

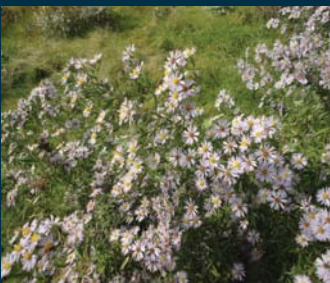
Species at Risk



Flowering Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*) that were transplanted in a Tallgrass Prairie restoration site.



Flowering Colicroot (*Aletris farinosa*) in a Tallgrass Prairie restoration site.



Flowering Willowleaf Aster (*Symphyotrichum praealtum*) that were transplanted in a Tallgrass Prairie restoration site.



Transplanting of species at risk within the Parkway footprint.

Tallgrass Prairie

The Windsor-Essex Parkway will provide more than 300 acres (120 hectares) of green space. The green space will feature an overall Carolinian theme, focusing on protection and expansion of Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savannah habitats. Here is a Q and A that will help you learn more about what some of the green space will look like once the Parkway is complete.

What is Tallgrass Prairie?

Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savannah ecosystems in Windsor are grasslands with a high diversity of plants, birds, mammals and insects, including a number of species that are considered to be rare, threatened or endangered in Ontario. Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savannah are among the most endangered ecosystems in Canada with less than one per cent of their original extent remaining. Windsor's Ojibway Prairie Complex is one of the largest protected prairie complexes in Ontario.

Why is Tallgrass Prairie important?

Tallgrass Prairie is considered a rare and high quality habitat in Ontario. Most natural remnants of this habitat are found in southwestern Ontario, in particular, southwest of the Parkway corridor. The formerly widespread prairies have become rare because of agriculture, urban development, and the suppression of fire.

What do Tallgrass Prairies look like?

Prairie communities are characterized by native vegetation dominated primarily by grasses and wildflowers. In southern Ontario, Tallgrass Prairies can either be found on dry upland soil types or on fresh-moist lowland soils. Plant species typically found in Tallgrass Prairie communities include:

- Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- Foxglove Beard-tongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
- Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)
- Switch Grass (*Panicum virgatum*)
- Common Evening-primrose (*Oenothera biennis*)
- Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*).

Tallgrass Prairie provides lush and diverse habitat for a wide variety of native plant and wildlife species. It is often admired for the colourful display of many wild flowers which is continuously changing throughout the seasons.

How will Tallgrass Prairie be included in the Windsor-Essex Parkway?

The Windsor-Essex Parkway is unprecedented in its combination of transportation, environmental and community benefits. The unique green space provides an excellent opportunity to restore and, where possible, increase the amount of Tallgrass Prairie in Windsor-Essex following construction. It is anticipated that the area of Tallgrass Prairie in the Parkway footprint will be increased significantly following restoration. This includes creation and enhancement/restoration of lands directly adjacent to existing restoration sites for species at risk such as Colicroot (*Aletris farinosa*) and Butler's Gartersnake (*Thamnophis butleri*).

The Parkway's restored ecological landscapes will support and enhance existing vegetation communities adjacent to the corridor striving to create larger natural heritage areas and will link existing habitat across the Parkway footprint. In general, restored Tallgrass Prairie areas will be located where previously there had been existing fields, meadows and thickets. Some of the larger prairie-grass-dominated areas will occupy the tunnel tops where limited soil depth will not accommodate deeply rooted trees and shrubs. Only locally grown and locally collected seed stock will be allowed for restoration use.

For more information about Tallgrass Prairie ecosystems, visit the Ojibway Nature Centre (5200 Matchette Road, Windsor) and Canada South Science City (930 Marion Avenue, Windsor).



Scan the barcode with your smart phone to view photos of Tallgrass Prairie from across North America. If you don't have a smart phone, visit our Flickr gallery at www.flickr.com/photos/weparkway to view.

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Here is what's been happening within the corridor:

Over 500,000 hours of work have been completed by WEMG and PIC since spring 2011.

Pile driving for construction of the North Talbot Road Bridge (B-15) was completed in January 2012.

Topsoil removal and clay fill are nearing completion in the Howard Avenue area.

Clay fill is in progress for construction of diversions D-5 and D-7, located at the new Highway 3.

Topsoil removal works are ongoing between bridges B-13 and B-14 where the future off-ramp from Highway 401 westbound to Highway 3 and the realigned Howard Avenue will be.

Excavation for tunnels T-10B (Hearthwood Tunnel), T-11 (Oliver Estates Tunnel) and T-2 (Labelle Tunnel) is ongoing.

Earthworks for bridges B-9, B-10 and tunnel T-7 are expected to start in the next few months.

Excavation of Pond 5 has begun in the Bethlehem area.

Embankment construction on both sides of Malden Road between Chappus Street and Matchette Road is underway.

The new Spring Garden Road was opened for public access in January 2012.

Diversion D-1 connecting Bethlehem Avenue to Lambton Road has been completed and was opened to traffic in February.

Construction activities for diversion D-4, at the new Highway 3, have begun.

The Windsor-Essex Parkway

Prescribed Burns – Spring 2012

Prescribed burns are deliberately set, carefully controlled and closely, monitored fires. The Tallgrass Prairie that will become a permanent feature of the completed Windsor-Essex Parkway will be subject to these burns in accordance with permits issued under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*. Prescribed burns are the most effective management tool to maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems.

Prescribed burns are planned this spring on several sites totalling approximately 7 hectares of the existing Parkway green space in the Chappus Street and Oakwood Bush areas between March 1 and April 10, 2012. A detailed burn plan has been prepared for each block of Tallgrass Prairie to be burned. Each burn is expected to last for a maximum of 20 minutes. The burn patch will then be monitored until the burn is declared extinguished by the lead burn expert, known as the burn boss. Wildfire Specialists Inc., a partially local company, is conducting the burns on behalf of the Windsor Essex Mobility Group (WEMG) and Parkway Infrastructure Constructors (PIC). Danshab, a local First Nations company, will provide security during the burns. Safety is the central focus for prescribed burns with the highest safety measures being employed.

Rather than prescribing a burning frequency (for example, every two years), the timing for burns in areas within the Parkway footprint will be determined and adapted based on management objectives and site-specific conditions. Generally, as the prairie community matures, the fire frequency can be reduced. Given the Parkway's location in southwestern Ontario, in years when prescribed burns occur, they are anticipated to be carried out in early spring.

Learn more about prescribed burns by viewing the fact sheet posted at www.weparkway.ca.



Prescribed burns in the Chappus Matchette area were conducted on March 26, 2012 by Wildfire Specialists Inc. These photos show the before and after views of the burn site.

Traffic Notes

Matchette Road eastbound on-ramp to E.C. Row Expressway

The Matchette Road eastbound on-ramp to E.C. Row Expressway closed on March 15, 2012, for a period of approximately two years. This closure was required for various construction activities including the installation of wick drains, embankment construction, and construction of a new ramp, bridge and connection to new eastbound collector lanes. Learn more about this closure by viewing the public notice and fact sheet at www.weparkway.ca.

Bethlehem Avenue

A portion of Bethlehem Avenue between Huron Church Road and Sixth Street was closed on Tuesday, February 21, 2012, for a period of approximately one year. This closure was required for construction of the Windsor-Essex Parkway Labelle Tunnel (T-2) and Bridge 7 (B-7) (Labelle Street and Lambton Road). A diversion route (D-1) connecting Bethlehem Avenue to Lambton Road is providing access during this closure.

Grosvenor Drive

The permanent closure of Grosvenor Drive at Highway 3 took effect Tuesday, February 21, 2012, to allow for construction of the Oliver Estates Tunnel (T-11). Traffic can access this area via the next intersection at Howard Avenue. The permanent closure was required as this section of road will be incorporated into T-11 once constructed.

People Profile

Meet some of the team

The Windsor-Essex Parkway is creating and supporting jobs across the region and helping to stimulate our local economy. Design and construction of the Parkway is also providing training for people in our community and creating unique partnerships. In each issue of this newsletter, we'll introduce you to at least one person involved with the Parkway.

Q. What is your name and position?

Katie Dicks, Public Liaison Officer, Windsor Essex Mobility Group

Q. Where are you from?

Windsor, ON

Q. What type of work are you doing on the Windsor-Essex Parkway project?

I am a member of the Communications Team dedicated to keeping members of the public informed about Windsor-Essex Parkway works. I help answer, document, and respond to inquiries received by the Public Liaison Office, along with contributing to Public Information Open Houses and the project website www.weparkway.ca.

Q. How long will you be working on the project?

I started work on the project in September 2011, and will carry on throughout the duration of the project.

Q. When people find out that you are working on the Parkway project what do they typically say?

People usually express excitement as I am from the local community and submitted my resume through an online job posting. They usually express an interest in the project and try to get the inside scoop about ongoing works and future Parkway design.

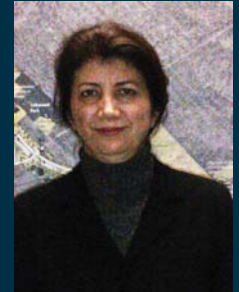
Q. What has been the most rewarding part of your work on the project so far?

Being involved in a project of this magnitude in my local community, witnessing all of the different aspects coming together and achieving milestones continues to be a great experience.

Each work day is always different providing new challenges to overcome. Working to ensure the public is well informed continues to provide opportunities to work closely and develop positive relationships with both the project team and members of the public. Receiving positive feedback from affected neighbours after providing the insight or information is great to hear and pass along throughout our organization.

Q. Do you have anything else you would like our readers to know about your experience working on this project?

The Parkway team is diversified and has provided a great learning experience for a recent University of Windsor graduate.



Ms. Noorbakhsh brings extensive senior level experience in program management, engineering design, construction and operations and management of infrastructure and transportation projects. She holds a B.Sc. Electrical Engineering from California State University at Long Beach, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Southern California. She is a Professional Engineer who is experienced in design-build of highways, traffic management systems and telecommunications networks.

In our winter 2011 edition we introduced Directors Pat Stricklin (Design-Build Director) and Michael Hatchell (Technical Director). Mr. Stricklin has recently moved to a new position as a member of the Design-Build Board of Directors. Mr. Hatchell has taken on the role of the Design-Build Director.

Have your say – DCR #6 available for review

On Tuesday, March 27, 2012, the Windsor Essex Mobility Group (WEMG) and Parkway Infrastructure Constructors (PIC) released the sixth Design and Construction Report (DCR) for a 30-day public review period.

DCR #6 for the Windsor-Essex Parkway documents the proposed works and associated mitigation measures and how public input received to date and commitments outlined in the Detroit River International Crossing Provincial Environmental Assessment Report (December 2008) and the associated Conditions of Approval (August 2009) have been addressed.

DCR #6 covers a number of Parkway construction works including: grading of the Parkway from Ojibway Parkway to 700 metres west of North Talbot Road; various tunnels not covered in previous DCRs; demolition of the Highway 3 Bridge where it crosses over Highway 401; pump stations aesthetics and locations; temporary closure of Matchette Road eastbound on-ramp to E.C. Row Expressway; and other items.

The DCR can be read at www.weparkway.ca and at various public offices in the community. Comments can be submitted until Wednesday, April 25, 2012, at 2:00 p.m. Have your say. Your input is important.

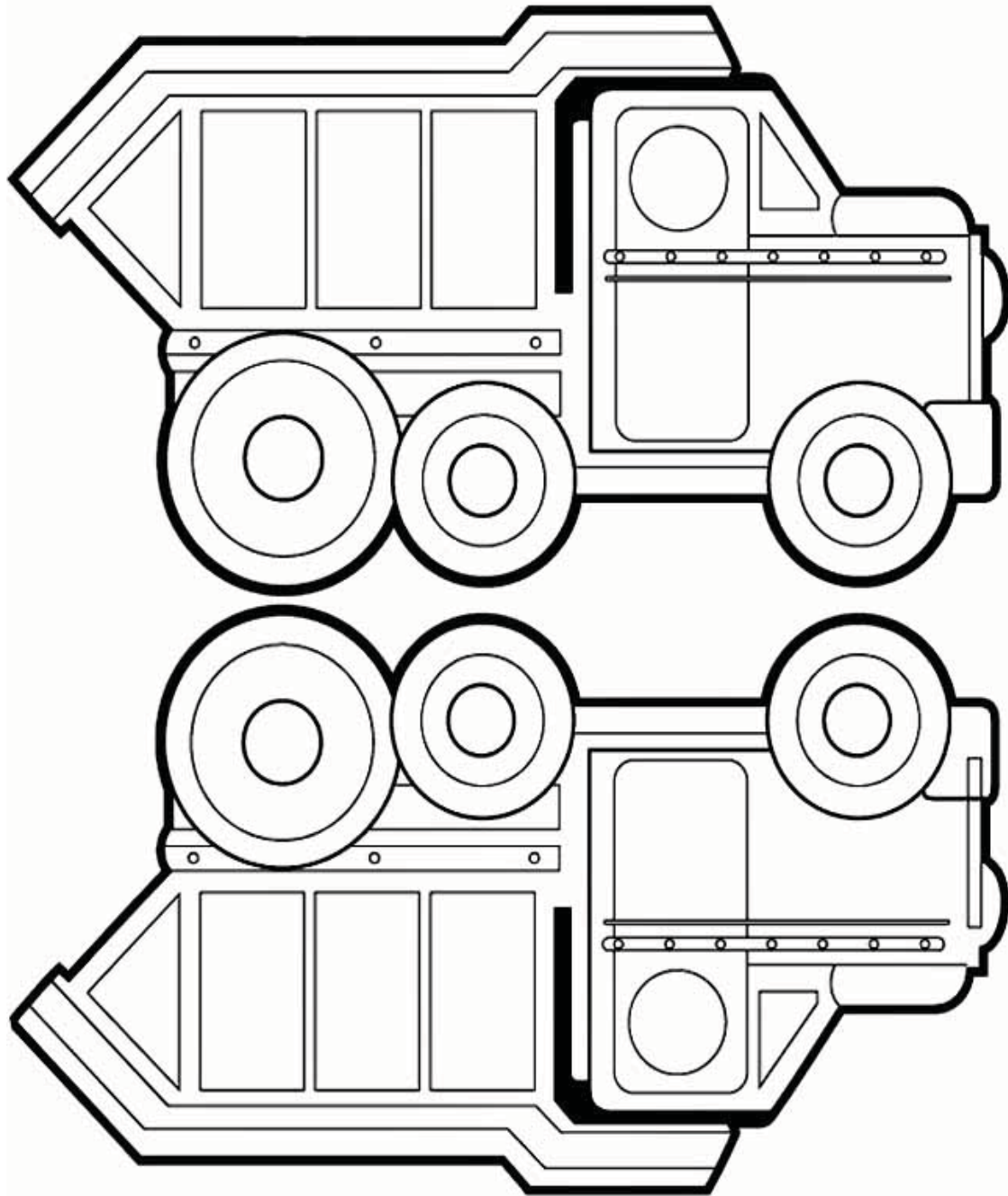
Congratulations to the Windsor Essex Mobility Group (WEMG) for successfully completing the ISO 9001 certification process. In December 2011, WEMG received a certificate for conforming to international requirements and meeting the ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems standards. Receipt of this certificate also means that WEMG has fulfilled its commitment under the Windsor-Essex Parkway project agreement to receive ISO certification.

ISO 9000 is a family of standards related to quality management systems and designed to help organizations ensure they meet the needs of customers and other stakeholders. The ISO 9001 sets out the criteria an organization must meet to operate in accordance with the standards and gain certification.

On an on-going basis, WEMG staff will self-monitor activities to verify they are complying with regulatory and procedural requirements. WEMG's activities could be assessed at anytime by an independent certifier to confirm compliance.

The ISO 9001 certification process is one of the most widely used management tools in the world today. Organizations awarded this certification must renew their certificate every three years. ■

One of the many pieces of equipment that can be seen daily on the Windsor-Essex Parkway construction site is a dump truck. Dump trucks will be used to move more than 3 million cubic metres of dirt over the next few years of construction.



Directions:

1. Colour each dump truck.
2. Cut out each dump truck and glue each one to the sides of a juice box or milk carton. Be sure to ask an adult for help before using scissors.

There are many ways to stay up-to-date

■ www.weparkway.ca

■ 1-877-WE-PKWAY

■ www.twitter.com/WEParkway

■ www.flickr.com/photos/weparkway

■ www.youtube.com/weparkway

■ Public Liaison Office
2187 Huron Church Road
Suite 340 A
Windsor, ON N9C 2L8
wep-plo@wemg.ca

■ Ministry of Transportation
949 McDougall Avenue
Suite 200
Windsor, ON N9A 1L9
detroit.river@ontario.ca