
Backgrounder

March 3, 2008

The Border Transportation Partnership

The Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study is being carried out by the Border Transportation Partnership – the Governments of Canada, the United States, Ontario and Michigan. The study team is moving forward on its goal to provide for the safe, efficient and secure movement of people and goods across the Canada-U.S. border in the Detroit River area and support regional, provincial, state and federal economies.

The DRIC Study

This international transportation improvement project requires approvals from governments on both sides of the border. The Partnership's coordinated process will enable the joint selection of a recommended river crossing location while meeting the requirements of the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA)*, *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*, and *U.S. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*.

The DRIC study team is fully committed to working with the public, communities, and interested groups in Windsor-Essex County to develop a solution in consultation with the U.S. partners, which best meets future transportation needs, while minimizing community impacts. To date, the Canadian study team has participated in nearly 250 consultation events.

Project Chronology

Working closely with U.S. partners, the Canadian study team has coordinated studies on both sides of the border, and identified shared timelines and milestones.

- June 2005 Identification of 15 alternative river crossings.
- November 2005 Analysis and evaluation of 15 river crossing alternatives led to the identification of the Area of Continued Analysis.
- March 2006 Specific options for access roads, plazas and crossings announced.
- August 2007 Analysis of five alternatives for the access road was completed. Parkway alternative was presented at Public Information Open Houses.

With the recent completion of detailed foundations investigations, the DRIC study team has reached yet another significant project milestone.

Foundations Investigations

The crossing locations studied as part of the foundations investigations include the proposed Crossing B, from south of Prospect Avenue in Windsor and landing north of Zug Island near Lafarge Cement in Detroit, and the proposed Crossing C, from south of Prospect Avenue in Windsor and landing north of Fort Wayne, adjacent to the Mistersky Plant in Detroit.

The work completed for the geologic and geotechnical evaluation of alternative crossing locations consisted of a program of deep drilling, down-hole geophysical logging, cross-well seismic surveys, surface seismic reflection surveys, numerical analysis, and historical research.

On September 6, 2006, Canada and Ontario announced the start of a deep drilling analysis program to attain a better understanding of the bedrock stability in areas where a new international bridge spanning the Detroit River could be located.

There were three parts to the deep drilling analysis program.

One: Drilling 12 deep boreholes on the Canadian side of the river to a depth of up to 500 m (1640 ft). Drilling operations were completed in August 2007.

Two: Conducting geophysical and other testing within each borehole. The geophysical tools are similar to a CAT scan where signals are sent through an object in different directions and the signals are compiled to construct a cross section of the object or, in this case, a rock mass. The results of the cross-hole survey identified any anomalies between boreholes and imaging of individual rock layers. The geophysical and other testing was completed in September 2007.

Three: Interpretation and analysis of the results of the drilling and geophysical programs, including the geophysics results, by the consulting teams and a thorough review by the Geotechnical Advisory Group. This review was completed in February 2008.

Geotechnical Advisory Group

The Geotechnical Advisory Group was brought together to provide technical guidance in the development of the foundations investigations program, and to review the findings of geotechnical explorations, testing, analyses and conclusions undertaken by the U.S. and Canadian study teams. The Geotechnical Advisory Group is made up of a panel of geotechnical, geophysics, and foundations, mining, and rock mechanic experts from Canada and the United States including:

- two representatives from the Michigan Department of Transportation
- two representatives from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration
- two representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation
- two representatives from the Government of Canada
- two American professors (University of Michigan & University of Kansas)
- two Canadian professors (Queen's University & University of Waterloo)

The Geotechnical Advisory Group is satisfied that the scope of the foundations investigations program and the methods of data collection were appropriate. They further report that the interpretations and analyses were sound, and reflect the state of the art or practice in the engineering and scientific fields used to reach conclusions made by the geotechnical consulting teams that conducted the studies on both sides of the river. The Advisory Group's findings were released to the Border Transportation Partnership on February 13, 2008.

Next Steps

The Canadian and U.S. teams will evaluate the information gathered by the geotechnical team and reviewed by the Geotechnical Advisory Group together with the plaza and crossing analysis of the seven major factor elements. The information gathered will allow the study teams to make informed decisions concerning the crossing options which may include:

- development of mitigation strategies for design and construction
- refinements to the location of the bridge
- expediting additional foundations investigations, guided by the results of the current work.

This evaluation will lead to the identification of a single technically and environmentally preferred solution, including a river crossing, inspection plaza and access road in spring of this year.

For information on the bi-national DRIC study, including reports, work plans, the Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference, maps, public meeting notices visit the Border Transportation Partnership website at www.partnershipborderstudy.com.

