



TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO

Advocating For Environmentally, Socially & Economically Sustainable Public Transportation and Freight Movement

Box 6418, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X3  
[www.transport-action.ca/ontario](http://www.transport-action.ca/ontario)

Phone: 416.504.3934  
[ontario@transport-action.ca](mailto:ontario@transport-action.ca)

## PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

**TOPIC:** DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL CROSSING (DRIC)

**PROJECT GOAL:** Advocate for cancellation of this project and replacement with sustainable alternatives

**LAST UPDATE:** June 9, 2010

### **TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO CONTACTS:**

Natalie Litwin, Committee Chair  
Dan Hammond

### **BACKGROUND:**

There are currently three road-based international crossings between Southwestern Ontario and Southeastern Michigan. - the Ambassador Bridge (AB), the Windsor-Detroit Tunnel and the Blue Water Bridge (Sarnia/Port Huron.) The DRIC project involves construction of a third bridge approximately three km downriver from the AB. There are three Canadian components to the DRIC project: the 10 km long Windsor-Essex Parkway (a new 6 lane below-grade limited access freeway and service road connecting Highway 401 to the new bridge), a Canadian customs plaza and the new bridge itself. The USA project components are its share of the bridge, a customs plaza and an interchange connecting the plaza to Highway I-75. The total cost of the project (USA and Canada) is estimated at \$5.3 Billion. The cost of the Windsor-Essex Parkway portion is estimated at \$1.6B. The entire project will be funded by the two federal governments, Ontario, Michigan and private partners (if any can be found).

In Canada, the Environmental Assessment for the Parkway was approved by Ontario in August, 2009. A federal screening level environmental assessment on all three parts of the Canadian project was approved in December, 2009.

There are also some private projects that will expand international transportation capacity. Borealis Infrastructure and CP Rail, co-owners of the Windsor-Detroit rail tunnel, plan to build an adjacent tunnel to accommodate larger double-stacked railway cars and possibly

high-speed cross-border passenger service. And AB has initiated work to construct a 6 lane replacement span, but its permit application has been set aside by the US Coast Guard.

Transport Action Ontario recommends the cancellation of the DRIC for the following reasons:

- Declining traffic levels/economic climate do not justify a fourth road-based crossing.
- Dividing toll revenues from declining traffic among three bridges and one tunnel is economic folly. Taxpayers will end up paying for the DRIC project.
- Border delays are usually ten minutes or less. Delay times can be managed by increased staffing of customs booths and freight pre-clearance.
- Alternatives such as intermodal rail were inadequately assessed.
- The need for a new crossing for security reasons is invalid, as an area security threat would trigger closing of all crossings. In the unlikely event of an actual attack, there is sufficient capacity to keep freight moving.
- Windsor-Essex Parkway will negatively impact endangered and threatened species in the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve.

Transport Action Ontario has identified a checklist of alternatives to the DRIC that should be studied further. These include various freight and passenger rail alternatives, urban transit, bicycle lanes and a replacement span for the AB. For further details, consult the Transport Action Ontario website.

### **STATUS AND RECENT ACTIVITIES:**

In December, 2009, Infrastructure Ontario and Ontario's Ministry of Transportation issued a Request for Proposals to design, build, finance and maintain the Parkway.

The AB has filed a federal lawsuit in Washington against the Canadian and US governments. AB and the Sierra Club of Canada have both filed in federal court for a judicial review of the approval of the screening level EA.

In April, 2010, the Canadian federal government surprisingly announced that it will provide a sum of \$550 Million to the cash-strapped Michigan government, to pay for its share of the DRIC bridge.

A joint news conference was held by Transport Action Ontario and Sierra Club of Canada on May 13, 2010 to outline the reasons that they oppose the DRIC project.

### **HOW TO LEARN MORE:**

Contact Committee Chair or members

Review material on Transport Action website:

- Information from 13 May news conference on DRIC
- DRIC Forum Summary
- Transport Action-Ontario President issues statement on DRIC

### **NEXT STEPS:**

Continued advocacy using news conferences and letters to newspapers and politicians.