

Myth Busters

The Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Environmental Assessment (EA) was established to identify the location for a new crossing of the Detroit River, a new plaza for border inspection, and a new access road. Since the study was initiated in January 2005, the DRIC study team has provided information about the study through more than 100 community consultation activities, including Public Information Open Houses, workshops and other meetings. The team also provides a website (www.partnershipborderstudy.com), updated regularly, which contains a wealth of information about the study. The following information has been compiled to debunk some common myths surrounding the DRIC study and to clarify the DRIC study team's objectives.

Myth	Fact
Myth: The increase in truck traffic will cause further pollution in our city and the DRIC study team is not taking any steps to address the air quality problems that this city will have to contend with.	Environment Fact: Our air quality specialists are working in consultation with provincial and federal agencies to identify the air quality impacts for crossing, plaza and access road options through a combination of field measurement and modelling. They are also working to identify how these impacts can be mitigated.
Myth: As a provincial road, trucks will be allowed to transport hazardous materials on the “superhighway” that will leave our community vulnerable to potential devastating disasters.	Fact: The transportation of hazardous materials is highly regulated and the regulations are enforced. Hazardous materials currently travel throughout the province on highways, municipal roads, and by rail.
Myth: By preserving Ojibway you are saving frogs and killing people.	Fact: The Highway 3/Huron Church corridor has been the main arterial road from Highway 401 to the border since the construction of Highway 401 in the 1950s. We are attempting to improve upon existing conditions. The Ojibway Prairie Complex is an important community resource. Three levels of government protect this fragile and unique area – municipal, provincial and federal – making the construction of a freeway through these lands virtually impossible.
Myth: Eighteen schools are located within close proximity of the access road and inspection plaza options. As a result, our children's health is at risk.	Fact: Sensitive areas, such as schools, places of worship and historic sites, are being given careful consideration as the DRIC study team works to identify options that avoid or limit impacts and identify how impacts can be mitigated. We are paying close attention to results from other ongoing studies, including a Health Canada study that is looking specifically at impacts in the Windsor area and will incorporate the results of these studies into our mitigation plans.

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Access Road

Myth: The DRIC study team is proposing a 12-lane at-grade superhighway that will divide our city in two.

Fact: We are only proposing a six-lane extension to Highway 401 to accommodate traffic predictions. We are looking at five options – tunnelling, two options with a depressed freeway, and two options with an at-grade freeway. All options include service roads for local access. A combination of the five options is also possible.

Myth: The DRIC study team is not seriously considering tunnelling as an option.

Fact: Tunnelling is one of the five alternative access road concepts under active consideration.

Myth: The options proposed by the DRIC study team will not take trucks off our city streets.

Fact: All access road options currently being studied by the DRIC study team will separate international traffic from local traffic.

Myth: Tunnelling is the best option to reduce air quality impacts.

Fact: No one knows at this time if tunnelling is the best option. The DRIC study team is conducting comprehensive technical studies of the five options, looking at the advantages and disadvantages of each, and will present the findings to the public in December 2006 with the goal of presenting the preferred option in 2007.

Myth: The current proposal for the access road is not consistent with existing land use.

Fact: The homes and businesses along Highway 3/Huron Church Road are already located along the main arterial road from Highway 401 to the border. Highway 3 is a provincial highway and has been for 75 years.

Myth: The DRIC study team is conducting tests and studies that will favour an at-grade freeway.

Fact: The DRIC EA study is open, transparent and fully accessible to the public for scrutiny and evaluation. All study documents are available online at www.partnershipborderstudy.com.

Myth: Plans for the redirection of traffic during the construction phase will severely impact local traffic patterns.

Fact: We have decades of Ontario-wide experience at maintaining traffic flows with minimum disruptions. These lessons and practices will be put in place during the construction staging of this project.

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Environmental Assessment

Myth: The DRIC study team will recommend the cheapest solution.

Fact: The DRIC study team has been directed to recommend the solution that provides the best balance of transportation benefits with environmental (including community) impacts.

Myth: The DRIC study team is looking for a quick fix to the border issue.

Fact: The DRIC study team is undertaking a thorough and systematic study, leading to the identification of a new border crossing system. This bi-national planning process commenced in 2005, and is scheduled for completion in 2007. In Canada, the final recommendation for a preferred access road, plaza and river crossing will be documented in an EA report. This report will be submitted to Ontario's Ministry of the Environment and to federal authorities in for review and approval. This would provide for construction of a new crossing by 2013, meeting increased traffic demands. The study team continues to explore ways to accelerate the schedule while continuing thorough investigations of the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives.

Myth: The DRIC study team is not using forward thinking or "state-of-the-art" approaches to developing this transportation system. They are using out-dated technologies and methodologies.

Fact: The latest in engineering technologies will be considered during the planning, design and construction of this transportation system.

Myth: The people of Windsor-Essex County have not been made aware of this project until decisions had already been made.

Fact: The thoughts, views and opinions of the people of Windsor-Essex County are important to the success of this study. Between early 2005 and August 2006, the Canadian study team participated in over 100 community consultation activities.

Our next round of PIOHs is scheduled for December of this year. However, there will be opportunities for the study team and the community to discuss options before then. We encourage all residents and business owners to visit our website, contact us by phone, email or fax, or visit our storefront office at 949 McDougall Avenue, Suite 200, Windsor.

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Myth: The majority of traffic on the bridge comes from outside of the city of Windsor.

Fact: 50% of cross-border truck traffic is local, meaning it originates from or is destined to locations in the Windsor-Detroit area and is essential to the regional economy and local jobs.

Myth: The study team is not from Windsor and doesn't care about what happens to the people of Windsor.

Fact: The people of Windsor-Essex County deserve the best talent available to lead this project. Several senior Ontario staff, with decades of experience, recognized for their knowledge, skills and professionalism, have been assigned to this project to ensure Windsor gets the best solution possible. Furthermore, we have an office in Windsor staffed by local people so that residents have storefront access to information and assistance. The Minister has also assigned a full-time staff person, based in Windsor and from Windsor, to advise her on this project to ensure local voices and concerns are heard, and acted upon.

Myth: The DRIC study team is not taking into account Sam Schwartz's recommendations.

Fact: The DRIC proposals are consistent with key elements of the Schwartz report

- depressed roadway on Talbot Road
- roadway adjacent to E.C. Row
- plaza in Brighton Beach
- and one of the DRIC river crossing alternatives is consistent with Schwartz proposal.

Access road is different from the Schwartz proposal just along the two-kilometre section of Huron Church Road between Highway 401 and E.C. Row. Other Schwartz recommendations are being carried out as part of the *Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving* strategy.

Myth: The new transportation system will not improve the quality of life for the people in Windsor in any way.

Fact: The alternatives currently under consideration will separate international traffic from local traffic; improve the environment; minimize noise and air pollution; and improve the overall transportation situation within this community.

Local jobs rely on a safe, secure and reliable border crossing, and that will be the result of the DRIC study.

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Myth: The decision is already made. The DRIC public consultations are merely a public relations tactic.

Fact: The study is ongoing and no final decisions have been made. Community consultation is an essential part of the EA process. We will continue our dialogue with the public. Comprehensive technical studies are underway. These will help us, the study team, and the public, to gain improved understanding of the potential benefits and impacts of each alternative.

Property Procurement

Myth: The construction of the plaza and access road will lead to diminished property value and the DRIC study team is not addressing this concern.

Fact: Given the nature and extent of land uses and development along the Detroit River in both Canada and the United States, it is simply not possible to develop a new river crossing, inspection plaza and access road that entirely avoids impacts on local communities. The DRIC study team is making every effort to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to the greatest practical extent. Once a preferred option and required property are identified, the government will work with homeowners and business owners to procure property in a mutually agreeable way.

River Crossing

Myth: No one knows how large the caverns are under the Windsor Salt mines. It will be impossible to build a crossing in that location.

Fact: Foundations investigations, beginning September, will provide improved understanding of the effects of the solution mining of salt deposits on the bedrock stability in two of the areas where a new international bridge spanning the Detroit River could be located. This information will help us to ensure that a new crossing is built on a site with a stable foundation for the bridge supports.