

# **Public Attitude Research Regarding the Port Hope Area Initiative**

*Port Granby Project*

*Wave A*

**April 2008**

Prepared for: Low-Level Radioactive Waste  
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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Port Hope Area Initiative, the Low Level Radioactive Waste Management Office (LLRWMO) has commissioned periodic public attitude research to monitor public awareness of the PHAI, identify issues and concerns, determine communications needs of the public, and provide data regarding public attitudes and behaviours. Ward 4 Clarington studies were conducted in 2002, 2004 and 2005 using a telephone survey among the general public who lived in the postal code areas that received the Port Granby Project communications.

The sample and methodology changed in 2007 to focus more on the households who live closer to the proposed site. The primary boundaries were: South border is Lake Ontario; Mill Street on the west; on the north, Highway 401 to Morgans Road, north to Concession Rd 4, east to McCullough Rd, south to Concession Rd 3, east to 4<sup>th</sup> Line and along 4<sup>th</sup> Line; on the east the boundary followed Morrish Church Rd and Wesleyville Rd south to the lake. All houses in the area received a hand-delivered post card from the LLRWMO inviting them to participate in the survey, a questionnaire with a postage-paid reply envelope, and a reply card to enter a draw to win one of 5 prizes for completing the questionnaire.

Questionnaires were delivered to 674 houses on October 22 and 23, 2007 and the cut-off date for accepting returned questionnaires was November 27, 2007. Households were offered the option of completing the survey by mail, on-line or by telephone. In total 119 residents completed the survey, 112 by mail, 2 by phone, and 5 on-line. Before any survey results were released and to capture households that had missed the original questionnaire distribution, a subsequent telephone survey using the same questionnaire was undertaken among 12 households in Zone 3 from March 12 to 20, 2008. Five (5) people participated in this survey, bringing the total number of interviews to 124. The confidence interval for 124 respondents is  $\pm 8.0\%$ , 19 out of 20 times. The Technical Appendix provides a description of the sampled areas.

Due to the 2007 changes in methodology and sample area, this report presents the findings for the 2007 study only, and constitutes a new baseline study among residents who are the most affected by the Port Granby Project.

### KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from the 2007 survey include:

- Satisfaction with living in the community continues to be high, with 75% stating that they are "very satisfied". (Table 3.1-1)
- Residents in the Port Granby area in close proximity to the low-level radioactive waste management facility are aware of the presence of the waste and name it as one of several community issues.

- Self-assessed knowledge about the presence of low-level radioactive waste in the community is high. Eight-in-ten respondents (83%) claim to know at least something about it. (Table 4.2)
- Living in a community dealing with radioactive waste management facilities is something 56% of respondents dwell upon; 16% “very often” and 40% “often” think about this fact. (Tables 4.1-1)
- Radioactive waste is one of several top issues in the community with 19% mentioning “relocation of the cleaned-up radioactive waste” or “the Port Granby Project”. A further 14% name “the Port Granby Project / radioactive waste” as what they like least about their community and 23% name this topic as what most negatively affects the image of their community. (Tables 3.2, 3.3-2, 3.3-3)
- The other frequently mentioned top issues facing the community are “urbanization / expansion / development” (21%) and “high property taxes” (18%). (Table 3.2)
- While there appears to be a high awareness of the presence of low-level radioactive waste in the community, survey results suggest that information levels are mostly at the broad level and not in-depth, with residents needing more information before they increase their acceptance of and confidence in the Port Granby Project.
  - Awareness of the Port Granby Project (78%) and the Port Granby Waste Management Facility (74%) is high. (Table 4.3-1)
  - Respondents are divided between satisfied (50%) and dissatisfied (51%) with accessibility of the information about the Port Granby Project. (Tables 6.1)
  - Only half of the respondents (51%) are familiar with the environmental assessment studies carried out over the past three years to determine the most appropriate ways to clean up the low-level radioactive waste in Port Granby. (Table 4.3-3)
  - There is “strong” agreement on the need for the Property Protection Program (80%). However, more information about the Program is needed. Only 32% are aware of the PVP program, and only 44% of all respondents believe that the program “completely” or “somewhat” protects residents against losses in property value, while 38% “do not know”. (Tables 4.4-1, 4.4-2)
  - Only 40% are at least “somewhat” confident that the waste can be safely managed at the recommended facility for the long term, and 45% are “not at all confident”. (Table 5.1-1).
  - Concerns about the proposed facility are diverse but also speak to the desire for more information. Roughly similar proportions (11%-15%) mention spillage or leakage, environmental contamination, monitoring, safety, and the need to be better informed about the project. The most frequent response to questioning about what would make them more confident about the safety of the facility is “better information to the public” (20%) and hold “community forums” (8%). (Table 5.2-1, 5.5.2)

- Communications about the Port Granby Project appear to have a positive impact on people's attitudes towards the Project. However, findings suggest that more effort needs to be placed on communicating with residents on this topic in order to improve awareness and assessments of LLRWMO communications efforts.
  - Six out of ten read the *Port Granby Project* newsletter "always" (41%) or "sometimes" (19%). (Table 6.3-1)
  - The two primary sources seen to provide "accurate and complete information" about the Port Granby Project are independent qualified scientists (31%) and LLRWMO staff and consultants (20%). (Table 6.4-2)
  - Yet relatively few respondents (21%) provide a "very good" or "good" assessment of the manner in which the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office is addressing questions about its activities. (Tables 6.2-1)
  - Brochures / newsletters mailed to them (mentioned by 72%) are the preferred sources of information about the Port Granby Project. (Table 6.4-1)