

# BRIEFING DOCUMENT

## MANITOBA INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION'S LIMITATIONS ON CONSTRUCTION ALONG THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY IN VIRDEN

In 1996, Manitoba Highways and Transportation commissioned a study to look at various alternatives to eliminate direct highway access and to construct overpasses over the Trans-Canada Highway. This was undertaken so as to have a plan in place so that the Trans-Canada Highway could become a “freeway” at some point in the future, with no stop lights along its full length through Manitoba. This plan proposes a total of three overpasses located at PR 257, King Street and PTH# 83.

At each location, the proposed plan, when implemented at some unknown point in the future, would require the purchasing of a substantial amount of additional land from private owners at each of the three locations. To this point, Manitoba Highways has purchased only a portion of the land they would need to construct an overpass at King Street and the Trans-Canada Highway.

In discussions with, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation (the new name for Manitoba Highways and Transportation), they willing admit that they have no indication of when the plan would be implemented. They indicated that Virden’s population would have to be significantly greater. The City of Brandon currently has two overpasses planned and they are not likely to be built for several years. The City of Brandon has a population today of greater than 44,000.

Our current average daily traffic volumes passing through Virden on the Trans-Canada is approximately 4,000 per day. The average daily traffic volumes at the Trans Canada and PTH#16 (Yellowhead) is approximately 12,000 per day and the overpass that was to have been constructed at that intersection has been put on hold due to the need for substantial repairs to all Manitoba’s highways and bridges as a result of recent years spring flooding.

Given our current population growth and the current average daily traffic volumes on the Trans Canada, it is unlikely that an overpass would be built in the next 50 years and even longer. In addition, the current plan identifies the need for 3 overpasses in the Virden area plus there would be a requirement to build another overpass at the railway crossing.

The proposed number of overpasses for Brandon is only two, and therefore it is highly unlikely that Virden would ever see three overpasses developed . The more likely scenario is there would be

consolidation of routes and a new plan developed prior to the construction of any overpasses in the Virden area. At this time, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation refuses to revisit the proposed plan which is currently 15 years old.

As a result of the 15 year old “proposed” plan, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation is opposing all new construction within the areas of what would be required for the proposed overpasses, regardless of the fact they may never be built. This has effectively rendered the land values within these areas as negligible and that large tracts of privately owned land, which are suitable for development and growth , have been eliminated as developable land.

MIT is doing this solely for the reason of saving them money when it comes time to purchase the lands when or if they begin construction of the proposed overpasses. Because this land at the intersections is privately held, MIT and the Manitoba Government are essentially living off of the current equity of the private owners.

The Town of Virden has a very limited supply of highway commercial land along the Trans Canada due to low lands and geography. The current Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation policy has put a major road block in the development of Virden and area. Now that no new development can occur within these areas and in particular at King Street and the Trans Canada intersection , these areas and lots have a strong potential of becoming unsightly and un-kept vacant lots that are blights on our community which has won National and International acclaim for beauty!

The Town of Virden is greatly concerned with the restrictions this plan has on new business development along the Trans Canada Highway and in particular within the 1,000 foot restricted development zone surrounding King Street.

In addition, MIT has a zero access policy for any service road or driveways directly onto PTH # 83, which makes any development along that corridor extremely difficult if not impossible. The net result of MIT’s intransigence along both the Trans-Canada Highway and along Provincial Highway # 83, appears to fly in the face of the need to develop long term plans so as to minimize future costs and yet allow development to occur.