

Detroit River International Crossing CANADIAN STUDY Frequently Asked Questions

What is the status of the Canadian DRIC Environmental Assessment?

On December 31, 2008 the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study team submitted the Environmental Assessment detailing the Recommended Plan for a new access road, Canadian inspection plaza and international crossing over the Detroit River to the Minister of Environment.

How does the Environmental Assessment process work?

The Detroit River International Crossing study team was required to conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA) process that address provincial and federal legislative requirements in Canada and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) in the U.S.

The EA process for major transportation facilities involves extensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including the public, regulatory agencies and municipalities. In the case of major projects such as a new international crossing, an EA must be conducted.

The first step, in accordance with the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA), is the development of an EA Terms of Reference (ToR). This document develops a framework for completing the EA. The EA ToR requires approval by the Minister of the Environment, prior to proceeding to the Individual EA. Following approval of the EA by the Minister of Environment, the Ministry of Transportation may proceed with design and construction. These stages also are regulated by the Canada Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) and require extensive environmental studies and consultation.

The Detroit River International Crossing Study Environmental Assessment ToR was approved by the Minister of the Environment in September 2004, and the study commenced in January 2005.

What is the Schedule for the Environmental Assessment?

For the Environmental Assessment (EA) that was submitted to the Minister of the Environment December 31, 2008 is expected that an approval decision will come in summer 2009. If approved, Ontario may proceed with construction of the provinces most significant single highway investment ever at a price tag of \$1.6 Billion (2011 dollars).

How long will it take to construct the DRIC Project? When will construction begin?

2013 has always been our stated goal for completion of The Windsor-Essex Parkway, and we are eager to start construction activity as soon as we can. We expect construction to get underway later this year but will know better once we have obtained approvals on the project from approving authorities. The Canadian plaza and portion of the international crossing will take 4-5 years to construct. The new border crossing system, including The Windsor-Essex Parkway, is important for the local community, for local business and for Ontario and Canada.

What has happened to date?

On December 31, 2008 the Detroit River International Crossing Study team submitted the Environmental Assessment detailing the Recommended Plan for a new access road, Canadian inspection plaza and international crossing over the Detroit River to the Minister of Environment.

The Environmental Assessment Report was available from January 9 to February 27, 2009 for review and public comment. It was requested that all comments be sent directly to the Ministry of the Environment.

How many letters did the Ministry of the Environment receive from the public?

The Ministry of the Environment received over 800 letters during the seven-week public comment period for the DRIC Environmental Assessment Report.

Will you be making any changes based on the comments received?

The DRIC study team is confident in the work completed and is prepared to let the experts at the Ministry of the Environment consider the results. The study team is prepared to address and respond to comments received during the review period.

Will there be additional opportunities for public comment?

There will be opportunities for public involvement in future stages of this important infrastructure project.

What's next?

The Ministry of the Environment has forwarded all comments received to the DRIC study team for review.

The DRIC study team is considering the comments received and will provide a response to the Ministry of the Environment. The MOE will then review how DRIC has addressed the concerns raised and prepare the ministry Review document. For more information about this process please contact the Ministry of the Environment.

Once the environmental approvals are received, construction on The Windsor-Essex Parkway can begin.

Is the DRIC project required if the Ambassador Bridge Company builds a twin span?

The DRIC Recommended Plan will be necessary in order to meet the needs of the Windsor-Detroit corridor to the year 2035 and beyond.

The DRIC study addresses four regional transportation and mobility needs:

- Provide new border crossing capacity to meet increased long-term travel demand;
- Improve system connectivity to enhance the continuous flow of people and goods;
- Improve operations and processing capabilities at the border; and
- Provide reasonable and secure crossing options (i.e. network redundancy)

The DRIC study assumed that the Ambassador Bridge would continue to be an integral part of the border transportation system in the future.

Twinning of the Ambassador Bridge was considered within the DRIC study, as one of 15 possible river crossing systems. All 15 alternatives were evaluated in a consistent manner. In November 2005, the Border Transportation Partnership announced that twinning of the Ambassador Bridge was no longer being considered as part of the DRIC study due to community impacts of the plaza and access road in Canada.

How can I find out if my property will be impacted by the DRIC project?

All Owners affected by the DRIC project were sent a registered letter in November 2008 indicating that their property would be required.

How does the property acquisition process work?

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is continuing to consider requests by owners wanting to sell their property that has been identified as required. All Owners affected by the DRIC project have received a registered letter indicating that their property will be required. Owners wishing to sell their property may contact the Ministry of Transportation, Windsor Border Initiatives Implementation Group at 519-973-7367 or 1-800-265-6072 ext. 4800 or email Detroit.River@ontario.ca.

After the Environmental Assessment (EA) study has been approved, MTO may initiate expropriation proceedings, if required.

However, even after EA approval, MTO will continue to negotiate with property owners in an effort to obtain a mutually acceptable agreement. If an amicable agreement cannot be reached, MTO will proceed in accordance with the provisions of the Expropriations Act. MTO respects owners rights under the laws of Ontario and your rights will be fully explained to you by an MTO real estate officer.

For property owners in the area of the plaza and crossing

The federal government is in discussions with willing sellers for property acquisition.

For more information, interested parties should contact 1-866-636-3136 or by email to Windsor-Detroit@tc.gc.ca. Affected property will be appraised by an independent appraiser, with purchases carried out on the basis of the appraised fair market value.

How do I get more information?

The Project web site will continue to provide information and various updates as the study continues to move forward. Reports and presentations have been available for downloading as they became available. Documents can also be reviewed at the local project office located at 949 McDougall Avenue, Suite 200 in Windsor. You can make arrangements to come into the office by calling (519) 973-7367. Documents were also provided to municipalities and various locations through out the Windsor and Essex area for public review during the comment period.