
News Release Communiqué

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BORDER TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP IDENTIFIES CENTRAL AREA OF ANALYSIS FOR A NEW DETROIT-WINDSOR BORDER CROSSING

WINDSOR – The governments of Canada, the United States, Ontario and Michigan announced today that they have made significant progress towards developing a new river crossing at the Detroit-Windsor Gateway.

Applying the evaluation criteria jointly established by both Canada and the United States has led the Border Transportation Partnership to concentrate future study of a new border crossing and inspection plazas to the industrial area of West Windsor. This area extends north generally from Broadway Boulevard to the vicinity of Brock Street on the Canadian side, and a corresponding area on the U.S. side extending upriver from Zug Island to just south of the Ambassador Bridge (see attached map). The analysis area, together with the preferred connecting road from Highway 401 in Canada, is shown on the attached map.

As part of the next phase of environmental studies, the Border Transportation Partnership will consider all aspects of developing the border crossing system, which includes a river crossing as well as appropriate customs plaza locations and connecting roads on both the U.S. and Canadian sides of the border. Further detailed study, technical analysis and public consultation will be conducted to identify the best end-to-end solution within this area.

With this announcement, the Partnership is on track to identify the preferred location of a new river crossing by mid-2007. The environmental review requirements of both countries have been, and will continue to be carefully applied throughout this process.

“Today the Partnership has taken a major step forward in the planning process to develop additional border capacity at the Detroit-Windsor gateway,” said Federal Transport Minister Jean-C. Lapierre. “Canada shares a dynamic multi-billion dollar trading relationship with the United States. It is therefore important that we continue to move forward on this project in both a practical and timely fashion to ensure no disruption to the safe, efficient and secure movement of people and goods across the border in the Windsor-Detroit area.”

“Relieving border congestion is a top priority for the McGuinty Government,” said Ontario Transportation Minister Harinder Takhar. “Forty-one per cent of Ontario-U.S. trade flows through the Windsor-Detroit border crossing, making it Canada’s premier trade gateway. We look forward to public and stakeholder input as a vital part of the ongoing Environmental Assessment process.”

“The Border Transportation Partnership is a strong, respectful collaboration between the United States and Canada. Together we have taken another important step toward concluding this study. Now we will continue our commitment to public participation and input during our careful analysis of impacts and options as we move forward to provide safe, efficient border crossings that strengthen our regional economy and quality of life,” said Gloria J. Jeff, Director of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The Canada-United States-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Partnership is comprised of technical experts and officials from Transport Canada, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and the Michigan Department of Transportation. The Partnership's purpose is to improve the movement of people and goods across the United States-Canada border in the Detroit-Windsor Gateway.

In October, the partners announced that the south and east alternatives were eliminated from further study as the result of analysis. With today's announcement, additional crossing alternatives have been eliminated:

- The capacity provided by the Detroit River Tunnel Partnership's two-lane truckway proposal was determined to be inadequate to serve the region's long-term needs.
- It was also determined that a six-lane freeway following the Canada Southern (CASO) Rail corridor in Canada to a new river crossing, would have caused major community impacts in significant urban areas on the Canadian side of the border.
- Alternative crossings in the Morton Industrial Park area in Windsor were determined to not be practical because the proposed U.S. plaza site in River Rouge would have resulted in significant economic impacts and time delays.
- Twinning the existing Ambassador Bridge was determined to not be practical based on the community impacts of the proposed plaza and access road in Canada. The Partnership will continue to explore the U.S. customs plaza area of the Ambassador Bridge to connect to a potential customs plaza on the Canadian side in the remaining area of continued analysis.

The start of the formal environmental review was announced in February 2005. In June 2005, the Partnership presented the 15 alternative locations for river crossings, along with the associated inspection plazas and roadways to connect the plazas to the freeway systems in both countries. Eight other options, including southerly routes through LaSalle, and Amherstburg, Ontario and communities extending south from Ecorse to Trenton, Michigan, and the area upriver near Belle Isle, were eliminated in early October 2005.

The Border Transportation Partnership will soon hold public meetings to present the technical assessment to date, and seek public and stakeholder comments on the preliminary list of practical alternatives. Public Information Open Houses are scheduled in the Windsor area during the week of November 28, 2005 and public meetings are scheduled in the Detroit area during the week of December 5, 2005.

In March 2006, the Partnership will hold Public Information Open Houses and public meetings in Canada and the United States to present a final list of practical alternatives.

The governments of Canada, the United States, Ontario and Michigan are committed to an efficient and secure Windsor-Detroit Gateway. The development of additional border capacity is a national priority in both countries to support the continued growth in trade between Canada and the United States.

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