

Building a Successful Communications Program Based on the Needs and Characteristics of the Affected Communities - 13152

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ABSTRACT

Over 200 local residents streamed through the doors of the Port Hope Lions Centre to see the detailed plans for the historic low-level radioactive waste clean-up project about to take place in their community. The event had a congenial atmosphere as people walked through the hall taking in rows of display panels that explained each element of the project, asked questions of project staff stationed around the room and chatted with friends and neighbours over light refreshments. Later that year, the results of the Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI) 10th annual public attitude survey revealed an all-time high in community awareness of the project (94%) and the highest levels of confidence (84%) recorded since surveying began. Today, as the PHAI transitions from a decade of scientific and technical studies to implementation, the success of its communications program – as evidenced by the above examples – offers room for cautious encouragement. The PHAI has spent the past 10 years developing relationships with the southern Ontario communities of Port Hope and Port Granby in preparation for Canada's largest low-level radioactive waste environmental restoration project. These relationships have been built around a strong understanding of the communities' individual needs and characteristics and on the PHAI's efforts to consider and respond to these needs. The successes of the past, as well as the lessons learned, will inform the next stage of communications as the projects move into waste excavation and transportation and building of the long-term waste management facilities.

INTRODUCTION

The PHAI Port Hope and Port Granby projects, currently underway in south-central Ontario, Canada, share many elements. They address the same waste from the same source, their history in dealing with the waste over decades is similar, and they will implement the same waste management solution through the same federal processes and proponent.

Although the problem may be the same – soil contaminated with low-level radioactive waste – the way in which the communities have responded to the problem differs. These differences are rooted in history and in the distinct social fabric which defines each community. Therefore, the methods used to communicate effectively and to build the trust and credibility needed to sustain such long and complex projects must be tailored to the community.

BACKGROUND

Together, the Port Hope and Port Granby projects will address the cleanup and long-term, safe storage of approximately 1.7 million cubic metres (m³) of historic, low-level radioactive waste and marginally contaminated soils. The waste resulted from the radium and uranium refining operations of Eldorado Nuclear Limited, a former Canadian Crown Corporation, and its private sector predecessors that operated in Port Hope from the 1930s to 1988. Predominantly in the form of contaminated soil, the waste was deposited at various locations within the urban area of the Municipality of Port Hope and at two storage facilities, the Welcome Waste Management Facility, located just outside of the urban area, and the Port Granby Waste Management Facility in the adjacent Municipality of Clarington, 13 km to the west of Port Hope.

Both projects began as community-initiated proposals, developed by council-appointed citizens' committees. After more than two decades of unsuccessful attempts to find an acceptable waste management solution, the affected municipalities stepped forward with their own concepts to manage the wastes within their borders. By 2000, the Government of Canada had accepted these proposals as the basis for Port Hope Area Initiative.

Each project has progressed in parallel with one another – completing extensive environmental assessments^{[1][2]} (EAs) through the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and licensing^{[3][4]} by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. The same waste management approach has been approved for each Project – excavation and relocation of the wastes to an engineered, aboveground mound facility to be constructed within each municipality.

Finally, both projects are being implemented by the PHAI Management Office (PHAI MO), a tri-partite organization comprising Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) as the proponent, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) as the overseer of major contracts, and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) as the sponsor and funder.

Looking from the outside, it would be hard to see very much to distinguish one project from the other. However, in spite of their similarities, each community's response to its project has been as distinctive as the communities themselves. Port Hope residents have been waiting for the cleanup for decades. Most residents feel their community has suffered economically and reputationally since the mid 1970s, when awareness of the waste became an international media story. In the meantime, the town has grown and shown every sign of prospering, yet the last chapter will not be written until the cleanup is completed. Port Hope residents want the cleanup; their most common frustration with the PHAI is that it has taken 10 years for construction to begin.

The same could not be said for the Port Granby community. It would be fair to say that many residents of this small hamlet would prefer the project not to take place at all. Unlike Port Hope,

this rural, southeast Clarington community has not suffered economically or reputationally from the existence of the waste. Out of sight along the Lake Ontario shoreline, the waste does not affect their daily lives. However, the PHAI cleanup is seen by many local residents both as a disruption and a potential health risk.

The communication challenge for the PHAI is to ensure that each project proceeds with community confidence and support and that the community's respective concerns are legitimized and addressed as fully as possible.

A Commitment to Communicate

The PHAI was established through a Legal Agreement^[5], finalized in March 2001, between the Government of Canada and the affected municipalities. In providing for three phases – EA and regulatory approvals, construction and cleanup, and long-term maintenance and monitoring – the Legal Agreement set the stage for the long-term relationship that the project proponent would forge with all stakeholders, especially local residents.

From the outset, the PHAI communications program was developed recognizing that the Port Hope and Port Granby communities share a long history with low-level radioactive waste. By the start of the PHAI in 2001, residents had been living with the waste issue and seen varied, unsuccessful attempts to solve it for more than 30 years. Residents held definite ideas about how the waste should be managed and possessed valuable local experience as well as a broad spectrum of opinions and biases. All of this influenced community acceptance of the proposed solutions.

Researching and understanding each community's historical involvement with the waste issue were essential first steps in planning consultation and communications. A respect for the community's experiences, its values, its level of trust in decision-making, its objectives and its desires informed the PHAI's community relations strategies in the Port Hope and Port Granby communities.

The PHAI, as a federal government project, also considers the information needs of a broader public. This audience includes informed stakeholder and environmental groups across Canada (in two official languages). The bilingual PHAI website is continually updated to address this information need. Additionally, mechanisms have been established to consult with federal, provincial and municipal government representatives. A separate consultation and communications plan^[6] for First Nations and aboriginal peoples was developed at the start of the PHAI and continues to be implemented to engage First Nations. Their unique perspective on the projects' relationship with the environment has offered the PHAI valuable opportunities to integrate First Nations participation and engagement in mutually beneficial ways.

Two Distinct Communities with Ties to Eldorado



Fig. 1 Aerial Photo Shows Municipality of Port Hope and Adjacent Municipality of Clarington

The Municipality of Port Hope and the Municipality of Clarington sit side by side along the northern shoreline of Lake Ontario, 100 km east of Toronto.

Port Hope is a predominantly urban municipality of 16,500 people with a mix of industrial, commercial, residential and rural farm uses. It is an exceptionally picturesque small town. The Ganaraska River, a renowned salmon and trout fishery, runs through its centre. Its carefully restored 1800s main street earned it the distinction of being named the best restored downtown in Canada. Over the years, U.S. and Canadian film crews have frequently sought out the town as an ideal backdrop for period movies.

Port Granby is a small, farming hamlet of several hundred people, clustered along the Lake Ontario shoreline. Its relatively few homes and farms are set apart, geographically, from all urban uses and amenities. Recreational cyclists, Sunday drivers and neighbourhood dogs are the predominant users of Lakeshore Road, the main route through the hamlet, which runs parallel to scenic, 30-metre high lakefront bluffs.



Fig.2. Ganaraska River in Port Hope



Fig. 3. Hamlet of Port Granby

Not only are the communities different in character, but their history with Eldorado sets them apart as well. Port Hope residents benefited from the plant's well-paying jobs from the 1930s on and, as a result, weathered the effects of the Great Depression better than many other places. Community life became inextricably tied to plant life; high school graduates followed their grandfather's and father's footsteps into what promised to be jobs for life.

Few, if anyone, realized during the 1940s, '50s and '60s that Eldorado's practice of stockpiling refinery wastes on its harbourfront site (including some which ended in the harbour itself) and later in ravines scattered throughout the town, would cause the problem it did. During this period, the company offered, and workers helped themselves to, waste "soil" and discarded lumber for use as fill in yards, roadbeds and as building material. One local contractor built houses from salvaged Eldorado lumber during the 1940s.

It was not until 1976, after elevated radon levels were detected in a local school, that the Canadian government agency, Atomic Energy Control Board, undertook a comprehensive radiological survey of the town. This resulted in the removal and transfer of 100,000 cubic metres of historic low-level radioactive waste to AECL's Chalk River Laboratories, near Ottawa, Ontario. Subsequently, the government committed to finding a long-term solution to manage the remaining Port Hope waste.

The 1976 revelation proved to be a watershed event in the life of Port Hope, as it marked the first public awareness that Eldorado's past practices had created a widespread problem within the town.

Historically, Port Granby's rural population did not enjoy the same, close economic relationship with the plant. In 1955, however, the life of this community also became entwined with Eldorado. When contaminated runoff from the plant's Port Hope waste storage facility forced the company to close that site, Eldorado acquired a lakefront property for a new storage facility just

outside of the hamlet of Port Granby. The Port Granby site received waste from 1955 to 1988 when, under new, private-sector ownership, it was closed for good.

TWO EVOLVING PROJECTS

The municipalities entered into the Legal Agreement on the basis of the community-developed citizen proposals. However, over the course of each project's environmental assessment, these proposals were evaluated against other waste management options or "alternative means." Out of this process, which involved intensive technical review and extensive public input, the eventual waste management solution for each of the projects was selected.

The rigour of the alternative means process resulted in modifications to the community proposals. In the case of Port Hope, the recommended waste management approach was welcomed by most residents as a logical outcome that would benefit the greatest number of people. In Port Granby, however, the best technical option was ultimately at odds with the proposal the council-appointed citizens' committee had put forward. This decision challenged local residents' confidence in the project and their trust in those who delivered it.

Port Hope Project

Between the time the Memorandum of Understanding for the Legal Agreement was initialed in fall 2000, and its final signing in March 2001, the urban area (former Town of Port Hope) and rural area (former Township of Hope) had amalgamated to form the single, Municipality of Port Hope. This event would have a significant impact on the waste management solution that would be approved for the Port Hope Project.

During the evaluation of alternative means for the Port Hope Project, two community-developed concepts – one proposed by the former Township of Hope and its advisory committee and the other proposed by the former Town of Port Hope and its advisory committee – were on the table for consideration. Each committee had been required to propose construction of a new, engineered aboveground mound at a site within its then, municipal borders. The town proposal was to build the facility in a residential neighbourhood where about a third of the town's low-level radioactive waste was already located. The Hope Township proposal was to locate the facility at Eldorado's former waste site, which had been closed since 1954 but still contained 450,000 cubic metres of low-level radioactive waste. In its report, the Hope Township committee advised that a one-site solution would be feasible, as this site would be large enough to accommodate all of Port Hope's estimated 1.2 million cubic metres of low-level radioactive waste.

The amalgamation eliminated the need for two separate Port Hope sites, and the one-site solution was approved. This decision generally united the community, as it would permit the urban

neighbourhood to be cleaned up and restored and the waste to be safely consolidated at a single location that would minimize trucking and other impacts on the community.

Port Granby Project

In Port Granby, although the municipality's political boundaries did not change, other factors resulted in a movement away from the community-initiated proposal. This had an equally significant impact on the course of the project and the community's reaction to it.

The Port Granby Project alternative means process never received residents' buy-in. When the alternative means process – in spite of its extensive public involvement – resulted in a preferred technical decision that rejected the community-preferred, in-situ concept, the local community felt discounted. The decision was made to relocate the waste into an engineered aboveground mound to be built 700 metres away from Lake Ontario. The existing site's eroding bluffs, receding shoreline and porous, sandy soils made it unsuitable for long-term waste management.

The community's rationale for not wanting the waste to be moved stemmed from health-based fears. Residents believed that an inhalation risk would result from excavating the waste and that the new facility location would pose a threat to their groundwater wells. They believed these risks did not exist as long as the waste remained where it was.

The original, council-appointed citizens' advisory committee and the current South East Clarington Ratepayers Association (SECRA) have drawn their memberships from the same people in this very small community. As one group has given way to another, these same sentiments and fears have been passed along.

TAILORED COMMUNICATIONS FOR EACH COMMUNITY

Establishing a communications program in communities with a strong knowledge and interest base – such as Port Hope and Port Granby – offers a clear advantage. The groundwork has been laid. The task is simply to focus on maximizing the benefits of an already engaged public by demonstrating an open and proactive approach and providing meaningful opportunities to integrate stakeholder ideas and participation into the projects.

Effective communication must address the public's need for substantive information that is accessible, understandable and relevant to the issues that matter to those who are affected. The PHAI has filled this need for both projects through regular newsletters, bulletins, fact sheets, brochures, the PHAI website and, more recently, Facebook and Twitter.

However, the differences between Port Hope and Port Granby have meant the PHAI must also approach each community with distinctive strategies that fit its needs.

Within Port Hope, the PHAI has provided varied opportunities for two-way engagement through community meetings, workshops, kitchen table discussions and the centrepiece of the PHAI communications program – the Project Information Exchange. This information office has doubled as a library to offer all of the documents on which project direction and decisions are based, such as the environmental assessment study reports, the technical designs and the public registry of stakeholder comments. This emphasis on ensuring extensive information is highly accessible and transparent has increased public confidence in the project and helped the PHAI to be seen as a credible, honest broker of information. It has also facilitated many productive and open exchanges between project staff and members of the public that have helped the PHAI, over the years, to better understand community opinions and needs and adjust its communications strategies accordingly. Today, about 50 people drop into the information exchange each month.



Fig. 4. Port Hope Project Open House, November 2011

Broad outreach to nearly every facet of the Port Hope community has been possible through presentations to community groups, schools and business associations. Tours of waste sites offer a valuable way to give the public a first-hand look at the scope of the cleanup. Participation in community events through displays and information booths facilitates informal interaction and heightens the visibility of the PHAI and its communications staff within the community. Open houses provide an opportunity to disseminate clear and accurate project updates, to hear comments and questions and to respond to concerns. Neighbourhood information sessions target smaller, more directly affected residents so their unique concerns can be addressed.

In 2012, these combined activities reached approximately 5,000 area residents and visitors, raising awareness, interest and support for the Port Hope Project.

By contrast, the rural nature of the Port Granby community provides greater challenges to offering diverse opportunities for engagement. The PHAI Project Information Exchange, located in Port Hope, 20 minutes away from the hamlet, is rarely used by Port Granby residents. In 2004 the PHAI established a Port Granby Project information office; however, it soon became evident

that the community's rural lifestyle did not lend itself to a drop-in centre as a source of project information.

To address this, the project has made a concerted effort over the years to inform and consult residents through regularly held open houses, workshops, information sessions and community meetings. Facilitated meetings have provided the most effective mechanism for two-way communication. At times, the discourse has been strained when the project's direction has run counter to residents' views, and progress toward developing an understanding of one another's perspectives has suffered setbacks. Nevertheless, over the past decade, these meetings have provided an important outlet for community expression about the project and given project staff a deep appreciation of the community's needs and attitudes.



Fig. 5. Port Granby Discussion Group, September 2012

After years of attempts to find the right fit to meet all participants' needs – residents, municipality and PHAI – the Port Granby Discussion Group was formed. Today, the local community participates actively in this forum through their resident association, SECRA. Although SECRA does not support the selected waste management approach, it demonstrates a willingness and high level of interest in being part of the process. Its voice has led to changes in the project, agreed to by the PHAI and municipality, specifically to address local concerns and increase public confidence. For example, a design modification was made to add extra protective layers in the aboveground mound cover system to address residents' fears over facility leakage. To respond to fears about dust, the PHAI erected a meteorological station within the hamlet to collect monitoring data. The project has also conducted radiological surveys, at residential properties closest to the future waste movement activities, to provide a baseline measurement against which subsequent monitoring can be compared.

MANAGING RISK THROUGH TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATIONS

Establishing trust and credibility are key components in managing the perception of risk. PHAI communicators regularly speak with people whose fears about low-level radioactive waste have been amplified by misinformation. These fears are frequently fueled by the media, kept alive through social media and on the internet, and often reveal a general lack of public understanding about radiation exposure.

The findings of over 40 environmental and health studies done on the Port Hope community since the mid 1950s were synthesized in 2009 in a Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission report^[7]. This comprehensive review concluded that “no adverse health effects have occurred or are likely to occur in Port Hope as a result of the nuclear industry’s operations in the town.”

With this factual basis on which to address people’s health concerns, PHAI communicators focus on giving people the information they need to make informed decisions about assessing risk for themselves and their families. This information focuses on putting Port Hope’s comparatively low, natural background radiation levels into context with other places in Southern Ontario, Canada, and the world and by explaining the actions the PHAI will take to ensure these levels remain low during and after the cleanup.

The vast majority of people are reassured by this message. However, some members of the public are not, especially those belonging to special interest groups with strong, ideological views about the inherent dangers of any level of radiation. These individuals commonly do not accept the federal regulatory standards on which project safety is based. Their trust in government tends to be low, and they rebuff and refute the scientific data presented. Respecting and acknowledging the diversity of views within the community are fundamental to PHAI communications objectives, and communicators work to keep open the lines of communication with all members of the public. A tour of clean-up sites provided to one of these interest groups in 2012 led to ongoing dialogue over important, health-related topics between project subject matter experts and concerned members of the group. As this exchange of information continues, a greater understanding of one another’s perspectives remains possible.

THE MEDIA’S INFLUENCE ON THE PORT HOPE STORY

Over the years, a stark disconnect has existed between how outsiders perceive Port Hope and how Port Hope residents see themselves vis à vis the low-level radioactive waste issue. The media have contributed to this dichotomy, playing a role that frequently is a catalyst for controversy.

Over the last decade the local media have kept residents informed and provided a generally balanced perspective on the story. External media coverage, in contrast, has largely been

sensational. Since the first national media coverage in 1976, on elevated radon levels at a Port Hope elementary school, to the 2012 story in Canada's largest daily newspaper about the cleanup of a Port Hope house built from contaminated lumber, the media has played a role in diminishing Port Hope's image in the eyes of the outside world.

Inflammatory headlines like "Toxic Time Bomb" and "What Lies Beneath" have propelled Port Hope, again and again, into the unwelcome glare of the media spotlight. Media and anti-nuclear activists have grabbed onto the word, "radiation," to exploit, rather than to explain, the Port Hope situation. In response, the PHAI has chosen a strategic approach aimed at educating the media about the projects, reinforcing the PHAI, through its subject matter expertise, as the best source of credible project information and minimizing the dissemination of inaccurate information.

In 2012, the PHAI invited national and local media to a full-day education session, including tours of waste locations and future facility sites. The day generated balanced coverage that reflected a much greater appreciation by even the national media of the complexities of the projects. The event provided a foundation on which the PHAI will continue to build and strengthen its relationship with all media outlets.

USING PUBLIC ATTITUDE SURVEYING TO MONITOR AND ADJUST COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Since the start of the PHAI, independent public attitude surveying has been used as a powerful tool to measure the impact of the PHAI public communications program and to assist in the design of the strategies and tactics that shape it.

Public attitude surveying has helped the PHAI to monitor public awareness, identify issues and concerns and determine communications needs and preferences. The ability to monitor residents' evolving understanding has been especially important given the changing nature of the projects. Taking the pulse of the community as the projects progress, by seeking feedback on people's satisfaction with their opportunities for input and on the effectiveness of the information provided, is essential to building public support. Correlated survey data repeatedly shows that the more knowledgeable people are, the greater their confidence in the PHAI.

Port Hope Public Attitude Survey

In Port Hope, public attitude surveying has demonstrated a consistent increase in awareness and confidence over the years. Public Attitude survey results for 2011^[8] and 2012^[9] revealed that Port Hope residents named PHAI staff (followed by independent scientists) as the most trusted source for accurate and complete information about the project.

Residents’ confidence in the waste management solution reached its highest level in 2012, rising to 85% – a gain of 20 percentage points since the start of surveying in 2002. Similarly, awareness of the PHAI rose to 95%, which marked another record high and an increase of 33 percentage points since the first survey. While a majority of respondents (84%) cited the cleanup as an important issue facing the community, almost three-quarters “never” or “hardly ever” think about it. When asked what actions the PHAI could take to increase their confidence in the safety of the long-term waste management facility, 29% of respondents (compared to 13% the previous year) said they have “no safety concerns.” Other top responses were: “closely monitor, test and inspect,” and “inform residents honestly.”

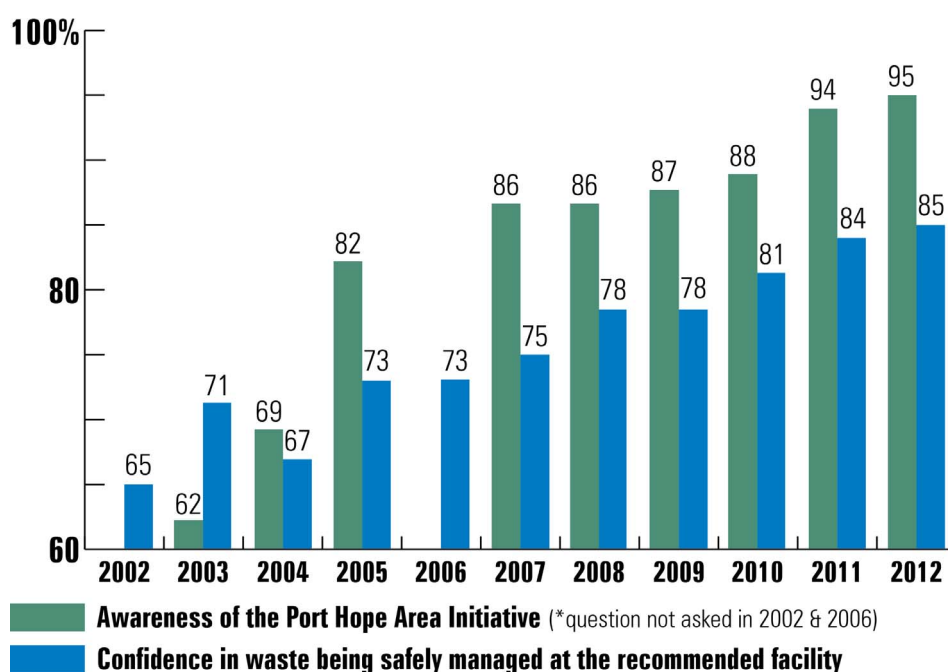


Fig. 6. Port Hope Project Public Attitude Survey Confidence & Awareness Findings

In 2011, the Port Hope Project prepared to undertake one of its most challenging aspects to date, the radiological survey of every property in urban Port Hope – in all, 4,800 public and private properties. A critical step in carrying out the work was receiving consent from every property owner. In developing the communications approach, it was important to find out if residents knew about the survey and their role in it.

Years of public attitude surveying had confirmed a very high level of awareness about the presence of low-level radioactive waste. It followed, therefore, that many residents might know that the town had been surveyed decades earlier. The question remained, however, did they know that the PHAI was about to do this again? If they did, gaining access to their properties to

monitor radon gas, conduct indoor and outdoor gamma radiation surveys and collect soil samples would be much easier.

Using the 2011 public attitude survey to probe residents' knowledge, three questions were added about the awareness of various project plans. People were asked if they: 1) knew about plans to transport waste on designated transportation routes; 2) if they had heard about plans to do a radiation survey of every property; and 3) if they knew that some residences and other sites contaminated with low-level radioactive waste would, eventually, be cleaned up. The findings were revealing. While 88% had heard about plans to transport the waste, and 92% knew the PHAI would clean up certain residences and other sites, only 38% were aware that the project planned to carry out radiation surveys at every property. This was the lowest result for any awareness question asked.

Armed with this information, the PHAI developed a communications strategy^[10] to broaden the entire community's awareness of the survey program. Throughout 2012 an aggressive information campaign was implemented to spread the word: displays were set up at the Project Information Exchange, at fairs and other community events; presentations to community groups were used to explain and re-enforce the survey program; fact sheets were distributed; neighbourhood information sessions were held; and full-page advertising was placed in the local media. Concurrently, the first 450 people whose properties were to be surveyed were sent personally addressed letters, information packages and consent forms to sign. When fewer than half of the forms were returned after several weeks, the PHAI followed up with reminder postcards. This was followed by phone calls and, finally, as the number of outstanding consents declined, by door-to-door visits so PHAI staff could talk personally with the property owners. By the time radon gas monitoring began in summer 2012, a participation rate of 93% had been achieved.

This past fall, the 2012 public attitude survey was used, once again, to measure residents' awareness of the survey program. It revealed that 83% – up from the previous year's 38% – were now aware that the PHAI would be surveying their property, a dramatic 45% increase.

PORT HOPE AREA INITIATIVE **Port Hope Property Radiological Survey Starts This Summer**

Over the next five years, all homes, buildings and parcels of land in Ward 1 Port Hope and a few in Ward 2 will be tested for the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste.

The extensive survey will be done in phases, beginning this summer with 450 properties in six different areas of Ward 1.

Come to a Port Hope Project information session to learn more about the survey:

Saturday, May 12, 2012 Halliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit 200 Rose Glen Road, Port Hope 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, May 16, 2012 Port Hope Lions Recreation Centre 29 Thomas Street, Port Hope 2:00-6:00 p.m.
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The map shows the areas that will be tested this year. These areas have been selected because they represent six different areas of the community.

Canada **PHAI** For more information visit us at 115 Toronto Road, call 905.885.2091 or email info@phai.ca
Find us on Facebook • Follow us on Twitter @PHAI_PORT_HOPE • www.phai.ca

Fig. 7. Newspaper advertising for Summer 2012 survey campaign

Port Granby Public Attitude Survey

In Port Granby, random telephone surveying, which proved to be so useful in Port Hope, did not provide reliable data. Because the community's small population is dispersed over a large rural area, many of those phoned lived too far away to be knowledgeable about or interested in the project. To address this, telephone surveying was replaced with a more targeted approach through the delivery of questionnaires to 750 households located closer to the project area. However, because mail-in surveys require more effort on the part of respondents, response rates can be expected to be reduced.

In 2011^[11], 138 residents completed the survey. In response to SECRA's concern that the opinions of the most affected residents should not be concealed within the broader results, the sample area has been divided into zones. Zone 3 represents residents in the immediate project area, and their responses are included in the total tabulation as well as being reported separately.

The most recent findings of the Port Granby Project Public Attitude Survey indicate that, in many areas, the 38 Zone 3 respondents share similar attitudes with that of the surrounding residents. Both report a 90% satisfaction rate with living in their community and agree that the Port Granby Project is the most important issue facing their community – 26% overall compared to 32% in Zone 3. Awareness of the project is high at 85% (overall) and 89% (Zone 3).

The Port Granby survey results diverge from Port Hope's findings when people are asked about their confidence in the waste management solution. About half (52%) of all respondents report being at least "somewhat" confident that the waste can be safely managed for the future (compared to 85% in Port Hope), with this percentage dropping to 37% in Zone 3. Similar to Port Hope, the two actions residents say will increase their confidence in the project are daily monitoring and more information.

MOVING INTO PHASE 2

The PHAI entered its 10-year construction/clean-up phase in 2012. In Port Granby, the first contract was awarded to carry out major road reconstruction. In Port Hope, radon gas monitoring at the first 450 homes became the first visible Phase 2 activity, followed by the groundbreaking for a waste water treatment plant at the site of the long-term waste management facility. Each of these activities has brought the projects into the lives of residents more closely than ever before.



Fig. 8. Port Granby Project newsletter Fall 2012

Building the new roadway, along which construction materials and workers will access the Port Granby Project waste management facility site, resulted in truck traffic and construction noise in close proximity to some local residences. Sensitive to the needs of the affected property owners, the PHAI actively kept them informed through letters, emails or phone calls whenever schedules or activities changed. Ongoing dialogue with affected residents and through the Port Granby Discussion Group has focused on working together to develop effective mitigation measures to address nuisance effects of the project.

Port Granby residents closely watched the implementation of the PHAI dust management plan during the road construction, regarding it as a test for how effectively the project will be able to manage dust during waste excavation. Applying the same stringent requirements to conventional road construction as to the movement of low-level radioactive waste, the PHAI posted daily dust monitoring results on its website and shared dust and noise monitoring data with residents through the Port Granby Discussion Group. Monitoring demonstrated that dust was well managed and noise kept within acceptable limits.

In Port Hope, as the property survey program continues, information packages have been sent to the next group of 1100 property owners to gain consent for radon gas monitoring in winter 2013. At the same time, radiological field investigations are underway to complete gamma radiation testing and soil sampling at the first 450 properties. Over the next several years, the PHAI will continue to keep residents well informed about the radiological survey program and emphasize its benefits – both to individuals and to the community. At the conclusion of the surveys, or after properties contaminated with low-level radioactive waste have been remediated, owners will receive a compliance letter confirming that no further investigations for low-level radioactive waste will be necessary. The strength of this message is that the PHAI is a once-and-for-all cleanup, resulting in peace of mind for the entire community.

As the projects move into a decade of construction and cleanup, it has never been more important to maintain and build active support for and confidence in the PHAI with the public, the political leadership of the host communities and the lead government agencies.

The Phase 2 communications objectives^[12] are based on the same principles that have enabled the PHAI to develop strong relationships and cultivate trust with stakeholders in the past. However, it is clear that the needs of the affected communities for timely and effective two-way communication will intensify as work progresses – Phase 2 communications will be much more than a continuation of past practices.

To augment existing opportunities for community engagement, the PHAI has initiated a Citizen Liaison Group (CLG) for each of the projects. Members will represent a broad cross section of the community in areas such as business, environment, health, education and community life.

Each CLG will act as a conduit for information sharing and feedback between the constituent organizations its members represent and the PHAI, thereby playing an important role in reflecting and sharing community perspectives. By inviting meaningful citizen involvement through the CLGs, the PHAI acknowledges that members of the community have a role in seeing the cleanups carried out safely and efficiently.

CONCLUSION

Eighty years ago a radium refinery set up operations on the waterfront of Port Hope, Ontario. That single event would shape the lives of two communities for decades to come. Port Hope benefited from Eldorado's presence through well-paying, steady employment. No one foresaw the environmental problems the industry would leave behind.

For 33 years, the rural hamlet of Port Granby, in the neighbouring Municipality of Clarington, received Eldorado's waste at the company's lakefront storage facility. When the site was closed in 1988, Clarington and its citizens joined Port Hope and its citizens in the search for a long-term waste management solution.

History is important, so important, that the genesis of these projects has influenced the tone and direction of the communications approach adopted by the PHAI. Most Port Hope residents are confident in the cleanup and want to see it completed. Port Granby residents express less support for the selected waste management solution but remain engaged and have chosen to have a voice.

Today, as the PHAI moves into the 10-year construction/clean-up phase, the experiences and attitudes of the affected communities continue to influence the direction of the PHAI's community relations strategies. Understanding, leveraging and respecting these community interests are principles on which the foundation of the PHAI communications program has been built.

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