

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE #1 – PRESENTATION TRANSCRIPT

JUNE 25, 2020

Slide 1 – Welcome Slide

Hello and welcome to the first Public Information Centre for the Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange Improvements, Preliminary Design and Class Environmental Assessment Study. The Study Area is located within the City of Hamilton and the City of Burlington in Halton Region. Thank you for taking the time to view this presentation, your input is important to us.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has retained AECOM Canada Ltd. (AECOM) to undertake this study.

Members of the Project Team are available to discuss any questions that you may have regarding this project, please email us ProjectTeam@Hwy403Hwy6PreliminaryDesignEA.ca or by clicking the 'Contact Us' button on the study website.

If you require any assistance regarding the accessibility of these materials, please let us know by emailing the address above. We would be happy to assist you.

Slide 2 – Purpose of Public Information Centre # 1 (PIC #1)

The purpose of this Public Information Centre is to present and receive feedback on the:

- Study area and scope
- Key objectives of the study, study process, and timing of study activities
- Adjacent projects
- Existing & future traffic projections: need for highway improvements
- Alternatives to the Undertaking
- Proposed evaluation criteria
- Highway Improvement Alternatives (*Highway 403 mainline, Highway 6 mainline, Highway 403 & Highway 6 interchange, Highway 6 and York Road interchange, rail, and crossing road alternatives*)
- Overview of environmental project works
- and Next steps

Slide 3 – Public Information Centre # 1 Content Is Available on the Study Website

This video presentation will briefly take you through some of the key features and details of the Study. In addition to this video, we have additional PIC resources available for download on the Study website, so that you can review the information in more detail.

The following information is available on the Study Website for this Public Information Centre:

- This Video Presentation
- PDF (downloadable) copy of the PIC #1 Presentation slides
- PDF (downloadable) copy of a Roll Plan illustrating the Study Area

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- Summary of Key Facts, Questions & Answers
- An online PIC Comment Form

We encourage you to fill out the *PIC Comment Form* available on the study website.

Slide 4 – Study Area & Scope

As shown on the map, the study limits extend from Grindstone Creek westerly to Old Guelph Road on Highway 403, and from the Highway 6 and Highway 403 interchange to the Bruce Trail on Highway 6.

The primary focus of this study is to confirm the operational needs of the corridor. Reasonable design alternatives for structural and operational improvements will be developed and evaluated leading to the selection of a preferred alternative(s) for the short-term and long-term. The improvements to the corridor will be examined to make certain that the future infrastructure rehabilitation can accommodate the future traffic needs of Highway 403 and Highway 6 within the Study limits.

The study includes the rehabilitation or replacement of:

- 14 Bridges
- 3 Structural Culverts
- 15 Retaining Walls

Slide 5 – Structures within the Study Area

This slide illustrates a map of the study area and identifies bridges, retaining walls and culverts within the study limits that may be impacted by improvements to the highway corridors.

Slide 6 – Key Objectives of the Study

Key Objectives of the study include:

- Exploring long-term improvements along the Highway 403 and Highway 6 corridors with potential improvements including additional lanes.
- Developing a long-range plan for Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange so that an ultimate interchange design can be established and land protected.
- Evaluating the widening and/or replacement needs of all structures within the study area based on the preferred highway and interchange alternatives
- Developing a preferred staging and contract sequencing strategy, and
- Obtaining Environmental Assessment approval

Slide 7 – Study Process

- This study is following the requirements of a Group 'B' project under the *MTO Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000)*.
- Stakeholder consultation is ongoing, including two rounds of PICs.

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- A Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) will be prepared and made available for public and agency review for a period of 30-days at the completion of the study.
- We also encourage you to complete a comment sheet and email it to us at ProjectTeam@Hwy403Hwy6PreliminaryDesignEA.ca. We would greatly appreciate receiving your comments by August 8th, 2020.

The slide also illustrates a flow chart describing the Study Process.

Slide 8 – Study Timeline

This slide illustrates a bar chart describing the Study Time. *Please note, the schedule is subject to change.* We are looking to complete the study in Spring 2022.

Slide 9 – Adjacent Projects

Provincial Projects include:

- The MTO is undertaking the Preliminary Design for the QEW from the north end of the Burlington Skyway to Guelph Line and Highway 403 from QEW to Grindstone Creek, in the City of Burlington under the Provincial Class Environmental Assessment Process (Group B). This project is located immediately east of this study.
- The Detail Design of Highway 5 & Highway 6 for the planned interchange study is independent of this Study.
- Highway 6 on-ramp, off-ramp, and York Road Intersection improvements.

Municipal Projects include:

- The City of Burlington is undertaking improvements to Grindstone Creek Erosion Control Project – Waterdown Road to Hidden Valley Park under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process (Schedule B).
- The City of Burlington is undertaking improvements to Grindstone Creek Erosion Control Project – Unsworth Avenue to Sumac Drive under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process (Schedule B).

Slide 10 – Transportation Problems & Opportunities

Transportation Problems & Opportunities include:

- Commuter traffic on Highway 403 is currently experiencing delays during weekday peak periods.
- Population and employment forecasts indicate that traffic volumes will continue to grow and congestion is projected to increase in the study area to the 2041 planning horizon.
- Capacity and operational issues have been noted along Highway 403, Highway 6 and at the Highway 6 and Highway 403 Interchange connections.
- Operational issues have been noted at the Highway 6 and York Road interchange.
- A number of bridges and culverts in the study area will require rehabilitation or replacement by 2041 or earlier.

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- Recognizing the need to provide efficient movement of people and goods, MTO is exploring opportunities for improvements such as increasing the number of through lanes, as well as encouraging carpooling, and transit use.

Slide 11 – Existing & Future Traffic Conditions: Need for Highway Improvements

Current Traffic Analysis:

- For the current study, the planning horizon for addressing Highway 403 and Highway 6 operational improvements are 2031 and 2041.
- Since 2004 there have been changes in provincial legislation (for example the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, planned 2006 / and updated in 2013) and additional development constructed (and proposed) along the Highway 403 corridor.
- The current traffic projections indicate that the Highway 403 and Highway 6 corridors need to be widened throughout the majority of the study limits.

The slide illustrates two traffic diagrams: one illustrating existing traffic conditions in the AM (the morning) and the second illustrating existing traffic conditions in the PM (the afternoon and evening). The numbers on the diagrams represent the number of vehicles traveling in that direction.

Slide 12 – Existing & Future Traffic Conditions: Need for Highway Improvements

The diagrams show existing traffic congestion along the:

- Highway 403 Eastbound AM (morning) Peak Hour Congestion east of Highway 6
- Highway 403 Westbound PM (afternoon and evening) Peak Hour Congestion west of Highway 6

The colour coding indicates traffic speeds. Orange and red indicates significant traffic slowing due to congestion.

Highway 403 posted speed is 90 km/h along this section.

Slide 13 – Existing & Future Traffic Conditions: Need for Highway Improvements

The diagrams show existing traffic congestion along the:

- Highway 6 Southbound AM (morning) Peak Hour Congestion
- Highway 6 Southbound PM (afternoon and evening) Peak Hour Congestion

Colour coding indicates traffic speeds. Orange and red indicates significant traffic slowing due to congestion.

Highway 6 posted speed is 80 km/h along this section.

Slide 14 – Alternatives to the Undertaking

'Alternatives to the Undertaking' are broad-based alternatives that represent fundamentally different ways of addressing future transportation needs.

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The 'Alternatives to the Undertaking' considered in this study include:

- "Do Nothing"
 - Which maintains the status quo of transportation infrastructure and services with no actions. This alternative will seldom address the problem/opportunity; however, it provides a baseline against which the effects of other alternatives can be compared (*MTO Class EA, 2000*)
- Transportation Demand Management and Intelligent Transportation Systems
 - Transportation Demand Management : measures aimed at shifting transportation demand (for example carpooling, telecommuting)
 - Intelligent Transportation Systems: measures to improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system (for example variable message signs)
- Encourage the use of other modes of transportation (for example public transit)
- Improvements to Highway 403 and Highway 6, and
- Encourage greater use of local roads

The 'Alternatives to the Undertaking' were evaluated based on their ability to meet the study objectives which are:

- Address future capacity and operational issues along Highway 403 and Highway 6
- Improve safety conditions on Highway 403 and Highway 6
- Address the future rehabilitation needs along Highway 403 and Highway 6
- Reduce or minimize impacts to the natural, social, economic and cultural environments

Slide 15 – Alternatives to the Undertaking: Evaluation Criteria & Approach

The table presented shows an evaluation of some high-level alternatives to the undertaking such as:

- Do Nothing – this alternative does not address the study objectives and is only carried forward for comparison purposes.
- Transportation Demand Management and Intelligent Transportation Systems – this alone cannot solely address the study objectives, but may be considered along with other alternatives.
- Encourage the use of other modes of transportation (for example rail, bus, etc.) – this alternative may be considered along with other alternatives.
- Improvements to Highway 403 & Highway 6 – this is carried forward.

Slide 16 – Evaluation Criteria and Process

- Alternatives have been developed and will be evaluated for improvements to the following:
 - Highway 403 Mainline
 - Highway 6 Mainline
 - Highway 403 & Highway 6 Interchange, and
 - Highway 6 & York Road Interchange

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**Crossing roads and watercourse crossing improvements have not been considered as alternatives, as they depend on which mainline and interchange alternatives are preferred. Additional details will be presented at the next Public Information Centre..*

- A Reasoned Argument (trade-off) method of evaluation will be used to identify the advantages and disadvantages to select a preferred alternative or alternatives.
- The criteria outlined in the table will be used to evaluate alternatives.

This slide illustrates a table which outlines the Evaluation Components including: Natural, Socio-Economic, Cultural Environments and Transportation, Engineering and Cost; and the Criteria that will be used to evaluate the alternatives. The criteria include:

Evaluation Component	Criteria
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fish and Fish Habitat ▪ Terrestrial Ecosystems (vegetation, wildlife, wetlands etc.) ▪ Designated Natural Areas (ANSI/PSW, Niagara Escarpment etc.) ▪ Groundwater ▪ Species at Risk ▪ Surface Water
Socio-Economic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aesthetics ▪ Noise ▪ Air Quality ▪ Community Effects (residential, commercial, institutional, Property Impacts etc.) ▪ Agricultural Operations ▪ Commercial / Industrial Operations ▪ Approved Plans & Policies ▪ Contaminated Properties & Waste Management
Cultural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Archeological Resources ▪ Built Heritage and Cultural Landscapes ▪ Indigenous Lands
Transportation, Engineering and Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traffic Operations & Safety ▪ Construction Staging ▪ Utilities ▪ Excess Materials (more, less, equivalent) ▪ Number of New Structures ▪ Cost (construction cost)

Please provide your suggestions regarding the criteria that should be considered in the evaluation process!

Slide 17 – Highway 403 & Highway 6 Mainline Widening Sections

The study area and following displays have been divided into the following three sections for the purpose of evaluating highway widening alternatives:

- Highway 403 Mainline / Highway 6 Mainline

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- Highway 403 & Highway 6 Interchange
- Highway 6 & York Road Interchange

Highway 403 Mainline / Highway 6 Mainline

Mainline widening alternatives have been considered along the Highway 403 and Highway 6 corridors, including:

- Do nothing, maintain existing Highway 403 and Highway 6 alignments and number of lanes.
- Widening Highway 403 by adding one lane eastbound and one lane westbound, involving realignment to accommodate construction of new overpass structures while maintaining traffic during construction. Widening Highway 6 by adding one lane southbound and extending the northbound truck climbing lane through the study area.
- Widening Highway 403 by adding one lane eastbound and one lane westbound, involving realignment to accommodate construction of new overpass/underpass structures while maintaining traffic during construction.

The Recommended Plan (to be determined and presented at the next Public Information Centre) will incorporate the recommendations of the study.

Slide 18 – Highway 403 & Highway 6 Mainline Widening Sections

The following displays outline the alternatives being considered as part of this current study.

Alternative 1: the 'Do Nothing' alternative includes no highway widening and reflects existing conditions.

Slide 19 – Highway 403 & Highway 6 Mainline Widening Sections

Alternative 2 includes: *Adding one lane in each direction to Highway 403 and Highway 6.*

This involves widening both Highway 403 and Highway 6. Property impacts are not anticipated at this point in time; however, this will be confirmed as the study progresses. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Slide 20 – Highway 403 & Highway 6 Mainline Widening Sections

Alternative 3 includes: *Adding one lane in each direction to Highway 403*

This involves widening (adding one lane in each direction) on Highway 403 only (not Highway 6). Property impacts are not anticipated at this point in time; however, this will be confirmed as the study progresses. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Slide 21 – Overview of Interchange Alternatives

There are two interchanges as part of this project that are being reviewed:

- Highway 403 & Highway 6 Interchange, and the
- Highway 6 & York Road Interchange

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Major interchange alternatives (for example new configurations) have been developed where the following criteria have been met:

- The alternative will provide significant transportation and safety benefits (such as designing highway entrances to be from the right versus the left).
- The alternative does not significantly impact a major constraint.
- The existing configuration cannot accommodate the required widening of Highway 403 or Highway 6.

Minor interchange improvements that maintain the existing configuration will be identified following this Public Information Centre. Examples can include:

- Extension of turning lanes or speed change lanes
- Removal of channels
- Modifications to pavement markings
- Improved geometry (for example increased ramp radii, etc.)

Please refer to the roll plan available for download on the website. It includes the two interchange locations where major interchange alternatives have been developed for evaluation.

Slide 22 – Highway 403 & Highway 6 Interchange Alternatives

Highway 403 and 6 interchange alternatives are shown now.

The 'Do Nothing' alternative: This alternative was screened out as it does not meet the objectives of the study or traffic forecasts.

Alternative 1 is a *Directional Ramp Interchange Configuration*

This alternative involves Highway 403 being realigned to the north with exit and entrance ramps that exit/enter to/from the right. Structure placement differs with this alternative. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Alternative 2 is a *Directional Ramp Interchange Configuration*

This alternative involves Highway 403 being realigned to the north, with exit and entrance ramps exit/enter to/from the right. Structure placement differs with this alternative. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Slide 23 – Highway 403 & Highway 6 Interchange Alternatives

Alternative 3 shows the *Directional Ramps*

This alternative involves Highway 403 being realigned to the north, with exit and entrance ramps exit/enter to/from the right. Larger ramp radius results in conflict with Plains Road West Underpass. This alternative is screened out.

Slide 24 – Highway 6 & York Road Interchange Alternatives

The following eight alternatives are being considered for the Highway 6 & York Road Interchange.

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Alternative 1 shows the *Existing Configuration with Intersection Improvements*

This alternative displays the existing conditions along Highway 6 at York Road. If intersection improvements are made potential improvements may result. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Alternative 2 shows the *Reconfiguration to a Parclo B2*

This alternative would conflict with Newman Road and results in more property impacts in the southwest quadrant. This alternative is screened out.

Slide 25 – Highway 6 & York Road Interchange Alternatives

Alternative 3 shows the *York Road Realignment with Two Roundabout Intersections*

This alternative provides an opportunity to improve the York Road alignment over Highway 6. The alternative will also minimize the underpass skew and improve sight distance, addressing safety issues. The inclusion of roundabouts will allow for free flow traffic onto and off Highway 6. The existing bridge would require replacement. Screened out to avoid replacement of bridge constructed in 2006.

Slide 26 – Highway 6 & York Road Interchange Alternatives

Alternative 4 shows the *Roundabout Intersection at the Highway 6 West Ramp Terminal*

This alternative provides one roundabout at the west ramp terminal intersection. This alternative is to be carried forward.

A number of studies on the safety benefits of roundabouts have been undertaken, and in general roundabouts can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of collisions. The Project Team is investigating the feasibility of roundabouts at York Road. Roundabouts are subject to further analysis.

Slide 27 – Highway 6 & York Road Interchange Alternatives

Alternative 5 shows the *Reconfiguration Parclo AB (with 3 movements)*

Traffic volumes may not be sufficient to justify the additional property required by this alternative. This alternative is screened out.

Alternative 6 shows the *Reconfiguration Parclo AB (with 2 movements)*

Potential for a carpool lot in the southwest quadrant. Traffic volumes may not be sufficient to justify additional property required in the northwest quadrant. This alternative is screened out.

Slide 28 – Highway 6 & York Road Interchange Alternatives

Alternative 7 shows the *Reconfiguration Single Point Urban Intersection (SPUI)*

This alternative requires less property. There is a conflict with Plains Road west intersection with York Road. A Plains Road west realignment may be feasible. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Alternative 8 shows the *Reconfiguration Parclo A4*

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This alternative has the greatest property impact. Traffic volumes do not justify this configuration. This alternative is screened out.

Slide 29 – Highway 403 – CN & CP Rail Track Bridges Alternatives

West of the Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange, there are 2 rail structures that cross over Highway 403 just before Old Guelph Road.

The following five alternatives are being considered.

Alternative 1 shows the *Rail Bridge Replacements on Existing Alignments*

This alternative results in rail service disruption during construction. This alternative is screened out.

Alternative 2 shows the *Rail Bridge Replacements Offline*

The Canadian National Rail bridge is east of existing and the Canadian Pacific Rail bridge is west of existing. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Alternative 3 shows the *Rail Bridge Replacements Offline*

The Canadian National Rail bridge is west of existing and the Canadian Pacific Rail bridge is west of existing. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Slide 30 – Highway 403 - CN & CP Rail Track Bridges Alternatives

Alternative 4 shows the *Rail Bridge Replacements Offline*

The CNR bridge is east of the existing and the CPR bridge is east of the existing. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Alternative 5 shows the *Rail Bridge Replacements Offline*

The CNR bridge is staged construction on the existing alignment and the CPR bridge is west of existing. This alternative is to be carried forward.

Consultation is ongoing with CN and CP Rail.

Slide 31 – Carpool Lot Existing Conditions: Need for Improvements

Potential opportunities for Carpool Lots include:

- The MTO Central Region Carpool Lots Opportunity Study (2007) included a recommendation for a carpool lot at the Highway 6 and York Road Interchange.
- The existing provincial carpool lot located along Plains Road West will be reviewed and opportunities to relocate this lot to the Highway 6 and York Road Interchange will be considered.
- The advantages of lot relocation include the opportunity for expansion and direct access to Highway 6 and Highway 403.

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Slide 32 – Overview of Environmental Project Works

The following environmental studies will be undertaken within the Study Area as part of this assignment:

- Fish and Fish Habitat Existing Conditions & Impact Assessment
- Terrestrial Ecosystems Existing Conditions & Impact Assessment
- Groundwater Study
- Noise Study Report
- Land Use Factors Report
- Contaminated Properties & Waste Management – including a Contamination Overview Study
- Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage Landscapes – including a Cultural Heritage Assessment Report
- Archaeology – Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment
- Landscape Composition Plan
- Air Quality Assessment
- Surface Water (including Drainage & Hydrology)
- Erosion and Sediment Control Measures

A Transportation Environmental Study Report will be prepared to document the design and environmental process, as well as potential environmental impacts and mitigations. This report will be made available for public and agency review for a period of 30 days at the end of this study.

Slide 33 – Overview of Key Existing Environmental Features

There are several existing environmental features in the Study Area:

- Fish and Fish Habitat – Within the Study Area, Highway 6 has approximately four (4) watercourse crossings and Highway 403 has approximately 11 watercourse crossings within the Grindstone Creek watershed, regulated by the Halton Conservation Authority (HCA).
- Terrestrial Ecosystems - There are also several terrestrial flora and fauna Species at Risk with the potential to occur within the Study Area.
- Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) – is a well-known tourist destination attracting visitors from across Ontario and beyond. It is the largest botanical garden in Canada, protecting and restoring 2450 acres of nature sanctuaries containing environmentally sensitive habitats.
- Cootes Paradise Wetland Complex – Located in the westerly section of the Study Area, this wetland is part of the Cootes Paradise Nature Reserve, with these lands representing 99% of the unaltered lands along the Lake Ontario shoreline.

Slide 34 – Overview of Key Existing Environmental & Transportation Features

- Bruce Trail – Highway 6 Bruce Trail Pedestrian Tunnel (Site 36-515/C) is a 2.9 m x 2.6 m x 50 m long reinforced concrete box culvert under Highway 6 approximately 800 m north of York Road. The pedestrian tunnel:

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- Is part of the Bruce Trail and allows pedestrians to safely cross under the highway.
- Was constructed in 2007 and is in very good condition, with no repairs envisioned to be required.
- The end of the pedestrian tunnel extends 12 m west and 10 m east beyond the Highway 6 shoulders and can therefore accommodate any potential widening of Highway 6
- It has not been determined at this point whether or not proposed works may impact the Bruce Trail. Any property requirements or proposed works anticipated will be confirmed as the study progresses.
- Noise Study – Noise sensitive areas are located within the study area and there is an existing noise barrier on the west side of Highway 6 between Northcliffe Anueve and York Road. The full noise analysis and recommendations for noise mitigation measures will be presented at the next Public Information Centre..
- Carpool Lots – Configurations of commuter parking lots will be determined once a preferred alternative is selected. Recommendations will be presented at the next Public Information Centre.
- Rail Lines – CN Rail and CP Rail cross over Highway 403 east of Old Guelph Road (CP Rail also passes under Highway 6 south of York Road). Potential widening of Highway 403 may impact the rail bridges over Highway 403 as both structures have piers abutting the eastbound and westbound lanes.

Slide 35 – Existing Natural Heritage & Aquatic Features

The existing Natural Heritage & Aquatic Features that exist within the Study Area are shown here.

Slide 36 – Existing Land Use

The existing Land Use that exist within the Study Area are shown here.

Slide 37 – Next Steps & How to Stay Informed

Following this Public Information Centre we will:

- Respond to comments received at this PIC.
- Assess and evaluate interchange and highway alternatives to select the Preferred Alternative leading to the overall Recommended Plan.
- Present the Recommended Plan at the next Public Information Centre.
- A Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) will be prepared and made available for a 30-day public and agency review period at the completion of the Study. Notification and timing of the TESR will be published in local newspapers, on the project website, and those on the contact list will be notified.

Consultation is being undertaken throughout (with all stakeholders – members of the public, municipalities, interest groups, agencies, Indigenous Communities).

Thank you for attending PIC #1!

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Please fill out the PIC Comment Form which can be found on this Study Website.
Please provide any comments by August 8th, 2020.

For more information:

Continue to visit our Study Website at: www.Hwy403Hwy6PreliminaryDesignEA.ca

Or

Email the Project Team at: ProjectTeam@Hwy403Hwy6PreliminaryDesignEA.ca

Slide 38 – Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act

- Comments and information regarding this study are being collected to assist MTO and AECOM in meeting the requirements of the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act*. This material will be maintained on file for the use of this study and may be included in study documentation.
- Information collected will be used in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

On behalf of the Project Team thank you for your interest and for participating in Public Information Centre. We encourage you to contact members of the Project Team if you have any questions or concerns regarding the above information.