

Frequently Asked Questions Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Specific Options for Access Roads, River Crossings and Inspection Plazas

Q1 What is being announced at the Public Information Open Houses on March 28 and 30th in Windsor?

A1 We are announcing specific options for access roads, inspection plazas, and river crossings on the Canadian side. These options will be analyzed in greater detail over the next year as part of the next stage of the EA process.

The access road options – all of which will separate international from local traffic -- include:

- 6-lane freeway in a cut and cover tunnel below a rebuilt Huron Church Road/Hwy 3
- 6-lane freeway at grade, parallel to Huron Church Road/Hwy 3
- 6-lane freeway at grade, with one-way service roads on either side
- 6-lane freeway depressed, parallel to Huron Church Road/Hwy 3
- 6-lane freeway depressed, one-way service roads on either side

The three inspection plaza options are:

- In the Brighton Beach area
- South of E.C. Row Expressway and East of Ojibway Parkway
- At the waterfront, between Prospect Avenue and Broadway Boulevard

The three river crossing options are:

- In the area of Brighton Beach
- In the area of Prospect Avenue
- In the area of Sterling Fuels

Q2 The options you are presenting today appear to be different from those that were presented at the City of Windsor's public information session on Saturday, February 18, 2006.

A2 That meeting was organized by the City of Windsor, and the display boards and maps were prepared by Sam Schwartz Engineering on behalf of the City of Windsor. DRIC was not involved with the preparation of those materials.

With the announcement of the specific options, we have a better idea which areas might be affected. We will analyze, evaluate and fine-tune these options in more detail throughout 2006. Consultation with the community will continue.

Q3 Are you seriously considering a tunnel?

A3 Yes. Tunnelling is one of several options that will be considered within this corridor. We have committed to study the benefits, impacts and feasibility of tunnelling for all or part of the access road. The study team will consider the benefits and impacts of all alternatives, including tunnelling that are carried forward for further analysis, based on seven evaluation factors. Decisions will not be based on any single factor. Consultation with the community will help our understanding of community concerns, desires and values.

Q4 I heard you are looking for the least expensive solution. Are you more concerned about cost than our community?

A4 Definitely not. The DRIC study team is working with the community to find the solution that provides the best balance of transportation benefits with community impacts. As taxpayers, we all expect our public funds to be spent wisely, and we expect governments to make responsible fiscal decisions. Cost is only one of seven important factors we are considering throughout the EA process.

Frequently Asked Questions Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Specific Options for Access Roads, River Crossings and Inspection Plazas

Q5 There is already a tunnel in Windsor that could be easily converted into an international truck route to the U.S. – the DRTP. Why aren't you considering using the DRTP?

A5 The DRTP was eliminated from the list of 15 illustrative alternatives in November 2005. This is because the capacity provided by the DRTP two-lane truckway proposal, in the CP Rail Corridor, was determined to be inadequate to serve the long-term travel demand, which requires a six-lane freeway from the 401 to the inspection plaza and river crossing.

Q6 What are the seven factors that are being considered in conducting further analysis?

A6

- Changes in air quality
- Protect community and neighborhood characteristics (includes noise, business, community features)
- Maintain consistency with existing and planned land use
- Protect cultural resources
- Protect the natural environment
- Improve regional mobility
- Cost

Each factor has performance measures. The evaluation will be considered in the context of the international and national significance of the Detroit River crossing in terms of the economy, security, and ability to provide continuous river crossing capacity. Any alternative to be considered must meet the stated project purpose: to provide for the safe, efficient and secure movement of people and goods across the Canadian-U.S. border in the Detroit River area to support the economies of Michigan, Ontario, Canada, and the U.S.

Q7 I liked the Schwartz Report's connecting route better. Why aren't you just using that?

A7 Our proposal is consistent with the Schwartz Report in the use of Hwy 3; the proposal for a plaza at Brighton Beach; the proposal for a bridge in the industrial area of West Windsor; and the proposal for a road parallel to E.C. Row.

The only difference in our proposal from the Schwartz Report is our proposed use of a 2-kilometre section of Huron Church Road. The route selected by the DRIC team is considered to be more consistent with existing and planned land use and consistent with the protection of community and neighbourhood characteristics.

The proposed Schwartz alignment would create a new transportation corridor adjacent to an existing low density residential subdivision and through parklands that are protected by three levels of government, and are also used for recreational activities.

Q8 You say you considered various alternatives for the access road corridor but it seems like you have just followed existing corridors to the river. Why aren't you looking more closely at options outside of the existing corridor, for instance in the land in LaSalle?

A8 In June 2005, we presented 15 river crossing alternatives, associated inspection plazas and access roads for public consultation. Some were located outside the City of Windsor, and some within the Town of LaSalle.

Our objectives are the same as the community's: separate international from local traffic; improve the environment, including noise and air; and in general improve the overall situation. We want to enhance the safe and secure movement of people and goods across the border with minimal impacts to the host communities.

Frequently Asked Questions Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Specific Options for Access Roads, River Crossings and Inspection Plazas

The analysis and evaluation, carried out between June and November 2005, concluded that the Hwy 3/Huron Church corridor provided the best balance of benefits and impacts, when compared to other alternatives. First, the Hwy 3/Huron Church corridor has been the main arterial road from 401 to the border since the construction of Hwy 401 in the 1950s and Hwy 3 is a provincial highway and has served that need since 1929.

The routes evaluated through LaSalle had significant impacts and were found to be less consistent with existing and planned land use. As well, the introduction of a new transportation corridor through LaSalle would further divide communities as a result of additional property severances.

Q9 Why would you choose to construct a corridor to a new border crossing along an area that is already burdened with a border access route that generates noise and air pollution?

A9 The Partnership will make decisions based on the need to provide for the safe, efficient and secure movement of people and goods across the Canadian-U.S. border while recognizing the strong desire of separating local from international traffic, maintaining acceptable local traffic movement and minimizing impacts to the affected communities.

Impacts on air quality and noise conditions will be studied in more detail during the evaluation of alternatives within the Area of Continued Analysis. The study team will evaluate the air quality impacts and noise impacts that could occur for each alternative. The objective is to minimize impacts, if not actually reduce the current noise and pollutant levels from trucks.

Q10 You have talked about mitigating impacts to the Ojibway nature area. What about mitigating impacts on children and other residents in South Windsor? Isn't the health of people just as important as sustaining prairie grass?

A10 Yes. All of these issues are very important. The Ojibway Prairie is an important environmental feature, and a significant community resource. Some would argue that the prairie also contributes to the health of the community. As we move through the next stage of the study, we will investigate air quality issues in more detail. This work will help to assist in everyone's understanding of the impacts of the proposed transportation facility.

Q 11 Why are you not comparing the air quality impacts of an alignment along the Schwartz route to that along Huron Church Road?

A11 Air quality impacts were similar for all the illustrative alternatives. The Schwartz route presented no air quality advantage.

Q12 Where are you going to locate interchanges along the proposed route? I want to make sure I can still access my home.

A12 Our intention is to construct a six-lane freeway to carry international traffic from Hwy 401 to the new river crossing, and separate local from international traffic. The DRIC study team is working with municipalities, local community groups and the public, to develop options for this access route. Service roads, interchanges and grade separations are being considered. Specific access road options will be presented for public comment on March 28 and 30, 2006 and will be evaluated throughout the rest of the year.

Frequently Asked Questions Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Specific Options for Access Roads, River Crossings and Inspection Plazas

Q13 Should I put money into my house if it is just going to get expropriated? What if I want to sell my property now?

A13 Proceed as usual. We are not in a position to start doing full-scale property acquisitions as this time. While developing alternatives, the study team kept in mind the need for a high level of transportation service, but also seeking to avoid impacts on existing features as much as possible. Now that access road options have been identified, the team will assess impacts and look at ways to protect houses, businesses and other features that remain, and to address the loss of features and properties that must be removed. Consultation with homeowners will continue throughout the study.

Q14 What is the basis of compensation for property that may be acquired?

A14 Compensation is based on the market value of the property. Market value is ascertained by determining what similar property in the area might be expected to sell for in the open market by a willing seller to a willing buyer. If only a portion of the property is required, the effect of the acquisition on the rest of the property will be taken into consideration. The Ministry of Transportation is required to compensate a property owner according to the provisions of the Expropriations Act. Upon final settlement, there are also provisions for payment of other reasonable expenses actually incurred. Once an appraisal of the owner's property has been completed, a ministry real estate officer will be in contact to present an offer of compensation, based on the appraisal report.

Q15 Why does the access road have to be six lanes?

A15 Our study mandate is to provide a connecting route from Hwy 401, to an inspection plaza and river crossing, to a U.S. inspection plaza and connection to the U.S. freeway system. Keeping in mind current and future traffic flows, we have determined a six-lane facility will best meet traffic needs in the Windsor-Detroit gateway. We need to plan for a facility that provides for all local and international traffic, and to ensure there is enough flexibility in the plan to allow for future growth.

Q16 Why have you decided to focus on this Area of Continued Analysis?

A16 In June 2005, we presented 15 river crossing alternatives, and associated inspection plazas and access roads for public consultation. The analysis and evaluation, carried out between June and November, concluded that access route, plaza and crossing alternatives in the Area of Continued Analysis provide a good balance of transportation service and mobility, with fewer associated community and environmental impacts, in comparison to other alternatives. This analysis was completed using 7 major factor groups and 35 evaluation criteria.

The Area of Continued Analysis defines a river crossing location that will meet the transportation demands of the region and provides for a corridor that will allow for the separation of international and local traffic; is most consistent with existing and proposed land use; does not destroy natural environmental and recreational features; and does not create additional community and neighbourhood impacts through the creation of a new highway corridor bisecting communities.

Given the nature and extent of land uses and development along the Detroit River in Canada and the U.S., it will not be possible to develop options that entirely avoid impacts on local communities. The goal of the Partnership is to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to the greatest practical extent.

For more information, visit www.partnershipborderstudy.com.