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BINATIONAL EFFORT ONE STEP CLOSER TO A NEW BORDER CROSSING BETWEEN WINDSOR AND DETROIT

WINDSOR — The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, today welcomed the technically and environmentally preferred location of the new inspection plazas and bridge crossing between Windsor and Detroit presented by the binational study team.

Today's announcement is an important milestone that represents the result of years of technical studies, analysis and community input by the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study teams on both sides of the border. Over the coming months, the DRIC study teams will continue preparation of final environmental assessment documents for submission to approval authorities in each country.

"The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of an efficient, effective and secure Windsor-Detroit trade corridor, as well as the need to move ahead with the development of a new border crossing for this region," said Minister Cannon. "Today's announcement of the locations of the inspection plaza and new bridge brings us a step closer to an end-to-end transportation solution that will support international trade and, therefore, enhance the economies of Windsor, Essex County, Ontario and Canada."

"Increasing border crossing capacity while ensuring efficiency and security are key priorities for our government," said Minister Day. "The Prime Minister raised the issue of congestion at major border crossing points, such as Windsor-Detroit, with U.S. President George Bush at the Leaders' Summit in New Orleans in April."

The Canadian inspection plaza is bounded by Broadway Street on the south side, Chappus Street on the north side, the Detroit River on the west side and the Essex Terminal Railway line on the east side. The new inspection plaza and bridge will mitigate environmental impacts and therefore improve the quality of life for local residents.

The development of additional border crossing capacity at Windsor-Detroit not only will ensure that trade between Canada and the United States prospers but will also create jobs on both sides of the border.

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“I congratulate the DRIC study team on reaching this important milestone,” said Sandra Pupatello, Member of Provincial Parliament for Windsor West. “We committed to making a plaza decision by spring so the residents of Spring Garden will have clarity on property impacts — and we have done that. We have always said that the DRIC process would be respectful of the historic nature of Olde Sandwich Towne and protect its special character — and we have done that, too.”

The vast majority, 62 per cent, of Canadian and U.S. bilateral trade crosses the Canada-U.S. border by land. Each day, 36,000 trucks cross our shared border, more than one-quarter of these at Windsor-Detroit, making it the busiest commercial land border crossing in North America. In fact, the total bilateral trade crossing at Windsor-Detroit is greater than all the trade that exists between the U.S. and Japan.

Since the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement in 1989, two-way trade has tripled and is expected to continue to increase over the next 30 years. Under high-growth scenarios, cross-border traffic demand could exceed the capacity of the present border crossing systems in the Detroit River area as early as 2015. The development of additional border capacity is critical to support the economies of Canada and the United States.

A backgrounder on the proposed inspection plaza and bridge, as well as the ongoing environmental assessment process and the federal land acquisition for the Canadian inspection plaza and the Canadian half of the bridge, is attached.

For more information on DRIC, visit www.borderpartnershipstudy.com.

Contacts:	Karine White	Mark Butler
	Press Secretary	Transport Canada, Windsor
	Office of the Minister of Transport,	519-967-4280
	Infrastructure and Communities, Ottawa	
	613-991-0700	

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Backgrounder

PROPOSED INSPECTION PLAZAS AND BRIDGE AT THE WINDSOR-DETROIT BORDER CROSSING AND ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Overview

The Windsor-Detroit border is the busiest commercial land border crossing in North America, and trade moving through this corridor is expected to increase well into the future. This is good news for the economies of Windsor-Essex County, as well as the provincial and national economies.

The governments of Canada, the United States, Ontario and Michigan recognize the importance of the Windsor-Detroit Gateway and have come together to form the Border Transportation Partnership (the Partnership). The purpose of the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study is to provide for the safe, efficient and effective movement of people and goods across the Canada-U.S. border in the Detroit River area to support the economies of Ontario, Michigan, Canada and the U.S. — in other words, to construct a new end-to-end transportation system that will link Highway 401 to the U.S. interstate system with inspection plazas and a new river crossing in between.

The partnership has reached an important milestone with the June 18, 2008, announcement of the technically preferred location for the Canadian inspection plaza and the river crossing. The announcement is the result of years of technical studies and analysis by the DRIC study teams on both sides of the border, undertaken with the benefit of significant community input through hundreds of information sessions in Canada and the United States.

The Canadian inspection plaza is bounded by Broadway Street on the south side, Chappus Street on the north side, the Detroit River on the west side and the Essex Terminal Railway line on the east side.



Canadian Plaza B1

The new bridge

The final design of the Windsor-Detroit bridge will be determined after discussions with prospective builders. Given the span required to cross the Detroit River, there are two bridge design types that could be used: a suspension bridge, which is recognized by its elongated “M” shape, or a cable-stayed bridge, which has more of an “A” shape. The Ambassador Bridge, Mackinac Bridge and the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge are suspension bridges. Examples of cable-stayed bridges include the Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Tampa and the Vancouver Sky Bridge.

Cable-stayed bridges may look similar to suspension bridges in that both have roadways that hang from cables and both have towers, but the bridges support the load of the roadway in very different ways. The difference lies in how the cables are connected to the towers. In suspension bridges, the cables ride freely across the towers, transmitting the load to the anchorages at either end. In cable-stayed bridges, the cables are attached to the towers, which alone bear the load.



Suspension bridge (illustration only)	Cable-stayed bridge (illustration only)
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Final costs for the bridge cannot be determined until the final design is selected. Details on the suspension bridge and cable-stayed bridge options follow:

	Suspension Bridge Option	Cable-Stayed Bridge Option
Total length of crossing alignment (Canadian plaza to U.S. plaza)	2.9 km	2.9 km
Bridge span (distance between main towers/pylons)	855 m	840 m
Piers in the water	None	None
Ranking	5th-longest suspension bridge in North America 20th-longest suspension bridge in world	Longest cable-stayed span in North America 5th-longest cable-stayed bridge in the world
Clearance at shoreline	40 m	40 m
Clearance at centre of channel	47 m	47 m

Height of main towers/pylons	140 m — slightly higher than the Fisher Building in downtown Detroit; Ambassador Bridge main towers are approximately 120 m high	approximately 250 m approximately 30 m higher than the Renaissance Center in Detroit (220 m)
Bridge deck	approximately 36 m wide and accommodates 6 lanes, a median, shoulders and a walkway on one side	approximately 36 m wide and accommodates 6 lanes, a median, shoulders and a walkway on one side
Building material estimates	400,000 tonnes of concrete 22,000 tonnes of steel 6,900 tonnes of cable	135,000 tonnes of concrete 24,000 tonnes of steel 3,300 tonnes of cable

Note: Information in the above chart is preliminary and subject to change.

Inspection plazas

The plazas will be designed to shield the host communities from cross-border traffic. For instance, the Canadian plaza will include 43 acres (17 hectares) of buffer area. The plazas will also include state-of-the-art inspection facilities to promote the flow of traffic. The final plaza designs will be determined in consultation with the Canada Border Services Agency.

Canadian Plaza (B1)
132 acres (53 hectares)
Total of 29 inbound inspection lanes, including: 9 lanes for cars 5 lanes for cars or trucks 14 lanes for trucks 1 lane for buses
103 secondary inspection parking spaces for commercial vehicles
9 toll-collection lanes

Note: Information in the above chart is preliminary and subject to change.

What are the next steps?

The DRIC study team met a significant project milestone on June 18, 2008, with the announcement of the technically preferred alternative for the Canadian inspection plazas and the bridge.

With more than 300 public consultation sessions held to date, community consultation has been, and will continue to be, an important part of this project, and public information open houses (PIOHs) will be held as future milestones are reached.

The federal government has not begun purchasing property for the Canadian plaza and the Canadian half of the bridge but is prepared to discuss such interest with willing sellers at any time. All property owners will be treated fairly and will receive the compensation to which they are entitled in accordance with federal legislation. It is the Government of Canada's preference to reach mutually acceptable agreements with all property owners. It is expected that discussions with affected property owners will commence during the summer.

For more information, interested parties should contact 1-866-636-3136 or send an e-mail to Windsor-Detroit@tc.gc.ca.

Preferred plazas and crossing location in Canada announced	June 2008
U.S. final environmental impact statement (EIS) circulated	Fall 2008
U.S. record of decision (ROD) expected	End of 2008
Canadian submission for environmental assessment (EA) approvals	End of 2008
Canadian EA approvals expected	Fall 2009

The Windsor-Essex Parkway

Construction of the Windsor-Essex Parkway, the Canadian access road, is expected to start as early as 2009. It will take four to five years to design and build the bridge and the inspection plazas. The DRIC study team is working to move the project forward as quickly as possible. The documentation for the environmental assessment must be finalized and submitted to the appropriate Canadian and U.S. authorities for approval, and an agreement must be reached among the partners on the governance structure and the financing method to be used.

The environmental study process — a co-ordinated process

This international transportation improvement project will require approvals from governments on both sides of the border. The Partnership has developed a co-ordinated process that will enable the joint selection of a recommended river crossing location that meets the requirements of the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the *U.S. National Environmental Policy Act* in an effective and efficient manner.

A key principle of this process is that all affected and interested parties have been and are being given the opportunity to participate and provide input throughout the study. The Partnership is proactively seeking community and stakeholder input during the study.

Requirements of the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act* (OEAA)

As required under the OEAA, terms of reference were prepared and received approval prior to commencement of the DRIC environmental assessment study. The document outlined the framework that the DRIC study team followed in completing the environmental assessment, including key opportunities for public participation.

On completion of this study, the EA report will be submitted to the Ontario Minister of the Environment for approval. The formal review process provides further opportunities for public comment.

Requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*

The CEAA applies to certain projects that require a decision by the Government of Canada. In the case of this study, Transport Canada has partnered with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to conduct the Canadian portion of the study. The requirements of the OEAA and CEAA are being co-ordinated in a manner that will ensure the most rigorous EA standards are met.

A project description was prepared for the DRIC study, and federal agencies with an interest in the study have been identified. The project was listed in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry in March 2006, and federal agencies have been participating throughout the study.

As part of the co-ordinated EA process, the federal draft EA guidelines and the public consultation plan were provided for public review. These documents are available to be downloaded or viewed online at the Partnership website (www.partnershipborderstudy.com). Information on the federal environmental assessment process is also available at www.ceaa.gc.ca.

A CEAA screening report identifying project impacts and mitigation needs will be prepared, drawing on the technical work that has been carried out throughout the study.

Requirements of the *U.S. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*

In the United States, NEPA is the umbrella environmental law that provides for a decision-making process relying on interdisciplinary analysis, as well as consultation with and comments from the public, stakeholders and regulatory agencies.

For major federal actions, an environmental impact study (EIS) is prepared. A draft EIS explains the purpose of and need for the project, examines alternatives, discusses the impacts of the practical alternatives, and documents the public involvement and co-ordination that occurs. The draft EIS is released for formal comment and a public hearing is held. Subsequently, a decision is made on a preferred alternative, based on the comments received and any further analysis that is required to respond adequately to the comments. That decision is made available to the public and agencies through the formal availability of the final EIS (FEIS). When comments on the FEIS are addressed and the decision is to pursue an “action” alternative, a record of decision (ROD) is issued under NEPA. An ROD completes the process and allows a project to advance to the design stage and project implementation.

Summary

The DRIC study is following three legislated processes. These processes require that the DRIC environmental study be thorough, open, transparent and fully accessible to the public for scrutiny and evaluation. The DRIC study team is fully committed to working with the public, communities and interested groups in Windsor-Essex County, in consultation with the U.S. partners, to develop a solution that best meets future transportation needs while minimizing community impacts.