

Consistency with Existing and Planned Land Use

As part of the impact assessment of the DRIC study, an analysis of potential land use impacts was, and continues to be, conducted. This assessment's goal is to examine what currently exists in this area, what is planned and what impacts the Practical Alternatives may have on the land use.

How the Analysis was Done

An analysis of land use has been conducted for the Practical Alternatives for the access road, inspection plaza and river crossing based in part on information provided in the City of Windsor Official Plan (April 2000), zoning bylaws for the City of Windsor, the Huron Church Road Urban Design Master Plan & Development Guidelines (February 2006), the Olde Sandwich Towne Community Planning Study Report (October 2006), as well as Town of LaSalle and Town of Tecumseh Official Plans. Field reviews were also conducted to verify current land uses. Approved development plans obtained by the study team were also incorporated in the analysis.

Results to Date

Access Road Alternatives

The Highway 3/Huron Church Road corridor has served as an access road to the Ambassador Bridge for over 75 years. Huron Church Road is classified in the City of Windsor Official Plan as a Class 1 Arterial Road, on the basis of the volumes carried and its significance in the road network. The road is a multi-functional transportation corridor for transportation of goods, international travellers, and local residents of Windsor-Essex County. Due to the high volume of traffic on this roadway, access along the road corridor is controlled and the City of Windsor has been closing street entrances and constructing parallel service drives to reduce points of conflict along the roadway. More recent residential developments adjacent to the corridor have been constructed with a property buffer and fences and berming along the edges of the corridor to shield roadway impacts. Development in the Town of LaSalle has also been planned to limit access to Highway 3 at signalized intersections only.

Land uses within the access road corridor consist of residential, commercial, and vacant or open lands. Commercial uses include highway-oriented businesses including restaurants, hotels, service stations, fast food restaurants, and shopping plazas. Residential uses include single family homes that have frontage on Huron Church Road and Highway 3. There are a few industrial businesses located along the access road corridor. A portion of the vacant land located along the Highway 3/Huron Church Road corridor has been designated for commercial use. Future land uses that have been identified adjacent to the Highway 401/Highway 3 interchange area include new residential subdivision developments in the Town of LaSalle, which are part of the Town's long-range planning strategy. In addition, future commercial land uses have been identified adjacent to Highway 3 across from St. Clair College and future residential land uses have been identified on the vacant lands adjacent to E.C. Row Expressway.

As the future right-of-way for the access road is wider than that of the existing road right-of-way, there will be impacts to land use with the access road alternatives. The extent of impacts of the alternatives and opportunities to reduce the effects of these impacts to land uses adjacent to the corridor is being investigated. Effects may be reduced through access features, aesthetics and other treatments to reduce the presence of the freeway, and planning of uses for remnant properties or parcels

The proposed access road will alter somewhat the land use characteristics of the Highway 3/Huron Church Road corridor. Although the existing roadway carries high traffic volumes and serves as the primary connection to the Ambassador Bridge for long-distance international traffic, introducing a six-lane freeway with service roads (at-grade, depressed or tunnelled) and widening the transportation corridor will have localized impacts on land use.

The new access road has the potential to impact land uses in the area of the E.C. Row Expressway, due to a loss of vacant lands zoned for residential uses, but which presently provide a naturalized buffer between residential and transportation uses. The Plaza A option is located between the E.C. Row Expressway and a predominantly residential and natural area in the Spring Garden Planning Area, as defined by the City of Windsor Official Plan. The

Spring Garden Planning Area is a largely residential community encircling an expansive natural area feature, the Spring Garden Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). A new residential subdivision development has begun in this area with approximately 20 homes completed. Placing a plaza adjacent to a residential and natural area is not consistent with the established zoning for the area. It has the potential to conflict with the neighbourhood characteristics of the area and may disrupt the manner in which this area functions as a cohesive neighbourhood.

Plaza and Crossing Alternatives

The plaza alternatives situated primarily in the industrial area of west Windsor are more consistent with existing and planned land use. A plaza is considered more compatible with industrial uses. Plaza C disrupts water-dependant industrial land uses, as such, relocation of these industrial uses elsewhere along the Detroit River may be difficult. Plaza C and Crossing C are also located closest to the Sandwich community. Recently, the City of Windsor adopted the Olde Sandwich Towne Community Planning Study Report, which is designed to provide direction for residents and business owners to actively participate in the plan-making and priority-setting process for the community. The plan outlines the continuation of industrial land uses in the waterfront area under consideration for Crossing C.

Impacts to individual properties (e.g. property acquisition, displacements and indirect effects) are considered in the 'Protection of Community and Neighbourhood Characteristics' and 'Maintain Air Quality' factors.

Hazardous Waste and Waste Management

Consideration of hazardous waste, waste management and potential impacts to contaminated sites is considered as part of the broader 'Maintain Consistency with Existing and Planned Land Use' factor. The evaluation of hazardous waste and waste management sites were based on data collected from selected environmental databases, aerial photographs, base land uses, technical reports, historical topographic maps and fire insurance maps. There are no known properties along the access road options that have been identified as being contaminated/disposal sites. Land uses associated with industrial operations near the western riverfront (i.e. in vicinity of Plazas B, B1 and C as well as Crossings B and C) are among those that are listed as being known contaminate/disposal sites. These sites include properties that historically were part of a municipal waste disposal landfill or construction debris disposal site, but that are currently assigned to different land uses, such as a hydro corridor across the landfill.

Remaining Activities

Consultation with municipal planning staff and the local communities will be held to more specifically identify land use impacts associated with the project and means of mitigating such impacts, as appropriate. This work will be undertaken as part of the on-going consultation process for the DRIC study.

As part of the impact assessment of the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study, an assessment of built heritage features and cultural landscapes is being undertaken. Built heritage resources are structures or objects that people have made or modified and that are valued for the contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.