

**Brian Masse September 9, 2002**

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## **Border congestion leaves Windsor jammed by trucks**

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LISA PRIEST

WINDSOR About 12,000 trucks snake through city streets each day in search of North America's busiest border crossing, leaving diesel fumes, traffic jams and the feeling of a city under siege in their wake. The lineup has delayed fire trucks, caused business profits to wilt and made children frightened to cross the street. Not to mention the thousands of frustrated residents making their way home after work.

Though the truck traffic is testament to the success of the North American free-trade agreement, getting across the border since Sept. 11 has been a recurring, 18-wheeler nightmare. The problem is so severe that U.S. President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Jean Chretien are to meet in Detroit on Monday to discuss border security at this continent's worst transportation bottleneck.

"It's been an absolute horror story," said Skip McMahon, director of special projects for the Ambassador Bridge, which sees the vast majority of commercial truck traffic.

"Windsor should not have to put up with this any more."

But this long-ignored, blue-collar city has been putting up with a daily lineup of massive rigs, which at its worst spanned some

9.3-kilometres down Huron Church Road, one of the municipality's major arteries.

The trucks appear as an intimidating wall of steel and chrome. Dwarfed in their presence are mothers pushing strollers, students on their way to school and seniors nervously trying to navigate their way to the grocery store.

"We used to be like a bedroom community of Detroit," Paul LeFave, regional representative of Al's Cartage Ltd., said of the city of 200,000 residents.

Today, that bedroom is more like a smelly truck stop.

Residents who once enjoyed easy access to Detroit are finding they can barely move through their own neighbourhoods. The days of going to Michigan for a baseball game, a quick bite, or filling up on a cheap tank of gas are gone.

"You just don't go there any more. It's [U.S. Customs] so understaffed," said Debbie Dent, a customs broker.

Once keen to enjoy a favourable exchange rate in a safe city, Americans are also thinking twice about making the journey through a dark, dank, winding tunnel that runs under the Detroit River. Favourite activities such as fur shopping, casino gambling, or visiting the cheesy downtown strip clubs can come with a long border delay.

The increased traffic was a predictable byproduct of the more than \$160-billion in commercial trade that flows across the border at Windsor each year.

The problem has gained the attention of a Canadian-U.S. task force, currently reviewing proposals to ease congestion.

One high-profile, \$450-million proposal by CP Rail and the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System is looking for \$150-million from the government to develop a rail tunnel into a new truck and rail tunnel.

Canadian Transit Corp., which owns the Ambassador Bridge, has completed key engineering work on a \$265-million plan that would rebuild a border plaza and convert the municipal road leading to the bridge into a limited-access highway. Canadian Transit would shoulder more than \$100-million of that cost.

A \$14-million plan for truck and passenger ferries is another option. Mich-Can International Bridge Co. also has a plan to filter traffic from Huron Church Road to an expressway and a parkway and then build a bridge from there across the Detroit River.

Though all the plans are being considered and debated, there is one thing Windsorites can certainly agree on: something must be done.

"Why should the residents live in fear like this?" asked New Democrat MP Brian Masse, whose Windsor West riding is most affected.

Despite the benefits of NAFTA to the Canadian economy, Windsorites say they are paying the price with cracked roads, diesel-spewing rigs and a rapidly eroding quality of life.

On the Ambassador Bridge alone, truck traffic has increased tenfold over the past three decades -- 359,000 commercial trucks crossed the bridge in 1965, while in 2000, 3.5 million made the crossing -- Mr. McMahon said.

"Before, the border was focused on efficiency and trade. Since Sept. 11, the whole world changed," Mr. McMahon said. "Now, it's all about safety and security."

But Windsor residents are also concerned about their safety.

Firehall captain Bob Waronchak, whose station is a block away from the bridge entrance, said firefighters have driven into head-on traffic a number of times to get to an emergency.

"We've got the sirens going, the horns going, and we try to squeeze in past the trucks," Mr. Waronchak said. "It's affected our response times. And with us, seconds count."

The truck problem prompted tough-talking Windsor mayor Mike Hurst to threaten a blockade of city streets over the summer.

"The volumes are so large and so ever present that the impact is literally being felt seven days a week, 24-hours a day," Mr. Hurst said.

Some trucks, keen to avoid the Huron Church Road queue to the Ambassador Bridge, have taken a more circuitous route through downtown's Wyandotte Street West. But once other truckers learned of that shortcut, there were lineups blocks long that backed past a school, a daycare centre and the university.

"Hog trucks went by one day and the smell was horrendous," said Joe Younan, principal of J.E. Benson Elementary School, where the windows are often kept closed to drown out the noise and smell of the trucks. "We are trapped in here."

When children are finished for the day, there are also worries as they try to make their way across the street.

At a daycare centre, workers run to a nearby monitoring station to check the pollution levels before letting children outside.

"Some days, the children just don't go out," said Robbin Stewart, child-care co-ordinator.

All this leaves a city, always eager to shed its reputation as a lunch-bucket town, with an even worse moniker: world's most backlogged border.

And it brings a financial cost.

David Bradley, chief executive officer of the Canadian Trucking Alliance, describes it as the "single most important issue in Canada right now."

"There were always problems at the border prior to Sept. 11," he said. "What this has done has increased people's awareness of it."

## **Brian Masse November 15, 2002**

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### **Border forum angers residents**

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Billed as a forum for citizens to express opinions and have questions answered, many residents who attended a city meeting Thursday on short-term border improvement proposals stormed out angry.

"It wasn't a meeting -- this was a farce," said Marjorie Hart. "It was all these booths, all selling their stuff like a product."

Local ward politicians like councillors Ron Jones and Charlie Hotham, as well as Windsor West MP Brian Masse, joined the outcry.

Instead of hearing from the various border proponents and then asking questions in an open session, it was up to individuals to wander from booth to booth, query each proponent on their plans and then pinhole the politicians.

The hundreds of interested residents that crammed the Holiday Inn Select made for a chaotic mix and much frustration.

"The people of Windsor West deserve to have their questions answered," said Jones.

No public meeting

Masse said it was "reprehensible" that the provincial and federal governments gave a committee of bureaucrats 60 days to find ways to spend \$300 million on improving Windsor's border crossings and they "haven't held a single public meeting."

Added Masse: "These proposals have significant ramifications for people and properties ... (and) they're going to make a decision without having seen a face of those directly affected?"

The problem was clearly laid out in July 1999 Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) report: "Canada's immigration system, because it is both open and accessible, is vulnerable to exploitation and abuse . . . this is of chief concern for Canada's national security."

The CSIS report went on to state that more than 50 terrorist groups, including the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, Kurdistan Workers Party and Tamil Tigers were believed to be operating in Canada.

Unfortunately, it appears that the federal Liberals have opted to take a soft stance with many of these groups.

For example, of the seven groups banned under Canada's anti-terror legislation, Bill C-36, Hezbollah is not among them. Even the National Post's recent report that Hezbollah has been using Canada as a base to raise money and purchase supplies to carry out attacks against Israel has had little impact.

Why? Simply because Hezbollah has two different wings: a military wing and a so-called "charitable" wing that is supposedly working for peace in the Middle East. But it should be obvious to the Liberals -- including Graham -- that Hezbollah, even with a "charitable" wing, is still a terrorist organization that believes in killing innocent people and is a threat to world security.

Our country's lax policy of checking into refugee claims has allowed people from dangerous parts of the world to immigrate to Canada. Even former Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan was at times unable to deport suspected terrorists from this country, including Manickavasagam Suresh, who is believed to be a member of the Tamil Tigers.

Meanwhile, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) recently released figures that 606 people suspected of crime, war crimes and terrorism were allowed into Canada on special permits in 2001, up from 464 in 2000.

Susan Scarlett of CIC told the media that people with terrorist and war-crimes backgrounds are typically given access to Canada to attend peace talks, international conferences and sign treaties.

This sort of lax attitude about terrorist groups, potential immigrants and suspected criminals in Canada has to be a concern across the U.S. border.

If Comartin and Masse really want to solve the problems involved with crossing the Canada-U.S. border, they should press our federal government to do two things:

First, take a tougher stand to weed out the criminals and terrorists that are already here. Second, set up a perimeter border around North America in conjunction with the U.S. that would reduce the need for a heavily patrolled and policed border between the two countries.

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Adding to the confusion was the fact the federal/provincial joint management committee, which will make its recommendation by Nov. 25, did not attend the city-organized meeting Thursday but sent representatives of a binational working group looking at long-term border transportation solutions.

"Now that I have all this information, what do I do now?" asked Hart.

She and her husband worry about the health impacts all the trucks going through Windsor are having on their three children under the age of seven.

Her husband Tim Rocheleau said residents should have a say before the bureaucrats make a selection: "What if they make the wrong decision?"

"We're considering moving, it's so bad," said Hart.

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## **The border; Fixing the real problem**

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NDP MPs Joe Comartin and Brian Masse recently held a news conference to protest racial profiling and the treatment of local Muslim Canadians and landed immigrants at the border.

The two MPs are trying to gather evidence of harassment that local residents experience while entering the U.S. to give to Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham. And their hope is that Graham will want to take a harder line with the U.S. after examining all of this evidence.

But taking a harder line with the U.S. isn't going to fix the real problem. There won't be any let up on the U.S. side until Canada takes action to meet the legitimate concerns of the American government. That means imposing tougher immigration and refugee standards that will stop members of terrorist groups from entering Canada.

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**BYLINE:** Roseann Danese Star Staff Reporter  
**SOURCE:** Windsor StarTRAFFIC

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## **Border process failing residents: MP**

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An angry group of about 250 Windsor residents showed up for a public meeting Saturday to denounce the government's handling of a \$300-million plan to ease truck traffic at the border.

Many living in South Windsor and the city's west end expressed their frustrations over the lack of information surrounding the secret recommendations made by a federal-provincial joint border committee.

They fear the proposals will have devastating consequences on their property values and serious repercussions on their health because of increased levels of pollution spewing from the trucks.

Some stood to speak out against a plan by the Detroit River Tunnel Partnership (DRTP), which has proposed a 14-km route from Highway 401 to I-75 in Detroit by using an existing CPR rail corridor and converting the rail tunnel for truck traffic. The meeting was organized by Windsor West MP Brian Masse.

"I think this process stinks with regards to not being publicly open and transparent," Masse said. "We don't even know all the proposals. So how can people intelligently look at the concerns that are very legitimate to their properties or their businesses if they can't at least pull together that information?"

Sean Baker, whose home backs onto Mic Mac Park, worries about the Ambassador Bridge plan to create a controlled-access parkway for cars and trucks from the 401 to E.C. Row Expressway and new truck route from a holding station near the expressway to the Ambassador Bridge.

The 80-acre holding station for trucks would literally be in Baker's back yard. "If this compound goes in the west end, I will be looking at it out my back window."

Baker, who oversees the operations at a logistics company that finds carriers to move freight on behalf of other carriers, said he sees truck drivers stuck in the offices of custom brokers for three and four hours because the steps they took to pre-clear shipments failed. He said none of the border proposals will fix the problems of truck traffic congestion because the process to move the goods across the international border is flawed and there aren't enough customs officers.

"It's a process failure right now and we need to fix that," he said. "Whether people like it or not, every commercial commodity they pick up, even if it's a bag of sugar, it has been on a truck. So we have to do something to improve that."

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**BYLINE:** Dave Hall Star Staff Reporter  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star RECOMMENDATIONS; WINDSOR-DETROIT BORDER CRISIS  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Dia Mossa  
**NOTE:** EDITOR'S NOTE: Dave Hall can be reached at 255-5777, Ext.408.

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## **Border study criticized; Talbot Road residents say Wayne State proposals don't solve short-term problems**

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A study suggesting short- and long-term solutions to the border traffic crisis was met with skepticism by a group of city residents and politicians Saturday.

The report, prepared by VITAL Research Group at Wayne State University, recommends a staging centre for trucks outside the city limits, expanded use of the barge system across the Detroit River, real-time traffic control to smooth the flow of trucks and, eventually, a bypass around the city limits leading to a third crossing.

The proposed bypass would cut through greenfield space between LaSalle and Amherstburg, connecting to a new crossing and a direct route to I-75 in Michigan.

"It's important that even the long-term solutions start now because this traffic situation will continue to get worse and loss of time is critical to easing the problems for Windsor residents," said Dia Mossa, project manager for the group.

### Neighbourhood problems

But Gino Fracas, a long-time resident of Talbot Road which carries more than 12,000 trucks a day between Highway 401 and the Ambassador Bridge, said the short-term solutions do nothing to solve his neighbourhood's problems.

"We have to find a way of sharing the problems in the short-term," said Fracas. "Expanded use of E.C. Row has to be part of the equation. Continuing to have 12,000 trucks a day use Talbot Road is simply not a good solution nor is it fair."

Councillor Ron Jones, who represents Ward 2 on Windsor's west side, said many of the suggestions have already been endorsed by council but said he also had concerns about the issues facing the residents of Talbot Road.

"My fear is that expensive short-term solutions may end up being long-term solutions and that, in our desire to find relief for those residents along the corridor, we may end up making their problems worse in the long run," said Jones.

Brian Masse, who represents Windsor West on Parliament Hill, said any solution needs to create more capacity at the border and along Huron Church.

"You don't need to go through Windsor to get from Montreal from Florida, you have to under the current system but you shouldn't need to," said Masse. "We need to find a way to separate the traffic that should be bypassing the city from the traffic that doesn't need to.

"If we do that, we create more local capacity and also reduce the volume of trucks on city streets."

Masse also pointed out that any decision by the joint provincial-federal committee could be delayed by the impending provincial election.

More delays

"No matter who forms the next government, there will be a shuffling of portfolios that could delay this process even longer," said Masse.

Mossa said the report has been forwarded to provincial and federal politicians but so far no reply has been received.

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**COLUMN:** SHEILA WISDOM  
**BYLINE:** Sheila Wisdom  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star  
**ILLUSTRATION:** SHEILA WISDOM  
**NOTE:** EDITOR'S NOTE: Sheila Wisdom's column appears every secondMonday.

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## **Bridging border woes**

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'A disaster for the auto industry ... this current boondoggle ... stupidity.'

Comments like these from Dennis DesRosiers, a well-respected Canadian automotive analyst, coupled with blunt opposition from Windsor Mayor Mike Hurst and others, sent the federal and provincial government's short-term plan for border improvements back to the provincial cabinet last week.

The plan, which was leaked the day before it was supposedly to be announced, has been billed by some as a trial balloon. Within hours of the leak, shots were being fired from all quarters at the balloon. Comments and opinions about the process that had been reserved for private discussions became public. City council called an emergency meeting, neighbourhoods began organizing in opposition, MP Brian Masse threatened civil disobedience and DesRosiers was motivated enough to fire off his thoughts to various and sundry, including the media.

The comments of auto analyst DesRosiers carry weight. After all, the purpose of the proposed improvements is to support the movement of goods across the border and most of the goods being moved at this border crossing are within the automotive sector.

Critical of the overall plan, DesRosiers has commented favourably on some of its elements; connecting Highway 401 to E.C. Row, widening E.C. Row and removing some stoplights on Huron Church met with his approval.

His criticisms focus on three areas: the impact on the auto industry, the impact on urban planning and city growth and the diversion of taxpayers' money away from the real solution.

DesRosiers says that the creation of a dedicated truck route through west side neighbourhoods would be a disaster for the auto industry and the city.

Right now, there is a bottleneck for international truck traffic at the Ambassador Bridge. According to DesRosiers, this plan will do nothing to eliminate that, it will merely "get trucks to the bridge faster," where they will "have to wait longer." Longer waits mean longer idling times, more frustration for drivers, lost time to companies and increased pollution for west-side residents. A new dedicated truck route only moves this lineup of trucks over about a half kilometre to the west.

Looking at the impact on the city and particularly the west side, DesRosiers says, "This new highway together with the upgrade of Huron Church will totally divide the City of Windsor. About one-third of the City of Windsor will be cut off from the rest of the city."

#### Provincial money

DesRosiers estimates that a new dedicated truck route could cost upwards of \$800 million, something he describes as "a total, utter waste of taxpayers' money." This is merely diverting "scarce federal and provincial money from solving the problem into a very expensive and useless new highway."

To DesRosiers the problem is plain and simple. "There is only one lane of pavement for trucks between Detroit and Windsor and it happens to be over the Ambassador Bridge."

His answer is also clear. "The ONLY solution to the Windsor border crossing problem is more pavement between the City of Windsor and Detroit.

"Until there is at least one and ideally two additional border crossings, then the border problem is going to get worse, not better."

Apparently DaimlerChrysler president Ed Brust and CAW president Buzz Hargrove agree with the need for more crossings. Hurst says both have sent him letters supporting "additional capacity" at the border. As Hurst puts it, "three major players" have identified the need for more pavement between Windsor and Detroit.

It is clear that if we want to preserve the current investment of the auto industry in this area and secure our position for the future, the border must be improved.

The challenge for the City of Windsor is finding the way to make this happen without turning more neighbourhoods into local versions of the Ohio Turnpike.

The provincial cabinet was expected to deal with the plan last Wednesday. That didn't happen. It is rumoured that the plan is on cabinet's agenda for this Wednesday. What happens if the plan is approved? Hurst says, "we haven't given up the fight by any stretch of the imagination." He says that any plan would require an environmental assessment and the city would use this process to "vigorously" oppose the plan.

Describing the hearings under the EA process as "rigorous, transparent and public," Hurst says it would be the "surest way of making sure we separate the good, the bad and the ugly."

But at the same time that we are following the \$300 million bouncing ball to see where it will land, work on a long-term solution is also being done by a bi-national study group.

It is expected that this group will be releasing a report on transportation alternatives by mid-June. Hurst has higher hopes for the result of this work which is being done by a group made up of Canadian and American representatives.

But both Hurst and DesRosiers fear that a decision to put in the dedicated truck route would favour the bridge and undermine the work of the long-term study. DesRosiers puts it this way: "Why spend any money on a white elephant -- this is a complete waste of money and creates a delay in getting at the real solution."

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**BYLINE:** Dave Battagello Star Border Reporter  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star

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## **Border inaction angers MP**

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Windsor West MP Brian Masse has blasted senior government officials for doing nothing since the federal-provincial \$300-million border truck route solution received final approval more than four months ago.

As unending truck lineups along Huron Church Road continue to cause havoc daily, Masse raised his concerns last week in the House of Commons and in a letter to the federal Standing Committee on Industry, where he requested an immediate study of border crossing capacity with the U.S.

Over a year has passed since Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Premier Ernie Eves announced the \$300-million border infrastructure package for Windsor and established a 60-day time frame for solutions.

"The whole file has been void of leadership from the beginning," Masse said. "The governments became sucked in by the lobbying of multi-million dollar corporations and the result is the plan is flawed. So, I think they are running from it now.

"There was no long-term planning evaluation done of the whole area."

### **New route criticized**

Masse was critical of the main highlight of the border solution which calls for a new Highway 401 connection with Lauzon Parkway and widened E.C. Row Expressway to accommodate U.S.-bound trucks to the Ambassador Bridge or proposed Mich-Can bridge and DRTP rail tunnel proposals.

"E.C. Row needs another lane right now for cars alone," Masse said. "To give it trucks you have to be mad. You are soon going to have 10s of thousands more people in Tecumseh and LaSalle. That will add a ton of traffic to the expressway.

"If there are backups, it's going to push more and more traffic to Tecumseh and Wyandotte roads which will be devastating to the city's economy."

Mary Johnson, communications adviser with Infrastructure Canada in Ottawa said she was not at liberty to discuss what work, if any, has occurred since the nine-point Windsor Gateway Action Plan received final approval at the end of May.

"We're committed to moving forward with the nine-point plan," Johnson said. "The details of what's been going on I can't discuss. But we are committed to moving forward and working with all parties involved."

Masse noted work should have at least been started on parts of the nine-point plan where there is heavy community support -- such as pre-clearance facilities or truck staging areas.

He also expressed frustration on how the Detroit-Windsor Ferry continues to remain a non-solution to both the federal and provincial governments.

#### WORK ON 401

Design work and soil testing has begun on widening a stretch of Highway 401 between the Walker Road exit in Windsor and Tilbury.

The work is unrelated to the border truck route debate, said Bob Nichols, spokesman for the Ministry of Transportation.

Construction will begin sometime early next year, he said.



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**SOURCE:** Windsor StarEFFECTS; HEALTH THREAT  
**NOTE:** EDITOR'S NOTE: dschmidt@thestar.canwest.com or 255-5586

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## **Gridlock, not traffic flow, poses health threat: MOH**

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There would be no health fears of diesel truck emissions along the Huron Church Road corridor -- if only the big rigs kept rolling and didn't stop, said local Medical Officer of Health Dr. Allen Heimann.

But as soon as the U.S.-bound truck traffic grinds to a halt, an environment ministry study released Tuesday shows pollution levels are enough of a concern that people in the area should remain indoors and avoid physical activity, Heimann said.

"Keep the trucks moving and the impact ... is negligible," he said. "It's a traffic congestion issue." Heimann's comments followed a briefing by officials from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment to local health and environmental stakeholders on the results of a preliminary air quality assessment related to the Ambassador Bridge traffic congestion.

The study showed that during "normal traffic movement (no delays), the average increase in particulate matter adjacent to the road was minimal."

But whenever truck traffic backed up, the study showed the increase in particulate matter was sufficient to change the local air quality index (AQI) by a complete level -- for example turning a "moderate" reading into "poor."

That concerns Brian Stocks, the provincial air quality manager for the Lung Association.

Many people, particularly asthmatics and seniors, suffer respiratory ailments at even moderate AQI levels, he said.

Stocks, along with Windsor police, noted truck congestion at the border is almost non-stop.

Truck traffic on Huron Church comes to a standstill "pretty well most days," said Windsor police Staff Sgt. Ed McNorton.

"On weekdays, there will be stopped truck traffic."

MP Brian Masse (NDP -- Windsor West) said: "It's not good enough to say if the trucks keep moving it's alright."

Masse said Heimann's advice for area residents when the trucks come to a standstill would create "a community of shut-ins ... so our lives are totally dominated by stalled traffic."

If there was political will, said Masse, governments could move fast to have thousands of the idling trucks facilitated across the border using an expanded version of the existing Detroit River truck ferry.

Derek Coronado of the Citizens Environment Alliance was unhappy with the study's conclusion that normal traffic movement has a "minimal" impact on local levels of particulate matter.

"I certainly don't agree with that," said Coronado, who questioned the scope of the study. "What does normal mean when it comes to truck traffic (on Huron Church)?"

He also faults the study's only summer monitoring dates -- July 3 and 4, 2003.

"They were measuring down here when it was a holiday," Coronado said.

Study co-author Michael Parker said those two days were smog advisory days, but admitted neither provided any idling trucks to measure.

"We certainly know, as people living in this community, that truck traffic is not what we want our kids to live and play near," said Ken Bondy, vice-president of Windsor's Centre for Environmental Health.

"I don't think trucks, free-flowing, are a good thing anywhere where there are densely populated areas," added Alan Halberstadt, co-chairman of the Windsor-Essex County Environmental Committee.

The environment ministry will be conducting additional monitoring and hopes to have an "air dispersion model" by this summer, Parker said. Those upcoming studies will help better assess how different weather and traffic patterns affect air pollution levels.

Both Health Canada and Environment Canada have also included Windsor in their own upcoming studies on the human and environmental impacts of air pollution.

#### MORE AMMUNITION

"This only goes to show what the people in the west end have been saying for years," said Ron Jones, Ward 2 councillor of the Huron Church Road ministry report.

"Certainly this talks about carcinogens on the west side. It certainly adds more ammunition to getting the trucks off Huron Church Road. We need an area outside of our neighbourhoods where they can process trucks and have them flow.

"Then the binational (group) says 'wait another three years.' We can't wait for that. We need to appeal to senior government to get this going. They are going to have to get off the mark."

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**BYLINE:** Dave Battagello

**SOURCE:** Windsor Star

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: CONSTRUCTION PLANS: This is a conceptual image, viewed from the U.S. side, of the Ambassador Bridge's plan to twin its crossing. The company says it can be completed by the summer of 2009.

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## **Second span on fast track: 'Time to get out of this rut,' says Ambassador Bridge boss**

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Fed up with government inaction, the Ambassador Bridge company Thursday outlined an aggressive plan to construct a second bridge and end Windsor's truck traffic problems.

"It's time to get out of this rut and get on with it," said Dan Stamper, president of the Ambassador Bridge. "Let's not remain stuck in the mud."

The Detroit International Bridge Company, controlled by trucking empire mastermind Manuel "Matty" Moroun, has filed permit applications with both U.S. and Canadian governments to build a new \$400-million Cdn span across the Detroit River.

Company officials said that after examining several options it makes the best business sense to build a second span right next to the current bridge, just metres to the west.

The company's plan calls for a new four-lane bridge with the potential to add two more lanes. The old bridge would be used for four lanes of traffic into the U.S., while the new bridge would carry traffic into Canada. Essentially the same customs and toll plazas would remain in place with some redesign and expansion on both sides of the border.

Stamper said the bridge could be built by summer 2009.

But Stamper said Moroun -- among the top property owners in Michigan -- remain open to other crossing routes if called for by local or senior governments.

"If they want it on Ojibway Parkway, Lauzon (Parkway) or somewhere else, that's fine," he said.

"We will look at it. Let's just get going."

Kevin Weeks, director of field operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Detroit, said staffing a new bridge should not be a problem.

When asked about security concerns from having two bridges in such close proximity, Weeks would only say a precedent has already been set in the area with twin bridges in Sarnia-Port Huron.

Mayor Eddie Francis said the city's lawyer for the border situation, David Estrin, has been asked to examine the bridge's move.

"Just because an application has been filed for twinning the bridge, it doesn't mean its the best place or the right plan," Francis said.

City council continues to wait for a report from its hired transportation guru, New York's Sam Schwartz -- also known as Gridlock Sam -- expected to soon come forward with recommendations to resolve the local truck traffic crisis.

"We are not going to settle for just any plan," Francis said. "Neighbourhoods have to be protected. We brought (Schwartz) in because he is the expert. Quality of life and communities not being destroyed -- those are things he is considering."

Councillor Ron Jones, who represents the west end, said he was not surprised by the bridge's application.

"They been taking steps all along to do this," Jones said. "No way in the world can I see this happening. I'm trusting the system will say this is not the appropriate plan. If they want to build, do it somewhere else. I feel it would be a detriment to Windsor."

MP Brian Masse (NDP -- Windsor West), said the Ambassador Bridge has been able to move aggressively because of the void in leadership at the federal level.

"They have every right to do what they are doing and file applications," Masse said. "But as a nation, not just locally, we have to find a better alternative. I don't think the Ambassador Bridge expanding their operation is going to benefit anybody."

"I believe it's time for a public crossing. This is the only place where there is this type of market dominance. We as a nation need to invest in infrastructure when it affects so much trade. This has to have public ownership."

MPP Sandra Pupatello (L -- Windsor West) said she can understand the bridge company's frustration because of government inaction.

"The problem for me is not so much two spans, but what happens with the lead in and lead off from those spans in our community. This doesn't alleviate the concerns on Huron Church Road."

Emna Dahak, spokeswoman for Ontario's Ministry of Transportation, said it was reviewing the application and attempting to determine the impact on the binational study, a multi-level effort to find a long-term border crossing solution.

Action by the bridge company should trigger a response from competing proponents.

Former mayor Mike Hurst, CEO for the Detroit River Tunnel Partnership, a competing proposal to convert the city's rail tunnel for truck traffic, said the bridge's announcement "confirms what the DRTP has been saying all along" in that more border capacity is needed in Windsor.

As for DRTP's next step, Hurst responded: "We see ourselves in a different ballgame. We view ourselves as the only plan that can be done in the short term.

Ross Clarke, general manager for Mich-Can bridge proposal, said his group will meet within a few weeks to determine its next step and also how to respond to the bridge's repeated overtures to utilize the same Ojibway Parkway corridor contained in its bridge proposal.

"Of course we are surprised at that and obviously concerned about it," Clarke said. "We really don't see this going anywhere at this point because we are assuming nothing will proceed until the binational (study) completes its process."

**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2004.12.23  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** Canada  
**PAGE:** A6  
**BYLINE:** Peter O'Neil  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Black & White Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Treasury Minister Reg Alcock says he's not overly worried.

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## **Canada fears U.S. access to personal data: Patriot Act: Ottawa assailed for its attitude to privacy concern**

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OTTAWA - Canada is responding to concerns that access to personal, military and national security secrets can be gained by American authorities under the U.S. Patriot Act, says Treasury Board Minister Reg Alcock.

He said the federal government has asked George W. Bush's administration to consider a new deal to enhance privacy and has ordered officials in 162 federal departments and agencies to assess their potential for vulnerability. Ottawa is also altering language in contracts being struck with U.S. companies that do business with the federal government.

But Mr. Alcock said he's not greatly concerned about the Patriot Act, which allows the Federal Bureau of Investigation to require companies to share personal data secretly.

"To date I have not had anything raised with me that has been truly alarming," Mr. Alcock said, adding that he has discussed the matter with provincial government officials and "we're just not identifying a lot of areas where we're at risk."

But New Democratic Party MP Brian Masse blasted Mr. Alcock yesterday, saying the minister is undercutting Canada's need for a new privacy accord with Washington by downplaying Ottawa's concerns.

"I don't understand the mixed messages dealing with this file. I think obviously they're hiding incompetency in dealing with this."

Mr. Alcock said he has ordered federal departments and agencies to study all contracts with private firms to determine by Jan. 31 what, if any, secrets could be learned by FBI investigators.

The Treasury Board directive tells officials to assess "all outsourcing activities that involve the handling of personal information of Canadians, as well as other sensitive data such as commercial, confidential, and security-related information," read a statement from the Department of National Defence.

Mr. Alcock said President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell were told of Canada's concerns during the president's visit to Ottawa.

"What we've raised in the U.S. is to say, this conundrum exists, and we intend to enforce our law," he said, referring to privacy legislation that allows Canada to prosecute companies that leak information. "But also we may want to look to see if we can't negotiate an arrangement ... so that it doesn't become an issue between our two countries."

Mr. Alcock said Canadian concerns about doing business with U.S.-based firms make the Patriot Act a trade issue.

The minister said officials at the Department of Justice are working on ways to incorporate language in contracts to make clear that companies must respect Canadian privacy legislation.

He said Canada's vulnerability is obvious when it comes to U.S.-based companies that win contracts with governments in Canada and store data in the U.S.

"I think we have a problem and this is why we are doing this review and we're looking at changing our contracting language and pulling back some of those."



**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2005.02.18  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A2  
**BYLINE:** Dave Hall  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Brian Masse

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## **Border plan stalled: MP**

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The federal government plans to "shelve" Windsor's border study without acting on the short-term recommendations, Windsor West MP Brian Masse charged Thursday.

"I have well-placed sources who told me today that the federal Liberal caucus has received a briefing on the Schwartz Report and that their intention is to shelve it and fold it into the bi-national process without any commitment to implementing any of the short-term solutions," the NDP MP said.

Blaming "bureaucratic gridlock" for delays in solving Windsor's border crisis, Masse called on Prime Minister Paul Martin "to live up to his recent promises and move ahead with a local solution."

Masse said "it's unconscionable that the federal government and in particular the prime minister has not taken a public position on the Schwartz Report yet."

But Mayor Eddie Francis said he was still hopeful that the federal government would follow through on commitments made by Martin as recently as three weeks ago.

"As a council, we've done everything we were asked to do and now we're waiting for a commitment to move forward," said Francis. "We've been told by industry, senior levels of government, numerous other stakeholders including the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce to get a plan in place and we've done it.

"Clearly there are different people who have different ideas about what needs to take place but we have a well thought out, costed plan that achieves both short and long-term solutions," said Francis.

The report, unveiled a month ago, calls for a new truck route around the city leading to a new crossing on the west side, increased use of the truck ferry, a multi-modal transportation centre at Windsor Airport, a new rail tunnel, improved transportation

information systems and upgrades at both the Ambassador Bridge and Windsor-Detroit tunnel.

"There are indications that some politicians and bureaucrats believe the report prejudices the bi-national process and they will use that as an excuse to pre-empt a local solution that has been promised to the residents of Windsor by the prime minister," said Masse.

The mandate of the bi-national process is to develop long-term solutions to the traffic congestion at the border, including planning for a new crossing. Earlier this week, the committee announced plans to begin an environmental assessment which is expected to be completed by 2006, leading to a new crossing by 2013.

"There have been decades of neglect on this issue and nothing appears to be changing," said Masse. "Here we have a report that recommends some short-term solutions and we have a government incapable of taking a public position on them."

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**PAGE:** A3  
**BYLINE:** Dave Battagello  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Brian Masse

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## **Grit rift delays border fix: MP**

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Major funding to support border infrastructure improvements in Windsor needs to be "front and centre" in today's federal budget announcement, said MP Brian Masse (NDP--Windsor West).

But Masse warned Tuesday from Ottawa that "warring factions" within the Liberal government over what should be spent next on border solutions in Windsor continue to delay the next phase of improvements.

"There needs to be a strong signal to this community that they are going to fix the problem," Masse said.

"I would truly hope there is going to be something in the budget.

"But there are departments warring up here (on the border file) and there has been no clear direction from the Prime Minister's office. I just don't think they have their act together on this.

"They may not even make reference to it. There is chaos up here. They have so many files that they are not coming to a conclusion on. The border is a great analogy on what is happening with this government on a lot of files."

The city of Windsor last month released its \$1-billion solution to fix the border truck traffic crisis. But the report by New York traffic expert Sam Schwartz has since collected dust, with little indication from Ottawa action will be taken on the plan any time soon.

A spokesman for Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan refused comment Tuesday on whether funds to fix the border in Windsor would be included in today's federal budget.

Federal authorities have said repeatedly they are "continuing to study" the Schwartz plan.

Former Liberal MP Susan Whelan said if added funding to improve the border in Windsor is to be included in today's budget it will likely occur within the Strategic Infrastructure Fund or the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Fund.

But she was uncertain any new money will be announced to support border improvements in Windsor until the remaining funds already allocated to the city under the Border Infrastructure Fund -- roughly \$220 million -- have been exhausted.

"There is already money on the table, that is the good news," Whelan said. "It is going to take years before a lot of the projects (under the Schwartz plan) can be completed, so whether or not we will see an increase in funding before the border infrastructure money is spent we will have to wait and see."

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**DATE:** 2005.03.31  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A2  
**BYLINE:** Chris Thompson  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star

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## **Publicly run crossing urged for U.S. border: Private ownership leads to higher tolls, bridge authorities say**

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Lower tolls and greater benefits to the community could be the result of public ownership of a new border crossing, a public meeting heard Wednesday night.

Windsor West MP **Brian Masse** invited executives from the binational public authorities who oversee the bridges across the Niagara River to speak to concerned residents at Vanier Hall at the University of Windsor.

"We want to open the public's eyes about what's happening in the province outside of Windsor," said Masse.

The meeting heard that bridges controlled by the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority and the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission operate like a business but don't have to answer to shareholders.

The total revenue for the Peace Bridge between Fort Erie and Buffalo is \$26 million while revenue from the three bridges to the north is \$24.9 million.

One-way passenger vehicle tolls on the Peace Bridge are \$1.15 and \$1.75 on the other bridges.

When asked why their tolls are so low compared to the \$4 charged by the Ambassador Bridge, Niagara Falls Bridge Commission general manager Tom Garlock said their motive is not profit.

"It's really quite simple," Garlock told the crowd of 75.

"We calculate what we need to do the job, to meet payroll, to pay the bonds, to maintain our structures. It would be improper for us to collect more, so we don't. It's that simple."

The boards that oversee the bridges are made up of equal representation from Canada and the U.S. and their figures are audited annually and the results made public.

The Ambassador Bridge's revenues are rumoured to be between \$75 million and \$100 million, said Ron Rienas, the general manager of corporate services for the Peace Bridge.

"I don't know why their numbers are that high," said Rienas.

"You'd have to ask them."

Rienas urged senior governments on both sides of the border to create a public authority here to put an end to the competition and bickering over a new crossing.

"What stands out for me is that you have all of these competing interests when really the senior levels of government need to take ownership of this issue," said Rienas.

"It's in the best interests of both countries."

Both public bodies were created after privately owned bridges were either destroyed by nature or ran into financial difficulty.

Masse is looking for public input on the issue of public ownership of a new border crossing and has a downloadable survey on his website at [www.brianmasse.ca](http://www.brianmasse.ca).

#### BY THE NUMBERS

Peace Bridge revenues:

Car tolls: \$6.3 million

Commercial tolls: \$12.9 million

Rental income: \$6.3 million

Other: \$500,000

Niagara Falls Bridge Commission revenues:

Car tolls: \$7.3 million

Commercial tolls: \$6.7 million

Rental income: \$9.6 million

Other: \$1.3 million

**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2005.07.15  
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**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** A7  
**BYLINE:** Anita Zaleski  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star

## **NDP only party offering real border solutions**

Re: Conservative Views Demonstrate Ignorance To NDP's Accomplishments. Does anybody remember the federal Liberal and provincial Conservative governments' plan to turn E. C. Row into a truck route? What about putting the city's taxpayers exclusively on the hook for the tunnel plaza redevelopment or consolidating the next 100 years of traffic growth in the City of Windsor with no traffic study?

It was New Democrats who held them accountable, and were the reason for the first allotment of funding from senior levels of government on projects to help our community.

Indeed, with only 19 members in the House of Commons, and with the continued popular growth of their leader, Jack Layton, it is easy to see why they are the only political party to rise in the polls since the last election. While Conservatives and Liberals tape conversations, trade party loyalties for positions and are mired in past or present scandals, it is the NDP that has worked for Canadians.

I noted with interest letter writer Nick Kouvalis's suggestion that the provincial Liberals are on side with a local solution. If that is the case, why have these provincial cousins only committed funds and support in 2010? What a snow job.

I took the time to go to Brian Masse's website to review some of his border solutions. Long before it was popular, he called for a place at the table for the City of Windsor, border money for the tunnel plaza, pedestrian crossings, public ownership, environmental protection, increased staffing, rail improvements and ferry improvements. Due to continued vigilance, some of the measures have been implemented, while others are still waiting for federal or provincial decision-makers to get their act together. An example is the waiving of NEXUS fees, something Mr. Masse called for back in 2003.

As the NDP rises in numbers, so will its influence and the opportunity to solve our border problems with accountability. Luckily, most Windsorites quickly recognize a thinly veiled Conservative agenda and continued Liberal corruption and scandal.

Anita Zaleski, Windsor

## Border cash needed: Layton

The Windsor Star  
Fri 26 Aug 2005  
Page: A3  
Section: News  
Byline: Don Lajoie  
Source: Windsor Star

Despite a campaign-style, grit-bashing tour of Windsor Thursday, federal NDP leader Jack Layton insisted he's still willing to work with the minority Liberal government.

"We're into proposition, not just opposition," Layton said, after proposing Prime Minister Paul Martin loosen the purse strings immediately to address environmental degradation and health concerns caused by border traffic.

"We see this visit as an opportunity to get the word out on issues where the government has missed the boat," he said, indicating the exhaust-belching transport trucks roaring behind him during a photo opportunity at Huron Church Road and College Avenue. "If this is what constitutes a 'solved problem' then you've really got to question the judgment of (Trade minister) Jim Peterson."

Flanked by MPs Joe Comartin (NDP - Windsor-Tecumseh) and **Brian Masse** (NDP - Windsor West) Layton mocked Peterson's "bizarre" recent statement that he was "delighted" Windsor's border problems have been solved. In fact, Layton said, there are steps the government should take immediately to ease the problems.

'IMPROVE AIR QUALITY'

**Masse** called for an Environmental Legacy Fund to be created out of the \$200 million remaining in the Gateway Action Plan, money previously announced by the government and earmarked for border improvements.

**"Almost three years has gone by since the Liberals promised \$300 million for short term projects, yet only \$100 million has been dedicated," said Masse. "if government isn't going to act seriously on infrastructure, this community knows plenty of ways to improve air quality."**

The NDP proposes between \$50 million and \$75 million of the Gateway funding be put into a trust to pay for projects to improve air quality in the corridor. One example cited was installing a berm system along Huron Church to cut noise and block exhaust particulate from invading neighbourhoods.

"There are many active local environmental organizations whose expertise will be invaluable to such an undertaking," said Comartin. "The federal government should get behind the community."

Layton, who has visited the trade route on several occasions, met with municipal leaders and citizens groups concerned with border issues, including residents along the corridor "who have neighbours sick with cancer" living in a cloud of smog.

Edition: Final  
Story Type: Business  
Length: 357 words



## Premier names border adviser: Former ambassador to be 'catalyst' for change

The Windsor Star  
Sat 17 Sep 2005  
Page: A1 / Front  
Section: News  
Byline: Dave Battagello  
Source: Windsor Star

Premier Dalton McGuinty added another layer of bureaucrats and decision-makers to the mix Friday to help resolve Windsor's border traffic problems -- but vowed the latest round of government appointees will make a difference.

Michael Kergin, Canada's former ambassador to the U.S. for the past five years, was named as the premier's new "special adviser on border issues" in a high-profile move he says will be the "catalyst" to finally trigger long-awaited border infrastructure in Windsor.

Kergin will also be chairman of the newly formed provincial "border initiatives implementation group" that will consist of between 20 and 30 transportation ministry staff "dedicated to advancing the process in Windsor," McGuinty said.

"The difference I find here is these appointments are not part of an effort to acquire more information before we can move," McGuinty said. "(Kergin's) job is to act as a catalyst and driver for change."

McGuinty repeatedly made reference Friday to Windsor's border being his "top economic priority."

"We don't want Windsor to be consumed in a construction project for an endless period of time," he said. "We also don't want uncertainty to go on any longer than necessary because it compromises Ontario's economy."

"What I'd like to see Mr. Kergin do is act as a focal point -- a magnet for collaboration so we can move this along."

But over the past three years the city has only seen an endless stream of government committees and studies, with just a handful of infrastructure projects approved since a \$300-million border infrastructure fund was first given to Windsor in September, 2002.

The only construction to ease the city's truck traffic burden has been a pedestrian overpass at Assumption high school.

Kergin said he will be based in Ottawa "with good communications" with Toronto and Windsor.

"I'm quite hopeful we will see some progress on this reasonably soon," he said. "One of the differences is I have a mandate to talk with all players and through me hopefully bring together people so we can move forward."

The former ambassador insisted he will "safeguard" environmental concerns that Windsor's residents "have every right to expect."

**MP Brian Masse (NDP -- Windsor West)** was among those blasting the move, calling it further waste of tax dollars which could be better spent on construction to actually fix the city's international traffic problems.

**"It's another level of bureaucracy which is an indication they don't have a plan or know what to do," Masse said. "Now we have someone else new who has to learn the file before any action can be taken.**

**"If the premier wants some suggestions on what needs to be done, he can talk to Mary Ann Cuderman (of the West Windsor Truck Watch's residents group) and she'll tell him for free."**

MPP Sandra Pupatello (L -- Windsor West) said Kergin will receive a per diem based on the number of days he's needed on his new job, while the staff members within the new local border implementation group will be paid out of the transportation ministry's budget.

Mayor Eddie Francis said he will take a wait-and-see approach to Kergin's appointment, although he looked forward to dealing with him again.

The two met previously on the border issue when Kergin was ambassador.

"People, players may change, but our position remains the same," Francis said. "This city will not accept any trucks on E.C. Row (expressway), any local roads or through any local neighbourhoods."

Ontario Chamber of Commerce President Len Crispino was among those applauding the move.

"It's definitely an important step," Crispino said. "It's somebody that understands the U.S. side of the relationship and that's important."

Ontario's chamber has determined border traffic issues in Windsor cost the province's economy \$5 million per year, which Crispino called a "\$1,000 hidden tax on every resident."

Patrick Persichilli, spokesman for Nemak's Canadian operations -- which employs about 1,500 locally - called Kergin's addition a "positive first step."

"It signals the provincial government is serious about addressing border infrastructure," he said. "Nemak views the border as a critical economic issue that needs to be dealt with."

"This needs to serve as a catalyst to push the federal government to work closer with the province to achieve solutions to the border problems."

"We are highly export dependent. If we can't move our parts across the border we've got significant issues with our customers. It impacts our bottom line. If we can't improve productivity, then we will have no chance to compete with Eastern Europe or China."

Illustration:

• Colour Photo: Canadian Press / MICHAEL KERGIN: New border czar appointed by Dalton McGuinty.

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Note: Appointment of Michael Kergin.

Length: 748 words

## Crossing options still face hurdles

The Windsor Star  
Wed 16 Nov 2005  
Page: A2  
Section: News  
Byline: Anne Jarvis  
Source: Windsor Star

Somewhere in the three kilometres of west end riverfront between the heart of historic Sandwich and the bleak and isolated Brighton Beach industrial park, a third border crossing considered key to future economic prosperity will be built.

Exactly where it will be built will depend in part on money, geology, land ownership and community, say observers. Two locations in the corridor stretching from Brock to Broadway streets are considered key. One is Prospect Avenue, the site proposed by the city's hired traffic expert, Sam Schwartz, and the Mich-Can bridge consortium. The other is north of Prince Road, proposed by the binational group studying options for the crossing.

The site north of Prince Road was rejected Monday by Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis, MP **Brian Masse** (NDP-Windsor West), MPP Sandra Pupatello (Liberal-Windsor West) and community activist Mary Ann Cuderman of the West Windsor Community Truck Watch Coalition.

Prince Road is less than a kilometre from Brock Street, the heart of Sandwich. There are also a lot of homes in the area, and children walk to and from General Brock school.

**"There will be a community backlash from Sandwich," warned Masse, "and I think it will go beyond Sandwich because of the historical significance of the area."**

Dave Wake, Canadian co-ordinator of the Detroit River International Crossing study, has said the team will stay away from the core of Sandwich. But geology and money may make it a better location.

The farther north the crossing goes, the more solid the bedrock is, said Marko Paranosic, an engineer and Canadian project manager for Schwartz.

"You've got good bedrock from the (Ambassador) bridge north," he said. "Once you go south, you get progressively worse soil conditions."

Old brine mines, rows of hydro towers and river pipelines farther south along the corridor all present risks to construction, Wake said. Project engineer Leonard Kozachuk cited the same challenges when he cautioned five months ago against assuming the site would be on the binational group's short list.

"It's not a challenge that can't be overcome -- as long as you have the money," said Paranosic.

Another consideration will be where the customs plaza will be located on the American side.

The Michigan Department of Transportation, which is part of the binational team, is planning in its Gateway Project to reconfigure the roads leading to and from its end of the Ambassador Bridge. It may want to use an expanded customs plaza at the foot of the bridge for both crossings, said a source.

"They may want to use the foot of the Ambassador Bridge and the expanded plaza there as an economy," said a source. "The expanded plaza can serve two bridges."

The binational team has already said it wants to link the new crossing to the new American gateway. If the new crossing is linked to that plaza, it will make sense to build the crossing farther north, the source said.

Despite technical challenges, the site at Prospect Avenue, known as the Ojibway Parkway crossing, is considered more suitable because of its industrial nature. Much of the land around Prospect and Sandwich is publicly owned, and there are only two industries at the end of Prospect.

#### CAUTIOUS APPLAUSE:

County municipalities and environmental groups are cautiously applauding the recommendations of the Detroit River International Crossing Study for a new bridge in west Windsor.

"I'm pleased," said LaSalle Mayor Mike Raymond, also Essex County warden. He's said he's glad both the Sam Schwartz truck bypass proposal and Detroit River Tunnel Partnership route were dropped. However, with the proposed expansion of Highway 401 partially within residential and commercial areas of LaSalle, Raymond wants his town and county more involved in the development of the route.

Derek Coronado, research director for the Citizens Environmental Alliance, said the recommendations appear to remove the biggest threat to the Ojibway nature preserves. But the broad corridor sketched out "provides a lot of wiggle room."

Coronado also wants to see where a new bridge plaza and customs buildings would be located to be sure that natural areas, like Black Oaks Heritage Park, aren't threatened. "We have a ways to go yet."

Tecumseh Mayor Gary McNamara said senior governments should now focus on getting some agreement between the city and county on the regional roads that need to be improved in the next few years.

"Jobs are leaving the region," said McNamara, because of the delays in crossing the bridge or tunnel.

Source: Gary Rennie

Illustration:

• Map: Windsor Star / (See hard copy for map.)

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Note: Ran with fact box "Cautious Applause" which has been appended to the story.

Length: 739 words

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EDITION: Final  
SECTION: News  
PAGE: A3  
BYLINE: Dave Battagello  
SOURCE: Windsor Star  
WORD COUNT: 389

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Feds fear virtual fence: MP says U.S. high-tech security measure will harm both economies

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U.S. plans to install a high-tech security fence along Canada's border will damage both nations' economies, a high-ranking federal politician said Monday.

Vancouver-area MP Russ Hiebert (Con--South Surrey-White Rock-Cloverdale), who was in Windsor for a breakfast meeting with local politicians, said his government is asking Washington to back off from plans for the virtual fence and to delay its looming passport requirement.

Hiebert is parliamentary secretary to Minister of National Defence Gordon O'Connor and -- with MP Brian **Masse** (NDP--Windsor West) -- is co-chairman of the federal government's all-party border caucus.

"The difficulty we face is we have to respect their sovereignty. This is U.S. law," Hiebert said. "It's not something we can change to our benefit. We would not allow members of the Congress or Senate to tell us what to do.

"But we will do everything we can to persuade them (to accept) an alternative solution."

U.S. officials last week announced they plan to use infrared cameras, drones, watchtowers and sensors to detect illegal activity as part of the Secure Border Initiative on the Mexican and Canadian borders.

Sections of the border in B.C. and Southwestern Ontario -- deemed most vulnerable to drug smuggling and terrorist infiltration -- are likely the first locations where U.S. authorities will deploy a virtual fence to stop illegal crossings, Homeland Security officials said.

Boeing Corp. has been awarded a US\$67-million contract to begin work on the plan, which could eventually cost \$2.5 billion, according to estimates.

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SECTION: News  
PAGE: A2  
BYLINE: Dalson Chen  
SOURCE: Windsor Star  
WORD COUNT: 410

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Reaction mixed on feds' border cash: Unclear whether money announced in budget is new funding

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The 2007 federal budget's pronouncements on the new Windsor-Detroit border crossing are "highly suspicious and troubling" for our community, says Windsor West MP Brian **Masse**.

"Is it going to be cheap and dirty? Is that their goal?" said **Masse** about the Harper government's plans for the long-awaited second bridge and its access road.

In a section of the budget unveiled on Monday, the federal Tories described a financing strategy that will set aside \$400 million national funding for a road linking the new international bridge to Highway 401.

According to NDP industry critic **Masse**, the amount is "certainly deficient" for any kind of environmentally minded tunnelling option on the access road.

**Masse** said the figure has heightened his concerns that the end result for Windsor will be the cheapest option: a ground-level super highway running through the community.

"You have to wonder whether or not there's been some type of deal cut to basically do a surface road. Why isn't there the commitment to do the project to the fullest extent?"

The budget states the access road will be the responsibility of the Ontario government, with the Canadian government covering half of the building costs through the \$400 million.

Windsor West Liberal MPP Sandra Pupatello said she's finding it hard to tell whether the \$400 million figure represents fresh funding. "It's unclear. We're working our way to sorting out if that is, in fact, new money."

Pupatello said the amount named isn't sufficient for an access road that meets the needs of the community.

The announcement even left Transport Canada officials struggling to comprehend the figures.

An official with Transport Canada could not get specifics from the Finance Department in Ottawa and was unable to provide an explanation for what Windsorites can soon expect in federal border dollars.

Mayor Eddie Francis applauded the budget, calling it the first time since the border traffic debate began in 2002, that Windsor was clearly identified by the finance minister in a federal budget.

"This has been identified with dollars attached to it instead of a casual reference," he said. "Instead of just talking about it, they have clearly identified it as a line item."

But **Masse** noted that no money has been committed past the year 2007. What's required, he said, is a multi-year investment in the \$2-billion range. "You need to have long-term, sustainable funding, and that needs to be attached explicitly. The fact that it's not explicit is the really troubling aspect."

The budget also states that the Canadian government will be responsible for half of the new bridge, including its plaza.

Although **Masse** said he's glad the Tories are now "owning up" to that responsibility, he's still concerned that the government is exploring partnership with the private sector.

"In fact, they've created a new agency to do that. They're still going to look at it there, and that could increase toll costs significantly for our area."

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Border woes highlighted; Politicians see need for bridge

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The need to "modernize" Windsor-Detroit border crossings was one of key issues discussed at this weekend's Canada-U.S. Inter-parliamentary Group meeting in Windsor, the group's co-chair said Sunday.

Liberal Senator Jerry Grafstein said the group, which included more than two dozen U.S. and Canadian legislators, agreed that another border crossing is necessary to reduce delays and boost trade between the two countries.

"What we need is more capacity and we have to do it in a way that the roads are modernized and made more efficient," Grafstein said.

MP Brian **Masse** (NDP -- Windsor West), the group's vice-chairman, said he lobbied to bring the 48th annual meeting to Windsor so that delegates unfamiliar with border issues could get a first-hand look at the traffic, delay and pollution problems this city faces.

"They are more aware now than they ever were of our concerns," he said. "But it's also about showing that this corridor is significant. We need to remember that 40 per cent of the Canada-U.S. trade happens along two kilometres of the waterfront here ... and that feeds 37 states that have Canada as their number-one trading partner."

**Masse** said a new sub-committee was created to focus exclusively on improving the border situation.

"That sub-committee will hopefully provide more structured and updated information about the border," **Masse** said, adding that legislators also discussed the U.S. plan for mandatory passports for travel between the two countries.

"We need allies to help us delay this process ... although it's unfortunately going forward," he said.



Climate change and economic co-operation were among other hot topics at the closed-door meetings.

Delegates exchanged their thoughts and ideas about the ailing auto industry, Great Lakes pollution and the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Grafstein said.

"We have trans-continental security issues and foreign competition in the manufacturing and auto industries," he said. "We all understand and grasp these issues."

**Masse** said delegates were taken on a bus tour of the old Sandwich area and aboard a Canadian Coast Guard vessel.

"We had formal meetings and social events, but we talked shop the entire time," he said.

**Masse** and Grafstein both said this year's meeting was a "very successful" one. It was the first time Windsor welcomed the Canada-U.S. inter-parliamentary group and only the fifth time the meeting was held in Ontario.

The resolutions made this weekend will be carried back to Ottawa and Washington.