

7.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The overall goals of the Public Involvement Plan were:

- To share information about the bridge replacement project in terms of scope of the study and “givens” and constraints from a project team point of view and to collect information, thoughts, ideas and perceived outcomes of the study from a stakeholder and public point of view.
- To test ideas and to share information about the options being considered by the project team and to seek input from the public and key stakeholders on those options and a recommended plan for the bridge replacement.

The Public Involvement Plan for the project was developed as a three phase approach to be implemented throughout the project.

Phase one was comprised of conducting fifteen (15) one-on-one interviews with a list of selected stakeholder groups that the Project Team determined would be representative of the many stakeholder groups that are an integral part of the project.

The second component of the Public Involvement Plan was a widely promoted and heavily attended (approximately 225 participants) Open House on November 18, 2010. This open was undertaken jointly with the West Rosedale Urban Design Planning project through the Planning and Development department of the City of Edmonton.

Common themes arising from the first and second phases of the Public Involvement Plan were:

- Respect environment and context of the area.
- Minimize impacts to historical and cultural resources, and treat cultural resources with respect.
- Provide access to commercial, recreational, residential and other roads.
- Maintain/improve pedestrian and cyclist connections through area.
- Protect safety, integrity and character of adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Reduce disruption during construction (traffic delay/detouring, noise, etc).

There were a number of competing themes within this list:

- **Improve Traffic Flow / Operations / Geometry** (remove hairpin turn at Saskatchewan Drive, reduce number of lights approaching bridge, grade-separate Gateway Boulevard) **versus Minimize Impact to Parks and Environment** (use existing roads / maintain status quo, minimize park requirements / minimize environmental footprint)
- **Signature Bridge versus Cost**
- **Two-way Traffic Through Area versus Cost, Community Impacts and Traffic Impacts**

- **Improve Traffic Flow versus Community Impacts** (protect safety, integrity, and character of adjacent neighbourhoods)

Acting upon the direction of the Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting of January 25, 2011, the third phase began in early March with a series of meetings with key stakeholder groups and was publicly culminated with an Information Session held on March 22, 2011 at the TransAlta Arts Barns.

Contact was made with twelve (12) stakeholder groups prior to the Information Session. Fourteen contacts were made, including 3 contacts with EPCOR personnel.

The final component of the third phase of the Public Involvement Plan was the Information Session held on March 22, 2011 at the TransAlta Arts Barns from 4:00 PM to 8:30 PM. Presentations of the recommended concept plan were made at 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM and each presentation was followed by a Question and Answer session.

163 participants attended the session, and of those, fifty-one (51) completed the survey handed out to each individual as they arrived. In addition, the City received one letter and an e-mail directing the Project Team to a blog. There were only twenty-six (26) written comments from the fifty-one (51) completed surveys, not including the letter or the e-mail about the blog. Since the event was promoted and positioned as an information session, comments and feedback about the recommended concept plan were not solicited in the same direct way as was done at the November Open House, hence the lower number of responses, and also the absence of any clear common themes. Therefore this summary identifies topics as opposed to common themes.

The most common topic arising from the comments dealt with the pedestrian trails, bike trails and multi-use trails, with ten (10). There was the majority support for the widened multi-use trail and four respondents indicated that they wished to see protection or segregation of pedestrians from the vehicular traffic crossing the bridge. Two respondents requested the pedestrian trail be on the west side of the bridge and two more requested that the multi-use trail be located on the east side of the bridge and the pedestrian trail be on the west side of the bridge.

The second most common topic dealt with the public involvement process. Four comments were received via the comment form and the blog, referred to earlier, dealt exclusively with the public involvement process.

The most common themes regarding the public involvement process were that respondents felt there should have been more information provided about the process itself and how and when to participate, and about a need for more information about the "historical resources" that have an impact on the design.

The third topic, and one that presented a competing theme, was regarding bridge capacity. There were five comments about bridge capacity and number of lanes. Three commented that three lanes were fine, but also thought that two lanes were sufficient;

two commented that at least four lanes were necessary and that the bridge capacity had to be planned for future growth of the City.

The fourth most common topic dealt with specific detail regarding access/egress from the bridge, with two commenting on the intersection of Queen Elizabeth Park Road and the access/egress from the Kinsmen Sports Center.

A more detailed summary of the public involvement component of the project can be found in **Appendix F**.