

3.0 Overview of the Cabana-Division Road Corridor EA Planning and Public Consultation Process

3.1 Introduction

The planning and design process for a Schedule C Class EA was followed for this project as outlined in the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (EAA). Projects that come under the Class EA process have a predictable range of environmental effects that tend to be recurring, usually similar in nature, limited in scale and responsive to mitigation measures.

The Class EA planning process requires the proponent, which is the City in this case, to undertake a comprehensive public consultation program. This process is intended to encourage dialogue among the study consultants, City staff, the general public, review agencies and interest groups in order to communicate the technical conditions of the project for input. Figure 2.1 identifies the discretionary and mandatory public contact points of the Class EA planning process.

The Cabana-Division Road corridor Class EA process was unique in its composition and execution. When the public consultation portion of the study was completed following PIC 3: Phase 3, the study team felt it was necessary to revisit Phases 2 and 3 prior to advancing to Phase 4 of the study. For this reason, a total of five Public Information Centres (PIC's) were held during this process. The Public Information Centres held are as follows:

- PIC #1 – Phase 1
- PIC #2 – Phase 2
- PIC #3 – Phase 3
- PIC #4 – Phase 2 revisited
- PIC #5 – Phase 3 revisited

The following is an overview of the Class EA Planning and Public Consultation Process followed for the Cabana-Division Road corridor. Descriptions of the technical aspects of each study phase are further described in Chapters 4 through 10.

3.2 Overview of the Public Consultation Process

The public consultation component of this study was very comprehensive, and went well beyond the minimum requirements of public consultation outlined in the Environmental Assessment Act (EAA). The following forums were used to consult review agencies and the public during this EA process:

- Agency Notification;
- Committee Meetings;
- Public Notification;
- Website;
- Study Newsletters;
- Public Information Centres; and
- “Kitchen Table” Meeting with Residents.

3.2.1 Agency Notification

Appropriate government and private review agencies were notified of the undertaking in order to solicit comments. Letters were sent to the agencies announcing the project initiation and outlining the purpose, schedule and contact persons for this project. Notification letters requested comments. The following is a list of provincial ministries, agencies, external municipalities and interest groups contacted during the study process:

Provincial Ministries

Ministry of Transportation
Ministry of Environment
Ministry of Natural Resources
Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation

Agencies

Greater Essex County District School Board
Essex Region Conservation Authority
WACAC
Bell Canada
Windsor Utilities Commission
Union Gas Limited
City of Windsor Police Services
City of Windsor Fire Department
Windsor Environmental Advisory Committee
Transit Windsor
Windsor Bicycling Committee
Ontario Hydro

External Municipalities

Town of LaSalle
Town of Tecumseh
County of Essex

Interest Groups

Windsor-Essex County Development Commission
Citizens Environmental Alliance
Active Living Coalition

3.2.2 Committee Meetings

A Steering Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee were formed following project initiation in order to provide the study with direction and monitor overall study progress. The Committees consisted of members of the consultant team and City of Windsor staff from the following departments:

- Traffic Engineering;
- Public Works;
- Planning;
- Parks and Recreation; and
- Legal.



The purpose of these meetings was to consider the technical review of design alternatives and input received from the public at each stage in the EA study. The Committee meetings were also an opportunity to discuss and evaluate the direction of the study based on all available information.

3.2.3 Public Notification

The public was notified of the PIC's through three primary media: newspaper announcements, the study website and mailed notice letters. Prior to each PIC, a notice was placed in the Windsor Star, and letters were delivered to all residents and business owners along Cabana-Division Road. In addition, notices were hand delivered to every residence, business and institutional use along the Cabana-Division Road corridor. The notice that was placed on the study's website is described in more detail in the following section. The newspaper announcements and notice letters can be found in Appendix A.

3.2.4 Website

A website was created to communicate study information to members of the public and other groups that actively use the Internet for study updates. Technical review updates on the Cabana-Division Road corridor and notices of public consultations were placed on the website. Comment forms were also placed on the study's website, and some comments were received through this medium.

The study website can be found online at: www.cabanadivisioncorridorea.com

3.2.5 Study Newsletters

A total of three newsletters were distributed to the public and posted on the study website. Each of the newsletters informed the public and review agencies of the status of the EA study and the opportunities available for input.

Newsletter #1 was released in April 2001 prior to Public Information Centre (PIC) #1. This newsletter explained the overall purpose of the study, and invited the public and review agencies to provide input. Newsletter #2 was released in July 2001 prior to PIC #2, and provided a summary of the issues raised during PIC #1. This newsletter also invited participants to join PIC #2 and provide input. Newsletter #3 was released in November 2001 prior to PIC #3, and provided the same type of information provided in the first two newsletters. These newsletters can be found in Appendix A.

3.2.6 Public Information Centres (PIC's)

The Class EA planning process requires the proponent, which is the City in this case, to undertake a comprehensive public consultation program. This process is intended to encourage dialogue among the study consultants, City staff, the general public, review agencies and interest groups in order to communicate the technical conditions of the project for input. Figure 2.1 identifies the discretionary and mandatory public contact points of the Class EA planning process.



Each of the PIC's is described below as the phases of the project are described. The description of the technical aspects of each study phase can be found in Chapters 4 through 10.

3.3 Phase 1: Identify the Problem

The Class EA investigated the short-term and long-term (20 year) road improvements required to handle increased traffic conditions that will result from the intensification of uses adjacent to the road corridor. This study also investigated roadway structural deficiencies related to the grid network of roads that intersect the corridor and their relationship to increased traffic conditions. A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held in Phase 1 of this study to gain a broad understanding of the transportation issues along Cabana-Division Road.

The PIC was held at the Roseland Golf and Curling Club on May 8, 2001. A total of 91 area residents, business owners and community group representatives signed in at this PIC.

The purpose of PIC #1 was to inform the public of the City's identification of the need to improve the current and projected traffic conditions along the Cabana-Division Road corridor and to receive initial input on the study objectives. An outline of the study and road improvement issues identified in the City's Official Plan were provided to participants on display boards, and members of the study team were on hand to answer questions and engage in discussion.

Participants were given a comment form that was intended to gain initial input on the study process and objectives. A total of 41 comment forms were received, and participants were asked to:

1. Identify their five top concerns or issues they have with the Cabana-Division Road corridor;
2. Identify the types of changes they believe would improve the corridor; and
3. Provide additional comments.

A detailed summary of the input received during PIC #1 can be found in **Appendix B**, and the main issues raised during the PIC included concerns regarding:

- Increased traffic along Cabana Road, particularly as it relates to safely accessing local streets;
- The safety of school children crossing Cabana Road;
- Widening Cabana Road;
- Maintenance of the status quo along the corridor;
- A centre left turning lane to provide safe access to residential streets; and
- Traffic signals at more intersections for greater control.

3.4 Phase 2: Identify and Evaluate Alternative Solutions

The purpose of this phase was to identify and evaluate the alternative solutions, and receive comments by the public and review agencies in order to narrow the alternatives and identify a preferred solution.

PIC #2 was held on July 24, 2001 at the Roseland Golf and Curling Club. Approximately 67 persons attended this PIC, with 39% of these residents living along Cabana Road. The purpose

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of this PIC was to review the study process and background studies that provided a technical justification for the transportation improvements identified in Phase 1 of the study. The public was given an opportunity to review the technical information on display boards, and members of the study team were on hand to answer questions and engage in discussion.

At PIC #2, alternative solutions were presented to the public to gain feedback on various roadway design concepts. The alternatives brought forth at PIC #2 during Phase 2 of the study process included:

- Do Nothing;
- Add bike lanes only;
- Three-lanes;
- Three-lanes plus bike lanes;
- Four-lanes;
- Four-lanes plus bike lanes;
- Five-lanes; and
- Five-lanes plus bike lanes.

A comment form was distributed to participants for feedback and input on the proposed solutions, and a total of 50 comment forms were completed. A series of very specific questions were asked on this comment form, which made it quite different from the more general comments requested during PIC #1. The comment form asked respondents to:

1. Identify their preferred road cross section (e.g. number of lanes, bike lanes or any combination);
2. Identify their preferred type of road re-alignment (e.g. widening to the north side, widening to the south, etc.);
3. Indicate if they support road closures or traffic calming measures to reduce traffic infiltration on residential streets;
4. Identify potential streets for road closures;
5. Indicate if they support signals or turn lanes at intersections with existing local roads;
6. Identify potential intersections for signals or turning lanes; and
7. Provide any other additional comments.

A detailed summary of the input gained during PIC #2 can be found in Appendix B, and the following is a general summary of the input received:

- The input provided through the comment form was reviewed in detail, but there was no conclusive finding on a preferred road cross section. The highest ranked option was five-lanes plus bike lanes, however, three-lanes plus bike lanes and four lanes plus bike lanes were also highly ranked.
- The most commonly chosen road re-alignment was widening about the centreline and adjusting the alignment to better fit within existing municipally owned property.
- Approximately 55% of respondents were in favour of local road closures and traffic calming measures in order to prevent traffic infiltration through residential areas, while improving traffic operations along the Cabana-Division Road Corridor.
- Approximately 80% of respondents were in favour of signalized intersections with local roads.



3.5 Phase 3: Identify and Evaluate Alternative Design Concepts for the Five-Lane Solution.

The purpose of this phase was to identify and evaluate all of the reasonable alternative design concepts for the preferred five-lane solution that were identified in Phase 2 and in doing so, develop the recommended design to be presented to the public and review agencies. Feedback from the consultation was to be used to finalize the design into the preferred design of the ESR.

PIC #3, which represented the first part of the Phase 3 process, was held on December 11, 2001 at the Roseland Golf and Curling Club. Approximately 158 people signed in at the PIC. The purpose of this PIC was to present to the public alternative design concepts for the five-lane solution. The presentation included the recommended five-lane road cross-section plus bike lanes. The study team received input on the concepts so that the preferred design could then be developed.

Design concepts were provided for three areas along the corridor:

- The Oak Tree Area along Cabana Road between Northway and California Avenues;
- The north-south intersection configuration at Cabana Road and Howard Avenue; and
- The east-west intersection configuration at Cabana Road and Howard Avenue.

These design concepts were presented to the public on display boards, with members of the study team on hand to answer questions and engage in discussion.

A comment form was distributed that asked respondents to identify their preferred design concept for the corridor. A total of 48 comment forms were received and the study team also received two letters by mail. The comment form asked respondents to:

1. Identify their preferred road alternative; and
2. Provide additional comments.

A detailed summary of the input received during PIC #3 can be found in Appendix B, and the following is a general summary of the input received:

- The most commonly chosen design alternative for Cabana Road between Northway and California Avenue generally consisted of a two-metre offset of the road from the trees, with the sidewalk located behind the trees but with pavement and boulevard widths below desirable standards.
- The most commonly chosen design alternative for the north-south intersection configuration at Cabana Road and Howard Avenue consisted of five lanes on Howard Avenue.
- The most commonly chosen design alternative for the east-west intersection configuration at Cabana Road and Howard Avenue consisted of the western limit of the Howard Avenue right-of-way defined by the southeast corner of the deli property and south limit of Cabana Road, now defined by the north wall of Pizza King.

As is required by the Class Environmental Assessment process, the study team is required to revisit a completed phase if it is determined that the alternatives that emerged from that Phase were insufficient to solve the problem statement. Due to the public outcry against the five-lane



recommended design during PIC #3, and although more than three PIC's are very rarely held in an EA of this kind, the study team recognized that a re-evaluation of the design solutions was in order. PIC #4 revisited Phase 2 of the Class Environmental Assessment process so that the team could "take a step back" in order to design roadway solutions that were "tailored" to the technical and social needs of the Cabana-Division Road corridor.

3.6 Phase 2 Revisited

After PIC #3, Phase 2 was revisited to identify additional alternative design scenarios. The purpose of PIC #4 was to present tailored design options to the public that were believed to better reflect the prevailing nature of the corridor and the desires of residents along Cabana-Division Road. The alternative solutions brought forth at PIC #4 included:

- Three-lanes plus bike lanes;
- Three-lanes plus bike lanes and paved shoulders;
- Four-lanes plus bike lanes;
- Four-lanes plus bike lanes and paved shoulders; and
- Four-lanes plus bike lanes with curbs and gutters.

The fourth PIC was held on November 20, 2002 at the Roseland Golf and Curling Club. A total of 129 participants signed in, with an estimated 150 persons in attendance.

A comment form was distributed to gain public opinion on the tailored design options. A total of 94 comment forms were received. The comment forms asked respondents to:

1. Identify their preferred design concept for west of Provincial Road;
2. Identify their preferred design concept for east of Provincial Road;
3. Indicate their preferred right-of-way characteristics such as paved shoulders or curbs; and
4. Provide additional comments.

The details of the input received during PIC #4 can be found in Appendix B, and the following is a general summary of the input received:

- The most commonly chosen design was three-lanes with bike lanes for Cabana Road west of Provincial Road.
- The most commonly chosen designs for east of Provincial Road were four-lanes with bike lanes (soft edge) and four-lanes with bike lanes (hard edge).
- The top two right-of-way characteristics identified were a centre two-way left turn lane and two motor vehicle lanes.
- It was found that most respondents were in favour of a three-lane configuration with curbs and gutters.

3.7 Phase 3 Revisited

After PIC #4, Phase 3 of the study process was revisited to evaluate alternative design concepts for the preferred solution in order to choose a recommended design to present to the public and review agencies leading to the selection of the preferred design.

The study team conducted a “kitchen table” discussion with Cabana Road residents on June 17, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at a home along Cabana Road. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the recommended road design alternative prior to presenting the alternative to the public at PIC #5, and to provide the technical rationale for the recommended design concept to members of the local residents group.

This meeting provided an opportunity for a number of residents whose properties front onto Cabana Road to better understand the details of the decision to recommend a four-lane cross section. While most of the residents in attendance continued to hold their position on a preference for a three-lane configuration, both the study team and the residents left the meeting with a greater understanding of each other’s opinions and position on the Cabana-Division Road EA project.

A fifth PIC was held on June 18, 2003 at the Roseland Golf and Curling Club as part of Phase 3 of the EA study process. A total of 145 citizens signed in to the PIC. The purpose of this PIC was to present the recommended four-lane road design to the public and to receive input on the design. Display boards presented the recommended four-lane design and a handout was distributed which provided a rationale for the recommended design. Members of the study team were on hand to answer questions and engage in discussion.

Comment forms were distributed during this PIC that asked respondents to provide any comments they may have on the recommended roadway design. A total of 88 comment forms were received. A detailed summary of the input received during PIC #5 can be found in Appendix B, and the following is a general summary of the input received:

- Respondents favoured a three-lane option over the four-lane recommended design.
- Approximately 77% of the comments received against the four-lane recommended design were from residents that live along Cabana Road.
- Of the respondents in favour of the four-lane recommended design, none were residents that live along Cabana Road.
- Property owners on the east end of the corridor were generally more supportive of the four-lane recommended design, while residents on the west end of the corridor were less supportive.

3.8 Phase 4: Prepare the Environmental Study Report (ESR)

This document represents the fulfillment of Phase 4 of the process.



4.0 Problem Identification (Phase 1)

4.1 Development of the Problem Statement

In Phase 1 of the Class EA planning and design process, the proponent is expected to make a clear statement of the problem that is identified for investigation. The problem statement frames the scope and drives the direction of the EA process. Thus, the proper phrasing of the problem statement is crucial to the efficient and effective completion of a Class EA.

In developing the problem statement for the Cabana-Division Road Class EA, the following issues were considered:

- The roadway designation in the City of Windsor Official Plan, plus the projections and recommendations of the Windsor Area Long Range Transportation Study and the Bicycle Use Master Plan;
- The ways in which the existing road network, transit network, traffic demands, collision analysis, capacity deficiencies and at-grade railway crossings influence traffic along the corridor; and
- Existing roadside conditions, including open ditches and unpaved shoulders, which produce specific physical and environmental concerns that make driving, walking and other modes of transportation difficult.

4.2 Problem Statement

The problem statement developed for the Cabana-Division Road Corridor Class EA is:

Existing conditions along the Cabana-Division Road corridor indicate the need to make improvements to accommodate travel demands and to improve the conditions for drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and other users of the corridor.

Existing and projected future transportation needs and conditions along the Cabana-Division Road corridor indicate a need to make improvements to the corridor.

The existing transportation issues within the study area are as follows:

Traffic congestion – The “bottleneck” of traffic at the intersection of Huron Church Road at Cabana Road is a concern, particularly along Cabana Road in the westbound direction. These traffic problems are due in part to the intersection being oriented on a short curve, with right and left-turning vehicles impeding through traffic. The through lane is blocked by right-turning traffic due to the absence of a right-turn lane, and by left-turning traffic due to insufficient storage length. The stretch of Cabana Road between Huron Church Road and Dougall Avenue is also a concern due to high volumes of traffic through this section of the corridor. Poor sightlines exist at the southeast corner of Cabana Road at Holburn Street, which creates a potentially unsafe situation. The intersections of Cabana Road at McGraw Avenue, Cabana Road at Howard Avenue and Cabana Road at Provincial Road are additional intersections of concern due to high traffic volumes during both the a.m. and p.m. peak periods. St. Clair College contributes to the congestion along the Cabana-Division Road corridor, with proposed

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expansions to the College expected to magnify problems both near the College and throughout the Cabana-Division Road Corridor.

Driveway and Local Access – Existing traffic conditions make accessing driveways and local streets difficult. This problem will intensify with the projected increases in traffic along the corridor.

Roadside Conditions – The existing roadside conditions along Cabana-Division Road are unsatisfactory. Physical and environmental concerns include dust from the gravel shoulders, unattractive drainage ditches, discontinuous sidewalks and litter along the roadside which is difficult, if not impossible, to remove by mechanical street sweepers.

School Safety – There are four elementary schools located along the Cabana-Division Road corridor. Safety concerns have been raised with respect to children crossing or walking along the road. Traffic delays resulting from school buses stopped on the road are also a concern as there is currently only one through lane in the western portion of the study area.

Future issues along the Cabana-Division Road Corridor and key local stakeholder concerns related to:

Traffic Volumes - Improvements to the corridor may result in increased traffic and development activity. There is a concern that this may threaten the residential character of the neighbourhood by increasing traffic infiltration, noise and pollution.

Property Values – There is concern about the potential impact of road widening on property values and loss and/or damage to front lawns. The loss of some mature trees along Cabana Road is another significant concern.

Traffic Speed – There is concern that traffic speeds will increase if improvements are made to the corridor. This threatens the residential character of the neighbourhoods and affects safety.

Truck Traffic – There is concern that any improvements along Cabana-Division Road will result in an increase in truck traffic, since truck drivers may use the corridor as an access to the industrial areas on the east end.

In summary, present-day and future conditions warrant improvements along the Cabana-Division Road Corridor. These improvements, however, must balance both the transportation needs of the larger community with those of local residents.

