

Canada-U.S.-Ontario-Michigan
Border Transportation Partnership

Detroit River International Crossing

Environmental Assessment
Terms of Reference

Public Information Open House
March 2004

Information Package

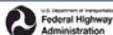


Purpose of this Public Information Open House

- Provide an update on the progress of the project.
- Present key components of the draft Ontario Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference (TOR).
- Describe the process for submission to the Ontario Minister of the Environment for Approval.
- Obtain comments, which we will consider in finalizing the Terms of Reference.

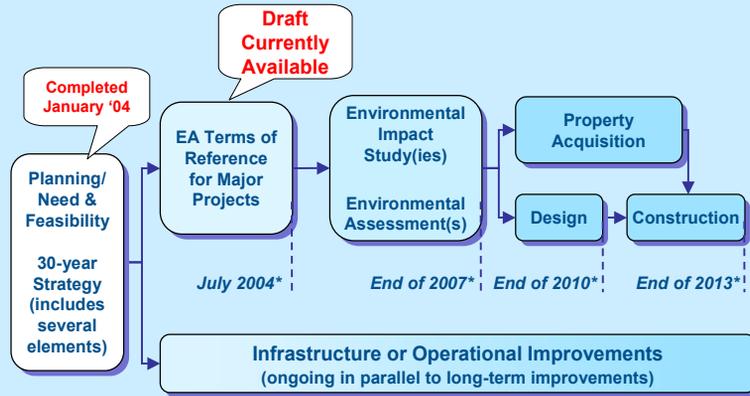
The Project Team encourages you to record your comments and concerns on a comment sheet. A written response will be provided to each comment sheet received.

Comments may also be submitted through our project web site at www.PartnershipBorderStudy.com



Project Background and Progress

In January 2004, the Canada-United States-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Partnership produced a final Planning/Need and Feasibility (P/NF) Study Report. The P/NF Study was the first of a multi-stage process leading to the implementation of transportation improvements.



**Timeframes are approximate*

Project Background and Progress (cont.)

The P/NF Study identified a long-term strategy to meet the needs of the transportation network serving the border between Southeastern Michigan – Southwestern Ontario.

Elements of the strategy, presented as advice to the Partnership governments, include:

- improvements to border processing
- optimizing the use of the existing transportation network
- travel demand measures
- encouraging the use of other travel modes, and
- major infrastructure projects to address border crossing deficiencies

On the basis of the findings of the P/NF Study, the Partnership is proceeding with formal environmental studies on both sides of the border.

As a member of the Partnership, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation is moving forward with the development of a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the preparation of the individual environmental assessment.

Key Plan



What is an EA Terms of Reference?

Major transportation improvements require individual approval under Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act.

A Terms of Reference (TOR) is:

- the first step in completing the Environmental Assessment (EA).
- a document which outlines the study process for an EA.
- a document which outlines how interested parties will be consulted during the EA.

A draft TOR is now available for public and agency review (refer to the following display panel for details).

Comments on the draft TOR will be considered in the preparation of the formal TOR, which is submitted to the Ontario Minister of the Environment for approval. After the review period is complete, the Minister can approve (with or without conditions) or reject the TOR. Following approval, the EA can proceed in accordance with the TOR.

Draft Terms of Reference for Public and Agency Review

A draft of the EA Terms of Reference and Supporting Documents has been prepared and can be reviewed at the following locations:

<i>City of Windsor Clerk's Office</i>	<i>Windsor Public Library-Main Branch</i>
<i>Town of LaSalle Clerk's Office</i>	<i>LaSalle Public Library</i>
<i>Town of Amherstburg Clerk's Office</i>	<i>Amherstburg Library</i>
<i>Town of Tecumseh Clerk's Office</i>	<i>Tecumseh Public Library</i>
<i>Essex County Clerk's Office</i>	<i>Essex Library</i>

The documents can also be viewed at www.PartnershipBorderStudy.com

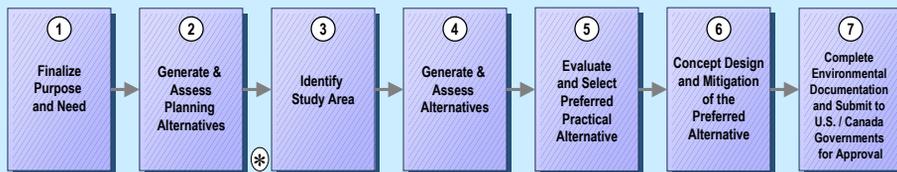
**The contents of the draft TOR
are summarized in the following display panels**



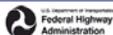
Proposed Integrated Study Process

The proposed study process for the development, assessment and evaluation of alternatives for the Detroit River International Crossing Project is illustrated below.

A key objective of the Partnership is to develop an integrated environmental study process, which complies with the requirements of the governments of Canada and the U.S.



* *The appropriateness of the study process identified in the Terms of Reference will be verified with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment after the assessment of planning alternatives.*



Preliminary Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Detroit River International Crossing Project is to maintain and improve the safe, secure and efficient movement of people and goods across the Canadian-U.S. border in the Detroit River area.

Do you have any comments on the stated purpose of the project?

The transportation problems to be addressed are:

- Lack of reasonable options for maintaining the movement of people and goods in cases of major incidents, maintenance operations, congestion or other disruptions;
- Lack of sufficient capacity to meet the long-term (i.e. 30-year) travel demand; and
- Increased security requirements creating impacts on the movement of people and goods at border crossings.

In addressing these transportation problems, the EA will consider opportunities to reduce impacts and enhance benefits to the border region.



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Identifying & Assessing Transportation Planning Alternatives

Transportation planning alternatives are fundamentally different ways of solving the problem.

Planning Alternatives to be considered in this project will include, but are not limited to:

- Doing nothing;
- Improvements to border processing;
- Travel demand management;
- New and/or improved rail alternatives with new and/or expanded international rail crossing;
- New and/or improved transit services;
- New and/or improved marine services;
- New and/or improved road alternatives with new or expanded international road crossing; and
- Combinations of the above.

Do you agree with this list of planning alternatives to be considered in the EA?



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Identifying & Assessing Transportation Planning Alternatives

In assessing the suitability and effectiveness of planning alternatives, the following factors/criteria are proposed to be considered:

FACTORS	CRITERIA
Transportation Network Improvement	Ability to address congestion on the transportation network by improving travel time and reliability for international passenger and freight movement
Transportation Opportunities	Ability to optimize use of existing transportation corridors or planned network improvements
Government, Land Use, Transportation Planning and Tourism Objectives	Consistency with established objectives
Border Processing	Ability to meet the long-term needs of border processing agencies
Environmental Feasibility	Potential impacts to environmental constraint areas (includes consideration of Natural Environment, Socio-Economic Environment and Cultural Environment features)
Technical Feasibility	Ability to achieve minimum technical requirements at a reasonable construction/implementation cost

Do you agree with this list of factors/criteria proposed to assess planning alternatives?

Process for Generating a Study Area

After the assessment of planning alternatives, a study area will be generated.

The study area will be established based on the following considerations:

- Constraint areas and features; and
- The ability of route/corridor alternatives to address the problems and opportunities.

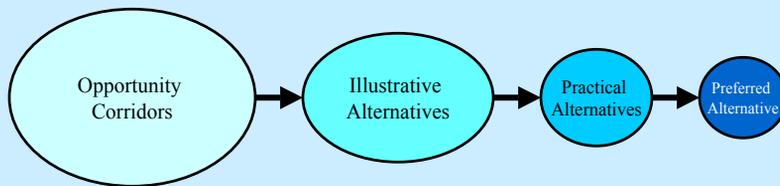
Should other inputs be considered in generating a study area for the project?

Generation and Assessment of Alternatives

The process for generating alternatives discussed in the draft TOR is applicable to linear transportation facilities (i.e. road and/or rail rights-of-way). The appropriateness of this process will be reviewed during the EA study.

The proposed process for generating alternatives is as follows:

- Review constraint areas/features to identify opportunity corridors.
- Within the opportunity corridors, develop long list of route alternatives (referred to as *illustrative alternatives*).
- Assess the illustrative alternatives and identify those to be carried forward for further consideration (referred to as *practical alternatives*).
- Assess the practical alternatives and identify the preferred alternative(s).



Generation and Assessment of Alternatives

In generating route/corridor alternatives, consideration is given to the following factor areas:

- Social Environment;
- Economic Environment;
- Cultural Environment;
- Natural Environment;
- Technical Considerations ; and
- Cost

Significant features will be identified using secondary sources, such as aerial photography, and large-scale constraint mapping and will be supplemented with field visits and meetings with stakeholders.

Alternative route / corridors will be developed and efforts will be made to avoid or minimize impacts to the extent possible.

Generation and Assessment of Alternatives

In assessing the feasibility of opportunity corridors, the following factors/criteria will be considered:

FACTOR*	CRITERIA*
Transportation Network Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local international traffic • Support long distance freight travel • Support long distance passenger travel • Limit negative impacts to access and mobility on local road networks (address international truck and/or vehicle congestion)
Transportation Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize use of the existing infrastructure
Government, Land Use, Transportation Planning and Tourism Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing land use and future plans • Support the transportation system • Maintain security and protect against system vulnerability
Border Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the long-term needs for inspection and processing of commercial and passenger traffic
Environmental Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid as much as possible impacts to constraint areas associated with natural, social, cultural and economic features in the study area
Technical Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical considerations (i.e. length of corridor, length of river crossing, geotechnical conditions) • Constructability and Related Impacts

*All factors/criteria will be reviewed during the EA study.

Do you agree with this list of factors/criteria proposed to assess the feasibility of the opportunity corridors?

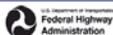


Environmental Considerations for Generating Practical and Illustrative Alternatives

In generating route/corridor alternatives, the following environmental components and features will be considered:

COMPONENT	FEATURE
Social Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of Residential / Commercial / Institutional Development • Landfills and Hazardous Waste Sites
Cultural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical, Archaeological and Cultural Sites • National, State and Provincial Parks, and Conservation Areas
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwater Quality and Quantity • Surface Water Quality and Quantity • Agricultural Lands • Wetlands • Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI's) • Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) • Woodlands • Wildlife Preserves • Endangered Species

Are there any other environmental components and features that should be considered in generating alternatives?



Proposed Evaluation Criteria

Impacts associated with the illustrative / practical alternatives will be identified according to the following factors/criteria:

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR*	CRITERIA*
Socio-Economic Environment	
Property and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to residential areas (i.e. property, access impacts) •Impacts to commercial/industrial areas (i.e. property, access impacts) •Impacts to agricultural operations
Community Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Noise impacts •Impacts to cemeteries, schools, places of worship •Effects on community activity
Property Waste & Contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Effect on operating and closed waste disposal sites •Impacts to other known contaminated sites
Cultural Environment	
Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to historical/archaeological sites
Heritage and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to built heritage features and cultural landscape units •Impacts to National, State/Provincial and local parks/recreation sites
Natural Environment	
Groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to groundwater and discharge areas, as well as identified wellhead and source protection areas and areas susceptible to groundwater contamination
Aquatic Habitat, Fisheries and Surface Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to critical fish habitat features (spawning, rearing, nursery, important feeding areas) •Number of watercourse crossings required •Impacts to water bodies, including channel realignments and fill
Agricultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to prime agricultural areas

*All factors/criteria will be reviewed during the EA study.



Proposed Evaluation Criteria (cont.)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR*	CRITERIA*
Natural Environment Cont.	
Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to Provincially Significant Wetlands and wetland function •Impacts to evaluated and unevaluated wetlands to the extent possible
Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Effects on species at risk (vegetation, fish and wildlife) •Effects on ecologically functional areas such as connective corridors or travel ways
Special Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to important wildlife areas such as deeryards, heronries, waterfowl areas, and important bird areas (BA). Other areas to be considered are any identified wildlife management, rehabilitation and research program sites •Impacts to environmentally significant features such as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's), Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI's) or other areas of provincial, regional or local significance and the functions of these features •Impacts to special species including the Detroit River, Conservation Authority Lands and NEPA 4(f) lands including the function of these features
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Effects on sensitive receptors to air quality •Air pollutants and GHG emissions
Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to significant forest stands and woodlots
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Impacts to mineral, petroleum and mineral aggregate resources
Property Waste & Contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Effect on operating and closed waste disposal sites •Impacts to other known contaminated sites
Technical Considerations	
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Transportation Operations •Network Compatibility
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cost

*All factors/criteria will be reviewed during the EA study.

Are there any other factors / criteria which should be considered in assessing and evaluating alternatives?



Air Quality Impact Assessment

Air Quality has been identified as an important issue to be addressed in the generation, analysis and evaluation of alternatives for this project.

The Partnership is developing a strategy to address impacts to air quality in a manner that meets the requirements of the governments of Canada, the U.S., Ontario and Michigan.

Several preliminary discussions with the government agencies responsible for assessing and reviewing impacts to air quality associated with this project have been held. These agencies include:

- Health Canada
- Environment Canada
- Transport Canada
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Highways Administration
- Ontario Ministry of the Environment
- Ontario Ministry of Transportation
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

As the project proceeds, the Partnership will continue to work with these agencies to develop the appropriate bi-national air quality impact assessment strategy for the Detroit River International Crossing Project.

Proposed Evaluation Method

The evaluation is based upon the assessment of impacts and involves a comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives considered. This leads to the selection of a "Preferred Alternative".

A Reasoned Argument (or Trade-off) method will be the primary evaluation method and an Arithmetic (weighting-scoring) method will be undertaken to verify the results.

The highlights of these evaluation methodologies are outlined as follows:

Reasoned Argument (Trade-off) Method

- Highlights the differences in net impacts (impacts after mitigation has been applied) of the various alternatives
- Identifies the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative
- Relative significance of impacts are considered

The rationale that favours the selection of one alternative will be derived from:

- Issues and concerns identified during public consultation;
- Government legislation, policies and guidelines;
- Municipal policy (i.e., Official Plans); and
- Project Team expertise.

Proposed Evaluation Method (con't)

Arithmetic Method

- The level of importance of each environmental attribute is assigned a *weight*.
- The magnitude of the impact/benefit is assigned a *score*.
- The weight is multiplied by the score to obtain a *weighted score*.
- The weighted scores are compared in selecting a preferred alternative.

The general public, municipalities and agencies can participate in establishing the weights of the environmental attributes.

Comparison of Evaluation Results

In developing a preferred alternative, the results of both evaluation methods will be considered.

Do you agree with the proposed Evaluation Method to guide the evaluation and selection of a preferred alternative?

Public Consultation During the EA

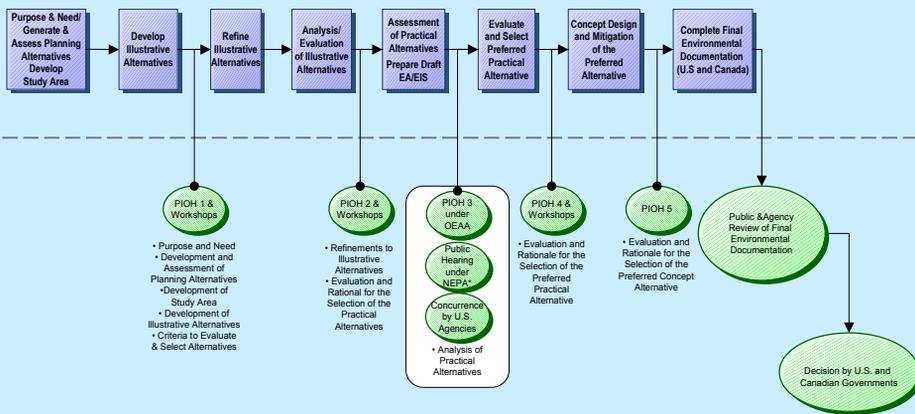
Public consultation is an essential part of the EA process. The Public will be invited to provide input to the environmental studies (natural, social, economic and cultural) and the evaluation process.

Public Information Open Houses (PIOH) and Workshops for the public and concerned agencies will coincide with each stage of the study process. Consultation inputs to each study stage is illustrated schematically in the following display.

External agencies provide valuable support by identifying compliance issues (laws, regulations, policies and programs) and other areas of concern within their jurisdiction as well as professional expertise and local knowledge.

External Agencies to be consulted throughout the EA study include Provincial Ministries/Agencies, State Departments/Agencies, U.S. and Canadian Federal Agencies, Municipalities and First Nation Groups.

Public Consultation During the EA



Note: additional meetings will be held from time to time as required

Do you agree with the proposed Consultation Plan?

*A public hearing on the analysis of practical alternatives is mandatory under NEPA



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Supporting Documents to the ToR

The following supporting documents have been prepared to provide background information regarding this study:

- Canada-U.S.-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Partnership Transportation Problems and Opportunities Report (January 2004);
- The FHWA/NEPA Planning and Approval Process;
- Preliminary Description of Existing Environment and Potential Effects;
- Alternatives Generation Criteria;
- Proposed Factors to Assess Feasibility of the Opportunity Corridors;
- Typical Elements of Concept Design;
- Activities Following Approval of the EA; and
- Proposed schedule for conducting the OEA.

The supporting documents are not subject to an approval decision by the Minister of the Environment.



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Submission to the Ontario Minister of the Environment (MOE)

- A draft Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference (TOR) is now available for review. Comments on the draft TOR are to be submitted directly to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) no later than **April 16th, 2004**.
- MTO will consider all comments received on the draft TOR in preparing the formal document for submission to the Minister of the Environment in Spring 2004.
- Once the formal TOR is submitted, members of the public and government reviewers have a 30-day period to provide comments to the Minister. The Minister will consider all comments received in evaluating the TOR. Within 12 weeks of submission, the Minister will make a decision whether or not to approve the TOR.
- The following measures will be taken to elicit comments on the formal TOR:
 - Post a summary of the TOR and contact information for sending comments on its Environmental Assessment Activities Website;
 - Place an advertisement in local newspapers;
 - Send letters to all individuals on its project mailing list;
 - Post the complete TOR document on the project website: www.PartnershipBorderStudy.com; and
 - Provide copies of the TOR to libraries and municipal offices that have been used in the past for this project.

NEPA Purpose and Need

A Purpose and Need Statement is currently being drafted in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Purpose and Need Statement is a brief statement circulated to U.S. federal agencies with responsibility for approvals and permits related to the project.

Agencies are requested to indicate any concerns re: the purpose or process for the EIS; FHWA considers these concerns in finalizing the Purpose and Need Statement.

Once the Purpose and Need Statement is finalized, scoping of the project can begin.

Next Steps

After this Public Information Open House (PIOH), the Partnership will:

- Review the comments received and respond to any questions.
- Finalize the EA Terms of Reference.
- Submit the EA Terms of Reference to MOE for approval*.

** The Minister of the Environment will conduct a 30-day public and government review of the EA Terms of Reference prior to making a decision.*

Thank you for attending!



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Your Input is IMPORTANT to this Study!

Please leave us your comments or contact us via:

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