

EMBARGO UNTIL FEBRUARY 10 AT 1:00 PM

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For Immediate Release

Phase 2A of the Environmental Assessment Study of Interprovincial Crossings: Plans Released for Public Consultations

CANADA'S CAPITAL REGION—The Co-Enterprise AECOM-Delcan (the Consultant Team), selected to lead Phase 2A of the Interprovincial Crossings Environmental Assessment, announced today the details of its Public Engagement Plan. In keeping with the commitment for public consultation, the Plan includes several opportunities for stakeholders and members of the public to provide input on the project. Information that is gathered during these consultations will be used in the development of a Study Design (process and methodology) and in the remaining phase of the environmental assessment, Phase 2B, to select an interprovincial bridge crossing in the Region's east end.

Given the importance of this project and the implications that a new interprovincial crossing will have on the National Capital Region's vibrancy, economy and landscape for well into the future, comments from the public will be given full consideration when developing a selection process that will lead to the best decision possible on the future bridge's location.

The Phase 2A Public Engagement Plan focuses on interactive exchanges with the public and stakeholders, which includes an online component, two public sessions to be held in the City of Ottawa and Ville de Gatineau in early spring (details to be announced at a later date), and a series of three stakeholder meetings through the Public Consultation Group (PCG). A number of meetings have also been planned with First Nations representatives.

In an effort to be proactive and innovative, the Consultant Team will also hold Community Consultation Group (CCG) meetings, a new forum for consulting directly with members of those communities that are adjacent or in proximity to the three corridors under consideration.

Workshops will be held with several resident associations from Ottawa and Gatineau that meet the Community Consultation Group criteria and that are interested in working collaboratively with the Consultant Team to provide input into the Study. The purpose of this collaboration will be to identify values which are characteristic of the participating community. These values will then be taken into consideration during the development of Phase 2B's 'Community Value Plans', designed to help identify and tailor appropriate and relevant measures to minimize and/or mitigate any environmental effects that a new crossing might have on that community. This analysis will in turn be used as part of the overall methodology developed to select the new crossing location.

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The Public Engagement Plan is comprised of four main steps:

1. Launch Activities (since November 2009): Activities to inform the public and stakeholders of the Study launch, Phases 2A and 2B objectives, and opportunities for input;
2. Input (February to March 2010): Interactive activities designed to seek input into the draft Study Design and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) Scoping Documents;
3. Refine (April 2010): Interactive activities designed to refine the draft Study Design and (CEAA) Scoping Documents;
4. Report (May to June 2010): Activities to promote the Final Study Design and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) Scoping Documents. Includes a project wrap-up and reporting of what was heard at stakeholder and public consultations.

Phase 2A is scheduled to be completed in June 2010. This will be followed by the selection of a consultant for Phase 2B; this process is currently scheduled to be completed in Fall 2010. It is expected that Phase 2B will be completed in Winter 2012, and the approvals process following completion of the EA Study is expected to extend to Winter 2013.

The Study is funded by the National Capital Commission (NCC), the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ), and guided by a Study Team consisting of the funding partners and the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau. The three corridors under consideration are those that obtained the highest ratings during Phase 1 of the Study: Kettle Island (Corridor 5); Lower Duck Island (Corridor 6); and Gatineau Airport/McLaurin Bay (Corridor 7).

For more information, please visit the Study website at www.ncrcrossings.ca.

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