

Facts at a Glance: Urban Design Elements and Noise Barriers

The Environmental Assessment Report for the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study required aesthetic features of the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway (the Parkway) be visible to drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and adjacent communities. This will occur through design in the form of structures like noise barriers, retaining walls, tunnel top barrier walls and bridge barrier walls, and trail structures and amenities. The Carolinian Canada theme is integrated into the design elements of the Parkway and aesthetic treatments consistent with this theme have been applied to the structures identified above. The following *Facts at a Glance* provide an overview of the urban design elements related to the noise barriers.

The locations and heights of the noise barriers being constructed for the Parkway were identified during the DRIC study and documented in the approved Environmental Assessment Report.

- The significant length and height of noise walls throughout the Parkway make these walls a prominent feature.
- The design considers the perspectives of drivers on the freeway and on service roads and residential communities adjacent to the noise walls. The design also takes into account species at risk protection.
- Noise barriers will be constructed in three forms:
 - o noise walls
 - o earth berms
 - o a combination of walls and berms.

The design considers the perspectives of drivers on the freeway and on service roads and residential communities adjacent to the noise walls.

Driving Experience: Creating a rhythmic and unique driving experience is central to the design of the Parkway. Visual interest in the noise walls is created by using a combination of solid and textured panels building from the bottom upwards to evoke a grassland pattern.

Residential Experience: A combination of textured panels, colour and vegetation will be effectively used to reduce the visual impact of noise walls from the residential perspective. The colour palette includes earth tone hues. Where space permits, vegetation will be planted to further screen the noise barriers. Plant species will be selected based on screening characteristics, seasonal interest and compatibility with the surrounding ecological landscapes.



Fractured Fin Pattern



Natural Stone Pattern

The highway facing and community facing sides of the permanent noise walls will be the same colour, however each side will feature a different pattern.

- To assist in the walls blending into the landscape, a complementary “yellow-brown” colour scheme is being used.
- The highway facing side of the wall features grassland patterning that resembles fields of prairie grasslands. This will work well with the Oak Savannah landscape where these walls will be situated.
- The top panels of the highway facing side of the wall will use a flat finish representative of the sky.
- On the community facing side of the wall the look of the wall is enhanced by using panels that feature a natural stone pattern representative of building material for newer residential and commercial development adjacent to the Parkway corridor.
- Where space permits on the community side, screening landscapes – a combination of deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs – will be planted to enhance the overall look of the wall installations.



Noise Wall Colour

The design also addresses species at risk protection needs.

- Noise walls are part of an overall fencing strategy required under an *Endangered Species Act* permit to protect Eastern Foxsnake by excluding them from the highway corridor.
- Eastern Foxsnakes are able to climb rough surfaces and as a result, in locations where snake fence barrier is required the bottom panels on the outside facing of noise wall will have a smooth surface.



Highway Face



Community Face

For the Parkway, earth berms will be used to provide noise attenuation and will have landscaping on them.

- Earth berms are mounds of earth raised to a specific height to serve a purpose.
- Earth berms will feature naturalized plantings of trees, shrubs and grasses which will integrate the berms into the surrounding ecological landscapes and increase their aesthetic appearance.
- Earth berms will be varying heights and will reduce the visual impact for the community.
- In some areas, a noise wall-earth berm combination will be used where there is sufficient area to do so in an effort to have the corridor visually interesting.

If you have any concerns regarding construction of the Parkway, please contact or visit the Public Liaison Office at 1-877-937-5929, 2187 Huron Church Road Suite 340, or hgp-plo@wemg.ca.

Please visit www.hgparkway.ca to learn more about the Parkway. Updates are posted on Twitter (www.twitter.com/hgparkway) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/hgparkway) and photos and videos are posted on Flickr (www.flickr.com/hgparkway) and YouTube (www.youtube.com/hgparkway).