

HIGHWAY 103 TWINNING TANTALLON TO HUBBARDS



July
2011

Public Consultation Report

Prepared by Lura Consulting
for the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

To be cited as:

Lura Consulting 2011. Highway 103 Twinning Tantallon to Hubbards. Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Public Consultation Report. iv + 6 p.

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (NSTIR) is planning to twin the existing portion of Highway 103 from Tantallon (Exit 5) to Hubbards (Exit 6). As part of this work, NSTIR has conducted extensive public consultation with the local community.

This report describes the consultation efforts undertaken.

2. PURPOSE OF CONSULTATIONS

The consultation has included the three components of the project:

1. The twinned portion of Highway 103;
2. An interchange(exit) to facilitate access to properties to the North, and situated between existing Exits 5 and 6; and,
3. A proposed connector road between St. Margaret's Bay Road and the new interchange (exit).

The consultations were held to inform and gather input, including:

1. To inform potentially affected landowners of the project and what it might mean to them;
2. To inform community members along St. Margaret's Bay Road about the project, the planning process and the options that are being considered;
3. To inform community members about the findings of several associated studies, including:
 - a. the Environmental Assessment for the twinned portion of the highway;
 - b. the environmental screening for the connector road options; and,
 - c. cost/benefit analysis (including a socio-economic study);
4. To gather local knowledge from the community; and
5. To gather input on community priorities with respect to the project.

In order to consult broadly and effectively, the consultations comprised public meetings, interviews and focus groups.

3. ELEMENTS

The consultation with the public on the Highway 103 Twinning Project included several elements, including:

1. Landowner Notification
2. Two Public Meetings
3. Meetings With Individuals and Groups
4. Interviews and Focus Groups

5. Interactive Website.

Descriptions of each of the elements of these meetings follow.

3.1 LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION

There were 126 landowners identified who were in proximity to the Highway 103 Twinning project. They were identified through the Province of Nova Scotia's Land Registration database. In order to inform landowners of the process, they were sent letters to their registered contact addresses. These addresses were not necessarily the same address as the properties, which ensured that contact was made with the landowner regardless of whether the land was a principal address or not. As many of the properties do not have dwellings on them, this was critical to effective contact.

The landowners were notified of the March 10, 2011 Open House and sent a factsheet on the project, complete with contact information (see Appendix A).

3.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

There were two public meetings held, one in June of 2010 and the other in March of 2011. The first meeting introduced the community to the project, before the studies were complete. The second was held after the studies were completed, and provided the community with all of the findings to date.

3.2.1 JUNE 9, 2010

In June of 2010, a public meeting was held to provide the local community with information on the project. Held at the Black Point Fire Hall, the meeting was organized by the local Member of the Legislative Assembly and comprised a presentation on the project and then a question and answer period. The estimated attendance was 275 people.

In the presentation, attendees were provided with information on the twinning of Highway 103, the potential interchanges, and the 6 candidate connector roads that were being considered. In addition, they were informed of the various studies being conducted, which were primarily the environmental assessment for the twinning and interchanges, and the environmental screening of the 6 candidate connector roads.

During the question and answer period, attendees asked questions about the project, raised issues of concern and declared support or opposition to specific aspects of the project. Project staff took notes on suggestions and answered the questions they could, given that studies were in progress and not all of the information had yet been gathered (see Appendix B, Minutes of June 9, 2010 Public Meeting). As well, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the local Member of the Legislative Assembly were present and fielded many questions.

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One suggestion was made by an attendee that there should be a study of the economic impacts of the road construction in addition to the studies that were being conducted. As a result of the suggestion, the project team hired a consulting firm to conduct a socio-economic study of the project.

In response to a request by members of the public to have more information when the various studies were complete, the project staff agreed to hold another public meeting in the community to provide the results of the studies when they were complete.

3.2.2 MARCH 10, 2011

In March, 2011, after receiving the results of the studies conducted¹, NSTIR held a second public meeting, in the form of an Open House. The meeting was held at the Black Point Fire Hall, and was attended by over 240 people.

The Open House format included information stations (see Appendix C for the Open House Floor Plan), maps, photographs and project staff (government and consultants) who were available to answer questions and listen to concerns and suggestions. In addition, the format included an opportunity for attendees to provide their views on community criteria that should be considered for the project. The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the local Member of the Legislative Assembly were present and mingled with attendees to discuss the project and answer questions.



Figure 1 - Detailed maps provided information on study findings

The information stations addressed the following topics:

- Project Overview
- Land Access
- Interchanges
- Connector Roads
- Socio-Economic Study
- Community Criteria Input
- Roundabout Information

The stations contained comprehensive information on each topic, the findings of the studies, and maps and photographs that facilitated discussion. At each station, project staff members were available to answer questions and have one-on-one discussions



Figure 2 - Videos from computer models showed what new road would look like

¹ The studies included the Environmental Assessment for the twinning and the proposed interchanges, environmental screening for the connector options, a traffic study for the connector options and cost/benefit analysis of the connector options.

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with people. For instance, at the Land Access station landowners could discuss impacts on their properties, and determine if there would be any need to purchase any portion of their land for the project, and if so, what the process would be.

In order to facilitate understanding of the different components of the project and to make discussion more concrete, video flyovers of the project were presented on large television screens. The flyovers were based on models created through a GIS system, and they covered the overall project and the 6 candidate connector roads in particular. Buildings, wetlands, and necessary structures were clearly visible on the flyover videos. This allowed people living in the vicinity of the highway and connector roads to have a clear understanding of what the project would look like when completed, the proximity of their homes, the impact on wetlands, and even how traffic would flow through the roundabouts.

At each station, people were welcome to provide information and comments, which were accepted as valuable local information. For example, one individual pointed out wetlands that had not been identified previously, on property owned by his family. Another showed that the location of his well and septic system could have an impact on the viability of purchasing a small portion of his property. Others indicated areas where wildlife and fauna had been observed, and where different land-use activities, such as recreation, were common. Such information was incorporated into the socio-economic study and environmental screening.



Figure 3 - Well attended, the meeting provided opportunity for discussion and fact-finding

Each attendee was given a form with a list of potential community criteria (see Appendix D) for the project, and 3 stickers to use to identify the 3 criteria they ranked as most important. Criteria identified included such potential issues as impact on the environment, emergency access, and impact on homes.

Evaluation forms about the effectiveness of the Open House submitted by people in attendance indicated a satisfaction rate of over 90%. Almost all of the comments (see Appendix E) were very positive about how much information was available, how it was presented, and the ability to discuss issues one-on-one with project staff.

3.3 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

During the course of the study of the project, project staff met with many people in the community who requested the opportunity (see Appendix F). They met with a total of 83 people, including:

- Landowners;
- Association Representatives (such as ATV groups, trail groups and environmental groups);
- Staff and political representatives of Halifax Regional Municipality;
- The Local Fire Department; and

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- Local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce.

Meetings were held for diverse reasons. Some landowners simply wanted to understand what the proposed road would look like and how it might impact their properties. Others wanted to know if any part of their properties would need to be purchased for the project. Still others wanted to know if access to their properties could be improved through the design and construction of the interchange and connector roads.

Association representatives discussed issues that were important to their members. For instance, ATV users were interested in how safety could be addressed and increased through the highway and road design. Environmental groups wanted to discuss environmental issues, such as wetlands, and the potential for development in the area if the connector roads are built. Trails representatives wanted to discuss how the connector road might impact the St. Margaret's Trail and access to it.

Representatives of the local fire department were interested in how a connector road could improve emergency access. They felt that a connector road could significantly shorten their response time; in particular to accidents on the Highway, which they felt would make a big improvement to health and safety in the community.

Several businesses met with staff, some existing and some seeking information for proposed businesses. They were looking for clarity on access to property.

3.4 INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

As part of the socio-economic study for the project, consultants from Genivar Inc. interviewed a sample of businesses and residents in the community, and conducted focus groups. The interviews and focus groups allowed people to provide local information and how they felt the project could affect business and the community in general. Maps were provided, and people were encouraged to write on them and mark them up. This provided an opportunity to acquire local knowledge. For instance, with respect to the St. Margaret's Bay Road, people identified areas where motor vehicle accidents frequently occurred, where it was unsafe to ride bicycles, and where there were blind turns on the highway that they felt were dangerous. In addition, people identified areas between Highway 103 and St. Margaret's Bay Road where they participated in recreational activities, such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing and riding ATV's.

In total, Genivar met with 38 members of the community.

3.5 INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

In order to facilitate effective two-way communications with the community, the project team established a project website. The website included reports, maps, factsheets, and other documents, including the visual fly-overs that were developed for the highway and connector road options. The documents were posted on the website as soon as it was possible to do so.

Additionally, the website was designed to allow visitors to submit questions about the project, as well as thoughts, suggestions and concerns, directly to project staff.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The public consultation with the community has been extensive for the twinning of Highway 103 between Exit 5 (Tantallon) and Exit 6 (Hubbards). Community groups, landowners, local residents, business people, municipal staff and emergency service personnel were able to meet directly with project staff upon request.

As part of the socio-economic study, Genivar met with a random sample of residents, and with business leaders, to get input from them on how the project could impact the community, both socially and economically.

Two well-attended public meetings provided the community with unfettered access to project information. The first provided them with the preliminary information on the project before the studies were complete. The second provided access to all findings of the studies once they were complete, and an opportunity to speak one-on-one to project staff, ask questions, raise issues and concerns, communicate opinions, provide input on the criteria for the community that should be taken into account in decision-making and to provide local knowledge.

The satisfaction rate of attendees at the second public meeting, where all of the study information was available, was over 90% and the comments were very favourable. People appreciated the level of transparency and the opportunity to engage directly with project staff.

Overall, the public consultation for the project was a substantial effort that resulted in effective community engagement and two-way conversations with the community.



Figure 4 - Community members provide input on community criteria

APPENDIX A – Project Factsheet

FACT SHEET

Highway 103 Twinning - Upper Tantallon to Hubbards Public Consultation - Thursday, March 10, 2011

Project Description

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) is planning for the future twinning of Highway 103 from Upper Tantallon to Hubbards.

The new highway, as proposed, will start at the end of the four lane section near Exit 5 at Upper Tantallon and terminate approximately 1.5 km west of Exit 6 near Hubbards. The length of the project will be approximately 21.5 km. The roadway will be a controlled access facility and built as a 4-lane divided highway with sections of narrow (5.6 metre width) barrier median and wide (27.6 metre width) grass median and a posted speed of 110 km/h.

Background

This section of Highway 103, between Exit 5 and 6, is a major arterial roadway that connects the communities of Upper Tantallon, Hubbards, Boutilier's Point, Black Point and Ingramport in the St.Margaret's Bay area. It is currently a two lane, 100 Series controlled access highway. Traffic volumes have been increasing steadily over the past several years. Volumes are currently 9550 vehicles per day and are at the point where twinning is an appropriate measure for increasing highway service and safety performance levels.

Plans to upgrade and twin Highway 103 are on-going. The highway is currently twinned from Highway 102, in Halifax, to Exit 5, at Upper Tantallon and from east of Exit 9 near Chester Basin to Gold River.

Highway 103 is part of the National Highway System Feeder Route making it eligible for Federal cost sharing (normally on a 50/50 basis).

Highway Planning and Design

The Department currently owns most of the land required for the twinning portion of the highway. However, additional land to extend the construction boundary and to build any parallel access roads or interchanges will be required through negotiations with private landowners.

The new lanes will be constructed on the north side of the existing highway separated from the existing lanes by either a narrow or wide median (see picture on reverse).

The project would involve construction of a new interchange on Highway 103 and potentially a connector road to Trunk 3 (St.Margaret's Bay Road). The new interchange would provide the only means of accessing Highway 103 between Upper Tantallon and Hubbards. The twinning would also involve modification of the existing interchange at Exit 6 and several watercourse structures.

Careful planning and design measures along with accepted construction techniques will ensure that environmental impacts from activities such as road construction in close proximity to developed areas, wetlands, streams, and highly erodible soils are minimized.

Direct land access to Highway 103 will not be permitted when the highway is twinned. Land access for abutting landowners with existing direct access will be accommodated via existing secondary roads and new parallel access roads.

The estimated cost of twinning this section of Highway 103, including the new interchange and connector road, is \$101 million. Due to cost, this project has been divided into phases. Phase 1 is the construction of the new interchange and possible connector and this is included in the Department's Five Year Plan.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - Public consultation is an important part of highway planning and the environmental approval process. *The purpose of this public consultation is to provide information to the public, identify any environmental issues that may be outstanding, and give the public an opportunity to discuss with Department staff any issues they may have. Hired consultants will also be in attendance to answer questions.*

The Department has also added a section for the project to it's website at:

www.gov.ns.ca/tran/highways/hwy103.asp

CONTACT INFORMATION

Adam Osborne, P.Eng.

**Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and
Infrastructure Renewal**

Highway Planning and Design

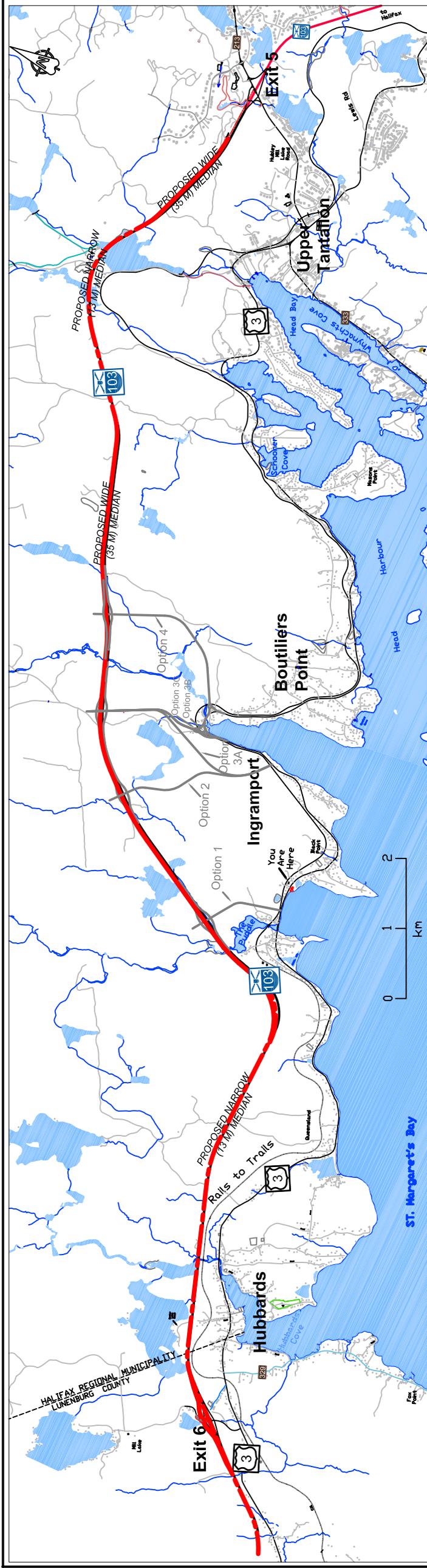
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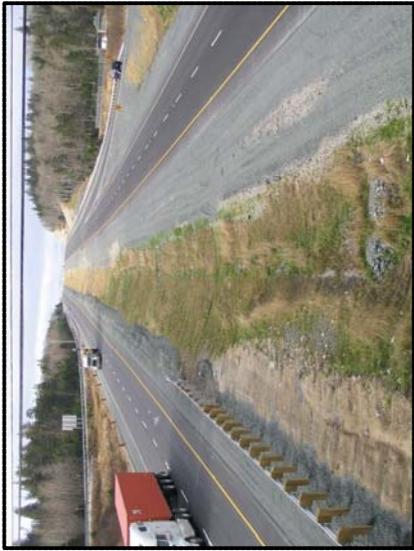
Legend

- Existing Highway 103 Lanes
- Proposed Highway 103
- Proposed Connector Road and Interchange Options

Proposed Narrow Median

Proposed Wide Median

Current



Highway Engineering Services

Highway 103 Proposed Twinning Upper Tantallon to Hubbards

Scale : see bar scale

Date : March 2011

Produced by : HP and D

File name : 103 fact sheet

APPENDIX B – Minutes of June 9, 2011 Public Meeting

Highway 103 Twinning -Exit 5 at Upper Tantallon to Exit 6 at Hubbards
Phase 1: Boutilier's Point Interchange and Connector
Public Meeting
Minutes - June 9, 2010.

ATTENDING: Bill Estabrooks, Minister, Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal
Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA, Tantallon-Chester
Ken Donnelly (facilitator), Lura Associates Ltd.
Phil Corkum, Manager, Highway Planning & Design
Adam Osborne, Highway Planning Engineer
Cathy MacIsaac, Director of Communications & Public Affairs
Ian MacCallum, Environmental Analyst
Sylvie Colomb, Environmental Analyst
Mike Croft, Manager, Traffic Engineering
Alok Wadhawan, Traffic Engineer
Richard MacPherson, Highway Planning Technician
Jason Rae, Highway Design Engineer
Brian Ward, Area Manager
approx. 270 stakeholders/interested parties

DATE: June 9, 2010

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Black Point Fire Hall, 8579 St.Margaret's Bay Road, Black Point

Meeting commenced about 7:05 P.M.

Issue	Discussion
Opening Remarks	<p>Ken stated guidelines of conduct for the meeting and introduced Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA, who introduced Bill Estabrooks, Minister of TIR.</p> <p>Minister Estabrooks stated: I'm the decision maker. And there has been no decision made. I live in the community and I am Minister of Transportation. I've lost too many friends on that highway, I want Highway 103 from Exits 5 to 6 twinned. There are some differences of opinion between neighbours but please be respectful.</p>
Presentation:	<p>Phil Corkum: -described info so far re access to properties along Highway 103, environmental impact, info yet to gather before Fall 2010. - case of Fire responding to an accident on Highway 103 - connectivity of roads, connector options and their impact</p>
Ingramport Resident	<p>Question I was picked-up by EHS and drivers on Route 3 "don't respect the siren". We need connector. When will we have a connector.</p>

	<p>Minister E.: Plans for twinning includes connector. Question: Can we have twinning without connector? Minister E.: Twinning can happen with or without a connector. Resident: "We've been trying for 17 years to get a bypass/emergency connector to the 103. We need a faster exit to the 103.</p>
Boutilier's Point Resident	<p>Questions: When did consultations start? This is a done deal? You didn't ask if we wanted it. Phil: Consultation meetings began in early 2007 with local residents and local special interests groups. No funding is in place. Much planning to take place before any decisions are made to build. "It is all about public safety"</p>
Queensland Resident	<p>Question: Obviously, Option 1 is the cheapest. How much weight would environmental impact be for Option 1? Ian MacC: More study of wetlands required to determine potential impact. Question: Why an interchange when it opposes HRM development plan: Phil: HRM plan is a working document. The interchange does not necessarily go against HRM's vision. Benefit Cost Analysis>User based only. Amount of economic growth can encourage or facilitate development or it can also be controlled by zoning. The plan is to be flexible and reviewed every 5 years.</p>
Queensland Resident	<p>Question: Why not build connector on Hillside Drive? It's already there. Phil: Too much impact on residential area: some homes would have to be bought-out and substantial sections of property acquired to bring the road up to connector road standard. Question: There are other connectors, like road from Dartmouth to Bedford, road from airport to residential area. Phil: That's not really the best option. TIR avoids homes if possible.</p>
Boutilier's Point Resident	<p>Question: What is the population of this area? Phil: I don't know. We are concerned with traffic volumes and traffic safety. Answer: (from woman in attendance) about 1300 residents total for Boutilier's Pt., Ingramport and Black Point. Question: Of the 4 options, what are the distances, general area of each option and how does Option 4 stack up? Phil: We don't have all the information available right now. More information will be available by fall 2010, including a traffic flow report.</p>
Boutilier's Point Resident	<p>Question: Does proposed development of land north of Islandview Drive influence need for connector? Phil: Development is not a consideration. Question: If Option 3 or 4 is chosen would access be granted off that road? Phil: One access would be granted (i.e. an intersection for access to either side of connector road).</p>
Ingramport Resident	<p>Question: Option 3B and 3C are your favourites. Do you have any more details re the roundabout locations? Phil: We do not have any more details. The impact boundary might</p>

	<p>change. We could affect more than one home. We have no favourite option. Still waiting for more information. Roundabouts would solve any potential speeding issues on this curve.</p> <p>Question: Phil:</p> <p>How and when will you get more details. Right now, we are gathering more information. We'll have consultant studies ready by the fall and meeting with local residents with possible 3D renderings. We may need to have more public meetings. In the meantime we will speak with any individuals requiring further information.</p>
Boutilier's Point Resident	<p>Question: When would you pick an option if you did (built) something (connector)?</p> <p>Phil: We hope to have all information by end of this summer and then give a recommendation on what to build.</p> <p>Question: Will you choose the Kennedy Road option?</p> <p>Phil: No. We're not considering that option anymore.</p>
Bedford Resident	<p>Question: Comparing spending choices, the interchange doesn't make the cut. Put the money towards health care. You don't need an interchange to access properties north of Highway 103 because you're building gravel roads.</p> <p>Phil: If anyone has a better idea than an interchange to allow access to the north side please let us know. Gravel roads are a means of getting a land owner to their land but after twinning the only means of accessing the highway will be at an interchange.</p>
A commuter to Burnside	<p>Question: Why not spend \$10 million on public transportation?</p> <p>Phil: You can spend more on public transit but cars will not go away. And you still have trucks that require a safe means of transporting goods.</p> <p>Question: Why not spend \$\$ on other projects besides roads?</p> <p>Phil: That would not be possible. Money budgeted for transportation is for transportation projects.</p>
Black Point Resident	<p>Question: We not use the \$10 million to hire more EHS staff?</p> <p>Phil: We still need to provide access to properties on the north side of Highway 103.</p>
Boutilier's Point Resident	<p>Question: How will you accommodate the intersection of the connector with the rails to trails?</p> <p>Phil: The treatment would be consistent with other side streets that currently cross the path of rails to trails. Accommodations will be made.</p>
Hubbards Resident	<p>Question: I read Jeff Ruben's book, "Your World is About to get a Whole Lot Smaller". Ministers: will you help create more sustainable future? Will you make the right decisions?</p> <p>Minister E.: This is the reason for this meeting. Thank you for offering this information. Give me the book. I'll read it. I respect your decisions and look forward to reading the book.</p>
Boutilier's Point Resident	<p>Question: Traffic data this time of year would not be a true picture of normal daily traffic. Would you consider paved shoulders for bikes, baby carriages?</p> <p>Phil: Yes. We will consider building paved shoulders. The consultants are forced to look at the entire year, not just a particular season.</p> <p>Question: We you consider another option about 2 km east of Option 4 to hook-up with an existing side street?</p>

	Phil:	TIR does not using existing streets as part of the connector because, according to our standards, only one access is allowed off the connector. All existing driveways would be eliminated and parallel access roads provided.
Black Point Resident	Question:	Option 2 and 3A would enhance the development proposal from Trinity Developments which contradicts the interests of this community. If one of these connectors is chosen will some compensation be given to the community (perhaps a park on the Trinity Dev. land)?
	Minister PR:	James, we've talked about this before. You and I can talk about this more at a later time.
Boutilier's Point Resident	Question:	Where did this idea come from?
	Phil:	It came from the Highway Planning office.
	Question:	What can I do to not make this connector road happen?
	Phil:	I think you're doing it now. Keep asking the tough questions and keep coming up with other suggestions and ideas.
Boutilier's Point Resident	Question:	If Option 3A is chosen, blasting through mountain, where would we get drinking water? How would you ensure pollution would not reach our ocean and waterways.
	Phil:	Water testing would take place before and after completion. Through careful planning and construction we can control environmental damage and work the project to avoid run off to lakes and streams from the highway.
EHS Member, Hubbards		I am a member of EHS. The office at Hubbards is a 3 rd priority post there is no full-time staff there. We travel up and down Route 3 on a constant basis responding to many vehicle accidents. The connector road would reduce response times by 10 to 15 minutes. If someone suffered a heart attack in Boutilier's Point, mid-afternoon on a weekday our travel time from Tantallon to Boutilier's Point to Halifax would reduce from 35 minutes to 20 minutes. The connector would improve public safety by getting us off Route 3 and improve EHS responses.
Local business owner	Question:	Did you consider effect on businesses?
	Phil:	Twinning & route location based on high traffic demand and highway safety.
Blandford Resident	Question:	We don't want connector. Do you include in design consideration for bikes, walking space. Option 3 tends to favour Bowater. We spend a lot of money, ours, on Bowater.
	Phil:	We could give some consideration of wider shoulders to accommodate pedestrians. We refer to it as active transportation and we give serious consideration to widening shoulders with consideration for paving to come later.
Queensland Resident	Question	I was involved with the formation of the Otter Lake Landfill. Does the connector road design take into account the landfill?
	Phil:	Not a consideration and Otter Lake is not at the end of it's life cycle.
Queensland Resident	Question	I propose an Option 1A on my land by Queensland beach, where a commercial project is proposed. This would be easy access for tourists and enhance EHS and Fire response.

	Phil:	Location is too close to Exit 6, about 4 kilometres. There would still be some 16 kilometres to Exit 5. This does not fulfill the department's requirements.
Fire Chief, Fire Services, Black Point		Development is a municipal issue. When there is a fire in Boutilier's Point, right now 2 fire stations can respond. With the connector 3 stations could respond. The connector would reduce our response times. The connector would save lives.
Tantallon Resident		The Bay is not being protected. Government has not supported the protection of St.Margaret's Bay. The next landfill will be at location of new interchange. We need a full cost/benefit analysis for cultural, spiritual impact and a study on bike lanes for Route 3. Minister E.: You make some great points and we have spoken many times in the past. But a landfill site? Give your head a shake! I can guarantee that during my time as minister, and my lifetime, the next landfill will be NO where near the area between Otter Lake and the county line. Minister PR: There appears to be a split re the connector. This tells me more discussion is needed. Remember that nothing is final. No decisions have been made at this time.
Woman, Accountant	Question	You take into environmental cost. What about community cost, interests of tourists? I want a more community-based analysis such as GPI index.
	Phil:	We will look into this.
Queensland Resident	Question	What will connector bring into our community? I see Option 3B and 3C include a roundabout. There are left-turn issues for the other options. Can you consider roundabouts there?
	Phil:	We can look at roundabouts for the other options. We are still early in the planning process.
Boutilier's Point Resident	Question	Why do we need a connector now? Does a decision have to be made this November?
	Phil	Present traffic volumes on Highway 103 are high. Capacity of the highway is an issue so more lanes are needed.
	Minister PR:	With every death on this section of highway there is extra pressure to twin. We must also consider demands for an interchange.
Boutilier's Point Resident	Question	Will you build sidewalks with new road?
	Phil:	We would build wider shoulders.
	Denise	Thanks everyone for coming, your comments are most welcome. Thank you for being respectful.
Next Meeting		Minister PR confirmed another public meeting would take place regarding the connector road.

Meeting adjourned about 9:15 P.M.

Note: Minister E. Minister Estabrooks

Minister PR: Minister Peterson-Rafuse

APPENDIX C – Open House Floor Plan

Registration

Project
Overview

Access

Highway 103 Open House Layout

Comm
unity
Criteria

Discussion

Interc
hange

Benefit/
Cost

Traffic

Roundabouts

Connector

APPENDIX D – Comments from March 10, 2011 Open House

OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY
Highway 103 Twinning: Upper Tantallon to Hubbards
Community Criteria

<u>Number of times selected</u>	<u>Criteria</u>	Selected by __% of participants
59	Protecting the character of the community	29.9%
73	Environmental protection	37.1%
53	Preserving Homes	26.9%
26	Preserving St.Margaret's Trail	13.2%
96	Improved emergency service access(Police, Ambulance, Fire)	48.7%
42	More options for access to Highway 103	21.3%
37	Enhancing public safety	18.8%
13	ATV safety and access	6.6%
47	Reduced traffic on St.Margaret's Bay Road	23.9%
10	Improved business opportunities	5.1%
32	Ensuring responsible development	16.2%
19	Ensuring access for landowners	9.6%
33	Reduced Travel Times	16.8%
29	More options for emergency evacuation	14.7%
Total # of participants =		197

APPENDIX E – Open House Comments

Highway 103 Twinning: Upper Tantallon to Hubbards Open House Comment Form Summary

March 22, 2011

1. Satisfaction with the Open House Format

The people who attended the Open House for the 103 Twinning Project were overwhelmingly pleased with the format (76%), stating that the meeting was ‘informative’, ‘well-done’ and ‘well-organized’. From the comment forms, participants stated that they especially liked the:

- Graphics and visual presentation of information;
- Experts and staff on-hand – they were helpful, well-informed, responsive and professional;
- Presentation – it was well laid out and interesting, factual and unbiased;
- Time people had to look through the information and ask questions;
- 3D models;
- Booth style displays;
- Detail that was considered in each of the options;
- Absence of individuals dominating the meeting, as can occur in Town Hall meetings; and
- Positive ‘low-key’ atmosphere.

Participants suggested the meeting could be improved by providing:

- Handouts for participants to take home and consider further with details of each proposed connector option (e.g. # of water crossings, # houses, # properties impacted);
- Refreshments such as water, juice, etc.;
- Ways to view participant comments publicly; and
- More time for discussion

Responses to Question #1, ‘What did you think about the Highway 103 Open House?’

Participants	No.
... <u>pleased</u> with the format of the Open House	85
... <u>somewhat pleased</u> with the format of the Open House	8
... <u>not pleased</u> with the format of the Open House	5
No comment	14
TOTAL	112

Participants who expressed that they were only somewhat pleased or not pleased with the format of the Open House provided the following reasons:

- All of their questions could not be answered;
- The information (e.g. tables) was somewhat confusing;
- There was a lot of information which could be difficult for some people to process;
- The information on plant species at risk was unclear;
- It didn't address the topics they wanted to hear more about (i.e. alternatives to the project);
- There was not enough opportunity for people to voice their opinions;
- The community should have been able to vote if they wanted a connector; and
- The open house only provided information from one point of view.

2. Specific Issues Related to the Project

In the second question on the Comment Form, participants were asked to outline any comments, suggestions, concerns or issues regarding the Highway 103 Twinning project that they would like to draw to the attention of the project staff. The variety of issues that were raised, and number of participants commenting on that issue is documented in the table below. Where a specific suggestion was noted to address these concerns, the suggestion has been included in the right column.

Responses to Question #2: ‘Are there any concerns, issues or suggestions regarding the project that you would like to draw to our attention?’

Theme	Concerns/Issues Highlighted by Participants	No. of People	Specific Suggestions Provided	No. of People
Access	Year-round access on gravel roads parallel to the 103 (E.g. Mill Lake to Sawler Lake) for residents and emergency vehicle access	3	Dept of Transportation needs to ensure winter plowing of access roads parallel to 103 (e.g. Mill Lake to Sawler Lake)	3
	Access from 103 to South properties	2		
	Access to rail bed and ATV trails	1		
	Impact on homes by turning Old Rock Road (a private road) into an access road. May remove walk-up access to land on North side of 103	1		
	Access roads won't be used – Hubbards residents are closer to Exit 6; Boutiliers Point/Head of St. Margaret's Bay residents won't double back	1		
Private Property	Impact on Simms Settlement – damage to land, wells, foundation and impact of noise	2		
	Proximity of highway to driveways of houses near Exit 2; impact of blasting during construction	1	Move connector road another 100 m towards Hubbards near Exit 2	1
	Disruption to homes in Ingramport	1		
	Lighting requirements will diminish value and enjoyment of adjacent properties	1		
Environment	Impact on water ways, fish species, and natural habitats from construction and ATVs going under road at River Lake bridge	7	Ensure minimal environmental impact	5
	Impact of narrow median on wildlife crossings	1		
	Increased carbon dioxide emissions and fuel consumption from increasing the speed limit	2		

Theme	Concerns/Issues Highlighted by Participants	No. of People	Specific Suggestions Provided	No. of People
	Impact on the water table has not been considered	1		
Safety	Proposed narrow median is in a section of road where visibility is obscured by turns and hills	2	Make a wide as opposed to narrow median	1
	No evaluation of storm impacts and emergency evacuation options, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – at Head of the Bay side of the Ingramport River – between Schooner Cover and Queensland Beach (where road close to ocean) 	2		
	Steep downslope toward Bay Rd. would make dangerous conditions in rain, snow and ice	1		
Local Economy	Tourist or commuter traffic will bypass businesses between Head of St. Margaret's Bay and the Connector creating an economic dead zone	1		
Traffic	Traffic will increase coming from Halifax to Hubbards and area; bottleneaking will occur during tourist season	3		
	Increased traffic from connector road combined with proposed Destiny Development	1		
Roundabout	Roundabout in option 4 will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destroy wildlife habitat • Decrease safety of people using rails-to-trails who have to cross it • Reduce property values of homes nearby • Decrease driver safety in winter on slippery roads so close to water 	1		

Theme	Concerns/Issues Highlighted by Participants	No. of People	Specific Suggestions Provided	No. of People
Project and Consultation Process	Not everyone in the community has been consulted or had an opportunity to voice their opinion	4	Have one more session that allows participation as a group People not from the area and not affected by the project should not be involved	1 1
	Individuals are speaking on behalf of the community	3		
	It is not clear how the decision will be made – weight of factors such as safety, cost, public input etc.	3		
	Meeting did not include a “straw vote” on what people think is the best option	1		
	Landowners whose land may be affected or who may be affected by potential expropriation (e.g. in Queensland) were not consulted one-on-one	3		
	There were no environmental representatives at the Open House	1		
Project Rationale	Cost of the project is high - resources are better spent elsewhere	8	Invest money in public transportation, improvements to Highway 3, public education and driver safety, increased police presence	6
	Cost-benefit analysis is un-convincing	1		
	Emergency response rationale is unconvincing - emergency services are nearby (exit 5 & 6), and safety will be resolved with twinning	3	Build an emergency vehicles only access road up by Black Point Firehall Remote control gating, emergency U-turn or simple overpass	1 1
	Traffic volume statistics used to justify the project are misleading; when broken down volumes are less than 90 per hour.	1		

Participants also provided the following general and specific suggestions regarding the project (the number of participants who included this on their comment form is included in brackets):

General Suggestions:

- Don't eliminate or move houses (5)
- Be cost-effective (1)
- Minimize destruction of private property (3)
- Make sure the cost/benefit study makes human considerations (1)
- Choose the option that best fits the aesthetics and environmental aspects of the area (1)

Specific Suggestions:

- Provide a better video that shows the impact on existing housing – e.g. as traffic comes off ramp into the community (2)
- Look at ATV access at exit 6 from rail bed up to null(?) Lake road (1)
- Provide commuter/carpool parking near interchange (2)
- Take Options 3B, 3C and 4 off the table (1)
- Graphics should show efforts for night lighting on roundabouts & how rails to trails will be handled (1)
- Make the stats and results of the focus groups publicly available (1)
- Hold mediation sessions with people who may be impacted; discuss compensation for perceived or real loss (1)

Information provided by participants to help with the decision-making process included:

- Puddle Beach, next to Option 1, is known as the “kids beach” and they often dart around the cars lining the road, making it a dangerous situation
- There is already a fish ladder at Dory(?) Lake
- House on Ingramport River at the bottom of proposed Option 2/3A - round house
- Option 2 has high elevated area after coming off Highway
- Maps did not show all wetlands and watercourses in at least Option 1 and 4

Number of participants who wrote on their comment forms:	
I support the project / feel it is overdue / hope it goes ahead	I feel the project is unnecessary
24	13

Specific Feature of Project	Number of People Who Wrote that they...	
	Approve	Disapprove
Tunnel at Big Rock Road/Vinegar Lake Rd	2	-
Connector Road (in general)	14	7
Roundabout	3	2

OPTION	# COMMENTS	Comments for	Comments against
Option 1	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortest route • Least environmental impact • Cheaper • Best access • No homes affected • Best option for fire department and emergency response team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much armour stone • Too close to Hubbards • May interfere with beach-goers and parking along side of road • Too close to exit 5 • Too close to beaches and homes • Most environmentally sensitive – two lakes, wetland and several watercourses will be affected
Option 2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most sensible • Least public disruption • No homes affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much cut and fill • A lot of bedrock will have to be blasted, near a blind corner in the road
Option 3A	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No homes affected 	
Option 3B	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midway between exit 5 & 6 • Short • Little environmental damage • Only a temporary cottage will be affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost and impact on environment • Loss of homes
Option 3C	4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost and impact on environment • Loss of homes
Option 4	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best midway point between interchanges • Best option for joining old road • Only option that provides a way out for residents if a storm washes out the bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too long • High cost and impact on environment • Impacts to Ingramport River • Loss of homes

3. Additional Questions from Participants

When do you start?

What is the decision making process?

How will the feedback from today's meeting be integrated into the decision-making process?

What is the decision time frame? (When will the option be decided upon?)

Has there been any consideration of social and economic impacts (e.g. loss of business to crossroads area?)

What environmental considerations have been considered besides wetlands (e.g. saltation, increased traffic, effect of run-off, redefinition of communities)?

APPENDIX F – List of Stakeholder Meetings

Highway 103 Twinning, Upper Tantallon to Hubbards Schedule of Stakeholder Meetings

Mtg No.	Date	Stakeholder	Discussion	No. Stakeholders
1	June 11, 2007	Business Operator	- discussion about Mill Lake at-grade interchange with Manager of Operations	1
2	December 10, 2007	SMBSA & SMBRTA	AO and PC met with St.Margaret's Bay Stewardship Assoc. & St.Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails Assoc. to discuss proposed twinning & connector road near Boutillier's Pt. (see minutes)	3
3	May 29, 2008	home owner	- AO and PC met landowner, at his home near Boutilliers Point to discuss access to his property near Vinegar Lake	1
4	June 26, 2008	home owner	- AO and PC met with landowners re development (proposed house)	2
5	July 29, 2008	Staff of Physical Activity Sport & Recreation	- AO & PC met with Ted Scrutton, Steve Vines and Jody Conrad re trails and recreational activities in and around this project.	0
6	November 7, 2008	Business Operator	- AO and PC discuss impact of twinning on hydro dam by Mill Lake	1
7	November 28, 2008	Justice Dept.	- staff met to discuss access issues re sale of land abutting Highway 103 corridor	4
8	July 7, 2009	Business Operator	- AO and DC met business operator proposing a quarry on north side just east of proposed interchange near Ingramport woods road	1
9	November 25, 2009	Business Operator	- staff met with business operator to discuss proposed twinning near Mill Lake	2
10	November 26, 2009	SMATVA	TIR staff met with Safety Minded ATV Association (SMATVA) and the All Terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia (ATVANS). Existing ATV travel patterns and ATV crossing 103 were discussed.	1
11	December 10, 2009	St.Margaret's Snowmobile/ATV Club	TIR staff met with St.Margaret's Snowmobile/ATV Club. Existing ATV travel patterns and ATV crossing 103 were discussed.	2
12	December 11, 2009	home owners	AO and PC discussed proposed twinning and the access for property owner in Queensland.	2
13	January 29, 2010	home owner	AO and DC discussed possible realignment of Hwy 103 travel lanes in front of Sawler Lake & access to	2

			adjacent properties.	
14	February 5, 2010	home owners	AO and DC discussed proposed connector road with (2) Ingramport property owners.	3
15	February 22, 2010	Councilor, Peter Lund, District 23	AO and PC discussed proposed twinning, connector road Vinegar Lake Road issues.	1
16	February 23, 2010	Vinegar Lake home owners	AO, PC and BW met with several home and property owners to discuss proposed twinning and proposed access to Vinegar Lake Road.	13
17	March 9, 2010	home owner	AO and PC discuss proposed Ingramport interchange & connector road with interested land purchaser.	2
18	March 18, 2010	home owners	PC discussed 3 proposed locations for interchange and connector road near Ingramport/Boutilier's Point.	2
19	March 18, 2010	home owners	PC discussed proposed twinning with residents who recently purchased a house and were wondering if we were going to require property from them.	2
20	April 6, 2010	Business Operator	Business Operator & AO discussed proposed interchange near Boutilier's Point.	1
21	April 15, 2010	home owner	AO and DC met with home owner St.Margaret's Bay Road at their workplace to discuss proposed connector road near their home and possible effect of construction process.	1
22	April 15, 2010	home owner	AO and DC met with home owners. Discussed proposed connector road near Boutilier's Point and access to their property.	2
23	April 29, 2010	HRM	AO and PC discussed proposed connector road options with Manager, Regional Transportation Planning, HRM,	1
24	May 10, 2010	home owners	Staff met with home owners near St.Margaret's Bay Road to discuss proposed connector road options and possible impact on their property.	2
25	May 12, 2010	RCMP, Tantallon	AO and PC met with RCMP staff to discuss proposed twinning & connector road options.	3
26	May 12, 2010	EHS, Tantallon	Staff met with Supervisor, EHS Operations to discuss proposed twinning & connector road options.	1
27	May 12, 2010	Fire Dept, Black Point	AO and PC met with fire fighters to discuss proposed twinning & connector road options.	2
28	June 4, 2010	Business Operator	AO and PC met with business operator, to discuss interchange options near Boutilier's Point and access.	1

29	June 9, 2010	Community Meeting	MLA community meeting at Black Point Fire Hall, Ministry and staff (see minutes)	275
30	June 16, 2010	home owner	AO and GC met with local home owner and given tour of the area.	1
31	July 19, 2010	Business Operator	Presentation given to AO, MC, PC and BW re proposed cost sharing for interchange.	1
32	July 20, 2010	home owners	AO and SM met with home owners re Boutilier's Point connector and possible effect on their property.	2
33	July 27, 2010	Terrain Group (Genivar)	Terrain Group discussed their progress with Boutilier's Point Traffic Study	
34	August 16, 2010	Business Operator	AO, PC and SC met with business operator	1
35	August 24, 2010	property owner	AO and SC met with woodlot owner for tour of Vinegar Lake Road, Old Rock Road, Muskrat Lake Road and Mill Lake Road	1
36	September 30, 2010	SMATV Group	AO, SC, MP, KB, PC met with Safety Minded ATV Group, to discuss effect of proposed twinning on ATV users trying to cross Highway 103. Last meeting: November 26, 2009.	3
37	October 1, 2010	HRM Councillor and SMSA	AO, SC, IM, PC met with Peter Lund, HRM Councillor, & St.Margaret's Bay Stewardship Assoc., to discuss proposed twinning & connector road.	2
38	November 10, 2010	home owners	AO, PC, SM met with re update on proposed connector road options. Staff displayed cross sections for Option 3C and plan with limits of disturbance.	2
39	December 21, 2010	SMATV Group	AO met on-site with members of Safety Minded ATV Group to discuss ATV crossing under Ingram River Bridge and Tote Road	3
40	February 24, 2011	home owner	AO, PC met with owner of property off highway corridor to discuss twinning	1
41	March 3, 2011	home owner	AO and consultant met with home owners off St.Margaret's Bay Road to discuss status of connector road options	2
42	March 8, 2011	Office of the Ombudsman	AO and PC with Office of the Ombudsman to discuss complaint by local resident and role of the Office of the Ombudsman,	
43	March 10, 2011	Open House	Staff & consultants (Genivar, Stantec, CRA and Lura Associates) host open house at Black Point Fire Hall	247
44	March 15, 2011	home owners	AO and PC met with property owners re proposed access road near Vinegar Lake Road	2
45	March 29,	Business	AO and PC discussed access issues with Business	1

	2011	Operator	Operator	
46	March 30, 2011	HRM Councillor	AO and PC discussed drainage issues re connector Option 4 and drainage issues @ St.Margaret's Bay	1
47	April 5, 2011	St.Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails	AO and KD discussed trail requirements with Bill Wiggins, Chair, St.Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails	1
48	June 7, 2011	Business Operator	AO and SC visit business operators re proposed access road.	2
49	June 7, 2011	Business Operator	AO and SC visit business operator re proposed connector going through their property.	1
50	June 17, 2011	Business Operator	AO and PC met with business representatives to discuss proposed tower near Highway 103.	2

Abbreviations:

AO = Adam Osborne, Highway Planning Engineer
DC = Dwayne Cross, Sr. Highway Planning Engineer
KD = Ken Donnelly, Lura Consulting Associates
PC = Phil Corkum, Manager, Highway Planning & Design
GC = Greg Connors, Highway Planning Engineer
BW = Brian Ward, Area Manager
MC = Mike Coady, Construction Manager
SC = Sylvie Colomb, Environmental Analyst
IM = Ian MacCallum, Environmental Analyst
SM = Steve MacKenzie, Manager, Acquisition & Disposal