



G. L. Pothier Enterprises Inc.
2197 Galloway Drive
Oakville, Ontario, Canada L6H 5M1

tel: (905) 844-5174
fax: (905) 844-7368
em: glenn@gipi.com

Meeting notes from:

**The Fifth Meeting of the
Georgetown South Rail Corridor Service Expansion &
Pearson Airport-Union Station Transportation Link IEA
*Public Liaison Committee***

Meeting Date/Location:

August 31st, 2006/York Civic Centre

Facilitator: Glenn Pothier, President, GLPi

Meeting Purpose

The main focus of the fifth meeting of the Public Liaison Committee (PLC) was to obtain feedback on and discuss issues relating to the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) Terms of Reference (ToR) and explore member ideas for refinements. In addition, the meeting included:

- An introduction to the new PLC facilitator;
- A reconfirmation of the purpose/role of the PLC, and operating procedures and ground rules/key principles to guide the work of the Committee;
- An overview of next steps in the process; and
- An opportunity for Committee members and meeting observers to offer comments on issues of their own choosing.

Summary of Meeting Highlights

Opening Remarks

- Glenn Pothier, the independent meeting facilitator, called the group to order and welcomed all participants and observers. Glenn then:
 - Explained that Robb Ogilvie (the previous facilitator) has formally withdrawn from the project given personal health issues and on the advice of his doctor.
 - Noted that at Mr. Ogilvie's suggestion — and with the agreement of the project team — he had been asked to step-in and serve as the new facilitator.
 - Briefly described his background, experience and credentials — including work on many other transportation EA's and his familiarity with this project in particular — and noted his commitment to making the meetings as productive and effective as possible.
- Glenn also noted that the 'live-time recording' would not be used at this meeting. Rather, a number of designated note-takers would capture the essence of the salient discussion points with a view to helping Glenn produce a summary of the substantive meeting content. The meeting summary will be made available to participants for review and identification of any errors or notable omissions.
- Glenn then introduced the project team members and elected officials in attendance, and invited PLC members to introduce themselves. Next, he provided an overview of the session agenda and confirmed the discussion items.

Getting and Giving the Most

- As part of a short slide presentation, Glenn Pothier reaffirmed the purpose of the PLC as an advisory group and outlined its general roles:
 - Dialogue and information exchange;
 - Advice-input on and joint exploration of key issues, concerns, challenges, opportunities;
 - A sounding board: review and comment on project materials, tools and reports;
 - Liaison — a conduit to/from the community; and
 - Facilitate effective/efficient project completion.

The group endorsed this description of the Committee's purpose. Glenn also noted the Project Team's commitment to listen to, seriously consider, and be respectful of participants' views, perspectives and opinions.

- Glenn then shared a number of observations about previous PLC meetings and suggestions for how future sessions can be made more productive and satisfying to all. In particular, he noted the importance of:
 - Nurturing and garnering trust — and winning confidence through sincerity, openness and honesty;
 - Focusing on the meaningful, substantive issues — and avoiding circular discussions;
 - Emphasizing dialogue — and not allowing process to overwhelm substance;
 - Understanding one another — and avoiding vagueness/lack of clarity;
 - Ensuring that PLC members are present, engaged and active participants; and
 - Personal disposition, tonality and approach.
- Glenn also described a number of ground rules and key principles to guide the work of the PLC — from a willingness to consider all relevant ideas, to a willingness to appreciate the legitimacy of different opinions, to agreement that consensus may not be achieved, to a focus on keeping the discussion conversational and forward-looking, and so forth — which were confirmed and accepted by the group. These will serve as the foundation for subsequent meetings.

- Glenn then invited PLC members to share any additional observations about meetings to date and ideas for process improvements:

Comment: It can be difficult to get background information and documents, particularly if one does not have access to a computer.

Project Team Response: The Project Team is committed to making our documents available to the public — for example, the draft Terms of Reference are available for viewing at a number of local libraries within the project area. Hard copies of documents may be made available.

Comment: There are some documents that the public cannot access or that are only partially available. For example, the Halcrow Study — as posted on GO's own website — has pages missing or passages blacked-out. The Federal government won't release the report in its entirety and is not responding to Freedom of Information requests.

Project Team Response: The Project Team is also limited in its access to selected documents from other studies — some of which are within the control of the Federal government. Notwithstanding the fact that some data may be proprietary or inaccessible for other reasons, GO will endeavour to make available the range of documents that this group wants to see.

Comment: Given that many of us are volunteers and have limited time, can we please ensure that each of our meetings is focused on the agenda items and that we proceed as efficiently/quickly as possible.

Project Team Response: [Comment noted.]

Draft Terms of Reference

- Glenn Pothier noted that the EA draft Terms of Reference (ToR) has been circulating for a number of months and that the Project Team is looking for ideas about how it can be strengthened and refined. He also noted that the Project Team had responded to the detailed input received from one PLC member — a copy of which, in table format, was provided to participants in advance of the meeting. Glenn then invited additional member comments:

Question: How appropriate is it to use pre-existing data to inform the ToR and the study once it formally begins?

Project Team Response: During the ToR stage of any project, pre-existing data is used. Once the Environmental Assessment begins, this initial data will be built

upon or updated — the project team will also be collecting its own additional data.

Comment: Why has the term ‘express’ been used to modify the phrase ‘cost-effective transportation service...’ — this should be a post-environmental assessment consideration (page 7 of the ToR, last paragraph of Section 2.2).

Project Team Response: The word ‘express’ will be removed.

Comment: Though I’ve had a conversation with the Project Team about my concerns — and they have attempted to address them — some responses were not satisfactory. I have issues with the purpose statement for the airport transportation link: just because other jurisdictions may have a link between the airport and a City Centre doesn’t mean we need one. One of the biggest problems with the draft ToR is that it’s hard to understand what the trade-offs/choices are that might be made and the rationale for them — will GO put the importance of fish before cost, or vice versa. GO Transit says they will follow the ToR to ensure the study is replicable and traceable, but the driving force behind trade-offs will not be revealed until a decision is made. If the Ministry of Environment accepts the ToR, there will be no arguing against it after the fact. [Another PLC member added: The community may have different values than the proponents — the weighting of trade-offs is not well described in the Terms of Reference.]

Project Team Response: First, the Project Team will look at re-working parts of section 2.2 of the ToR (Purpose of the Airport Transportation Link). Regarding trade-offs and decision-making, when conducting any evaluation, you have to do the following:

- Establish the set of facts — including the advantages/disadvantages of each alternative;
- Look at the significance of the effect or impact;
- Gauge the importance of the impact in relation to other factors/issues;
- Predict the effects of the impact; and
- Look at opportunities for mitigation.

The key objective is to make sure that the recommended approach is well explained and that significance and effects are clearly identified. The Project Team will have to explain why we may have put more emphasis on one effect versus another. There will be supporting documentation. We will be presenting the facts and issues to the PLC and looking for your input. In the end, the Ministry of Environment will look at the process and determine if it has been followed correctly. The Ministry of Environment takes the rationale behind the trade-offs seriously. A common challenge in the EA process is that there are different opinions regarding values and what is considered of relatively greater or lesser importance.

- A Project Team member then asked for PLC suggestions on how best to communicate the impact assessment process to the public. Suggestions included the following:
 - Allowing access to the project team in advance of a Public Information Centre — and getting information to people in advance so they have time to review and digest it;
 - Shorter presentations and longer periods of time for the public to ask questions;
 - Use a formal ‘mix and mingle’ approach;
 - Begin with a public drop-in Centre and follow-up with a presentation; and
 - A combination of the above.

- PLC members then continued to share their feedback on the draft ToR:

Comment: There is no mention in the draft ToR of how this project fits into the broader GTA/regional transportation network and what the effect will be on local communities. GO doesn’t want to address how people across the GTA will get to their jobs.

Project Team Response: Some of these points are outside the scope of this EA and others are evaluation issues, not ToR issues — they will be evaluated at a later stage of the study.

Question/Comment: To what extent will this project address issues regarding compatibility with higher-order (and lower-order) components of the transit/transportation network? Pedestrians should be included as part of the transportation network. You shouldn’t segment airport riders from other commuters — you need to look at the whole system.

Project Team Response: Consideration will be given to where higher order transportation routes meet with lower order routes within the Greater Toronto Area. Ridership forecasts will include both airport and commuter riders. In addition, impacts on adjacent roads and local access issues will be examined. A single GO Train takes 250 vehicles off the road — which results in 2,750 less personal trips. Transportation planning is made up of personal trips regardless of the travel mode.

Comment: What we need is a comprehensive transportation plan for the entire GTA.

Project Team Response: The purpose of this project’s ToR is not to design a whole transportation system for the entire GTA. However, the project presents an opportunity to make linkages and connections that can bolster the system, maximize existing infrastructure, and maximize benefits.

Comment: There is not enough focus on the environment in the first phase as described in the ToR. Other factors, such as cost, feasibility and ridership are to be examined. Environmental factors are not looked at until after the corridor is chosen. Some alternatives may be dropped before their full benefits are understood. There is a danger that the ‘best’ solution may be ‘thrown-out’ too early.

Project Team Response: Different technologies will be examined and all will have varying costs and ridership numbers. Several technologies will be carried forward on different corridors. More than one corridor alternative will be carried forward and this can be stated explicitly in the ToR. If two alternatives are comparable they would both be carried forward. Costs would only be considered in the early stages to help screen for ‘wildly’ expensive alternatives. More detailed cost information will be available as the evaluation proceeds. There is no requirement to carry forward only a certain portion of options. It has always been the Project Team’s intent to carry forward more than one corridor alternative.

Comment: Why not add environmental considerations as a criterion to include in the first-step evaluation?

Project Team Response: While environmental considerations will be a key focus of the next phase of the study, it may be possible to include something as part of the first-step alternative screening process. The Project Team will take this under consideration.

Question: Can GO improve locomotive technology to help lessen environmental impacts?

Project Team Response: This is an overall fleet issue and would be addressed regardless of this particular EA study. GO Transit is looking to state-of-the-art locomotives and cars for the future.

Comment: It’s not clear what ‘at a reasonable cost’ means — the criteria against which environmental impacts would be assessed needs to be explicit in the ToR.

Project Team Response: Given the many possible alternatives (for example, routes, technology, etc.) more detail would be needed to address environmental issues — the review of detailed environmental impacts most logically should occur at a later stage of the study. Please be assured that environmental issues are important to the Project Team. More than one corridor will be carried forward, so that meaningful environmental comparisons can be made.

Comment: Shouldn’t broad environmental criteria or factors be considered at this stage of the study? If different technology choices have different environmental impacts, should they not be included in the early phase of work?

Project Team Response: We feel there is a need to first define a reasonable set of alternatives — corridors and technologies — before conducting detailed environmental impact analysis. The Project Team will take the input under consideration.

Question: Can we attach a dollar figure to ‘reasonable cost’?

Project Team Response: No, not a specific number. That’s difficult to do at this point.

Comment: The latest technologies that GO Transit claims to be looking at are not the best available, nor state-of-the-art.

Project Team Response: Your comment is noted, but it’s not clear how this relates to the ToR.

Comment: The issues of grade separations and elevation are not being considered nor addressed.

Project Team Response: Actually, at-grade, below-grade and various grade separation issues have been considered previously and will be looked at as part of this EA.

Question: Should the second paragraph under Area Context (1.1 Background) be changed to better characterize the changing nature of the neighbourhoods adjacent to the Georgetown south corridor?

Project Team Response: [Comment noted.]

Looking Ahead and Open Forum

- Glenn Pothier noted that the Weston community meeting (the first part of which took place in June) would be completed on September 13th at the Faith Sanctuary venue. The meeting will include a brief recap of information already presented at the first meeting followed by the remaining presentation material covering the proposed evaluation criteria and process. A series of newspaper ads were placed to help promote the meeting.

- The Project Team explained that the revised draft ToR would likely be submitted to the Ministry of the Environment in October and that consultation records would be included in the submission. This timeframe would allow for consideration of comments made at or within a few weeks following the Sept. 13th meeting. The Ministry will initiate its own review process for the ToR and review/act on comments it may receive from the public. It is not atypical for the Ministry to request amendments to the ToR based on input from the public. PLC members were encouraged to send any additional comments about the draft ToR to the Project Team as soon as possible.
- Glenn Pothier noted that the next PLC meeting will likely be held in the fall and is proposed to focus on a discussion about the specifics of the alternatives included in the ToR (with a view to clarifying the facts and details that underlie the alternatives to be studied).
- Participants and meeting observers were then invited to share any additional thoughts about the project:

Question: Regarding public comments suggesting changes to the draft ToR — if the Project Team refuses to address a given concern, would it be documented, will you say you refused the suggested changes?

Project Team Response: We will document all of the input and a rationale for not adopting a particular suggested change would be provided, where applicable.

Question: Can the public appeal a Terms of Reference approval?

Project Team Response: There is no appeal mechanism at the Terms of Reference stage once its been approved, but there is one for the Environmental Assessment report. There is a mediation provision for a Terms of Reference. The Minister can approve, not approve, or send the Terms of Reference to mediation

Question: Will the costs of the alternatives be shown to the public?

Project Team Response: Yes, costs will be shown as work on the study progresses.

Question: Has a technical review been done by the City of Toronto?

Project Team Response: There is a technical review committee, of which the City is part, that has the opportunity to suggest changes to the ToR — the City has not yet done so. Comments from the City and other agencies are being sought. This input could result in changes to the ToR.

Question: Will the GTTA be the new name for GO Transit?

Project Team Response: No, that is a different organization.

Comment: There's a concern that we are not aware of GO Transit's long-term plans. We need to consider this project in the context of those plans and of a GTA-wide transportation network. Consideration needs to be given to the whole system and to alternative technologies.

Project Team Response: GO Transit's long-term plans can be made available. The relationship between this project and the GTA-wide transportation network was discussed earlier.

Closing Remarks

- Glenn Pothier thanked the group for their attendance and participation — and for embracing a new spirit of dialogue and cooperation. He noted that the meeting had been quite productive, though there was still more to be done to maximize the value and efficiency of future sessions.
- The meeting was formally adjourned (having run from approximately 7:05 to 9:40 P.M.).

Attendance (names listed in no particular order)

PLC Members:

Alan Murphy (Lexington Green Homes)
Anna Teed (Roncesvalles Village Business Improvement Association)
Dale Fallon (Roncesvalles-Macdonald Residents Association)
Dan Hammond (Roseland Ratepayers and Residents Association)
Helen Mah (Turnberry Residents Association)
Hillary Bell (West Bend Residents Association)
Lin Cheong (Mount Dennis Residents Association)
Mike Sullivan (Weston Community Coalition)
Stephen Otto (Friends of Fort York)
Suri Weinberg (Weston Business Improvement Association)
Cherri Hurst (Weston Historical Society)

Observers:

- Councillor Frances Nunziata (Ward 2)
- Paul Ferreira

GO Transit:

- Greg Ashby, Senior Project Engineer
- Imants Hausmanis, Corridor Manager, GO Trip Program
- Vasie Papadopoulos (AGM)

EA Consultant Team:

- Dennis Callan, Project Manager (McCormick Rankin Corporation or MRC)
- Mike Bricks, Coordinator of the EA Process (Ecoplans Limited)
- Brent Gotts (MRC)
- Irene Hauzar (URS)

Facilitator:

- Glenn Pothier, GLPi