



Highway 69 Action Plan



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OVERVIEW

Highways are critical to the quality of life and economic prosperity of Northern Ontario. The Ontario government is renewing and expanding this vital infrastructure as part of its Northern Prosperity Plan.

The Highway 69 Action Plan outlines a long-term strategy for completing the four-laning of the Highway 69 corridor in 12 years, a commitment made in the Provincial Budget of May 11, 2005. This commitment was reconfirmed in ReNew Ontario, the first ever five-year strategic infrastructure investment plan that will help the government prepare for future growth by concentrating on the priorities Ontarians say are most important: healthcare, education and economic prosperity.

Northeasterners believe that a four-laned Highway 69 is an essential part of their economic prosperity. Given the significant growth forecast for the Greater Toronto Area, and the highway improvement programs underway or planned along Highways 11 and 69, interaction between these regions is expected to increase. The construction and completion of the highway will spark growth in a number of sectors. An expanded and improved highway corridor will promote a strong, healthy and prosperous Northern Ontario.

In November 2003, the Ontario government entered into a joint federal-provincial Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP) agreement. SHIP paved the way for new investments on a number of provincial highways including the Highway 69 corridor. Although the province believes the federal government can contribute much more to the upgrading of Ontario's highways, this is clearly a step forward for a number of key northern highway priorities.

Ontario will continue to pursue every opportunity to discuss new funding partnerships with the federal government, beyond the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program that is currently in place. By clearly outlining its investment priorities for the next several years, Ontario is setting the stage for further funding agreements between the two levels of government.

Planning, engineering and building even a modest section of four-lane highway is an ambitious undertaking, which can span more than a decade. The processes involved include route selection, provincial and federal environmental approvals, engineering and property acquisition, public hearings and construction itself. Timelines can be extended by other factors or when complications arise.

This report defines the government's plan for completing a Highway 69 corridor that will deliver accelerated economic development, job creation and increased safety. Engineering, property acquisition and construction realities will be the variables that will dictate the timelines for the ultimate completion of this project. The information contained on **Map 1** indicates that the past, current and potential expenditures along the entire corridor, from Port Severn to Sudbury, could amount to approximately \$1.5 billion.

It is important to remember this point and to view this document as the first report on the various phases of this massive project. Regular updates will be provided as the program evolves. As new four-lane sections are opened, Highway 69 will be renumbered to Highway 400.

Throughout the life cycle of the four-laning initiative, efforts will continue to improve safety on the existing Highway 69. A considerable amount has been done already to address these concerns.

DID YOU KNOW?

Because of Northern Ontario's unique geography, the estimated cost to complete Highway 69 four-laning will be about \$6.5 million per kilometre. By comparison, a kilometre of four-lane construction in Saskatchewan costs between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

PROVINCIAL FOUR-LANING GUIDELINE

The guideline used by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation for four-laning a provincial highway calls for traffic volumes to attain an average annual daily traffic (AADT) of 10,000 vehicles per day.

While traffic volumes suggest that a four-lane highway is not yet warranted along some sections of Highway 69 – given the 10 years required to plan, design and build a new highway – work must begin far enough in advance for highway expansion to be completed when needed. As noted previously, this work includes activities such as route selection, environmental approval processes, engineering and property acquisition.

Highway 400/69 Corridor (# of vehicles)		
Average Volume Based on 2002 Data	Port Severn-Parry Sound	Parry Sound-Sudbury
Average Daily Traffic Volume Ranges	6,900 to 12,000	5,050 to 14,200
Summer Daily Average Volume Ranges	12,800 to 20,000	7,350 to 19,100
% Average Daily Commercial Traffic (volumes)	8.4% (1,075 to 1,579)	13.9% (1,022 to 2,655)

For the purposes of this action plan, the Highway 69 corridor between Parry Sound and Sudbury will be divided into five sections.

Each section will be segmented into a number of projects based on current work plans being prepared by the Ministry of Transportation (see **Map 2**). The information contained on that map suggests that the past, current and potential expenditures along the Parry Sound to Sudbury corridor could amount to approximately \$1.2 billion. Readers can refer to the maps contained throughout this document for details on the various projects.

This plan provides an overview of each project in terms of the various stages of the planning/implementation schedule. The intention is to provide a clearer understanding of where these projects stand, and what the plans are for proceeding to construction and completion.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

South Of Parry Sound

While the Parry Sound to Sudbury corridor is certainly a priority, work is still required on the highway south of Parry Sound. A short section of the highway remains to be four-laned, located primarily through Wahta Mohawk Territory, where construction of a new interchange at Muskoka Roads 32/38 and on the final, eight-kilometre four-lane project began in 2004. Both projects are funded through the Canada-Ontario SHIP Agreement, and the new alignment is scheduled to be open to traffic in 2007.

Parry Sound To Sudbury (Map 2)

While considerable progress has been made on the four-laning program south of Parry Sound, construction has only recently started along the Parry Sound to Sudbury corridor. The Ministry of Transportation has however, initiated engineering work along this entire section of the highway.

A Major Undertaking:

The four-laning of the remaining 152 kilometres from Parry Sound to Sudbury will involve the following elements (estimated):

DID YOU KNOW?

If the dump trucks required to complete four-laning of Highway 400/69 were placed end to end, they would cover a distance of some 21,700 kilometres, a distance greater than half the Earth's circumference.

- 18 interchanges
- 103 bridges
- 14 river crossings
- 50 stream crossings
- Bypasses of communities where required
- Service roads where required
- A 30-metre median separating the north and south bound lanes.

Map 2 illustrates the current breakdown of projects for planning purposes along the 152-kilometre corridor between Parry Sound and Sudbury. Once planning and environmental approvals are received, the projects will be broken down into shorter lengths for engineering and construction purposes.

The following is a summary of the engineering, property acquisition and construction work planned, underway or completed for the four-laning of Highway 69 from Parry Sound to Sudbury. The projects are presented in order from south to north.

Project 1: Parry Sound (Seguin River) to Highway 559 – 17 kilometres (Map 3)

The four-laning of Highway 69, for the 17-kilometre section between Parry Sound and Highway 559 north of Nobel, will be completed through a series of four contracts. The fourth and last contract will open the entire four-lane section at one time and remove temporary staging connections.

This schedule has been developed following extensive consultations with the Township of McDougall. In order to avoid having high-speed traffic exiting the four-lane highway directly into the community of Nobel, the Ministry of Transportation has decided to undertake construction of the entire 17-kilometre bypass around Nobel before opening any part of it to traffic.

Project 1A: Parry Sound to Nobel – seven kilometres

This project involves the twinning of the existing two lanes by building two new northbound lanes. Engineering and property acquisition are completed.

The project has been approved for funding on a 50/50 basis under the federal-provincial SHIP agreement. Tenders were called for this contract on April 13, 2005 and the contract has recently been awarded. Construction will get underway this summer, with completion expected in the Summer 2008. However, this section is designed to be operated as a two-lane facility (vehicles will use the two new lanes) until the completed four-laned facility around Nobel opens in 2010.

Project 1B: Nobel Bypass – five kilometres

Engineering, field surveys and property acquisition are complete. This section should proceed to construction in the Fall 2006, and be open to traffic in 2010.

Project 1C: Nobel to Highway 559 – five kilometres

A study of the access required from the new four-lane Highway 69 to Highway 559 and Carling Township has been completed and an additional interchange is now being designed. With the interchange, the project has extended three kilometres farther north than the originally planned termination point.

Engineering started in early October 2003 and fieldwork is proceeding. Property clearance is anticipated by the end of 2005, and the plan is to have this section available for construction in 2007.

Project 1D: Parry Sound to Highway 559

The fourth contract will be for the opening to four-lanes of the entire section at one time and the removal of temporary staging connections. At the present time, it is estimated that the entire highway will be open to traffic in 2010.

Project 2: Highway 559 to Highway 522 – 68 kilometres (Map 2)

Planning to establish the location of the new four-lane highway in this section is underway. Engineering and property acquisition may begin after the route is determined. There had been no previous highway planning work carried out through this area.

Route planning and environmental work began in April 2003 and will be completed in 2006 at which time the Environmental Study Report will be submitted to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) for review and approval.

Discussions with the three First Nation communities (Shawanaga, Henvey Inlet and Magnetawan First Nations) within the study limits has been initiated and will continue throughout the study process.

Initial corridor alternatives (each 300 metres wide) for this section were identified and then presented to the public in the first round of consultations in October 2003. The first and all subsequent public meetings were held in Britt, Pointe au Baril and Nobel, as well as in Toronto (the Toronto meetings ensure that the concerns of the numerous seasonal residents of the area are taken into consideration during the planning process).

The second round of consultations took place in April 2004, and dealt with the selection of the preferred corridor. The third round of consultations in September 2004 focused on the evaluation and selection of a recommended route and associated interchange configurations within the preferred corridor.

An additional round of public consultation is planned within the next year and the MTO study team will continue to refine the design, incorporating feedback and input from the public, until completion of the study in 2006.

Providing all environmental approvals are received, engineering and property acquisition could begin in 2007 and be completed in 2012. Construction would begin in 2010 with the earliest completion and opening to traffic in late 2016.

**Project 3: Highway 522 to Highway 64 – 25 kilometres and
Project 4: Highway 64 to Estaire – 22 kilometres (Map 2)**

For Project 3, alternative corridors including the preferred route were presented to the public in the first round of consultations in October 2003. Subsequently, the preferred route, including potential interchange locations, configurations and service roads, was presented to the public for comment in March 2004. Public Information Centres (PICs) took place in Sudbury and Alban. The preferred route is a combination of twinning the existing highway and construction on new alignment. The route planning to establish the location of the new four-lane highway in this section has now been completed and environmental clearance has been issued. This section is now ready to proceed to the engineering and property acquisition phase.

Planning on Project 4 resumed in April 2003, and the route planning and environmental assessment report has been filed with MOE. During the public review period, a request for an individual environmental assessment was made and the Ministry of Transportation is working with the Ministry of the Environment to address this and to obtain environmental clearance.

If environmental approvals are received and engineering/property acquisition activities are completed, construction could begin on Project 3 in 2011 and be completed in 2014. Construction could begin on Project 4 in 2010 and be completed in 2012.

Project 5: Estaire to Sudbury – 20 kilometres (Map 4)

Because it features some of the highest traffic volumes in this corridor, improvements to this section of the highway are among the government's top priorities.

This part of the program has been divided into two projects, a northerly eight-kilometre section (Project 5B) and a southerly 12-kilometre section (Project 5A). Within Project 5B, two smaller contracts (5C and 5D) have been developed and are now underway. Project 5C will see the construction of 600 metres of four-laning and an underpass in the vicinity of Old Wanup Road. Project 5D will involve the construction of two kilometres of new four-lane highway and an interchange at the north tie-in to the existing Highway 69.

Projects 5C and 5D have been approved for funding under the federal-provincial SHIP agreement.

The remaining two major contracts for the eight-kilometre north section and the 12-kilometre south section are scheduled to begin in early 2006. On Project 5B, engineering is 75 per cent complete and 60 per cent of the property has been acquired (24 of 39 properties). For Project 5A, engineering is also 75 per cent complete, and 29 per cent of the property has been purchased (four of 14 properties). The entire 20-kilometre section south of Sudbury is expected to be open to traffic in late 2009. If any substantial delays occur in the south project, a temporary connection just south of Highway 537 will allow for use of the northerly eight kilometres.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are a total of 24 passing lanes on Highway 69 between Sudbury and Nobel. This represents a combined 56 kilometres of passing lanes for both directions of travel, over a total distance of 152 kilometres.

Project 6: Connection to Sudbury Southeast Bypass and Four-laning of Southeast Bypass (Map 2)

There will be a requirement to complete a link from the new Highway 69 alignment to the Sudbury Southeast Bypass (Project 6, **Map 4**). Route selection has previously been completed for both this connection and the four-laning of the Sudbury SE Bypass. Engineering work is scheduled to begin in 2013 with construction to start in 2016.

Summary:

Table 1 summarizes the government's current plan to complete the four-laning of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound.

The short-term objective is to have both the 20-kilometre section south of Sudbury and the 17-kilometre section north of Parry Sound open to traffic in 2009 and 2010 respectively. These two sections feature the highest traffic volumes in the corridor.

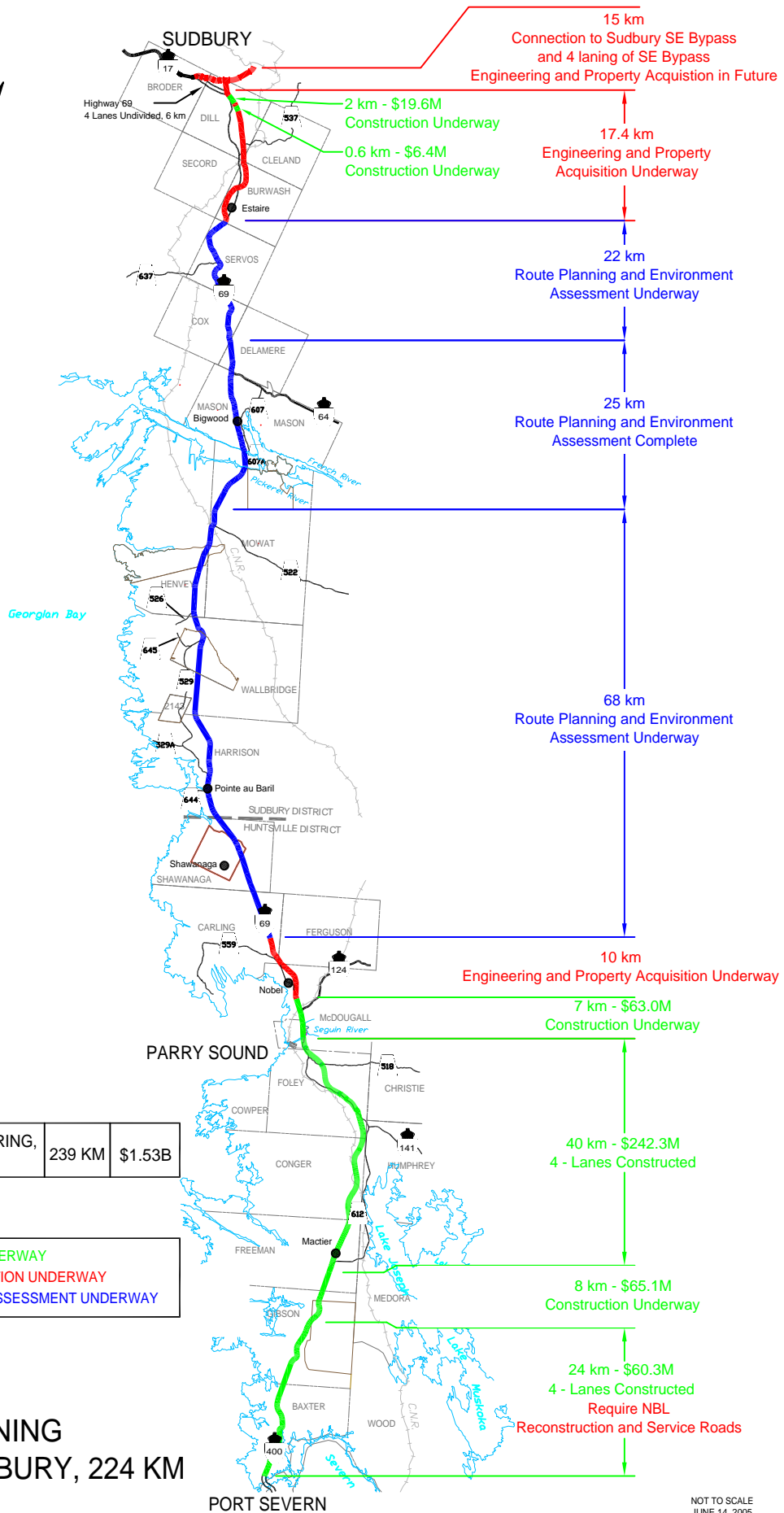
DID YOU KNOW?

The construction projects will result in the excavation of an estimated 37 million cubic metres of material (rock, earth and gravel). This is 22 times the volume of Toronto's Rogers Centre (Skydome). About 1.3 million tonnes of asphalt will be required.

For the remaining 115-kilometre middle section, the government's plan would see construction in the northern part of this corridor underway by 2010, provided all environmental approvals are received and all necessary property acquisition is completed.

Based on current best estimates and considering the time horizon involved, the Highway 69 Action Plan targets 2016 for the completion of the four-laning program through the entire Parry Sound/Sudbury corridor.

There are numerous environmental, technical, property acquisition and other challenges to be resolved and many of these will come to light and will have to be addressed as the projects progress.



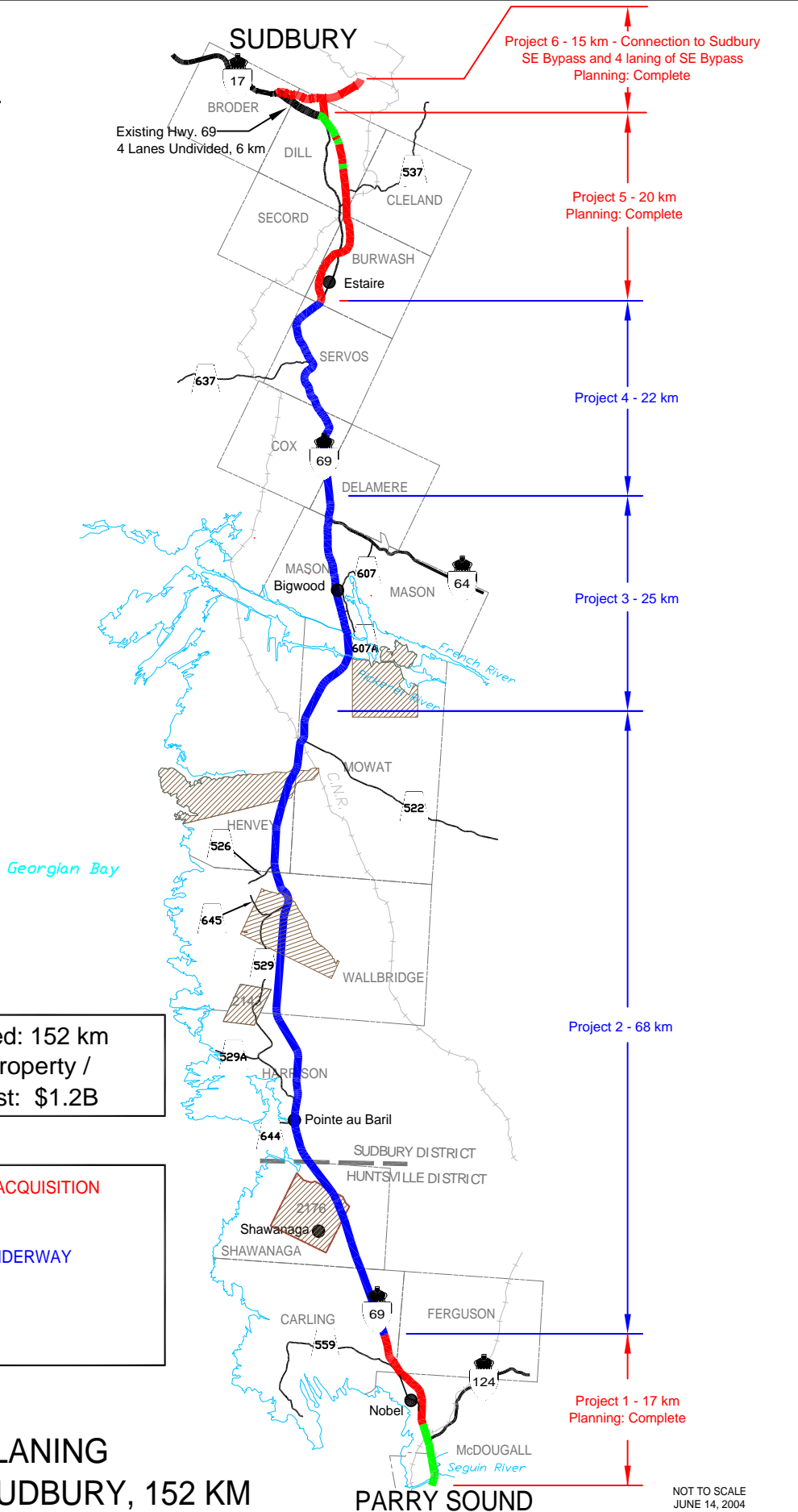
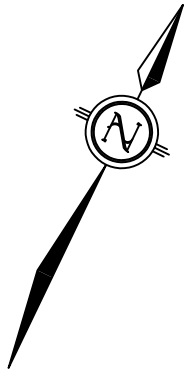
SUMMARY

TOTAL COST FOR PLANNING, ENGINEERING, PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCTION:	239 KM	\$1.53B
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LEGEND

█	CONSTRUCTED OR CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY
█	ENGINEERING AND PROPERTY ACQUISITION UNDERWAY
█	ROUTE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT UNDERWAY

**MAP 1
HIGHWAY 69 FOUR-LANING
PORT SEVERN TO SUDBURY, 224 KM**



SUMMARY

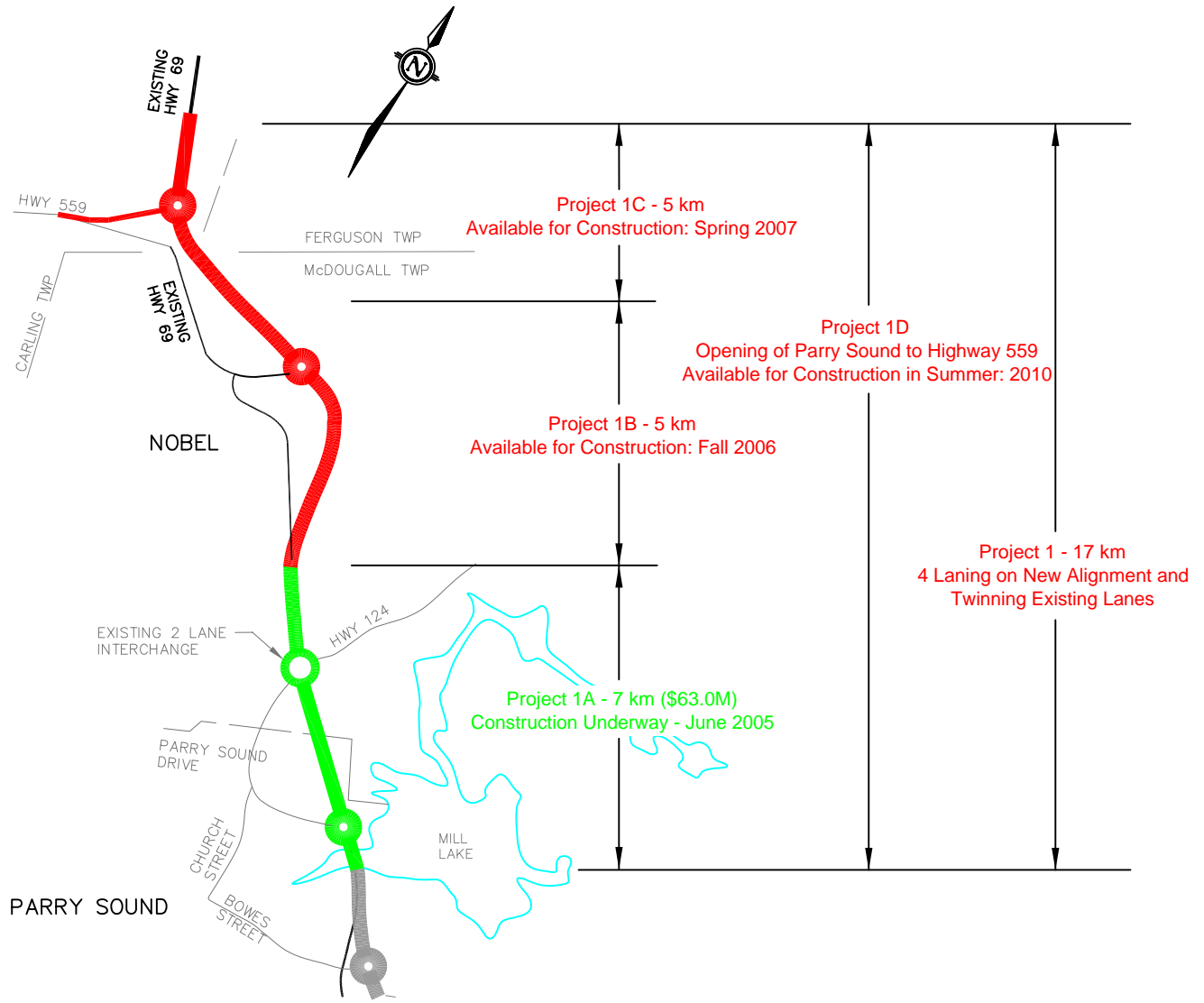
Length To Be Four-Laned: 152 km
 Planning / Design / Property /
 Construction Total Cost: \$1.2B

LEGEND






- █ ENGINEERING AND PROPERTY ACQUISITION UNDERWAY
- █ ROUTE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT UNDERWAY
- █ CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY
- FIRST NATIONS

MAP 2
HIGHWAY 69 FOUR-LANING
PARRY SOUND TO SUDBURY, 152 KM

NOT TO SCALE
 JUNE 14, 2004



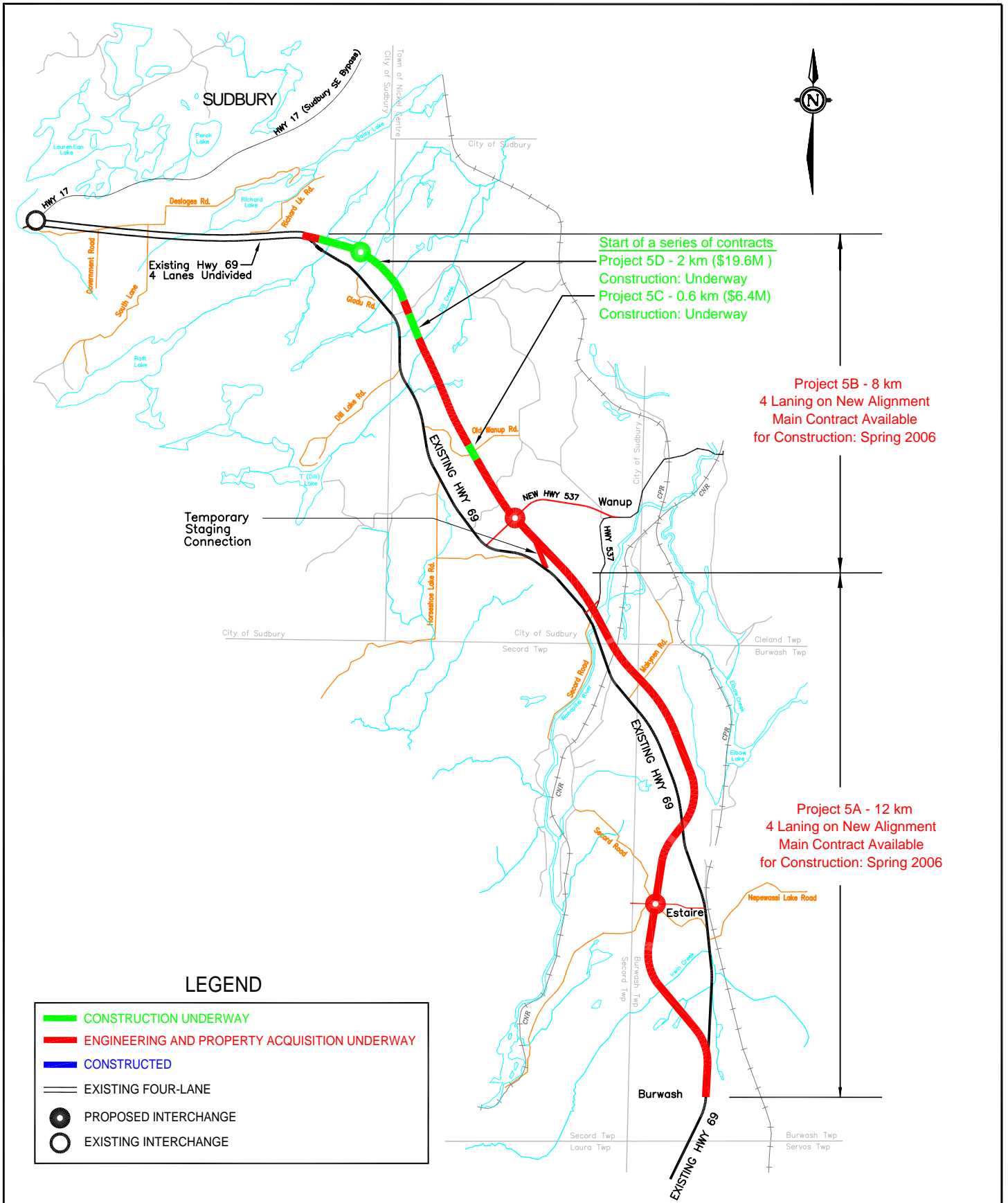
LEGEND

	CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY
	ENGINEERING AND PROPERTY ACQUISITION UNDERWAY
	CONSTRUCTED
	PROPOSED INTERCHANGE
	EXISTING INTERCHANGE

MAP 3
HIGHWAY 69: FOUR-LANING
PARRY SOUND TO HIGHWAY 559, 17 KM

NOTE: COST IS FOR CONSTRUCTION

NOT TO SCALE
 JUNE 14, 2005



MAP 4
 HIGHWAY 69: FOUR-LANING
 ESTAIRE TO SUDBURY, 20 KM

NOTE: COST IS FOR CONSTRUCTION

Table 1 - Highway 69 Four-Laning Parry Sound to Sudbury, 152 km

May 6, 2005

Route Planning and Environmental Assessment ■■■■■■
 Engineering and Property Acquisition ■■■■■■
 Construction Schedule ■■■■■■

TOTAL COST: Engineering, property acquisition and construction \$1.2B

Project Reference #		pre 2003	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sudbury																				
6	Connection Sudbury SE Bypass and 4-laning, 15 km																			
5D	Initial work, 6 km north of Highway 537 northerly, 2 km	←■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■														
5C	Initial work, 3 km north of Highway 537 northerly, 600 m	←■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■														
5B	Main Contract, Highway 537 to Sudbury, 8 km	←■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	Four-lanes opened for projects 5C and 5D with project 5B.										
5A	Estaire to Highway 537, 12 km		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■											
4C	Highway 637 to Estaire, 8 km		■■■■■	■■■■■			■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■							
4B	11 km north of Highway 64 to Highway 637, 6 km		■■■■■	■■■■■			■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■							
4A	3 km north of Highway 64 northerly, 8 km		■■■■■	■■■■■			■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■							
3C	7 km south of Highway 64 northerly, 10 km		■■■■■	■■■■■			■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■						
3B	French River to 6 km south of Highway 64, 7 km		■■■■■	■■■■■			■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■						
3A	4 km north Highway 522 to French River, 8 km		■■■■■	■■■■■			■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■						
2F	Highway 526 to 4 km north of Highway 522, 15 km		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■					
2E	15 km north of Highway 644 to Highway 526, 13 km		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■				
2D	5 km north of Highway 644 northerly, 10 km		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■					
2C	5 km south of Highway 644 northerly, 10 km		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■						
2B	10 km north of Highway 559 northerly, 10 km		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■						
2A	Highway 559 northerly, 10 km		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■							
1D	Opening of Parry Sound to Highway 559, 17 km	←■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■			■■■■■	■■■■■										
1C	Nobel to Highway 559, 5 km	←■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■										
1B	Nobel Bypass, 5 km	←■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■										
1A	Parry Sound to Nobel, 7 km	←■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■											
Parry Sound																				

SAFETY INITIATIVES – EXISTING HIGHWAY 69

Given the time required to complete four-laning of the Parry Sound to Sudbury corridor, efforts to improve safety on the existing Highway 69 will continue. A considerable amount has been done already to address these concerns including:

- A number of short-term improvements have been made south of the Highway 637 (Killarney) junction. Fully paved shoulders with rumble strips have been installed along with new curve warning signs (both northbound and southbound) that feature flashing lights. In addition, highly visible reflective markers and edgeline pavement markers have been added throughout the area to better highlight the curves. Finally, reflective pavement markers have also been installed along the centreline through the curve.
- To promote safe passing and reduce aggressive driving, a total of 50 new passing-lane location signs have been installed in the corridor advising motorists of the distance to the next passing lane.
- A public education program was undertaken using roadside safety message signage and radio advertisements focused on: the need to eliminate speeding, following too closely, unsafe passing, drinking and driving, dealing with fatigue, adjusting to road conditions and sharing the road with large commercial vehicles.
- The number of commercial vehicle inspections conducted annually by the Ministry of Transportation in this corridor has been increased by 30 per cent, to 1,300 inspections per year.
- The annual Ministry of Transportation/Ontario Provincial Police joint enforcement program, which targets aggressive commercial motor vehicles is continuing.
- The extension of six existing passing lanes between Britt and Sudbury was completed in 2004.
- Installation of five permanent changeable electronic message signs both south and north of Parry Sound began in 2004 and will be complete in 2005 at a cost of \$3 million. These will alert motorists to events or conditions that may affect travel, such as emergencies or weather related road closures. Safety messages promoting safe driving practices will also be posted.
- Construction of truck laybys at two locations south of Parry Sound also began in 2004 with completion planned for 2005 at a cost of \$4 million. These will allow the Ministry of Transportation to carry out inspections of commercial vehicles, as well as provide areas for truckers to safely stop and inspect their loads and vehicles.

- Fully paved shoulders and rumble strips were added in 2004 from Highway 528 at Britt to Estaire at a cost of over \$2 million.
- A \$3.25 million contract has recently been awarded to construct two new passing lanes in the vicinity of Highway 522 in 2005.
- Another 51 km of paved shoulders and rumble strips valued at \$3.3 million will be constructed this year.
- To promote greater use of the Ministry of Transportation's French River Rest Area and reduce driver fatigue, enhanced roadside signage has been installed along Highway 69 advising motorists of the location of the rest area.

The final safety initiative for the existing corridor involves the realignment of the 'S' curves located south of Highway 637. As part of the four-lane route planning and environmental assessment for Project 4 described above, the scope of potential improvements through this area will be determined. The objective will be to realign that short section of highway along the future four-lane corridor so that this investment will not be lost when the new highway is constructed. Construction could begin in 2008.

MAINTAINING EXISTING HIGHWAY 69

While the planning, design and construction of the new four-lane facility is underway, there is also a need to maintain the existing highway in a serviceable and acceptable condition for the travelling public.

Short-term approaches such as selective resurfacing will be employed to hold the pavement in an acceptable condition until the four-lane construction takes place. This work is estimated to cost \$6 million over the next 10 years. At the completion of the four-lane construction, those sections of Highway 69 that are bypassed will require full rehabilitation. The cost of follow-up rehabilitation of bypassed sections of highway is currently estimated at \$20 million.

The Highway 400/69 corridor is susceptible to severe winter weather conditions as a result of the lake effect from Georgian Bay. Whether used as a two-lane or a four-lane highway, driving on Highway 400/69 always demands care and control during adverse conditions. The provincial government currently contracts winter maintenance (sanding, salting, snow removal, plowing, etc.) to ensure the highway is restored to appropriate conditions as quickly as possible after major storms. No maintenance program can adequately compensate for appropriate judgment and driver care. Making wise decisions will always be important to the safety of all motorists.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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www.mndm.gov.on.ca

www.mto.gov.on.ca