

Calgary Southwest Ring Road Functional Planning Study ENGO Engagement Session #1 Summary

The Functional Planning Study (the Study) for the Calgary Southwest Ring Road (CSWRR) includes a public engagement program involving communities and stakeholders. Stakeholders include Environmental Non-Government Organizations (ENGOS) identified by the Study team as having activities and/or interests that specifically focus in the project area or may be directly affected by the project.

An evening engagement session was held on April 19th 2011 with representatives of ENGOS. They were invited to provide input regarding environmental aspects of the Study and specifically, on the route options being considered. Feedback was sought from participants related to the environmental implications of each potential route and other concerns and suggestions.

The following is a summary of the session's purpose, objectives, approach, and an overview of the topics discussed and feedback received.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the ENGO session was to receive input related to the environmental component for consideration during the Study.

The objectives of this session were for the Study team to:

- provide information regarding the scope, schedule and process of the Study;
- describe the work done to date;
- receive comments regarding route selection and proposed evaluation criteria as they relate to the environment; and
- document ENGOS' comments and concerns.

Approach

The Study team identified ENGOS whose activities and/or interests specifically focus in the project area or may be directly affected by the project. Thirteen ENGOS were invited to nominate one to two people from their organization to attend the session and continue their representation through the remainder of the Study. Twelve representatives from seven ENGOS attended Session #1:

- Calgary River Valleys;
- Elbow River Basin Watershed Partnership;
- Nature Calgary;
- Parks Foundation Calgary;
- Save Glenmore Park;
- Trout Unlimited; and
- Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society.

Other invited ENGOs that did not attend were the Bow River Basin Council, Calgary Canoe Club, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-Calgary Chapter (unable to attend), Ducks Unlimited (declined, indicated their concerns are addressed under the Water Act), and Friends of Fish Creek Park.

Study Team members present included representatives from Alberta Transportation (AT), AT's consultants (Focus Corporation and AMEC Earth & Environmental), and The City of Calgary (the City).

The session was held at the Best Western Village Park Inn on April 19, 2011 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. A light dinner was provided before the meeting.

Meeting Summary

The facilitator opened the session by explaining to participants that at this point in the Study, the project team had identified five potential route options to connect Glenmore Trail west of Sarcee Trail to Highway 22X. The options were evaluated relative to each another with respect to several overarching constraints and criteria, summarized in a route evaluation matrix that was provided as a handout. The Study Team requested input from session participants related to additional suggested criteria and concerns from an environmental perspective.

This introduction was followed by a technical presentation by the Consultant Team Project Manager, which included:

- what a functional planning study is and why one is being done for the Calgary Southwest Ring Road;
- five potential route options, highlighting features and sensitivities along each route;
- the route evaluation matrix, providing a relative comparison of the five routes;
- different construction options that will be considered when a preferred route is identified (tunnel, aerial roadway, surface roads); and
- a summary of input received to date from the public and stakeholder groups (January 29, 2011 community workshop and February/March open houses).

A presentation was also made by the technical lead for the environmental component of the Study, describing the environmental assessment process for the Study. A detailed environmental assessment (EA) will be completed once a preferred route is determined. The EA will be prepared to satisfy requirements under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and will include assessment of:

- Landforms and Soils
- Vegetation
- Wetlands
- Wildlife
- Fisheries
- Hydrology
- Water Quality
- Navigation
- Hydrogeology
- Stormwater
- Air Quality/Climate
- Noise
- Land Use
- Socio-Economic
- Historical Resources
- Cumulative Effects

The presentation was followed by open group discussion, during which participants provided comments and raised various questions that were addressed by Study team. Topics discussed during the session included:

- The environmental assessment process
- Aesthetic and social impacts, including recreation
- The Weaselhead Natural Area
- Water quality and spill management
- Route evaluation matrix
- Consideration of The City of Calgary's plans and standards
- Design elements and considerations
- The Study process, schedule and next steps