opportunities

- a) Engage the public and stakeholders through a variety of participation methods and accessible and timely opportunities to be involved throughout the IEA;
- b) Facilitate public discussion about the transportation alternatives for the Study Area in the larger regional context;
- c) Be flexible to accommodate the needs of participants and responsive to input from the public and stakeholders; and,
- d) Ensure access to participation through accessible venues.

Identify and Resolve Issues

- a) Consider all points of view and input received throughout the IEA process; and,
- b) Resolve issues where possible.

Ensure Feedback and Documentation

- a) Provide documentation of input throughout the IEA including questions, comments and concerns that are received;
- b) Prepare summaries of input from consultation events;
- c) Prepare notes of meetings with stakeholders;
- d) Use the project web site to regularly post project updates, interim reports, technical reports, meeting notes, summaries from consultation events and an e-mail sign-up sheet; and,
- e) Provide timely responses to questions, comments and concerns that are received.

3. Stakeholders

In addition to the general public, a comprehensive list of review agencies along with interested and affected parties will be used as a basis for consultation. A preliminary list of contacts has been developed and includes provincial ministries and agencies, municipal departments and agencies, First Nations, federal review agencies, emergency services, ratepayer organizations within the Study Area, special interest groups, affected property owners, and individuals who have previously enquired about the IEA. Various departments within York Region will also be consulted as part of this project, including Planning and Development, Health Services, and Transportation and Works.

During the IEA process, the list will be continually updated and revised, as appropriate, to reflect those agencies/parties who wish no further involvement in the IEA, as well as those new agencies/parties who wish to be directly notified of future events. In this manner, the project contact list will constantly be updated to ensure that all possible efforts are made to include all interested agencies/parties throughout the IEA process.

3.1 Stakeholder Sensitivity Analysis

As part of the development of this Consultation and Communications Plan, a Stakeholder Sensitivity Analysis (SSA) was conducted, involving telephone and face-to-face interviews with a diverse cross-section of potential stakeholders perceived to have an interest in the Study Area. The purpose of the interviews was to:

- a) establish contact and provide information about the IEA;
- b) obtain input on how people would like to be consulted during the IEA;
- c) discuss the use of web communication;
- d) identify preliminary study concerns; and
- e) determine interest in participating on advisory committees.

In September and October of 2007, a total of forty interviews were conducted with ratepayer organizations, major employers, agencies, environmental interest groups, transportation organizations and business representatives. The following bullets summarize the comments received from the interviews.

Suggestions/Ideas Noted on Approaches for Consultation with the Public

- a) There was strong support for receiving communication about the project via e-mailed newsletter.
- b) Several stakeholders expressed support for a hardcopy newsletter, although the majority of these emphasized the importance of a hardcopy newsletter being brief and only providing project highlights.
- c) Stakeholder group meetings were generally looked upon favourably, with some stakeholders citing positive experience with these in past projects. It was noted that these are helpful once stakeholders have established interest in the project.
- d) Development industry representatives noted that one-on-one meetings are preferred.

Ideas on How a Project Web Site Could Best Service Stakeholder Needs

- a) Stakeholders expressed strong support for a project web site. There is general consensus among respondents that sending an e-mail advising of web site updates (e.g., new reports posted) is the most effective way of ensuring use of the site. Anticipating new reports through constant checking of the site is not supported as a main form of gathering information.

Ideas About Participating in an Advisory Committee

- a) Many of those contacted indicated a willingness to participate on the advisory committees that were established for this IEA, depending on time commitments.
- b) Ratepayers associations who were contacted expressed the desire for evening meetings.

Preliminary Ideas/Concerns Noted About the Study

The following preliminary ideas/concerns were noted:

Congestion: Traffic congestion was noted as a significant issue in the Study Area. This was an issue identified by residents’ associations, environmental organizations, businesses and developers. Some stakeholders identified specific ‘problem areas’ while others cited the whole Study Areas as being congested. As to how to solve the issue, the responses varied, and while some respondents provided suggestions, others professed that they did not know the optimal solution for addressing the problem. Some noted the need for a range of travel choices including road improvements and transit.

Road Improvements: The following road improvements were noted:

- a) improve Major Mackenzie Drive, such as its intersection with Highway 50 and jogs in the road, in order to improve its use as a major arterial;
- b) alleviate traffic on Nashville Road, which should become a local road;
- c) improve east/west routes including Rutherford Road and Langstaff Road;
- d) more north/south routes needed in area;
- e) Highway 427 should extend as far north as possible; and,
- f) improvements to 400 series highways around the Study Area.

Some noted that while road improvements are needed, these should not be implemented to the point where it encourages everyone to drive. It was noted that there is a greater need to get people walking and using other means of transportation (other than driving) in the area.

Public Transit: Several stakeholders expressed their support for increased public transportation capacity in the area, believing that emphasis should be placed on providing public transportation and “walkability” throughout the area. One residents’ association wanted bus routes extended to major arterials, but not on local residential roads where noise and loitering at bus stops is an issue for residents.

Environmental Concerns: Impacts to the natural environment are of concern. The preservation of existing trails/natural conservation areas is a crucial issue for the environmental organizations and recreational associations contacted.

Land Use Planning: Poor development planning was noted as one cause of the congestion. Better future planning initiatives were proposed as a solution to transportation deficiencies. Several individuals have suggested that the use of high-rise buildings be incorporated within the Study Area to help with the limited amount of land that is available for development.

4. Communication and Consultation Activities

The following communications and consultation activities are consistent with the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this project as approved in February 2006.

- **Notice of Commencement**

The Notice of Commencement for the study was communicated to the public through advertisements in the Vaughan Citizen and the Toronto Star, and through direct mailings to stakeholders and agencies within the study distribution area.

- **Web Site**

The Region of York has created a project specific web site (www.york.ca/westvaughaniaea) as a communication vehicle and public affairs and media relations tool to reach out to stakeholders and public. The site is being utilized to post information about the status of the study, background reports, notices of meetings and opportunities for input and will be updated on a regular basis. Specifically, the web site includes background information about the study, information about the EA process including the ToR, a study schedule, a map of the Study Area, and a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs). It also provides information about the Advisory Committees, including meeting notes. Similarly, the web site will post the dates of the Public Consultation Centres (PCCs) and allow visitors to view and download the material shown at the PCC, including display panels, etc. This will keep stakeholders up to date on the time and place of meetings and other events.

Also included on the site is a comment form that allows the public and stakeholders to send questions and/or concerns regarding the IEA. These comments will be recorded and a response will be issued within a reasonable time frame. Comments and information will be maintained on file for use during the IEA process and may be included in documentation. Information collected will be used in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

4.1 Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee

A Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee (CSAC) has been established to provide a forum for in-depth discussion of project issues with a representative group of broadly based interested stakeholders. The CSAC will help to identify public and stakeholder opportunities and concerns and assess the possible reaction of the public to transportation alternatives. The mandate of the CSAC is:

- a) to share information and knowledge of the Western Vaughan Study Area;
- b) to assist in the identification of current and potential community issues relative to transportation conditions and improvements in the Study Area;
- c) to comment on consultant and staff presentations and reports;
- d) to provide input on the identification and evaluation of alternatives to the undertaking and alternative methods, including the evaluation criteria and indicators;
- e) to provide input on the consultation and communication program;
- f) to provide information to their stakeholder organization on the project and serve as liaison; and,
- g) to attend CSAC meetings.

The CSAC is composed of individuals from organizations and/or associations that have significance within the Study Area. The composition includes representatives from:

- Cole Engineering;
- Friends of Boyd;
- Kleinburg and Area Ratepayers Association;
- Nashville Ratepayers Association;
- Smart Commute - Vaughan
- Sonoma Heights Ratepayers Association;
- TACC Construction;
- Vaughan Chamber of Commerce; and,
- West Humber Naturalists.

Two citizens and one business representative are also members of the CSAC.

The CSAC is a non-voting advisory committee. The CSAC will seek consensus on matters where decisions are required. An independent professional facilitator chairs the CSAC meetings. The CSAC will meet approximately 12 times between January 2008 and May 2010. The total number of meetings and timing will be discussed with the CSAC members as the project proceeds.

Meeting notes will be prepared following each meeting and these will be circulated in draft form in advance of the next meeting. Approved meeting notes will be forwarded to the Region of York and project team and will be posted on the project web site.

4.2 Review Agency Advisory Committee

The Region of York believes that early and ongoing involvement of regulatory authorities and other government agencies is necessary to ensure that the project team recognizes and understands any issues that may affect the project. The Western Vaughan Review Agency Advisory Committee (RAAC) provides a forum for regulatory authorities and other government agencies to provide guidance to York Region and its consultants for the planning and implementation of the transportation improvements.

The RAAC will ensure that the Project Team has effectively engaged all levels of government that are responsible for commenting on the transportation improvements. Specifically, the group will review and provide input on the:

- a) purpose of the undertaking;
- b) collection of Baseline Data;
- c) identification and evaluation of alternatives to the undertaking, including the evaluation criteria and indicators;
- d) identification and evaluation of alternative methods, including the evaluation criteria and indicators; and
- e) communications material prepared for PCCs and other public activities; and, the draft Environmental Assessment Report.

The RAAC is composed of the following organizations with senior level individuals from regulatory authorities related to the Western Vaughan Transportation Improvements. The composition of this Advisory Committee includes:

- 407 ETR;
- City of Vaughan;
- CP Rail;
- GO Transit;
- Ministry of the Environment;
- Ministry of Transportation;
- Peel Region; and,
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Members will assume a liaison role between the Advisory Committee and their respective agencies and will be responsible for:

- a) collecting ideas from their organization to bring to advisory committee meetings;
- b) presenting these ideas to the advisory committee;
- c) conveying information from the advisory committee back to their organization; and,
- d) presenting the recommendations of the advisory committee back to their organization.

Similar to the CSAC, the RAAC is a non-voting advisory committee. The RAAC will seek consensus on matters where decisions are required. An independent professional facilitator will chair the RAAC meetings. The RAAC will meet approximately 12 times between January 2008 and May 2010. The total number of meetings will be discussed with the RAAC members as the project proceeds.

Meeting notes will be prepared following each meeting and these will be circulated in draft form in advance of the next meeting. Approved meeting notes will be forwarded to the Region of York and project team and will be posted on the project web site.

4.3 Public Consultation Centres

PCCs will be held at key project intervals during the study. Up to five rounds of public meetings are proposed to be held. Given the size of the Study Area, each PCC round will be held at a maximum of three locations within the Study Area. The PCCs will be held in a variety of venues, including libraries, community centres, or malls.

Table 1 shows the proposed content for each round of PCCs. Notification will be posted on the web site, and published in the local newspaper (the Vaughan Citizen), and in the Toronto Star. Copies of the notice will also be placed at strategic locations throughout the Study Area a week before the meetings (e.g., libraries/grocery stores, etc.).

Notices will be mailed directly to those stakeholders in the project's contact database, and hand delivered to local residences and landowners within the entire Study Area. The notices will provide a project description, information updates since the last notice, and a request for comments and input. Contact information for York Region's Project Manager and UMA's Project Manager will also be provided to encourage the submission of comments.

Where possible, outdoor signs will be placed near the respective PCC venues approximately one week in advance of the PCC dates.

Table 1. Preliminary Outline of Public Consultation Centres

Public Consultation Centre (PCC)	Proposed Meeting Purpose
PCC #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the project, team members, roles and responsibilities • Confirm the revised Study Area, the existing transportation/traffic conditions • Present the modelling results depicting future traffic conditions • Introduce the Purpose of / Rationale for the Undertaking • Request feedback on the draft evaluation criteria and Alternatives to the Undertaking
PCC #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline screening of the long-list to the short-list and the Evaluation of the Alternatives to the Undertaking and • Identify the recommended Alternative to the Undertaking • Discussion of the revised Study Area and Next Steps in the process
PCC #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the screening of the long-list to the short-list for the Alternative Methods and the proposed evaluation methodology including the evaluation criteria, indicators, and measures
PCC #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the results of the field data collection and comparative evaluation undertaken for the Alternative Method(s) • Presentation of the Recommended Alternative Method(s)
PCC #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show Preliminary Design of the Preferred Alternative network components • Outline the recommended environmental mitigation / compensation / enhancement measures to be implemented • Outline environmental commitments for future implementation/ adherence during construction, operation, maintenance, and use of the undertaking

There are various options for the format for each PCC. To ensure a highly participative approach to the meetings, a variety of meeting formats will be explored. For Round One (February 2008), an open house with a range of information stations was set up. The public was able to have informal one-on-one discussions with Region of York staff and members of the project consultant team. Attendees also received a handout package that provided additional details on the project and included a comment sheet to ensure the opportunity for individual to express their own view in written format. For future PCCs, the project team will explore other formats, including workshop sessions or formal presentations and facilitated discussion periods.

Documentation of public input will occur following each PCC. A summary report of the round of consultation will be prepared to describe the consultation activities and events, along with a summary of the comments received and any resulting action taken by the project team. The reports will be a valuable tool for focusing discussion for the advisory committees and for more informal individual follow-through on the comments noted.

4.4 Public Information Materials

The project team will work to prepare both print and web-based media/public information kits and to assist in responding to media and public inquiries on various issues. Kits could contain news releases, fact sheets on the specific issues, frequently asked questions and answers and information bulletins. The team will also develop discussion primers about key study components, such as traffic modelling, which can be downloaded.

4.5 Media and Public Relations

The purpose of Media Relations is to establish a liaison with the local media to ensure that information about the study is accurate and to provide information, media briefings and updates at regular and strategic intervals. This will involve:

- a) identifying Region of York Corporate Communications and key members of the consulting team to act as spokespeople and respond effectively to media inquiries about the study;
- b) directing incoming telephone calls to the spokespeople and arranging meetings where appropriate. Informal notes would be prepared and issues responded to as required;
- c) supporting designated spokespeople with a range of print and web-based materials, including briefing notes, key messages, core speaking points, a list of FAQs, and media and public information kits; and,
- d) monitoring and responding to announcements and statements made by key stakeholder and community groups in their written material (e.g., newsletters).

Public relations will be carried out over the course of the IEA through various types of media, as described previously. These would include, but not be limited to, local newspapers, project website updates and public notifications.

4.6 Project Contact List

A project contact list has been established and will be updated regularly with names, addresses, phone and e-mail contact information. Letters and notices will be sent to the contact list at key project milestones.

4.7 Consultation with First Nations

First Nations Engineering Services Limited has sent out letters to the following First Nations inviting them to participate in the project:

- Alderville First Nation;
- Beausoleil First Nation;
- Chippewas of Georgina Island;
- Chippewas of Mnjikaning;
- Curve Lake First Nation;
- Hiawatha First Nation;
- Iroquois Confederacy;
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island;
- Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation;
- Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte;
- Moose Deer Point First Nation;
- Nation Huronne Wendat; and,
- Six Nations of the Grand River.

4.8 Consultation with Review Agencies

Meetings and discussions will be held throughout the IEA with representatives of the Ministry of the Environment and other government representatives and the project team to advance the understanding of study issues and responses. Status reports will be provided to Region of York elected officials at key milestones.

Specific meetings will be held on the following related projects:

- Ministry of Transportation's Highway 427 Northerly Extension IEA Corridor Study
- Peel Region's Highway 427 / Highway 50 Arterial Roads Boundary Road EA Study
- York Region's Transportation Master Plan Update
- York Region's VIVA Transit Improvements Program
- Extension of the University-Spadina Subway Northerly from Downsview Station to York University and Vaughan Corporate Centre at Highway 7 west of Jane Street

This consultation and communication plan will be reviewed with the Ministry of the Environment to seek input on program and approaches to be utilized.