

IDNUMBER 200707180091
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.07.18
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Jason Kryk, Star photo / FRUSTRATION: Atransport truck speeds by as Edward Slingsby, 56, left, and Lynda Slingsby, 59, stand outside their Talbot Road home and business on Tuesday. The Slingsbys say they are losing business because of the uncertainty of the proposed truck route that may force them to be expropriated. ; Colour Photo: Eddie Francis ;
BYLINE: Dave Battagello
SOURCE: Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 542

DRIC delays, secrecy anger Talbot residents

Talbot Road residents say their lives are stuck in limbo because of a "sketchy and secretive" process to create a new border truck highway.

"It's a sad state of affairs," said Linda Slingsby, who lives at 1090 Talbot Rd. where she also operates a photography business.

"Everybody down here has a story. It's very bad, everything is sketchy and secretive. All we ask is to be treated fair and with compassion. But there has been no element of that."

The Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) team has announced the Huron Church-Talbot Road corridor will remain the main feeder route leading to a new border crossing off Ojibway Parkway.

DRIC has also announced it will unveil plans at local public forums on Aug. 14 and 15 for a six-lane below-grade highway in the corridor, with four added local service lanes.

Slingsby and her husband applied under provincial legislation as a hardship case in March 2006 to have their Talbot Road home and photography business bought out so that they could relocate and get on with their lives.

But the provincial government failed to respond until seven months later and on Tuesday cancelled a planned meeting with the couple to discuss an appraisal for their business, after the government official learned the press was aware of the meeting, she said.

"Them not coming today tells the story," Slingsby said Tuesday. "If they've got nothing to hide there shouldn't have been a problem.

She said that people claiming hardship are commonly bought out whenever there's a hint of a highway expansion.

"Why is Windsor being treated differently?" she asked.

"Why are we cemented in this footprint with no way out. We can't sell this place. Who is our only buyer? The government. We are dependent on them for what happen with the rest of our lives."

The ministry official involved in the meeting Tuesday with the Slingsbys "was not comfortable with media attention," said Jamie Rilett, spokesman for Ontario Transportation minister Donna Cansfield.

"All discussions involve privacy concerns. We can't publicly discuss what the negotiations involve."

MP Brian **Masse** (NDP -- Windsor West) said shabby treatment of residents living both in the Talbot Road-Huron Church Road corridor and neighbouring subdivisions by government authorities assigned to oversee the new truck highway must end.

Clear rules and precise compensation packages must be defined by the federal and provincial government authorities for residents and businesses, he said.

"This could turn into a scandal if things are being done on a (one-on-one basis)," **Masse** said. "It's totally unacceptable."

But Cansfield's spokesman Rilett said the provincial government already has protocol and compensation funds in place for Windsor's planned border superhighway and that agreements on five properties in the corridor have already been reached.

"We have a process, that's why we have bought a number of properties already," Rilett said. "I think (Masse) is a little ahead of himself."

CITY STRATEGY

Mayor Eddie Francis has served notice the city is getting ready to fight the DRIC plans to build a below-grade highway in the corridor. City council has insisted on tunneling.

A special public meeting in advance of the DRIC sessions in mid-August will be scheduled so the city's hired border experts -- former New York traffic engineer Sam Schwartz and Toronto environmental lawyer David Estrin -- can present what the city contends is a more environmentally friendly truck route.

"Our fear is if we don't put a better alternative in front of them, (DRIC) will consider the alternatives they know," Francis said.

"Our position remains that it's important to ensure quality of life for our residents is protected and enhanced. We believe there is a better way of doing things. Our experts have told us there is a way to get trucks across the border without having to carve through a community."

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
BYLINE: Dave Battagello

Masse warns of P3 bridge

Local MP Brian **Masse** says he fears higher tolls to cross the new Windsor-Detroit bridge if a private partner is involved.

Last week, he challenged the federal transport minister on whether the feds have done due diligence to determine if a private sector partner is the right model to use in the construction of a new crossing.

Minister Lawrence Cannon for over a year has touted the next Windsor crossing as an ideal opportunity for a public-private partnership, referred to as a P3.

But **Masse** (NDP -- Windsor West) fears the local commuters, travellers and truckers who will rely on the new crossing will be stuck with higher tolls if a private profit-driven company is introduced as a partner to the project, expected to be completed by 2013.

He has pointed to Highway 407 -- the Toronto ring road owned by Australia's Macquarie Bank -- where private ownership has led to rising tolls for users. The company, the world's largest operator of private toll roads, also has an ownership stake in the Chicago Skyway and Indiana Toll Road.

"There has been analysis of hundreds of P3s around the world," **Masse** said Tuesday. "What they show is a Frankenstein-type pattern with all kinds of different problems have emerged with private ownership of public entities -- water systems, roads."

During questioning by **Masse** last Thursday at the standing committee on transport, infrastructure and communities, Cannon backpedalled, saying a process will be launched early in the new year to determine whether a P3 is appropriate for Windsor.

"From the indications we have up to now, it's an interesting avenue to pursue," Cannon told the committee. "But if at the end of the day it's determined that it isn't in the public's interest or it's not something that is going to fly, I can assure you we are not going to go forward."

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2008.04.03
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: Brian Masse

Still time for GreenLink

The need for the City of Windsor's campaign for the province to fund the GreenLink proposal is an unfortunate situation that is the end result of a failed decision-making process set in place years ago. Compounding this tragedy was that it was predicted to happen at that time.

When the Detroit River International Crossing study was established, there were calls then by many residents to focus upon a bypass for the city of Windsor to the next crossing. This primary consideration was not made a requirement or even a priority. At that time, I advocated that a bypass was essential and warned that inevitably conflict would ensue if this initial decision was not taken.

The process moved to forcing the federal government to accept its responsibility to the most important border gateway in North America. In this area, there has been significant success. When I, along with numerous other residents, demanded public ownership, public control, rules and regulations to end the chaos, there were those who felt we could not achieve these results as corporate profits often trump public interest.

With the passage of the International Bridge and Tunnel Act last year and the announcement in the federal budget of 2007 that the federal government would take full responsibility for the bridge and the plaza, that the crossing would be publicly owned, pay for 50 per cent of the access route (even though this is a provincial responsibility), Ottawa allocated an initial \$ 400 million with more to follow, and said that a public entity would be created for governance. These victories are significant and in some cases the first of their kind in Canada, something we should be proud of.

The focus then moved on to the access route and the landing sites of the next crossing. With the new bridge going to be publicly owned and controlled and the elimination of the failed and flawed private sector proponents. The resulting locations were to be sites on the far west side of the city. Each of the three remaining are not ideal. One is completely unacceptable as it encroaches too much on Sandwich Towne.

The other two, along with their plaza locations, must be kept as far from residential locations as possible.

The access route has now taken centre stage. This process's initial failure has now come full circle. The analysis by the DRIC presented three options. The full tunnelling option,

which was demanded by residents and which I advocated as the best possible solution for the city, was made available by the DRIC.

At a meeting last year, attended by bureaucrats, city councillors, provincial cabinet ministers, and staff, a senior official representing the DRIC stated in response to a question from a city councillor about the full tunnelling option, that the only reason to not have full tunnelling was cost and that the decision rested solely with the provincial cabinet. This fact is significant because it revealed that monetary considerations -- and not what is best for the health of residents and the environment -- would be the primary factor in any final determination.

The City of Windsor, in its efforts to correct for the lack of action or concern by the province, has responded by trying to adapt the disastrous DRIC proposal for partial tunnelling into a less damaging form. These endeavours, and the additional costs, should never have been the city's in the first place. These expenses at the very least need to be repaid by the provincial government. The City of Windsor's initiative on the GreenLink and the associated campaign should never have been needed, especially during a time where city coffers are stretched for the normal expenditures required for local government.

In the recent provincial budget, Windsor border needs were mentioned for the first time by the government of Ontario. No commitment of resources or even a response to the city's GreenLink plan were in the document, but there is still time for the premier and his government to act.

The DRIC will make final announcements in the coming months but first the provincial cabinet still has to exercise its mandatory responsibility and make a decision.

Hopefully they have been listening to the residents of this area. Let us trust that history will not repeat itself and the province will take advantage of the rare opportunity to use the federal commitment to pay for 50 per cent of the access route to build the best solution for our community, region and country.

Brian Masse is the MP for Windsor West and the NDP's Transport, Auto Policy and Border critic.

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star

DATE: 2008.05.09

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

BYLINE: Dave Battagello

Brighton Beach site picked for crossing; City's choice from Day 1

Brighton Beach in West Windsor is expected to be chosen as the site of a new bridge between Canada and the U.S., sources said Thursday.

And sources confirmed that a new bridge plaza is to be built next to the Brighton Beach power plant on city-owned property near the riverfront.

The bridge will rise over the Canadian shore between the power plant and Canadian Salt company. It will be located on the U.S. side just northeast of Zug Island and travel into a plaza in an industrial area of Detroit known as Delray.

The plaza and crossing selections were both known as option B among three remaining plaza and crossing options being considered by the binational Detroit River International Crossing team assigned to fix the region's border truck traffic problems.

Transport Canada would not confirm Thursday any final decisions have been made by DRIC, saying only that an announcement on final recommendations will come some time before July.

"We still have not made a decision for a site or plaza," said spokesman Mark Butler.

"We anticipate making an announcement over the next few weeks -- certainly between now and July."

But sources familiar with the process said Thursday the DRIC team has made a final choice for the plaza and bridge locations.

Federal officials under DRIC are responsible for overseeing plans and construction of the bridge and plaza, while the provincial DRIC team is focused on a \$1.6-billion feeder highway through Windsor leading to the border. Plans for the feeder highway were unveiled last week.

The entire project is expected to cost \$5 billion and create up to 25,000 person years of employment. A person year is the equivalent of one person working full time for one year.

"We are advancing our agenda," Catherine Loubier, spokeswoman for federal transportation minister Lawrence Cannon, said Thursday.

"When we came to office in 2006 we made a commitment on moving forward to make this happen. It is critical infrastructure to the country and we are moving forward on it."

Construction is expected to begin sometime next year and will be completed in 2013.

The Brighton Beach location is exactly what city council "has been advocating for from Day 1," said Mayor Eddie Francis.

"We welcome that as the choice," he said.

Francis said he met recently with an unnamed federal cabinet minister to discuss the availability of a 110-acre property the city owns in Brighton Beach.

"We look forward to working together on this," he said. "The plaza and crossing are exactly where we would like it to be. It's the most removed from Sandwich. We'd rather have the plaza in Brighton Beach, so we offered it (the property) up."

Ottawa has already committed \$400 million from its budget this year for border projects in Windsor and has been seeking a private-sector partner to help fund the project.

It would be the largest public-private partnership (P-3) in Canadian history.

"We haven't gone to the market yet," Butler said. "We would not be in that position until a preferred location and environmental assessment is completed."

But he did say informal talks have taken place with several private corporations following last fall's annual P-3 conference in Toronto, where Windsor's bridge project was highlighted by Cannon.

The government is pursuing a P-3 to share the financial risk with the private sector, reduce pressure on taxpayers and get the project done more quickly, Loubier said.

Under such an approach, the private sector would be responsible for financing, design and construction as well as operation and maintenance of the new crossing.

Loubier said the federal government will own the bridge and inspection plaza.

The Ambassador Bridge, meanwhile, has plans in front of federal governments on both sides of the border for a proposed six-lane twin replacement span that would be constructed metres west of the current bridge, which handles 10,000 trucks daily and generates about \$60 million annually in tolls.

"They remain two completely different processes," Butler said. "The Ambassador Bridge has its own environmental assessment and we are progressing on schedule."

Federal MP **Brian Masse** (NDP -- Windsor West) said the Brighton Beach selection would fit with what he wanted -- a plaza far enough from Sandwich and not directly on the waterfront.

"I want to make sure it is as far west as possible," he said.

"It leaves land space open in the community, allowing for more development and usage of Sandwich for the public.

"The more into Sandwich, the more land we would lose for the future of the community. This keeps traffic and noise away from schools, neighbourhoods and residents."

Revelations about the DRIC bridge location are coming at the same time federal cabinet ministers are pushing to improve movement of cross-border trade and highlighting the need for more infrastructure in the Windsor-Detroit corridor.

Mounting delays at the Canada-U.S. border have created a "two-headed monster" that's not properly serving security or prosperity, Industry Minister Jim Prentice told top business leaders Wednesday in Washington.

PREFERRED LOCATION:

Windsor city council met briefly Thursday to review where the city stands with Brighton Beach, a neighbourhood the city bought up, house by house, for between \$12 and \$15 million in the mid-1990s.

Mayor Eddie Francis said councillors needed the background, "so that we're in a position to respond knowledgeably," now that there are news reports that Brighton Beach is the preferred location for a new bridge and bridge plaza.

Brighton Beach was bought up because the city council of the day believed a residential neighbourhood shouldn't remain in an area that was becoming increasingly industrial, the mayor said. It was purchased for industrial purposes.

Asked if Brighton Beach is a preferred location for a new crossing, he said: "It's consistent with the city council's position and it's consistent with the position we put out four years ago. Obviously we put it out there after careful thought and study and we thought it would be the best area to do it.

"You'd rather have a parking lot in Brighton Beach than a parking lot in Sandwich."

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2008.06.19
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Map: (See hard copy for map description.);
BYLINE: Dave Battagello

Border 'No. 1 priority'; Brighton Beach spot chosen

Calling it the country's "No. 1 priority" for transportation infrastructure, Canadian government officials unveiled long-awaited plans Wednesday for a new border crossing in Windsor's west end which they hope will help end the city's border truck traffic problems and improve the flow of the nation's trade.

Following nearly six years of meetings, debate and consultation, the final recommendation of the binational Detroit River International Crossing team is for the new bridge to be located in Brighton Beach in between the power plant and Canada Salt Company.

"For the economies of both Canada and the U.S., this certainly is important to get this up and running," said federal Transportation Minister Lawrence Cannon. "It's extremely significant for the economies of the two countries.

"Since we've been in power we have put a full court press on this project. It's extremely important and does rank as our No. 1 priority."

Cannon vowed nothing will stand in the way of the federal government completing the bridge project in Windsor -- not finances, legal challenges or constructability.

The length of the crossing from end-to-end is expected to be around 2.5 kilometres.

The span over the Detroit River will be about 850 metres. It has not yet been determined whether the new bridge will be a cable-stay or suspension crossing.

Cost for the bridge will be about \$800 million, with another \$200 million spent on the Canadian plaza which will be 132 acres and located in between the Nemak automotive plant and the power plant in Brighton Beach.

The bridge will cross into Detroit in between historic Fort Wayne and the north channel of the Rouge River that borders Zug Island.

Construction is to begin in late 2009 with a target completion date of 2013.

The location for the bridge and plaza were selected because they would have the least impact on residents, less costly to build because of soil conditions and will be located on property that is largely unused, the DRIC officials said.

Residents, business and politicians on this side of the border all applauded the location.

"It's exactly the location for both plaza and bridge the city proposed nearly four years ago," said Mayor Eddie Francis.

"It's a location that the community has supported. We are very pleased with the announcement today."

Mary Ann Cuderman, leader for a west-end truck watchdog group and advocate for the Sandwich community, said: "The plaza and crossing location is something we in Sandwich can live with."

Coun. Caroline Postma, who represents the city's west end, was also content with the location.

"It's good to know what we advocated for at the end of this route is going to happen," she said. "It's something we have talked about through the entire process. The people in the west end have been truly engaged."

DRIC last month unveiled its final recommendations for a new border feeder road through South Windsor and LaSalle. The Windsor-Essex Parkway is a nine-kilometre, six-lane below-grade freeway that will include 11 grassy overpasses in the Talbot Road-Huron Church Road corridor.

Costs have been projected as being up to \$5 billion for the entire end-to-end Windsor-Detroit border project.

Federal officials indicated Tuesday once construction begins on the new bridge, plaza and border feeder roads in Windsor it will create an economic spinoff benefit of \$3-\$4 billion. Up to 25,000 person years of work -- a person year equals one person working full-time for a year -- will be created.

The local chamber of commerce supported the final location for the bridge and plaza, but was most pleased the project's going forward.

"From the chamber's perspective we are more than content," said chairman Peter Hrastovic. "This is the most exciting economic development news we have had in a long time in this community -- in decades.

"This is badly needed. This is an announcement to the world that Windsor-Essex is open for business."

He hoped the DRIC's ongoing battles against Ambassador Bridge owner Matty Moroun and the city over its GreenLink plan that proposes more tunnelling on the route to the border, can be put aside.

"Let's not talk about war or battles, but peace and the solutions we can work out together if everybody puts their mind to it," Hrastovic said. "The potential for everybody doing well here, the prosperity, is seemingly endless if people want to work together."

Federal government authorities have been talking with Moroun, who has threatened to derail the DRIC effort, claiming that it will steal much of his truck traffic revenues.

"I don't want to make statements in terms of discussions with Mr. Moroun's group, but I do want to assure you those discussions are taking place," Cannon said.

He indicated the door is open for the bridge company to be among those considered for private sector investment of the new bridge.

The federal government leaders indicated how they will next seek a public-private partnership (P-3) to help pay for construction of the new bridge and plaza in Windsor, but vowed the crossing will remain under public control.

MP **Brian Masse** (NDP -- Windsor West) was happy DRIC respected the community's wishes when it came to deciding a final location for the bridge and plaza: "It's great news for the community. We've had enough troubles and tragedies related to this process, but this is the best location we could have hoped for if there is no bypass."

But he urged caution regarding Ottawa's push for P-3 for the bridge project, fearing profit-driven motives of the private sector will lead to high tolls for users, including Windsor residents.

"It could doom us to higher fares," he said. "It would be like an increased tax on residents."

Masse instead urged the use of bonds to help pay for the project.

IDNUMBER 200901160004

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star

DATE: 2009.01.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Windsor Star / BRIDGE PROPOSALS: Artist renderings of the DRIC border crossing project show a suspension bridge, in photo at left, and a cable-stayed bridge in photo at right. ; Photo: Matty Moroun ; Photo: Eddie Francis ; Colour Photo: Jennifer Granholm ; Colour Photo: Mary Ann Cuderman ;

BYLINE: Dave Battagello

SOURCE: Windsor Star

WORD COUNT: 987

U.S. pushes ahead with new bridge

A new bridge that will link Windsor and Detroit crossed a key hurdle late Wednesday when the U.S. government gave final environmental approval for the multi-billion-dollar project.

The decision allows the State of Michigan to begin property acquisitions and design work.

"It's a key milestone to ensure this project moves towards construction," Doug Hecox, spokesman for the U.S. Department of Transportation, said Thursday. "This signifies, as far as the U.S. government is concerned, all environmental reviews have been completed," Hecox said. "This has been a pretty rigorous process. What this decision does is indicate everything looked at is fine."

The bridge will link the downriver industrial communities of Brighton Beach, in Windsor's west end, and Delray.

Construction of the bridge, plazas and roads to Highway 401 on the Canadian side and I-75 in Detroit is expected to cost about \$5 billion. It will create an estimated 12,000 jobs on the Canadian side.

The Detroit River International Crossing project still needs state, provincial, local and Canadian government approval before construction can begin.

The Ambassador Bridge -- which has a competing proposal to build a twin span -- has said it may take court action to block the new crossing.

Bridge president Dan Stamper could not be reached Thursday for comment, but told the Star last week he believes the DRIC process has "fatal flaws."

"We have no information on that and generally don't comment on litigation," Hecox said.

He said the bridge should not be looked at as a replacement for the Ambassador Bridge since there will be plenty of traffic for both crossings.

"This has been a long time coming and will help improve traffic flow in the Detroit-Windsor area. It can't come soon enough," Hecox said.

"It will augment the area so people won't have to wait as long to cross. Waiting is something economically on both sides we can't afford anymore."

Construction of the bridge is expected to begin in 2010 and be completed by 2013.

The approval by Washington turns over the lead on the DRIC bridge project to the Michigan Department of Transportation.

MDOT spokesman Bill Shreck said property purchases on the Detroit side are unlikely to begin until summer.

Preliminary indications are that 257 residential dwelling units, 43 active businesses, and nine non-profit entities will need to be bought out.

"This is extremely positive," said MP Brian Masse (NDP -- Windsor West) whose riding includes the site for the new bridge. "I didn't know it was this advanced. It's a signal Washington is very serious about getting a span built through this process. It's reassuring that on their side there are no hiccups.

"Over 75 years ago, they created a rail tunnel, vehicle tunnel and Ambassador Bridge at a time when there were no transport trucks or as many commuters. But they had the foresight to lay the groundwork that helped make this a manufacturing base for decades.

"We need this to happen for the sake of the next 50 to 100 years. If we fail there will be negative consequences for decades. This is our opportunity to seize and make it a reality."

A Transport Canada official called the environmental approval "another significant milestone" for the DRIC partnership.

"It's critical because this is an end-to-end solution that will need approvals from all levels of government," said spokesman Mark Butler.

The DRIC process is in the midst of a 32-week review by Ontario's environment ministry and a parallel review by federal environmental authorities, he said.

The two sides are hoping to issue a joint approval sometime this summer. A key hurdle will be whether the city can iron out differences with the Ontario government over how much of a new \$1.6-billion feeder highway in Windsor should be tunnelled.

"The final decision will either say 'go ahead,' or 'no it can't go ahead because of significant adverse effects' or it will be referred to a tribunal or mediator," Butler said.

Mayor Eddie Francis said the city has been working closely with Ottawa because the feds must acquire city property in Brighton Beach for the bridge and plaza.

"We are very comfortable with those discussions taking place," he said. "We hope soon the federal government can make a similar announcement."

TWIN SPAN PROJECT

The fate of Ambassador Bridge owner Matty Moroun's twin span proposal remains uncertain. The U.S. Coast Guard station in Cleveland was assigned as lead authority on whether a federal permit will be issued to the billionaire transportation mogul in the U.S.

But a top Coast Guard official in Cleveland said Thursday the application was recently taken over by Coast Guard authorities in Washington and would not comment on its status. Moroun has been lobbying the Bush administration heavily to also give him final approval before he departs on Tuesday. One source suggested the administration may do that.

Lindsay Boyd, chairman of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber has worked closely with counterparts in Detroit to push DRIC forward.

The local chamber supports DRIC and Moroun's proposal, he said.

"If we have two, what's to stop this region from being the next Chicago or Boston?" Boyd said. "But (the DRIC bridge) would be the biggest single shot in the arm we need to start in terms of the jobs it would bring, getting us past this downturn and giving Windsor time to reinvent itself economically."

"This is excellent news and brings it that much closer to the reality of getting shovels in the ground. There is one less thing to worry about now with the federal approval given in the U.S."

State transportation director Kirk Steudle said construction on the Michigan side is expected to create 10,000 jobs and 30,000 indirect jobs.

"This is a significant milestone," he said. "Once built, the new crossing system will boost U.S. and Canadian trade by expanding the busiest trade corridor in the western hemisphere."

"We will be building the most modern border crossing system in the world."

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson -- who joined with Francis last summer on Detroit's waterfront to lend his powerful political support in favour of the DRIC bridge over Moroun's proposal -- also applauded the decision in Washington.

"This great news could not come at a better time," he said in a statement. "Construction of this new crossing will be a huge stimulus to our sagging economy. The green light has been turned on. Let's get going."

IN THEIR WORDS

"The new border crossing system empowers Michigan's economic recovery and revitalization An expanded Detroit-Windsor border crossing system will benefit every traveller who relies on safe, efficient border crossings." - Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm

"It makes me feel wonderful. I know there are a lot of obstacles to come, but I think governments will do the job on this in these economic times. I thought the waiting period would be longer ... but it looks like it went through with flying colours" - Activist Mary Ann Cuderman

EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
COLUMN: Anne Jarvis
BYLINE: Anne Jarvis
SOURCE: Windsor Star
NOTE: Profile of Anne Jarvis.
WORD COUNT: 835

Should Moroun build his bridge?; Sandwich would be toast

Anne Jarvis started her career in Burford, Ont., a small town with one stoplight and a restaurant called Dot and Dave's. She was the first reporter at a new weekly newspaper.

After a stint at the Brantford Expositor, she joined The Star in 1990.

In 1997, bothered by the number of troubled children in Windsor, Jarvis led a team of writers that documented the high number of child welfare cases in the city and probed why so many kids ended up so damaged. The series of stories won a National Newspaper Award.

In 2004, Jarvis secured a copy of a confidential report on the MFP leasing scandal, one of the biggest scandals in the city's history, and wrote three stories on it, winning an Ontario Newspaper Award.

She is married, with three children.

Colourful Olde Sandwich Towne, birthplace of Windsor, first permanent European settlement west of Montreal, rich in potential -- kiss it goodbye if the Ambassador Bridge builds a second span for trucks.

Our hard-won University of Windsor medical school and new, cutting-edge engineering school will have up to 10 lanes of trucks booming past. What university can boast that?

Beautiful, historic Assumption Church -- you'll have to dodge the debris as vibration from the trucks rattles the crumbling structure.

Windsor has budgeted another \$30,000 in legal fees, added to the \$5.4 million it has already spent on the border, to fight the bridge company's proposal. The city will address the U. S. Coast Guard, the lead American agency involved, which tentatively approved the plan in February.

This fight is worth every penny.

The proposal is for a second span with six lanes immediately west of the Ambassador Bridge. Added to the existing bridge, that's potentially 10 lanes of trucks. Don't kid yourself -- billionaire

bridge owner Matty Moroun, who has ridden roughshod over this community, government and the whole process, will be looking to rake it all in.

The so-called ring road, the road the bridge company favours for access to a second span, will go from Ojibway Parkway along the Essex Terminal Railway line through the city's west side to Huron Church Road. Sandwich activist Mary Ann Cuderman calls it "the moat" because of the way it will cut off that area. "We might as well flood it," she says.

If the bridge company can't get the truck inspection site it favours between Huron Church, E.C. Row Expressway and Malden Road, it wants a site at McDonald's on Huron Church -- acres and acres of truck inspections jammed into the middle of the city, closing the chunk of Huron Church between Wyandotte and College used to get downtown.

This proposal will carve up this city for what -- for the 701st richest man in the world? What about the new, sweeping neighbourhood improvement plan for Sandwich, with more than 50 recommendations to revitalize the area, designating heritage buildings and opening up the riverfront? Passionate people spent three years preparing this.

(For a bitter laugh, check out the bridge company's plan for a new crossing in Fort Erie. It's touting its route along an industrial rail corridor, away from homes, as more appropriate for international truck traffic.)

Look what's inside the ring road here: Malden Park, where we walk, run, skate and toboggan; Mic Mac Park; Windsor Regional Hospital's western campus, which this spring or summer will begin a long-awaited three-year, \$100-million renovation featuring a 65-bed mental health hospital that will allow Windsor patients in a St. Thomas facility to return to the city. Welcome home. Don't mind the trucks.

Forster secondary school, the only public high school in the west end, sits practically right next to the site.

The University of Windsor is becoming increasingly important to the city as it loses part of its industrial base and tries to diversify. The medical school was a coup, and the 300,000-square-foot engineering school to be built this fall will have a living wall and green roof.

But some university dorms are so close to the bridge that drivers can see in the windows, between rivulets of black gunk from pollution. How bad will it be with 10 lanes of trucks? Who will want to come to a university where diesel rains down? Oh well, it could become a centre for the study of environmental degradation.

And what will happen to Assumption Church, a local treasure, where incessant vibration from trucks is believed to have contributed to millions of dollars in damage to the structure, from stress on bricks and stone, deterioration to cornices and moulding and cracks in a bay to falling plaster? (The filing cabinets move, likely because of the vibration.)

This isn't just a local issue. The busiest border crossing in North America should be publicly owned. In a post 9-11 world built on a global economy, security and trade are too vital.

We've seen the price of the only privately owned, profit-motivated major border crossing in Canada: high tolls for businesses and commuters and the destruction of neighbourhoods as the

bridge company plows ahead with its plan, buying dozens of homes on Indian Road, Edison Street and Bloomfield Road, many left abandoned and boarded up.

"They don't give a damn," said Windsor West MP **Brian Masse**. "Why would we turn a critical piece of infrastructure into a monster and turn it on ourselves?"

Why would we?

Rail tunnel promises 2,200 jobs

\$400M project to replace aging tube, offer higher clearance

Dave Battagello, The Windsor Star

Backers of a proposed \$400-million Detroit River rail tunnel announced Thursday they have launched the first steps toward construction.

CP Railway, Borealis Infrastructure and the Windsor Port Authority have joined together to work on building a new double-stack high-clearance tunnel to replace the existing rail freight tunnel constructed in 1909.

Formerly known as the Detroit River Tunnel Project and Jobs Tunnel, the new name for the project is the Continental Rail Gateway. An environmental assessment description has been filed with the federal Transportation ministry.

Once environmental approvals are in place -- proponents expect them to take about 18 months -- the project will take three years to build and promises 2,200 direct and indirect construction jobs.

"A larger replacement rail tunnel is critical to creating jobs and turning Windsor-Detroit into one of the most significant logistics hubs in the Midwest," said David Cree, president/CEO of the port authority.

A new rail tunnel for Windsor has been touted for nearly 10 years, but the former DRTP got bogged down by controversy and neighbourhood opposition when the plan included conversion of a South Windsor rail corridor and tunnel into use by trucks.

That plan was pulled off the table several years ago and CP and Borealis have since focused on building a larger rail tunnel next to the existing tube to handle CP's growing fleet of double-stacked, three-metre-high rail containers and multi-level rail cars.

The existing tunnel -- which annually carries 350,000 cars and \$21.5 billion in trade -- was enlarged in 1994, but cannot be expanded further.

The number of larger cars -- many originating out of the Port of Montreal -- has reached the point where a new tunnel is a necessity in Windsor to get freight into the U.S., said rail tunnel proponents.

The tunnel will allow CP Rail to better compete for business with a larger Sarnia-Port Huron rail tunnel owned by competitor CN Rail. That tunnel was constructed in the mid-1990s.

"It's a great development for us," said Mike LoVecchio, spokesman for CP. "From our perspective, this would enhance our operations. We will be able to run all rail cars through the new tunnel. The existing tunnel is fully functional, but cannot accommodate double-stacked containers. This gives us more flexibility so there is merit there."

But it was premature to estimate how much added business might be created, he said.

LoVecchio could not say where the project ranks on CP's list of infrastructure priorities. The railway will spend \$750 million on infrastructure improvements in 2010.

"Every project we do is driven by demands," he said. "The fact that it's on the list means it's a project of significance."

The fate of the old tunnel is not yet decided, although some observers suggested it may play into growing efforts to build a high-speed rail passenger network or simply handle surplus freight service.

"One step at a time," LoVecchio said. "It's a discussion that will fuel a lot of debate, but no decisions are made at this stage."

MP **Brian Masse** (NDP -- Windsor West) said the announcement is "very positive news."

"A new tunnel is important for the manufacturing base not only in Windsor, but all over Ontario and up to Quebec City. It's a key part of our economic future."

Masse, whose riding includes the rail line leading to the tunnel, said there will be neighbourhood issues during construction, but hopes the final product will include significant landscape improvements on grounds above the new tunnel.

"We'd like to see some community benefits in this as well in beautifying the west end," he said.

Marge Byington, the rail tunnel's project leader in Michigan since its inception, said Thursday's step forward shows a border crossing can happen through co-operation on both sides of the border.

"We have a lot of support from business, the labour community and elected officials," she said. "I feel we are truly moving ahead with this now."

She said the rail tunnel could be open by 2015.

"This is a necessary, important part of the transportation system that's very needed for the Detroit-Windsor border," Byington said. "It's going to bring jobs and carry freight more efficiently."

"We sit across from each other and (Canada) is our largest trading partner. Anything we can do to improve transportation between the two will produce enormous spinoffs. It is very exciting."

The announcement reflects the latest border investment in Windsor following the launch of the \$1.6-billion Windsor-Essex Parkway and recently completed \$8.8-million improvement project for the Windsor-Detroit truck ferry.

The state of Michigan is expected to decide next week whether it will join with Canada to build a long-awaited downriver bridge in Brighton Beach known as DRIC.

"Without these infrastructure improvements this area would be limited in growth," said ferry operator Gregg Ward. "Like investment in the DRIC bridge, the rail tunnel project would position the region to become a world-class logistic hub."

"(The rail tunnel) is great for the entire region, so it will benefit everybody's business and help attract new industry and employment."

The port authority is a welcome addition to the CP-Borealis rail tunnel team because it provides a local connection and also a public body that can help guide through the government approval process. The port authority is not a financial partner, but will provide support and assistance, Cree said.

Officials from Transport Canada would not comment Thursday on the rail tunnel proposal.

ONLINE

windsorstar.com

DRIC backers urge Michigan vote

Masse joins last-minute lobbying

Dave Battagello, The Windsor Star

Local MP **Brian Masse** joined a last-ditch bid in Detroit to convince Senate Majority floor leader Mike Bishop to hold a vote on the government-backed DRIC bridge before a new governor and lawmakers take over in Michigan.

There are only a handful of lame duck sessions remaining following state elections earlier this month. Political, business and community leaders from both sides of the border have called on Bishop to fulfil a promise he made several months ago to stage a vote on DRIC before the end of the term.

Approval by Michigan's Senate is the last major hurdle before construction can start on the DRIC downriver bridge that would link the industrial communities of Brighton Beach and Delray.

Bishop -- who controls motions introduced in the Senate -- revealed his flip-flop a few days after the election when he announced the DRIC bridge issue would have to wait until incoming Gov. Rick Snyder and dozens of new senators take over in January.

He was blasted for the decision by DRIC supporters who pointed to political donations he received from Ambassador Bridge billionaire owner Matty Moroun as the reason for his decision.

"We want to let our neighbours know this is a binational betrayal," Masse said. "There is disappointment on the Canadian side because of what this new crossing means economically and environmentally for both communities.

"I ask (Bishop) to live up to his word. In Canada, when you shake hands on something, it means something. We've done our job (to get DRIC approved) on our side of the border and we like to see him finish it."

Bishop's office did not return messages left by The Star on Friday.

The event was hosted by state Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-- Detroit) outside historic Ste. Anne Church next to the Ambassador Bridge plaza in Detroit.

She represents southwest Detroit neighbourhoods which are home to both the Ambassador Bridge and the proposed DRIC bridge.

She pointed to the \$550-million offer by Canada's federal government to cover the state's costs of the bridge project as reason enough why Bishop must stage a vote.

"Michigan can't afford to turn our backs on a shovel-ready project like this one," Tlaib said.

"This is the only viable proposal on the table and would create 10,000 jobs with the generous support from Canada. It's alarming my colleagues are turning their backs on families and workers in this state."

Bridge spokesman Phil Frame said he couldn't speak about the donations between Moroun and Bishop "because I wasn't there."

The bridge owner remains committed to seeing his own twin span proposal become reality instead of DRIC, he said.

"We are pressing forward with the project and committed as we have always been," Frame said. "That's about all I can say."

Debra Williams, leader with the Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition, said residents in her Delray community and surrounding neighbourhoods are weary of the never-ending delays in Michigan's Senate to get the DRIC bridge approved.

"It's frustration -- that sums it up," she said. "It's unfortunate to see in the legislature that politics is put over people." Her community views the DRIC bridge as a beacon of renewal in Delray.

"We need a decision," Williams said. "Residents and business can't make important life and work decisions because senators won't take a vote. We need a vote this year so we can move forward."

"We see (the DRIC project) as an opportunity to get the area rebuilt or fix what's there. It will not be the way it used to be -- our neighbourhood was very viable in the old days. But we see this as something new and different for our young people."

ILLUS: Colour Photo: MP Brian Masse says failure to vote on the DRIC project marks a 'binational betrayal.';

Tories' border plan 'secrecy' draws fire

Les Whittington Toronto Star

On the eve of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's visit to the White House, the Conservatives refused to give members of Parliament any details on Ottawa's secret border-security talks with the U.S.

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff accused the government of keeping the public in the dark about what could bring vast change to Canadians' lives.

"Why the secrecy? Why is it that this government is talking about fundamental issues of Canadian sovereignty and Canadian freedoms with the Americans without talking to Canadians first?" Ignatieff said in the Commons.

He was asking about expectations that Harper, after months of confidential talks with President Barack Obama's government, will sign an agreement Friday for an overhaul of bilateral relations that could lead to a new era of shared U.S.-Canada border controls.

The deal would establish a high-level joint committee to pursue closer cooperation between the two countries in an effort to improve anti-terrorist defences and ease the flow of goods through the increasingly clogged U.S.-Canada border.

But critics say the Harper government is moving toward profound changes in Canada's sovereignty, immigration controls, information sharing and other aspects of bilateral relations without a mandate or debate in this country.

Fielding questions Thursday, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon declined to provide information about the security arrangements Harper and Obama will be discussing at the White House on Friday.

"Our government always puts Canada's interests first," Cannon told MPs. "Since we took office, we have been focused on creating jobs and economic growth through free, open and secure borders. That means keeping our shared borders open to trade investment but closed to security and terrorist threats."

Other attempts by opposition MPs to elicit information on the negotiations were met with similar descriptions of the government's general goals.

"Will the government, at the very least, tell this House what demands it will make to address the serious shortcomings at Canada's border with the United States?" asked NDP MP **Brian Masse**.

In response, Public Safety Minister Vic Toews explained that "efficiency and security" are the watchwords of Canada's border operations. ILLUS: THE DEFENCE Our government always puts Canada's interests first. Since we took office, we have been focused on creating jobs and economic growth through free, open and secure borders. Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon THE OUTRAGE Why the secrecy? Why is it that this government is talking about fundamental issues of Canadian sovereignty and Canadian freedoms with the Americans without talking to Canadians first? Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff Pawel Dwulit/THE CANADIAN PRESS Sean Kilpatrick/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Icon Howe's name floated or new bridge

Crossing lobbyist eager to move beyond DRIC label

Dave Battagello, The Windsor Star

The Gordie Howe International Bridge.

It might seem a bit far-fetched but, as a movement is slowly getting off the ground to find a new name for the proposed governmentbacked DRIC bridge, some think the hockey icon is a good choice.

"It makes a whole lot of sense," said Tom Shields, a lobbyist working in Michigan's state capital of Lansing to win final approval for the new Windsor-Detroit crossing. "When people hear that, eyes light up.

"He was a Canadian citizen, was a star in the Detroit-Windsor area and is still an icon in the community. It's an interesting possibility."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder said during a recent interview that the time is right for a new name to replace DRIC.

The name is derived from the binational Detroit River International Crossing team of bureaucrats assigned to determine the final location for the bridge.

"We have a new legislature and are putting together a new proposal, so we want to make sure there is a new name to get a fresh start," Shields said.

"I don't think anybody likes the name DRIC or has planned on naming the bridge that.

"It sort of took off on its own. Someone once said 'it sounds like Dr. Ic.'"

Shields said DRIC is already being dropped in reference to the new bridge. It will now be referred to as the "new international trade crossing,"

He expects a full-blown naming process will be launched once final approval for the project is secured.

Snyder is expected to push soon for a vote in the state's legislature to approve the project -the final major hurdle before construction.

West-end bake shop owner and DRIC advocate Mary Ann Cuderman said she believes the new crossing should be called Freedom Bridge.

"This was a crossing point of slaves looking for freedom. This is also an international bridge with freedom on both sides. To name it after anyone is ludicrous," she said.

"It should have meaning and relevance so people anywhere in the world understand what it means. Somebody from China would see Gordie Howe and say, who is that? This would have relevance around the world. It should be understood in any language."

There is a Freedom Bridge in Budapest and another in Korea.

Detroit-Windsor truck ferry operator Gregg Ward, another supporter of the DRIC project, said he has no preference.

"I figured they might sell the naming rights, like they do these days with stadiums," he said.

Naming of the \$1.4-billion DRIC feeder route in Windsor that will lead to the proposed bridge was tackled quickly with little fanfare a few years ago by Ontario's Transportation Ministry.

In August 2007, the DRIC team rolled out its refined design for the Windsor-Essex Parkway.

"It was named by the ministry for the regions that are its hosts -Windsor and Essex -and continues to use the term parkway to emphasize the green space that is one of its many benefits," said Fausto Natarelli, director of the Ministry of Transportation's Windsor Border Initiatives Implementation Group.

MP **Brian Masse** (NDP -Windsor West) has written federal Transportation Minister Chuck Strahl, calling on him to ensure a public process is undertaken before any name is selected.

He suggested his office lead a naming contest that could see local schoolchildren team up with their American counterparts and offer joint submissions.

"It's a community bridge and you want community ownership of the crossing," he said. "We need to have public involvement here and not have this done by somebody in Washington or Ottawa."

dbattagello@windsorstar.com ILLUS: / Gordie Howe;

Masse's bridge 'support' rapped

Jeff Watson, The Windsor Star

Windsor NDP MP **Brian Masse** wants people to forget he has consistently voted against the DRIC. Masse's record, however, is clear. What he wrongly calls "support" doesn't match his true record in the House of Commons.

Backing up what Prime Minister Stephen Harper has consistently called Canada's No. 1 infrastructure priority, our government budgeted the federal moneys for the DRIC in our very first budget in 2006. **Brian Masse**, Windsor-Tecumseh MP Joe Comartin, and the rest of Jack Layton's NDP voted against it.

Our government also made a \$400-million down payment on our 50-per-cent funding commitment to the Windsor-Essex Parkway in our second budget in 2007. Again, Masse, Comartin, and the NDP voted against it.

And in 2010, our government announced an additional equity investment of up to \$550 million to help Michigan build a toll plaza and link for the DRIC bridge to the I-75 -an investment key to Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder securing matching funds from the Obama administration to improve Michigan's highway infrastructure. In due course, Masse, Comartin, and the NDP will vote against this investment as well.

There simply is no excuse for voting against not only the top Windsor-Essex priority but Canada's top infrastructure priority.

Masse should have taken a page from former Thunder Bay Liberal MP Joe Comuzzi who, in 2007, voted for a Conservative budget containing a major investment in a cancer research centre promising 300 jobs for his riding.

Yet Masse, and for that matter, Joe Comartin, couldn't bring themselves to support the 30,000 jobs promised by the DRIC.

If this is what Masse and the NDP foolishly considers support, voters in Windsor should consider selecting Conservative MPs who will actually act in support of the DRIC.

JEFF WATSON, MP, Essex

Published | Publié: 2011-02-04
Received | Reçu: 2011-02-04 12:42 AM

NATIONAL POST (NATIONAL)
CANADA, Page: A12

New bridge from Windsor to Detroit could be named after Gordie Howe

Postmedia News

A movement is afoot to name a proposed bridge between Windsor and Detroit the Gordie Howe International Bridge. "It makes a whole lot of sense," said Tom Shields, a lobbyist working in Michigan's state capital to win final approval for the new crossing, now called the Detroit River International Crossing. Known as Mr. Hockey, "he was a Canadian citizen, was a star in the Detroit-Windsor area and is still an icon in the community. It's an interesting possibility." Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, who's in favour of a new name, is expected to push for a vote in the legislature to approve the project -- the final major hurdle before construction. **Brian Masse**, the NDP MP for Windsor West, has written Transport Minister Chuck Strahl to ask that the public be consulted before any name is selected.

ILLUS: Color Photo: /;

Strahl's departure unlikely to hurt work on new border crossing

Plans will 'move forward'

Jeff Bolichowski, The Windsor Star

Progress on a new border crossing shouldn't be set back by a key federal minister's decision not to seek re-election, local politicians say.

Federal Transport Minister Chuck Strahl is among three Conservative MPs who will not seek re-election, it was announced over the weekend. Despite speculation that an election could come as early as the end of the month, MP **Brian Masse** (NDP -Windsor West) said he didn't expect Strahl's departure to hurt the DRIC project.

"The project, on its face value, stands, as does all the work that's happened over the years to bring it to fruition," said Masse.

Masse said the bridge project was designed to withstand political changes.

"We've had changes in the past and obviously some people involved in the project are still around."

He acknowledged that any new transport minister would have to get up to speed on the Detroit River International Crossing file.

He said the bulk of the work lies with the Michigan legislature, where the new bridge has struggled to find traction despite first-year Gov. Rick Snyder's support for the project.

A spokesman for Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan's office noted Sunday that the project has already seen several transport ministers involved over the years.

"We expect that it'll continue to move forward under the same plan," said Andrew Chornenky.

Strahl has been transport minister since August, when he replaced John Baird in a federal cabinet shuffle.

He said in an open letter to his constituents he'll continue to hold the job until the next election.

Border fix is long overdue

Chris Vander Doelen, The Windsor Star

Contrary to what Windsor West MP Brian Masse says, the new border control system Canada and the United States are expected to announce next week is badly needed and a decade overdue.

Tens of thousands of people in this region can hardly wait for it - truck drivers, shippers, everyone in the auto industry, commuting nurses and engineers, and all the rest of us who cross the border regularly for work or play.

Almost anybody you talk to agrees we need to "fix" the border - everybody except for the obvious bad guys who exploit our loopholes.

We don't have confirmation yet what form the new system will take. But frankly it doesn't matter much because any effort they make has the potential to improve the sclerotic border mess we have now.

The way it works right now is, the U.S. is forced to treat every visitor from the Canadian side as a potential security threat. Why? Because they are - Canada has virtually no control over who enters the country, and keeps few records.

Recently, Windsor discovered that a man accused of defrauding possibly hundreds of customers at his Tecumseh Road used car lot was deported from the U.S. in the 1990s for trafficking heroin.

How he was able to waltz into this country as an immigrant to resume a career of alleged crime we'll never know. Apparently our border bureaucracy doesn't know and hasn't cared.

Not only can anybody in the world lie, bribe or cheat their way into Canada as a fake refugee or a "temporary" visitor, everybody in the world knows it. And since we don't keep track of their movements, instead of being a trusted neighbour Canada is a giant black hole of unknown risks to the U.S. - a veritable United Nations of threats.

The new system, it is believed, will feature some kind of shared biometric database (eye scans, fingerprints, etc.) of people who cross the border.

Opponents of the plan claim it will allow U.S. authorities to "track" every move of Canadians crossing the border - and it will. Canada will also be able to track Americans entering and leaving on both sides.

Sign me up, I say. They can even have a blood sample if they want one.

My fingerprints have been on file with CPIC (the Canadian Police Information Centre) since 1984 when Windsor police tricked most local reporters into providing our prints in return for press passes. Naive, silly us.

But giving up my prints saved me a few years ago when one of the rare jerks at the Detroit border decided I wasn't getting in to see the auto show that year.

"Ever been arrested or fingerprinted?" he barked at one point. Why, yes: but after showing him the prints on a cracked and yellowing Windsor police ID card all his complaints magically disappeared.

So it doesn't worry me in the least that border guards might swap additional information about me. Not if it means I can cross the border faster.

In fact, who could logically be opposed to a tighter, more controlled border system?

Probably the tens of thousands of fake refugees and other undesirables who manage to sneak into Canada every year. Certainly if it means they can't sneak into the U.S. at a later date.

Smugglers won't like a tighter system, either. Or drug traffickers. Or people who are members or supporters of known terrorist organizations. Or those shady immigration lawyers who depend on the steady stream of invaders for their billings.

We'll probably also hear lots of complaints from those dozens of immigrant "support groups" which act like charities, but whose members rely on the steady flow of incoming for their jobs.

Masse cites privacy issues as his main problem with a tighter border. But most of us have little or no privacy now and don't expect to have more when badly needed security improvements are made.

Other critics cite sovereignty as a concern. But that's mostly a Quebec obsession which has nothing to do with us and everything to do with the NDP playing to its new base of voters in that province.

I'm hoping what we hear next week is a first step toward a true perimeter border ringing all of North America, or at least Canada and the U.S. I'd like to see an outer ring of security similar to the one that encircles the European Union.

There is no good alternative to this. The U.S. is Canada's largest trading partner and the customer which buys three-quarters of our products. Less trade, fewer jobs. It's that simple.

How strange that the supposed party of the working class doesn't put jobs first.

cvanderdoelen@windsorstar.com or 519-255-6852 or blogs.windsorstar.com/author/winstarvanderdoelen

Media contents in NewsDesk are copyright protected.
Please refer to [Important Notices](#) page for the details.

Le contenu médiatique d'InfoMédia est protégé par les droits d'auteur.
Veuillez vous reporter à la page des [avis importants](#) pour les détails.

Border cuts at odds with Tories' tough-on-crime agenda, union says

Stephanie Levitz, The Canadian Press

The Conservatives' tough-on-crime agenda is weakened by federal budget cuts, the union representing border guards said Thursday.

Union officials say chopping \$143 million from the Canada Border Services Agency budget over the next three years will hamper its ability to catch child pornography, drugs and terrorists at the border.

The cuts represent more than 1,300 jobs, including intelligence officers and front-line agents, the union said.

Cracking down on sexual offences and illegal drugs has been a key focus for the Conservatives, as has border security.

When they were elected in 2006, they increased the number of officers by 400 and since then they've added a further 1,600 new positions, according to figures provided by Public Safety.

Union president Jean Pierre Fortin said he remembers applauding those moves, but can't understand why the increases are being reversed.

"If they are changing their mind right now and are taking everything away that was positive for public security - that's why we're in front and that's why we are screaming more than the others," he said.

"We don't understand what's going on here."

The cuts will be across the country, with the Pacific, Prairie and Quebec offices each losing more than 100 people.

Fortin says the public will notice the difference in waiting times at the borders, but what they won't see is the cuts behind the scenes to people who work at keeping threats out.

"I don't know if you're going to be able to see that, but certainly it's going to be less safe," he said.

A spokeswoman for Public Safety Minister Vic Toews says the government is trying to make the border more efficient.

"We will keep it open to legitimate travel and trade, but it will remain closed to criminals and terrorists," Julie Carmichael said in an email.

"We will find savings by reducing unnecessary spending and duplication of work such as cruise ships that currently need to be cleared numerous times instead of just one. This is a needless waste of time and costs our tourism operators money."

The Conservatives have been examining increased use of technology at the border, which would also help save money.

In Washington earlier this month, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said information-sharing and "infobiometrics" are part of the answer to increased border security.

"We've seen this all over the place," he said. "I'm of the strong view that checking millions and millions of people, making them go through lineups, making them go through screening, is not, in and of itself, an effective way to identify the potentially dangerous."

"We have to have more sophisticated ways of doing that."

Fortin said the union isn't against technology, but the cuts will harm that, too.

"If you don't have anybody feeding the data into the system, that's where we're going to have a problem," he said.

The Opposition New Democrats say technology isn't the answer.

"With fewer officers on the front lines, we will be leaving it up to computers to ask importers if they're smuggling," said trade critic Brian Masse.

"When a border services officer reviews the paperwork, they go over routing, cargo, quantities and any other criteria that would raise suspicion. Increasingly, we will leave this up to computers. It's unacceptable." PHOTO: Photo by The Canadian Press ILLUS: Jean-Pierre Fortin, national president of the union representing Public Safety workers, holds a news conference on Parliament Hill in Ottawa Thursday.

Media contents in NewsDesk are copyright protected.
Please refer to [Important Notices](#) page for the details.

Le contenu médiatique d'InfoMédia est protégé par les droits d'auteur.
Veuillez vous reporter à la page des [avis importants](#) pour les détails.

--Ontario Update--

(Toronto-Eaton-Centre-Shots)

The hunt continues for the gunman who killed one person and wounded six others at the Toronto Eaton Centre.

Shots rang out early Saturday evening in the mall's food court, sending hundreds of terrified shoppers diving for cover or stampedeing for exits.

A 25-year old man was pronounced dead at the scene, and two of the wounded -- a 13-year old boy and a 20-year old man -- were listed in critical condition.

Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair says investigators believe the gunman acted alone, that the man who died was targeted, and that the other victims were innocent bystanders.

He says it's outrageous anyone could show such wanton disregard for the lives others by opening fire in a crowded mall.

No word yet on a possible motive, but Blair vows to spare no effort in catching the culprit.

In the meantime, there's word the Eaton Centre mall and parking garage will remain closed today, but its business offices will be open. (The Canadian Press, CP24)

(Becel-Ride)

It's going to be a little tougher for a lot of people to get in and out of Toronto today.

The Becel Heart and Stoke Ride goes today, and as a result parts of the Don Valley Parkway and the Q-E-W will be closed until two o'clock this afternoon. (The Canadian Press)

(Bruce Power)

Bruce Power has put one of the nuclear units at its Bruce A generating station back on line.

Unit 3 has restarted after a 300-million dollar overhaul that began last November.

It's hoped the improvements will extend the unit's life for up to 10 years.

Last month damage to some non-nuclear equipment at the plant delayed bringing the Unit 2 reactor back on line. (The Canadian Press)

(Highway-Reopens)

O-P-P say Highway 144 in northeastern Ontario is open again now that a large forest fire near Timmins is under control.

A week of rain has helped firefighters knock down the blaze that ravaged the area for two weeks.

But people are still being urged to stay away from the fire zone and officials say the area west of the highway remains closed to the public. (The Canadian Press)

(Canadian-Steel)

A Windsor M-P is demanding the Harper government ensure that Canadian steel is used to build the new Windsor-Detroit bridge.

The Detroit News reported Friday that Ottawa wants to buy cheaper steel made in China.

But New Democrat Brian Masse says that even if it cost more the steel should still be made in Canada because it would create much-needed jobs.

Masse has made his views clear in a letter to Transport Minister Denis Lebel. (CKLW)

(Doggy-Tea)

Some four-legged fans of the Queen will be wagging their tails today in celebration of the monarch's Diamond Jubilee.

Toronto's Woofstock dog festival will join in the jubilee festivities today with a dog-friendly high tea in the Windsor Ballroom of the King Edward Hotel.

The menu features everything from beef-broth tea to canine crumpets.

Attendance at the event, which begins at 2 p-m, is limited to 70 dogs and their humans.

The Queen is well-known dog-lover, having had more than 30 corgis during her lengthy reign. (680News)

(Ontario Update by Linda Shearman & Steve Hennigar)

(The Canadian Press)

Media contents in NewsDesk are copyright protected.
Please refer to [Important Notices](#) page for the details.

Le contenu médiatique d'InfoMédia est protégé par les droits d'auteur.
Veuillez vous reporter à la page des [avis importants](#) pour les détails.

Deal clinches new bridge between Windsor-Detroit

Canada offers to pay \$550 million of state's share

Dave Battagello, Postmedia News

An agreement was announced Friday by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder to build the long-awaited \$1-billion government-backed bridge after 10 years of controversy and unfulfilled promises to fix the gridlock at the Windsor-Detroit border.

Calling it a necessary step to better facilitate and expand the current \$120-billion in annual Canada-U.S. trade across the Detroit River, the prime minister said there was no other project more urgently needed across the country than the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) bridge.

He also took time to fire a warning shot against the project's biggest opponent - Ambassador Bridge billionaire owner Matty Moroun - and any political body that at-tempts to get in the way of the DRIC bridge being built.

"We are prepared to do whatever it takes," Harper said. "Make no mistake, whatever battles lie ahead this bridge is going to get done."

Details announced during an hour-long event at the Hilton Hotel show Canada is poised to take on all the risk and rewards of the bridge project, while the highlight from Michigan's perspective is no risk for its tax-payers, thanks to Canada's offer to pay up to \$550 million toward the state's share of the project.

Another key feature in the deal for the economically struggling state is how the U.S. federal government is allowing the Canadian funds to count under a matching grant pro-program for new roads and infra-structure that will provide around \$2 billion in grants.

Canada is to be repaid through bridge tolls for the loan and will carry all the financial risk if there is not enough revenue to cover those costs. A private contractor will be retained to finance, build and manage the bridge and Canada will owe payments under the planned public-private partnership.

There will be the creation of a new six-member bridge authority with equal representation from Canada and the U.S. All tolls will be collected on the Canadian side.

In addition to creating thou-sands of both temporary and permanent jobs, the new crossing would ease the congestion which is slowing business and trade on both sides of the border, particularly in the auto industry.

The new bridge will be located on the Windsor side in the riding of local MP Brian Masse (NDP - Windsor West), who supports the project.

Published | Publié: 2013-01-16
Received | Reçu: 2013-01-16 2:13 AM

THE WINDSOR STAR

WINDSOR STAR (FINAL)
NEWS, Page: A3

Masse suggests public name the bridge

Don Lajoie, The Windsor Star

Matty Moroun might want to suggest "A Bridge Too Far" but MPP Brian Masse (NDP - Windsor West) is proposing the Canadian and American public be given the chance to name the new Detroit River bridge.

Masse said Tuesday he has written to Minister of Transport Denis Lebel, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray La-hood and Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, urging them to create a "bi-national process that engages the public to come up with a name for the new crossing."

"The DRIC days are over," Masse said at a Tuesday news conference. "We've contacted officials on both sides of the border and there seems to be some interest in the idea."

He said the new bridge is coming to fruition following years of work, struggle and support from people in communities in Canada and the U.S. Masse added the recent November election results, with the Michigan electorate voting down Proposal 6 to put construction to a referendum, and the "over-arching consensus we've achieved here" shows how important completion of the project has become to citizens in both countries.

"I believe that to acknowledge those contributions the public should be at the forefront of developing a name for this infrastructure that will play such a critical role in our future prosperity," he said.

Masse said the bridge promises to become a symbol of the "partnership between Canada and the United States" and will be a tool for the economic growth of both nations.

One model that might be followed, Masse said, is a process in Scotland to name a new bridge crossing the River Forth. In that country, an advisory panel, made up of community representatives, was named to gather and assess suggestions submitted by the public. A short list was decided upon and those names were put to a vote to select the most popular. So far, 6,000 submissions have been received.

Masse said that here, a mechanism would have to be found to take into account the population differences on both sides of the border to ensure fairness.

He said "feelers" have already been put out and two of the more popular suggestions thus far have been the "Freedom" or "Veterans" Bridge.

"This will be an identifiable structure not just for ourselves but for the whole world," he said.



Masse aims to minimize border cuts

Claire Brownell, The Windsor Star

The U.S. sequestration budget cuts are coming whether we like it or not, but MP Brian Masse said he's pushing for minimal impact on the Canadian border.

Gridlocked U.S. politicians couldn't stop \$85 billion in cuts from hitting U.S. federal programs Friday. Republicans and Democrats blamed each other for failing to strike a deal before the deadline.

That's cause for concern for local businesses that rely on speedy cross-border trade. U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano estimates the cuts will spell layoffs for about 5,000 border agents.

Masse (NDP-Windsor West) spent part of last week in Washington, trying to convince lawmakers to spare the Canada-U.S. border from the cuts. Small border slowdowns have a big impact on the economy, and the loss of that many U.S. border agents could have a serious impact on wait times.

Masse said he didn't have to spend much time in Washington before it became obvious that avoiding the cuts before the deadline was going to be impossible.

"It was clear no deal was going to be reached from the day I got there," Masse said. "The partisanship has really reached a fever pitch, there's no doubt about it."

Instead, Masse is hoping the Department of Homeland Security can be convinced to focus the cuts elsewhere, such as the U.S.-Mexico border. Failing that, U.S. lawmakers could step in and introduce new legislation to stop the cuts during the 30-day notice period after the department sends out pink slips, he said.

It's impossible to know exactly what will happen. Some experts have said the budget cuts could send the U.S. spiralling back into a recession, while President Barack Obama has called them "dumb" but not catastrophic, as long as politicians reach a deal to remove them as quickly as possible.

As for their effect on Windsor, Masse said he hopes to avoid the worst-case scenario of companies relocating from Canada to the U.S., skyrocketing shipping prices and longer and longer wait times to cross.

"For the border here, we don't know exactly what it means," he said. ILLUS: / Brian Masse;

Published | Publié: 2013-03-21
Received | Reçu: 2013-03-21 2:19 AM

THE WINDSOR STAR

WINDSOR STAR (FINAL)
NEWS, Page: A2

Support grows for DRIC bridge bike lane

U.S. customs, senator back concept

Dave Battagello, The Windsor Star

A lane for bikes and pedestrians is part of the conceptual design for the new Detroit River bridge, but whether it makes it off the drawing board has not been determined, a spokesman for Transport Canada said Wednesday.

"The final decision as to whether bikes and pedestrians will be allowed on the new bridge will be formed by discussions that will take place with border inspection agencies in both countries," said Mark Butler.

"Any decision will take into account mobility needs as well as safety, security and other operational considerations for the crossing."

Another call for including bikes on the new downriver bridge recently came from Michigan Sen. Carl Levin, who issued a letter of support to U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection told Levin it supports bikes and pedestrians on the Detroit River International Crossing and "will work with these requirements as it begins the design phase of the project."

The six-lane bridge will link the industrial communities of Brighton Beach and Delray.

Last fall, MP Brian Masse (NDP - Windsor West) gathered several dozen cycling supporters along Windsor's riverfront to push for bike lanes on the new bridge.

He also hopes a path will be included at the end of the \$1-billion Herb Gray Parkway that would link to the new bridge. The crossing should include a three-metre pathway for pedestrians and cyclists with possibly free or reduced tolls, he said.

"It's good momentum when Carl Levin supports this," said Masse on Wednesday. "U.S Customs is also supporting the bike lanes so the problem appears to be on the Canadian side."

He said all federal Transportation Minister Denis Lebel needs to do "is say 'yes' on our side. I'm disappointed he is not getting back to us on this. I don't know why they are not embracing this. It's win-win project for both sides."

Masse said time is an issue since the parkway's design - with construction more than one-third complete - has left its multi-use trail 300 metres short of the proposed bridge plaza site in Brighton Beach.

"There is an opportunity here to connect major biking circuits on both sides of the border where we could really market this area," he said. "Imagine someone packing camping gear, coming to visit a winery and then camping nearby overnight. This has not been a priority, when it really should be, so we wait."

Published | Publié: 2013-04-09
Received | Reçu: 2013-04-09 4:26 PM

THE WINDSOR STAR

WINDSORSTAR.COM
ONLINE

Moroun sues U.S. and Canada federal governments to stop DRIC bridge

Dave Battagello

Ambassador Bridge owner Matty Moroun has filed a sweeping lawsuit in Washington - against the U.S. departments of Secretary of State, Transportation, Coast Guard and Homeland Security - plus the Canadian federal government in a bid to stop the \$1-billion government-backed downriver Windsor-Detroit bridge.

The 92-page lawsuit was originally filed in federal court in February where lawyers for Moroun claim he has a "perpetual and exclusive franchise right" to operate the Windsor-Detroit crossing without competition from another bridge based on agreements signed in the 1920s by U.S. Congress and the Canadian Parliament when the Ambassador Bridge was built.

The lawsuit obtained by The Star on Tuesday says the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) bridge would "destroy" the value of its franchise by diverting up to 75 per cent of border traffic, while an agreement signed with Canada to build the new crossing is unconstitutional.

The defendants named in the lawsuit have also thwarted the bridge company's right to build a twin span, the lawsuit said.

Bridge president Dan Stamper did not respond to messages from The Star.

"No one should be surprised by this," said Ken Silfven, spokesman for Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder - who signed the binational agreement to build the DRIC bridge. "It seems to be how they operate."

"But delaying jobs for working families isn't in their best interests or Michigan's. When all is said and done, we believe the bridge will be built to the benefit of Michigan and Canada."

The U.S. Dept. of State, formerly headed by Hilary Clinton and now John Kerry, has been responsible for processing the presidential permit application in Washington for the DRIC bridge. The permit is regarded as the last remaining political step before construction can begin.

A State department spokesman did not wish to comment Tuesday about Moroun's lawsuit, but indicated the approval process for the permit remains ongoing.

"The presidential permitting process continues as required by the Executive Order," he said. "We hope to be able to provide additional information in the near future."

Canada's Consul General Roy Norton - an active supporter to get the DRIC bridge built - was not surprised to learn of Moroun's lawsuit.

"They are acting out what they said they would do," he said. "I'm not surprised, they have an enormous sense of entitlement."

The bridge company's ongoing claim to exclusive rights to bridge traffic at the Windsor-Detroit crossing is something "nobody takes seriously," Norton said.

"They are lashing out in all directions and trying to stop progress," he said, "This is what they do.

"They try to use the courts to achieve their goal and are doing it again. They never win (in court), so you would assume they won't win again this time. Hopefully, there will be no inordinate delays associated with this lawsuit."

Norton has made inquiries as to the status of the presidential permit.

He noted the Keystone pipeline presidential permit application was submitted five years ago and still not finalized.

although does not believe the DRIC bridge application will take nearly that long. It was submitted last June with a public comment period closing on Labour Day.

There are nine federal departments and agencies in Washington required to provide a formal response to the DRIC bridge project, which Norton believes was completed by Christmas and "my understanding was they were all favourable."

"We think it's on track and anticipate it will be issued in the not too distant future," he said. "These things often take a year and that would be in June. We hope it happens by then and we can get underway with property acquisition."

A Windsor partner in the former Mich-Can bridge group which several years ago touted to construct a Windsor-Detroit crossing in essentially the same location as the DRIC bridge said Tuesday he has studied the original legislation for the Ambassador Bridge and doesn't see anywhere in the documents where the company has exclusivity.

"You know how lawyers can twist the meanings," said local surveyor Ross Clarke. "I would suspect this will go all the way to a hearing by the Supreme Court and get dismissed, but Moroun will have accomplished his goal of delay."

Local MP Brian Masse (NDP - Windsor-West) said the lawsuit by Moroun was expected.

"What's their next step - declaring themselves as their own independent country? Masse said.

"What has to happen is (governments) need to continue to put the case for the new bridge out there, follow the rules and be insistent on the overall need. The two countries have a right to provide improvements to the economies, safety and accountability at the border."

News on the Moroun lawsuit comes on the heels of a separate lawsuit filed in Michigan by a state representative from Detroit which claims Snyder had no legal right to negotiate the deal with Canada to build the DRIC bridge.

Rep. Fred Durhal (D - Detroit) is seeking to stop construction until there is approval from the state legislature.

Snyder signed the bridge agreement in Windsor last June with Canada's Transportation Minister Denis Lebel.

"The lawsuit was filed because the governor is trying to go around the legislature and achieve through the side door what he couldn't get through the front door," Durhal told The Star on Tuesday.

He believes Snyder has violated the state's constitution by "ignoring us" as no legislative approval has been given.

"My response is how the devil can he do this unless he's paying for the bridge himself," Durhal said. "He can not put the citizens of Michigan in a position where they might have to pick up the costs for the bridge at some point."

Snyder's office has countered he had a right to sign the deal since no state dollars are involved. Canada has offered to pay the state's entire cost for the DRIC bridge project - up to have \$550 million has already been committed. The money is to be recouped through tolls.

Durhal's lawyer is Godfrey Dillard. He represented Moroun last March in a Detroit court where the bride owner faced contempt charges for failing to follow a judge's orders to properly complete work on the U.S. bridge plaza.

According to campaign finance records, Durhal has also received \$7,200 in political campaign donations from the Moroun family since 2010.

"Godfrey Dillard is one of the finest constitution lawyers in Michigan," Durhal said. "Whoever his other clients are is irrelevant to me. I know he is as good a lawyer as we can get."

As to Moroun's political donations, Durhal responded "just like any other politician" he takes donations from a number of lobbyists and firms.

"That doesn't buy my vote," he said. "I'm not bought and paid for, but it's nice to have friends support you."

Published | Publié: 2013-06-10
Received | Reçu: 2013-06-10 2:07 AM

THE WINDSOR STAR

WINDSOR STAR (FINAL)
NEWS, Page: A1 / FRONT

Bridge would rank among world's longest

What kind will be built?

Brian Cross, The Windsor Star

Because its towers can't be planted in the Detroit River, the new government-backed bridge will have a tower-to-tower span that will rank it among the world's longest.

The 1929 Ambassador Bridge ranks around 66th when it comes to suspension bridges based on the 564 metres between its in-water piers. But the downriver DRIC bridge that's supposed to be built and operating by 2020 is going to have a span of either 855 metres if it's a suspension bridge (ranking it between 30th and 35th among suspension bridges, depending on the list) or 840 metres if it's a cable-stayed bridge.

It would be the longest cable-stayed bridge in North America and the sixth or seventh longest in the world.

The decision to not have any piers in the Detroit River goes back three or four years following discussions with the Canadian and U.S. coast guards as well as ship owners and captains, who said piers would interfere with safe navigation. The commitment was made as part of the environmental assessment. But that detail became prominent last week when MP Brian Masse (NDP-Windsor West) cited it in the House of Commons, as he argued against the way the government intends to build, finance and operate the \$1-billion bridge through a public-private partnership.

"That decision to not have any structures in the water is the right choice," Masse told The Star. But he said the decision means the bridge will have to be built a certain way - to go that distance between shores narrows the options down to either a suspension or cable-stayed bridge - perhaps limiting the number of qualified firms that are willing to get involved in the venture. "My concern is why are we doing a P3 (Public-Private Partnership) in the first place?"

Transport Canada spokesman Mark Butler said there is "significant" interest among private-sector companies in the DRIC project. "And we have confirmed this through a market sounding which sought expressions of interest."

The next phase in the lengthy process starts as early as this week when geotechnical drilling will help determine how deep the on-land piers will go, and help determine what kind of bridge is ultimately built.

Shaohong Cheng, an associate professor of engineering at the University of Windsor, said it's not important whether the piers are in the water or on land when it comes to building a bridge. In fact, piers in the water are more challenging because they require underwater construction.

"What really is important is how long is the span between the two towers," she said. Anything over 600 metres requires either suspension or cable-spans.

The longest bridges in the world are suspension, with the largest one, the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge in Japan, spanning 1,991 metres. Shaped like a stylized M, they employ two massive cables to hold up the roadway, that ride freely across the towers and transmit the load to anchors at either end.

If the DRIC bridge is suspension, its towers would be 140 metres high, slightly higher than the Fisher Building in Detroit and 20 metres higher than the Ambassador Bridge towers.

A cable-stayed bridge would have towers 250 metres tall, which is 30 metres higher than the Renaissance Center. Cable-stayed bridges also use cables to hold up the road, but these cables are attached to the towers. With a cable-stayed bridge all the load - from the vehicles, the weight of the bridge, the wind - is borne by the road bed and the towers, which transfer the load to the tower foundations. Their cables look like the ribs of an inverse fan, descending from the tower to the road bed. The longest in the world is the 1,104-metre Russky Bridge in Russia.

One factor in deciding between the two types is the soil conditions, because suspension bridges require very strong anchorages to bear the load of cables pulling horizontally. In very soft ground conditions, a suspension bridge might not

be an option, said Cheng.

She said often a cable-stayed bridge is cheaper, but there are so many factors to consider when deciding between the two.

One big factor will be how various bridge models behave in wind, said Cheng, who researches wind-resistant design of bridges and buildings. Cheng said a bridge as big as this will require wind tunnel tests in which experts gather meteorological data for the area around the bridge from the last 40 or 50 years to determine the highest wind speed the bridge may encounter during its lifespan.

Transport Canada's Butler said that "bottom line," it's been determined that either a cable-stay or suspension bridge will work at the DRIC site. It will be the P3 consortiums, that will do further tests including wind tests, to come forward with recommendations on which bridge is best.

All the major approvals for the bridge are in hand, and with most of the land required for the bridge and customs plaza on the Canadian side acquired, the land on the U.S. side now has to be appraised and purchased.

Following that, the government will be issuing a request for qualifications, for firms interested in the P3, said Butler. Following that there will be a request for proposals, with the start of construction expected at the end of 2015 or beginning of 2016.

BRIDGE FACTS

- . Total length: 2.9 kilometres
- . Bridge span between towers: 855 metres if suspension, 840 if cable-stayed
- . Clearance at centre of channel: 47 metres
- . Concrete: 400,000 tonnes for suspension, 135,000 tonnes for cable-stayed
- . Steel: 22,000 tonnes for suspension, 24,000 tonnes for cable-stayed
- . Cable: 6,900 tonnes for suspension, 3,300 tonnes for cable-stayed

bcross@windsorstar.com ILLUS: / The new DRIC crossing is likely to be a cable-stayed bridge, as seen in this artist's rendering, or a suspension bridge.; Windsor Star Files / MP Brian Masse argued last week against the way the government intends to build, finance and operate the new bridge through a public-private partnership.;

Published | Publié: 2013-11-19
Received | Reçu: 2013-11-19 3:30 AM

THE WINDSOR STAR

WINDSOR STAR (EARLY)
WINDSOR & REGION, Page: A5

New bridge authority in hunt for CEO

Job posting signals DRIC progress

Dave Battagello, The Windsor Star

Postings have been issued to fill the jobs of CEO and board chairperson for the public bridge authority that will oversee the new \$1-billion Detroit River bridge.

The postings by the federal government are another sign the Detroit River International Crossing project is moving closer to reality. The hirings are being carried out under the Privy Council Office, which provides advice and support to the prime minister and cabinet.

"The hiring of the chairperson is being done here and the president/CEO job is being handled by a search firm," Raymond Rivet, spokesman for the Privy Council, said Monday.

He could not say how long it will take to fill the positions.

"I have no information at this stage," Rivet said.

"They have just started the selection process."

Salary for the CEO job ranges from \$210,600 to \$247,700. The CEO job includes overseeing construction of the six-lane crossing, which is expected to open in 2020 and link the downriver industrial communities of Brighton Beach and Delray.

The newly formed Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority will be a Crown corporation. It will have a board of directors with three members each from Canada and the U.S.

The CEO will report to the board and should have some experience in the development of major infrastructure projects, according to the posting, which appeared Saturday in The Star. The search is being carried out by Renaud Foster, an executive search consultant.

Finding the right person to oversee construction of the new bridge and its operations is critical in light of what has gone wrong with the \$1.4-billion Herb Gray Parkway, where more than 500 girders - ranging in cost from \$50,000 to \$100,000 each - are being replaced, said MP Brian Masse (NDP - Windsor West).

"It's a good sign they are starting to post (for jobs)," he said. "The biggest issue is accountability and oversight - as we have seen with the parkway. It is critical."

Actions by the CEO and board also should be structured so they remain visible to the local community, Masse said.

"You want the public to be able to see operations of the board and office so there is local accountability," he said. "That's important, as everyone saw with the parkway what can happen when everything is done behind closed doors. It can lead to problems."

"As long as the curtain is raised on the government structure, I will have more confidence. It shouldn't be hard for the public to understand who is accountable."

The chairperson of the board will be a part-time paid position.

The salary will range from \$6,400 to \$7,500 with a per diem of between \$200 to \$300, according to Rivet.

The job will entail providing strategic direction for the authority, overseeing the board and reporting to Parliament through the federal transportation minister. The listing indicates the bridge authority's board meetings will be held 10 to 12 days per year.

Michigan will not move on making appointments on the three U.S. members of the board until the bridge authority "becomes operational," Ken Silfven, spokesman for Gov. Rick Snyder, said Monday.

dbattagello@windsorstar.com