

The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway: A Chronology

Date	Activity
May 2008	As a result of public review and comment, and extensive technical studies, the Windsor-Essex Parkway (now called the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway) is presented by the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study team as the Technically and Environmentally Preferred Alternative for the Ontario access road portion of a new proposed end-to-end border transportation system for the Windsor-Detroit Gateway.
October 2008	<p>The Windsor-Essex Parkway is assigned to Infrastructure Ontario to be completed under an alternative financing and procurement model—the first for a road project in Ontario’s history.</p> <p>Notices are sent to owners whose property is required for construction of the Windsor-Essex Parkway. Once completed, the property assembly program will see the acquisition of approximately 900 properties by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO).</p>
December 2008	MTO submits the DRIC Environmental Assessment Report under the <i>Ontario Environmental Assessment Act</i> . The Windsor-Essex Parkway is identified as the Recommended Plan for the access road.
February 2009	A market sounding session is held in Windsor to introduce the project to construction companies, engineering companies and lending institutions. Over 115 people representing 84 companies from local and international firms attend the session.
June 2009	The first step in the procurement process to identify a team to design, build, finance and maintain the Parkway begins with issuing of the request for qualifications (RFQ). The RFQ allows Infrastructure Ontario to pre-qualify and shortlist teams who will be invited to respond to the request for proposals (RFP).
July 2009	<p>The public consultation process for the construction of two bridges and a noise barrier begins with the posting of the draft consultation plan and a Public Information Open House.</p> <p>The first of two procurement meet and greet sessions is held in Windsor. These sessions are aimed at putting local business owners in touch with the international bidding consortiums to share information on local opportunities. Approximately 150 people attend the session. The second session, held in December 2009, is attended by 100 people. Both sessions result in the formation of key partnerships and the exchange of valuable business information.</p>
August 2009	<p>The RFQ for the Windsor-Essex Parkway closes. Consortiums made up of companies from all over the world responded to the RFQ.</p> <p>Ontario announces OEAA approval of the DRIC Environmental Assessment Report for the Windsor-Essex Parkway.</p>
September 2009	<p>MTO applies for two permits under the Ontario <i>Endangered Species Act</i> (2007). The first permit is received in November 2009 and allows for the removal and relocation of one plant impacted by construction of two bridges and a noise barrier. The second permit is received in February 2010 and allows for the relocation of species at risk for construction of the Parkway. A third permit is received in 2011 to address the proposed changes to Butler’s Gartersnake designation and to update and reconsider the conditions as necessary in relation to the Eastern Foxsnake (Carolinian Population) under the current D permit.</p> <p>The first utility relocations begin with the raising of two hydro towers at the western limits of the project adjacent to E.C. Row Expressway near Ojibway Parkway to accommodate the integration of the Parkway into E.C. Row Expressway.</p>
October 2009	Infrastructure Ontario announces the three companies short-listed to submit proposals to design, build, finance and maintain the Parkway.

November 2009	MTO begins the expropriation process to obtain title to remaining properties required for the Parkway. Since beginning the property acquisition process for the Parkway, the ministry's approach—to examine each file on a case-by-case basis and deal with property owners in a fair and consistent way—is successful in acquiring approximately 900 properties needed for the Parkway with less than 130 properties being expropriated. The majority of expropriated properties are vacant lands.
December 2009	<p>Facca Construction Inc. is awarded the \$15.5 million contract to construct two bridges and a noise barrier in the eastern limits of the Parkway.</p> <p>Infrastructure Ontario and MTO release the RFP inviting short-listed teams to submit formal proposals to design, build, finance and maintain the Windsor-Essex Parkway.</p>
March 2010	The 2010 demolition of buildings on properties MTO has purchased begins. Five contracts are awarded in 2010 totalling more than \$1.5 million. Over 170 buildings are demolished in the footprint of the Parkway prior to the end of 2010. The companies conducting demolition are Pillette Transfer Station, Jones Group, Canadian Group of Companies, and Priestly Demolition.
April 2010	Ontario announces it has acquired approximately 150 properties required from the City of Windsor for the Parkway. Further funding is announced for additional green space and to create connections between the Spring Garden ANSI and the Parkway.
June 2010	URS Canada wins the Award of Merit from the Consulting Engineers of Ontario in the Transportation category for work on the DRIC study including the Windsor-Essex Parkway.
July 2010	The Windsor Essex (W.E.) Pay it Forward program officially launches. The program sees not-for-profit groups salvaging building and landscaping materials from properties purchased for the Windsor-Essex Parkway. Materials were provided free to not-for-profit organizations requesting them, with the remaining going to the Habitat for Humanity Re-store. More than 250 tonnes of building and landscaping materials are salvaged under the program and over 200 volunteers give their time to support this effort. Sales at the Re-store quadruple during the salvage period.
August 2010	The RFP stage for teams bidding on the Windsor-Essex Parkway closes.
September 2010	The Transportation Association of Canada awards the Windsor-Essex Parkway with the Environmental Achievement Award. The award recognizes projects that contribute to the protection and enhancement of the environment and also innovation in approach to transportation projects.
November 2010	<p>The Windsor Essex Mobility Group is announced as the preferred proponent to design, build, finance and maintain the Windsor-Essex Parkway.</p> <p>Union Gas and BP Canada begin relocation of gas lines on Huron Church Road at Lambton Street/Grand Marais Road and near Ojibway Parkway at the western limits of the Parkway.</p>
December 2010	<p>The Windsor Essex Mobility Group reaches commercial and financial close, ahead of schedule. The Parkway procurement process is open, fair and competitive and the Windsor Essex Mobility Group's proposal delivers the best value for Ontario taxpayers.</p> <p>MTO takes over jurisdiction of Huron Church Road from Todd Lane/Cabana to Industrial Drive, and E.C. Row Expressway from Huron Church Road to Ojibway Parkway.</p>
January 2011	Construction of two bridges and a noise barrier in the eastern limits of the Parkway is completed.
March 2011	The Windsor Essex Mobility Group opens their local office.

	<p>Pre-construction work including geo-technical drilling, species at risk protection, property maintenance, and surveying begin in the Parkway footprint.</p> <p>Public Information Open House #1 is held to present the Parkway Landscape and Trails Master Plan for public input. More than 400 people attend. Two follow up workshops are held with more than 100 people attending. By the end of 2012, seven Public Information Open Houses and various community meetings will be held with approximately 2,500 attendees providing feedback and comments on Parkway design, landscape features, road closures and construction approaches.</p>
July 2011	<p>Design and Construction Report #1 is made available for a 30-day public review period. Most highway projects require one DCR. The Parkway is unique. To meet the aggressive construction schedule, the Parkway project has been divided into components so parts of the project can proceed to construction while other parts are still being designed. By the end of the construction, six DCRs are produced and made available for public comment.</p>
August 2011	<p>Demolition of the remaining buildings on properties required for the Parkway begins on Bethlehem Avenue. Jones Group of Windsor is completing demolition of over 180 buildings.</p> <p>Construction begins on the new Trillium Court. Trillium Court is a social housing development located on property required for construction of the Parkway. MTO works with Infrastructure Ontario, River Park Non-Profit Housing Corporation, and the Town of LaSalle to relocate this housing development, keeping the community together.</p> <p>The start of construction of the Windsor-Essex Parkway is announced at a groundbreaking ceremony held in Tecumseh.</p>
February 2012	<p>The first temporary local diversion road opens this month between Spring Garden Road and Bethlehem Avenue. A total of ten diversion roads will be constructed this year maintain traffic through the construction corridor, keeping people and goods moving on Highway 3/Huron Church Road. The diversions total approximately 28 kilometres of roadway. As sections of the completed Parkway open to traffic the temporary diversion roads will be removed.</p>
March 2012	<p>Prescribed burns, herbicide application and brush cutting of invasive species such as Russian Olive, are the main restoration activities in 2012. Prescribed burns take place on approximately seven hectares of existing Parkway green space in the Chappus Street and Oakwood Bush areas, in accordance with permits issued under the <i>Endangered Species Act, 2007</i>.</p> <p>By the end of the construction period, four prescribed burns will be completed with a total of 25 hectares of prairie burned. Prescribed burns will continue following the end of construction to maintain the prairie, remove invasive species and encourage growth of prairie plants.</p>
April 2012	<p>The first NU girders to be used in Ontario are manufactured in Windsor, Ontario and installed on the Parkway as part of bridge construction. The Prestressed Group of Windsor is awarded a construct to produce 546 NU bridge girders and over 12,000 precast concrete deck slabs for the Parkway project. The combined production will utilize over 13,000 cubic metres of concrete and two million pounds of reinforcing steel.</p>
June 2012	<p>A 3,000 square foot interactive Parkway exhibit opens at Canada South Science City. The Parkway exhibit tells the story of how the Parkway was created and features the themes of ecosystems, active transportation, traffic movement, and construction. The exhibit was created in partnership with St. Clair College. The partnership with the college will also include the creation of several roundabout education videos and a project documentary.</p>

July 2012	<p>All impacted families move from the existing Trillium Court into their new homes less than one kilometre away from their original location in LaSalle — keeping the community intact and residents close to current schools and shopping. The \$7.3 million project sees the design of the new homes completed by Archon Architects Inc. of Windsor and construction by Oscar Construction Company Ltd. of Oldcastle. Seventeen local Windsor/Essex sub-contractors help build the new Trillium Court.</p>
September 2012	<p>The Parkway's Landscape and Trail Master Plan is recognized by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) with a National Merit in the New Directions Category awarded to Dillon Consulting Limited.</p> <p>The Parkway team launches their first United Way campaign. Over the next of four years, the team has partnered with subcontractors and local construction firms working on the Parkway for various fundraising events. In total, the team donated \$182,000 to the United Way of Windsor and Essex and participated in several events like the Truck Pull and iClimb.</p>
November 2012	<p>A multi-lane roundabout – one of the first permanent features of the Parkway – opens to traffic. The multi-lane roundabout is a first for the Windsor-Essex region and is located where the Howard Avenue Diversion (County Road 9) meets Highway 3 and Highway 401. Local company Mill-Am produced approximately 20,000 tonnes of asphalt that was used to pave the roundabout.</p> <p>Prior to the opening of the roundabout, a public outreach campaign was launched to educate users on how to use a multi-lane roundabout. This included three public open houses, participation at Windsor's "Police Week" at Devonshire mall, a brochure, dedicated webpage, instructional videos produced by St. Clair College with the assistance of the Ontario Provincial Police, a display at the Windsor Public Library Central Branch and sharing of information on how to drive in the roundabout at all public events attended by Parkway team members.</p> <p>The Highway 3 bridge over Highway 401 at the eastern limits of the Parkway is demolished over a weekend with Highway 401 closed for 50 hours. The actual demolition of the bridge structure took four hours with the remaining time used to clear away debris and repair the asphalt highway. Traffic was detoured to the roundabout and the OPP was onsite to support road closures.</p> <p>On November 28, 2012, the Windsor-Essex Parkway is named after one of Windsor's most popular politicians – Herb Gray. Mr. Gray represented Windsor as a member of parliament for an unprecedented 13 consecutive terms. The Parkway is now officially called the "Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway."</p>
April 2013	<p>The new Highway 3 alignment between Howard Avenue and Huron Church Line opens to traffic. This marked the completion of the permanent section of Highway 3 through this area, Bridges 10 and 11, and the Hearthwood Tunnel (T-10B).</p> <p>The Parkway environmental team wins an award for leadership and innovation at the Ontario Endangered Species Act Conference.</p> <p>David Suzuki awards Danshab Enterprises, a subcontractor conducting species at risk removals and relocations, with the Mother Earth Award for Parkway work.</p>
May 2013	<p>On May 9, 2013 the first of several school presentations is held at Holy Cross. Over the next two years, more than 25 presentations will be held at surrounding schools focusing on safety, species at risk protection and construction.</p>
July 2013	<p>A scale model of the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway roundabout is opened at the Children's Safety Village of Windsor & Essex County. The announcement coincides with the partnering of 'Walk in Wednesdays' at the Village over the summers of 2013, 2014 and 2015. More than 2,000 children attended each summer.</p> <p>The Ontario Minister of Transportation releases a statement on girders used for the Parkway. Girder</p>

	production and installation is immediately halted while an independent expert review is launched to investigate concerns with girder manufacture. The independent expert review continues until the end of October with a report submitted to the Minister. On November 1, 2013, Parkway Infrastructure Constructors announces it is rejecting all 500 girders manufactured by Freyssinet. The Minister of Transportation accepts this decision and girder removal begins.
August 2013	The first Free Weekend at Canada South Science City is held, hosted by the Parkway. More than 300 people took advantage of the opportunity to tour the centre including the new Parkway exhibit. In total, three free weekends will be held over 2013 to 2015 with approximately 1,000 people attending over all.
September 2013	The Parkway team participates in Children's Fest held at the Safety Village where attendees could learn about Parkway construction, navigating the roundabout and environmental protection work on the Parkway.
October 2013	The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway is featured by Elder College during three weeks of sessions. Concrete paving on the below-grade Highway 401 section east of Howard Avenue begins.
December 2013	A re-sequenced construction schedule is presented to the public outlining the plan to reopen municipal cross-roads as part of the replacement of girders and restart of construction in several areas. Geraedts Drive is the first cross-road to be re-opened. It opens to traffic on December 22, 2013.
March 2014	The last pile is driven for the Parkway structures.
April 2014	Cousineau Road at Highway 3 reopens.
June 2014	The fourth leg of the roundabout opens to Highway 401 traffic. Directing traffic from Highway 401 into the roundabout would last approximately a year and allowed for construction of the below grade section of Highway 401 and Bridge 12 at Howard Avenue.
July 2014	The intersection of Todd/Cabana and Highway 3 shifts onto the new permanent alignment of the Parkway from the diversion used during construction of the Todd/Cabana Tunnel (T-6).
August 2014	Two more municipal cross-roads are reopened as the new permanent intersections of Howard Avenue and Huron Church Line at Highway 3 are re-opened to traffic.
September 2014	Lambton Road at Highway 3 is reopened to traffic.
October 2014	The last girder for all structures is placed.
November 2014	Ontario Minister of Transportation, Steven Del Duca, visits the Parkway site with the family of Herb Gray.
December 2014	The permanent section of Highway 3 eastbound between E.C. Row Expressway and Grand Marais Road West and Highway 3 westbound between Huron Church Line and Pulford Street opens to traffic. This includes the opening of Bridge 7. By the end of December, 90% of Highway 3 on the Parkway is complete.
January 2015	The carpool lot at the eastern end of the Parkway on Essex County Road 9 is opened.
April 2015	The first pedestrian bridge is placed over Cabana Road West. There are seven pedestrian bridges and two pedestrian tunnels on the Parkway trail system. This allows users to travel the length of the Parkway without ever encountering a car.

June 2015	An 8 km portion of Highway 401 to E.C. Row Expressway opens to traffic. This opening included the opening of ten of the eleven tunnels on the Parkway and brought Highway 401 below-grade through Essex County and Windsor for the first time. Opening of Highway 401 allowed for the surface coat paving of Highway 3 along the stretch of roadway.
November 2015	Three kilometres of Highway 401 from Highway 3 (Huron Church Road) to Ojibway Parkway opens. All that remains is the connection to the new Gordie Howe International Bridge.
December 2015	<p data-bbox="386 411 1479 506">Ontario Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca and Canadian Minister of Transport Marc Garneau unveil a plaque commemorating funding by both Ontario and Canada for the Parkway. The plaque is permanently located on a boulder at the eastern limits of the trail system by Essex County Road 9.</p> <p data-bbox="386 541 1516 634">The Ontario Ministry of Transportation holds a public open house to gather public comment on the detail design of the Ojibway Parkway Overpass or Bridge 1 – the final structure on the Parkway that will connect Highway 401 to the new Canadian Port of Entry in west Windsor.</p>