



PUBLIC CONSULTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Town of the Blue Mountains Comprehensive Transportation Strategic Plan (BMTP), this public consultation plan is prepared to support and encourage public participation and to ensure opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the decision-making process.

OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation with affected parties early in and throughout the process, such that the planning process is a co-operative venture, is one of the key principles of successful environmental assessment planning.

One important objective of a good public involvement process is the extent to which the process builds consensus on the path to decision. In exchange for participation in a fair and open process, stakeholders often are willing to support the outcome of the process even if their preferred alternative is not selected. This result, sometimes known as “informed consent,” is the desired outcome on highly controversial projects. It allows that the project to move forward even though all stakeholder desires are not accommodated. Involving stakeholders without informing them is not prudent.

In addition, a good public involvement process must have as an objective the incorporation of citizen input into the decision process. A “black box” that has public involvement inputs but no clear effect on the outputs is not a successful public involvement program. The decision-making process must be open and clear and must reflect citizen input.

The vision for the public participation plan is that the public will be provided thorough information on the project development in a convenient and timely manner. To this end, the following goals and policies have been established as part of the public consultation plan:

Goal 1: Actively engage the public in the transportation planning process

- a) Maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including at a minimum the following:

→ Elected Officials





- Municipal Staff
 - Transportation Agencies
 - Representatives of Users of Public Transportation
 - Representatives of Users of Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation
 - Local Media
 - Special Interest Groups
 - Individuals expressing an interest in transportation planning activities.
- b) Send mail and/or e-mails to the study contact list / targeted groups to announce meetings /invitations for upcoming activities.
- c) Employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include: charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS, artist's renderings, physical models, and/or computer simulation.

Goal 2: Keep the public informed of on-going project status on a continuous basis.

- a) All publications and work products should be made available to the public via internet, staff office, and employ visualization techniques to describe transportation actions as part of the Comprehensive Transportation Strategic Plan.
- b) Project Team shall be available to provide general and project-specific information during normal business hours.
- c) Maintain a project specific web site as part of the Town's website (section/link) allocated to this project.
- d) The website shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current information available.
- e) The website shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:
- Current Project Team contact information (i.e. name, title, mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail)
 - Brief descriptions of this undertaking
 - Work products and publications (Notices, Reports, PIC)





- Materials and etc.)
- Comment/Question form
- Links to related agencies (County, MTO, etc..)

Goal 3: Encourage the participation of all stakeholders in the transportation planning process.

- a) Hold public meetings at a scheduled time, location, and building facility convenient to potentially affected stakeholders.
- b) Provide an additional opportunity for public comments, particularly if the final study recommendations significantly differ from the version that was initially made available for public comment.

Goal 4: Strive to continuously improve public participation.

- a) Continuously evaluate public participation techniques, according to the procedures contained in this Public Participation Plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

An effective public participation process is characterized by techniques and procedures that enable stakeholders to become well informed. As part of encouraging more cooperative planning, consultation will be made, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that are affected by this undertaking within the study area. To coordinate the planning function to the maximum extent practicable, such consultation will entail comparing LRTPs (Long Range Transportation Plans) and TIPs (Transportation Improvement Plans) as they are developed with the plans, maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies.

An open consultation policy, whereby any private citizen or entity responsible for transportation in the study area may contact and be included in the consultation process may be achieved through the following tools:

I. Master Database

Consultant team will maintain a master database of all contacts, both business and public, on a continuous basis. The database includes, mailing information, phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses.





II. Display Ads

These ads are used to promote specific meetings, workshops, open houses or hearings that are not regularly scheduled, as required. The ads provide a description of the study, purpose of the meeting/workshop as well as the study contact information. They are published in the local section of the newspaper in order to reach a larger audience than those that typically read legal ads.

III. Press Releases

Formal press releases are sent to local media (newspaper, TV and radio) to announce upcoming special meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the project team or committees. The Project team will work with the media to let people know about the study.

Local newsletters within the study area include:

- The Blue Mountains Courier Herald
- Collingwood Enterprise Bulletin

IV. Direct Mailings

Direct Mailings are used to announce upcoming meetings or activities (specific meetings, workshops, open houses, etc.) or to provide information to a targeted area, group of people, or the media. Direct mailings are usually letters, but can be post cards or fliers. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example avid cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects.

V. E-mail Announcements

Meeting announcements and information can be e-mailed to interested persons that have submitted their e-mail addresses to the study team.

VI. Project-Specific Website





The project website will be developed as part of the TOBM website, under the link “Comprehensive Transportation Strategic Plan”. The site will need to provide basic information about the study process and staff contact information. Project web sites can contain study area maps, descriptions of potential alternatives, comment forms, user surveys and project team contact information. Study publications and work products, such as the reports will be made available for downloading from the site. Also, stakeholders are able to submit comments and sign up to be added to the distribution lists maintained by the project team. The site (www.thebluемountains.ca/bmtp.cfm) will provide many links to other transportation related sites and will be maintained and updated by the project team.

VII. Public Informational Centres

These are public meetings that are generally open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. The purpose of public informational meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment.

Two rounds of public consultations will be held during the study. Recognizing the significant number of part-time residents in the Town, each Public Information Centre (PIC) will be conducted on a week day evening and the adjacent Saturday morning. In order to capture the increase in population related to summer activities in the area and increases activities surrounding Thanksgiving, it is suggested that the PIC’s be scheduled in July and around the Thanksgiving weekend.

The approximate timing for the PIC’s:

- PIC 1– Last week of July
- PIC 2 – Second week of October

PIC Display Materials: All PIC display boards and material will be prepared by the consultant Team and electronic copies in PDF format will be provided to the Town to post on the project website.

Prepare Public Consultation Summaries: The Consultant team will provide Public Consultation Summaries subsequent to PIC meetings, a review/assessment of comments received.





VIII. Public Notices

Including Project Initiation, and Public Information Centres (PIC) and Project Completion.

Notice of Study Commencement and Invitation for Comments: Phase I Stakeholder Consultation - A “Notice of Study Commencement” providing a summary of the study, establishing the study area, and listing key Consultant contacts will be prepared and published in a *local newspaper* and posted on the project website. The Consultant team will prepare the notice of commencement.

Notice of Public Consultation Centre 1 & 2 (PIC1 & 2): The Consultant team will prepare the required notices for posting in local newspapers / Town website. The Town will co-ordinate the publication of the PIC notices in the local media. The Consultant will arrange for a suitable venue for both PICs, and as required, will also prepare a mail out to all stakeholders on the study mailing list.

IX. Agency Meetings

The consultant team will arrange to meet with other relevant agencies as required. These may include: the Town of Collingwood, Township of Clearview, Municipality of Grey Highlands, Municipality of Meaford and County of Simcoe.

X. Comment Forms

Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meeting. Comment forms can be very general in nature, or can ask for very specific feedback. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific planning alternatives being considered during the study, or may ask for a person's general feelings about any aspect of the project. Comment forms can also be included in publications and on websites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or website.

XI. Visualization

An important element to public participation is to provide the public, when possible, visual as well as written descriptions of transportation projects. Through visual imagery, the complex features of proposed





transportation plans, policies, and programs can be portrayed at appropriate scales, and from different points of view. To this end, various visual and graphic design techniques will be utilized; some of which may include:

- Drawings
- Aerial photography
- Mapping
- Interactive geographical information system (GIS)
- GIS-based scenario planning tools
- Photo manipulation and computer simulation

XII. Surveys

Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to ask very specific questions such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns.

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