

Windsor Border Improvements Creating Jobs

McGuinty Government Strengthens Windsor-Essex Economy in 2011

NEWS

January 13, 2012

Construction of the Windsor-Essex Parkway is on track to move people and goods more safely and efficiently at Canada's busiest border crossing while supporting and creating 12,000 jobs.

Last year, Parkway construction work included:

- salvaging a total of 250 tons of reusable materials from buildings slated for demolition within the Parkway right-of-way
- protecting species at risk, including transplanting hundreds of Willowleaf Asters to restoration sites
- breaking ground on the new [Trillium Court](#) affordable housing project, which will help 56 families relocate to brand new homes.

Current Parkway construction work includes:

- diverting traffic to ensure four lanes are open at all times along the Highway 3/Huron Church Road corridor
- building the Howard Avenue Diversion, a permanent Parkway feature that will include a roundabout to accommodate large trucks and facilitate the smooth movement of traffic through this area
- rebuilding the recently demolished North Talbot Road Bridge to allow for the widening of Highway 401 between Provincial Road and Highway 3.

As part of the [Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving](#) (LGWEM) strategy, detailed designs were developed for improvements to the Canadian Plaza of the [Windsor-Detroit Tunnel](#); the environmental study and preliminary design work for improvements to [Lauzon Parkway](#) got underway; and the [Howard Avenue CPR grade separation](#) was completed to ease congestion and improve travel times for commuters.

Building better highways, bridges and transit is part of the McGuinty government's plan to create and support jobs for Ontarians while attracting new investment and strengthening the economy.

QUOTES

"Building modern and efficient transportation infrastructure creates good jobs for families in the Windsor area and helps grow Ontario's economy."

— Bob Chiarelli, Minister of Transportation, Minister of Infrastructure

"This government is fully committed to improving the border in the Windsor-Detroit Gateway. Together with Canada, Ontario has invested over \$300 million in improvements to the transportation network here and we're ready for the biggest improvement yet — the Windsor-Essex Parkway."

— Dwight Duncan, MPP for Windsor-Tecumseh

"These improvements are contributing to Windsor's economic success in the region, the province, Canada and the world. Strong economies and strong communities go hand in hand. We are providing real solutions for this important international gateway."

— Teresa Piruzza, MPP for Windsor-West

QUICK FACTS

- The Windsor-Essex Parkway will generate approximately 12,000 jobs through supporting existing industry, attracting new investment and expanding business opportunities. The majority of these jobs will be in the Windsor-Essex region.
- Preparations for Windsor border improvements supported over 2,000 jobs last year, with 96 per cent of Windsor-Essex Parkway sub-contracts awarded to local companies.
- Each year, more than 12 million cars, trucks and buses — and nearly \$120 billion worth of goods — flow between Canada and the U.S. through the Windsor-Detroit corridor.

LEARN MORE

See [the Windsor-Essex Parkway](#).

Learn about the [Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving](#) strategy.

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Windsor Border Transportation Projects – 2011 Year in Review

January 13, 2011

Ontario and our partners reached major milestones and made considerable progress on projects in 2011 to improve the flow of people and goods in Windsor and Essex County, leading to Canada's busiest land border crossing.

Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving

Working together with federal and municipal partners, the Ontario government continued to make progress on the [Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving](#) (LGWEM) strategy during 2011. The governments of Ontario and Canada have invested over \$270 million in LGWEM projects.

[Howard Avenue Grade Separation](#) – Travellers now have a north-south route through the city, uninterrupted by border-bound trains having to slow for X-ray scanning. Coco Paving Inc. of Windsor worked on the \$23 million grade separation. The retaining wall commemorates Windsor-Essex's war veterans with a leaf motif. Construction of the pumping station was completed in fall of 2011. The pumping station features a design that keeps the memorial aspect of the corridor in mind.

[Lauzon Parkway Extension Environmental Assessment](#) – The environmental assessment and preliminary design study began in December 2010 and will be completed in early 2012. The study involves the City of Windsor and the County of Essex and includes the examination of the Sandwich South lands.

[Windsor-Detroit Tunnel Plaza](#) – Improvements to the tunnel plaza will help address local traffic concerns. Detailed design of improvements to the Canadian plaza began in fall 2011. Subject to environmental approval and property acquisition, construction could start in fall 2012 and take approximately two construction seasons to complete.

[Highway 401 Improvements](#) – Widening and improvements to Highway 401 from west of Manning Road to east of Essex County Road 46 were completed this year. This work will improve road conditions and enhance safety for drivers. The work includes the installation of Intelligent Transportation Systems cameras that feed into the [COMPASS](#) traffic system.

The Windsor-Essex Parkway

This year saw a number of significant milestones achieved for this once-in-a-generation project that will generate approximately 12,000 jobs through supporting existing industry, attracting new investment, bringing new jobs and creating business opportunities. Once the [Parkway](#) is complete, it will provide 300 acres of green space with landscaped areas, ecological protections and restoration areas and 20 kilometres of multi-use trails. The value of this alternative financing and procurement (AFP) project is \$1.4 billion.

Windsor Essex Mobility Group/Parkway Infrastructure Constructors – In April, the Windsor Essex Mobility Group (WEMG) and Parkway Infrastructure Constructors (PIC) opened their doors to

the public at their newly renovated location on Huron Church Road in Windsor. The renovation of the former Hallmark Building led to 30 project-related jobs. Since opening their offices they have successfully handled 3,000 public inquiries through the toll free number, 1-877-WE-PKWAY, attended 40 kitchen table meetings and met with over 1,000 residents at consultation sessions.

ISO 9001 Certification – The Windsor-Essex Parkway project received ISO 9001 certification in December. This milestone ensures that the work that is being conducted for the Parkway project meets International Quality Management System (QMS) Standards and is recognized by the Standards Council of Canada.

New Equipment – In preparing for the project, our partners have purchased a number of pieces of new equipment. This state-of-the-art construction equipment employs the latest technology and is one way our partners are ensuring adherence to effective mitigation measures. In addition, 54 work trucks were obtained by WEMG/PIC from three local Windsor-Essex dealerships. The local sourcing of these vehicles contributes to the local economy and business growth.

Initial Construction – Essex County contractor, Facca Inc., completed this \$15.5 million contract in early 2011. This initiative saw both the installation of a noise barrier behind houses in Southwood Lakes that will protect local residents during construction and the building of two bridges that will carry traffic between Highways 401 and 3 and the Parkway.

Species at Risk – All permits currently required for construction under the Endangered Species Act have been received. We continue to work with our partners at the Ministry of Natural Resources on measures to protect, create and restore habitat for species at risk in the corridor in accordance with the conditions of permits. Ten kilometres of temporary snake fence barrier were installed throughout the corridor in March 2011. The fence acts as a protective barrier between construction sites and residents and is made of a special fabric that deters Eastern Foxsnakes, a climbing snake, from entering the construction zone. Transplant activities were completed in spring and fall 2011. Crews from AMEC's local office continue to work in the corridor to monitor species at risk in active construction areas.

Archaeological Work – For the past three years URS Canada Inc., with the participation of Walpole Island First Nation, has been engaged in completing archaeological assessments for the Windsor-Essex Parkway. The joint crew's work led to the identification of over 20 previously unknown archaeological sites and the completion of more than 10 excavations. Recovered artefacts range in age from 200 to 3,000 years old. Four noteworthy sites have been found relating to the period between 1,000 and 1,200 AD. This work has led to a much more detailed understanding of the Windsor-Essex area.

Demolition – Following the demolition activities of 2010, 182 structures remained in the Parkway footprint. Jones Demolition of Windsor removed the remaining structures under a contract tendered by the WEMG. The work was completed in September 2011.

Road Closures – In November, the Ontario Municipal Board concluded hearings for the closure of 83 roads (60 in Windsor, 2 in Tecumseh and 21 in LaSalle) required for construction of the Parkway. This was the single largest road closure initiative in Ontario history.

Safety – This year WEMG and PIC have recorded over 320,000 work hours all without critical injuries or lost work days. In achieving this successful goal of "Zero Incidents," over 200 companies and over 2,000 people have received health and safety training that PIC has made mandatory for any person who will step into the construction corridor.

Local Sourcing – WEMG and PIC are committed to local sourcing for the Parkway project. Since January, 96 per cent of the companies awarded various contracts have been local, providing local knowledge and expertise to the Parkway project. Most recently, Facca Inc., of Oldcastle was awarded the contract to construct the North Talbot Road Bridge (Bridge 15) and Chall-Eng Services Inc. of Tecumseh is completing pre-condition surveys.

Utility Relocation – All major utility companies have been working concurrently in the corridor with PIC to relocate gas, hydro, phone, water and cable lines. In some cases, these lines are being relocated temporarily and will be permanently located on some of the tunnel tops.

Trillium Court – A social housing development located on property required for the Windsor-Essex Parkway will be relocated less than one kilometre away — keeping the community intact and residents close to current schools, shopping and transit. The new homes are currently being built south of Sandwich West Parkway and west of Heritage Drive near Sandwich West Park in the Town of LaSalle. Design of the new homes was completed by Archon Architects Inc. of Windsor and the project is being overseen by MPM Project Managers Inc. Oscar Construction Company Ltd. of Oldcastle began construction in July and is expected to be complete in mid-2012.

Community Partnerships

WE Pay It Forward – WEMG partnered with local charity group WE Pay It Forward to continue to the salvage efforts that began in 2010. In all, approximately 250 tons of materials were salvaged from buildings being demolished to make way for the Parkway. Salvaged materials were provided to local not-for-profit groups. The remainder was sold in the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store. Materials that would normally be destined for local landfills are being diverted and recycled in the community.

University of Windsor – Ontario is supporting Dr. William Anderson, professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Windsor, to lead a research project on the regional impacts of the Parkway. Dr. Anderson and his team are conducting a comprehensive economic assessment of the construction of the Parkway, incorporating data on Parkway activities and local economic conditions to measure actual impacts on the local economy. In the future, the government will work with the University to prepare conference and journal papers based on the research results. WEMG has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Windsor to support Dr. Anderson's research.

Emergency Services – Ontario partnered with local emergency service organizations to provide opportunities to conduct training activities in empty buildings scheduled for demolition. Windsor Fire Rescue provided hands-on learning to new recruits at buildings and homes in their communities.

Municipalities – WEMG was pleased to partner with the City of Windsor this winter in the donation of holiday trees. The City of Windsor accepted four trees that were being removed as part of the clearing and grubbing operations taking place to prepare the corridor for construction. The City used one tree for the Santa Clause Parade and has replanted the remaining three trees to be used for holiday seasons in the years to come.

First Nations – WEMG, PIC and the Government of Ontario are dedicated to creating and maintaining positive relationships with First Nations groups interested in the Parkway. To continue on with commitments made during the Detroit River International Crossing Environmental Assessment, Ecological Circles have been formed. These are informal meetings that provide opportunities for open dialogue amongst members of First Nation communities and the construction team. The first ecological circle was held in early December. To date, Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) have been engaged in archaeological assessments and ecological restoration activities.

Laborer's Union Local 625 – The design and construction of the Parkway is being performed under contract with WEMG and PIC. PIC has in place many agreements with Ontario-based companies, including LIUNA Local 625. This agreement ensures that local skilled workers are being utilized for various construction activities associated with the Parkway.

Other Activities

Awards and Recognition – The LGWEM strategy was recognized by the Windsor Construction Association for the work on Howard Avenue, Walker Road and the Detroit-Windsor Truck Ferry and by the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) for work on County Road 22. The awards were handed out earlier this year and recognize how the projects impact Windsor and Essex residents and travellers. Garfield Dales, Manager, Project Delivery, was recognized by the Transportation Association of Canada with the Award of Excellence in their Canadian Transportation Awards Program at the annual conference in fall 2011.

Public Engagement/Outreach – Community and local business involvement continued to play an important role in Windsor border transportation projects through 2011. The Ministry of Transportation provided updates through [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#) and [You Tube](#) and a community newsletter.

More than 1,000 local residents attended outreach sessions, providing valuable feedback on projects, including improvements to the Tunnel Plaza, the Windsor-Essex Parkway and the Lauzon Parkway extension.

The Ministry of Transportation attended various events in 2011 including the Can-AM Border Transportation Association meeting, the North American SuperCorridor Coalition annual meeting, the Ontario Motor Coach Association annual meeting, Transportation Association of Canada meeting and the Ontario Road Builders Association meeting.

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