

NIDCO Responds- Part 2



Dr. Carson Charles- President of NIDCO

AN ACCOUNT OF HOW THE ARMSTRONG REPORT WAS CONSIDERED BY NIDCO.

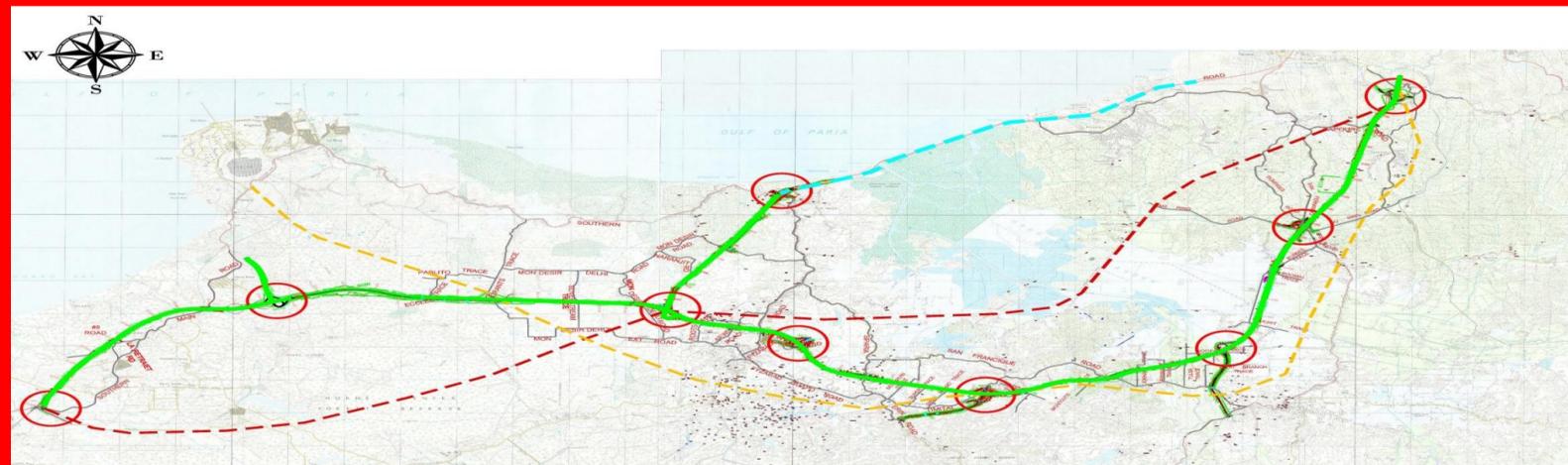
- Aggregates used on the SHHE project will be taken from locations in Central and South Trinidad, the Northern Range and imported from overseas suppliers.
- In the event of damage to local/community transportation infrastructure caused by the Contractor, the contract provides for such repairs to be effected by the Contractor at its expense.
- It should be emphasized that the Highway route chosen, presents the least impact on the wetlands, as well as on the built communities established in these areas over many years. The Contractor is required to protect and maintain existing watercourses and prevent mud, debris and other construction by-products from causing environmental damage and affecting residents.
- It is important to note that no mangroves are to be removed in the Debe to Mon Desir area. Where this has been necessary in other sections, a mandated Mangrove Rehabilitation Plan has been implemented by the Contractor and overseen by the EMA.
- NIDCO continues to be guided by the Certificates of Environmental Clearance for this and other sections and works in continuous collaboration with officers of the EMA who make regular visits to the work sites to provide feedback and guidance, as required.
- This is consistent with current industry best practices which call for an interactive and ongoing relationship between the design builders and the authority responsible for environmental management.

Recommendation No. 9:

IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT the APDSL studies be continued and that consideration be given to staging highway improvement for the south western peninsula to allow the phased development of the transportation system and minimize the potential for “overbuilding” the road network at the expense of competing land uses and to the detriment of the communities within the direct or indirect range of the alignments.

NIDCO ADVISES THAT -

- NIDCO engaged Transportation Consultant, APDSL, to continue its previous traffic management studies in the south-western peninsula. (see under Construction Schedule/Phasing below)
- In their report submitted in January 2013, APDSL concluded and recommended the following:
- **Optimum Route.** The conclusion of Dr. Bhesem Ramlal, GIS Specialist and Lecturer in the Department of Engineering at the University of the West Indies, is that, based on the best available spatial data sets obtained from government agencies and GIS consultants and criteria provided by professionals with significant expertise in physical planning, transportation planning, engineering, the results of the spatial analysis suggest that *the route proposed by LEA Trintoplan is valid.*
 - **Primary Arterial Road System is Needed.** An urban primary arterial system is urgently needed to connect the South-Western peninsula to improve accessibility to the major urban centres in the region including Debe, Penal, Siparia, Fyzabad, La Romaine, Oropouche, La Brea and Point Fortin. In order to facilitate the high traffic demand on both the Eastern and Western sides of the region, it is necessary to adjust the new arterial system to be closer to these urban centres from which the high traffic is generated.
 - **The Alignment of the Highway is Valid.** It is necessary to continue the new highway through Penal, Siparia, Fyzabad onto Point Fortin with the alignment as suggested.



LEGEND	
	Selected Route
	South Trunk Road Upgrade
	Alternative Route No. 1
	Alternative Route No. 2

ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENTS CONSIDERED

Construction Schedule/Phasing

Further APDSL Studies (see report of March 2013) made recommendations on the order in which construction should take place in order to systematically address the traffic demands in the south-western region of the country:

- **Completion by December 2013** - a new four-lane divided highway from Debe Interchange to Penal Interchange, including Penal connector road, the upgrade of the Cross Crossing Interchange and road geometric improvements to M2 Ring Road between SS Erin Road and Southern Main Road near Paria Suites.
- **Completion by December 2015** - a new four-lane divided highway from Point Fortin (Dunlop) Roundabout to Mon Desir Interchange; a new connector road from the new four-lane divided highway at Mon Desir to St. Mary's Junction, including Interchanges; Southern Main Road with four lane divided road between St. Mary's Junction and Paria Suites; new four-lane divided highway from Penal interchange to Siparia Interchange including Siparia connector road; two-way, two lane single carriageway roadway of the new highway between Siparia interchange and Mon Desir Interchange, with a roundabout intersection at Fyzabad and including the Fyzabad connector road and the upgrade of the Connector road to a four lane divided carriageway.
- **Completion by 2020** - the other two lanes of the four-lane divided highway between the Siparia and Mon Desir Interchanges should be available for public use. This implies that a delay of three to four years may be considered for the upgrade to four-lane status. There is no significant benefit to be had from such a postponement of the two-lane to four-lane upgrade, considering that the procurement and construction time required for this, may be two to three years and will have to be started immediately upon completion of the initial two-lane roadway. However, phased construction of the interchanges at Siparia and Fyzabad is currently being considered and incorporated into 'value engineering' decisions to be implemented.
- NIDCO continues to engage the services of APDSL on an ongoing basis with respect to traffic planning within the communities to be serviced by the Highway.

Recommendation No. 10

IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT all relevant state agencies (including the Commissioner of State Lands (COSL), MOWI, the Valuation Division (VD), and the Ministry of Food Production) together review their policy for the assessment of damage at Section 3 of the LA Act. It was further recommended that the Institute of Surveyors of Trinidad and Tobago (ISTT) be consulted and that consideration be given to including the Agricultural Society and the Law Association. It was also recommended that the Commissioner of Valuation (CoV) ensures proper compliance with the law and Land Economy principles.

NIDCO ADVISES THAT -

- The process of land acquisition is being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act. In this regard the Commissioner of Valuations conducts negotiations for land acquisition on behalf of the MOWI which is the Client Ministry, for this project. In addition, NIDCO has been authorised by Cabinet to conduct the acquisition of lands by private treaty. NIDCO utilizes independent licensed Valuers to determine the market values of the lands. Title searches are performed and background information obtained on the lands and their occupants by independent Consulting Attorneys. Before any settlement can be arrived at, NIDCO undertakes the following procedures:
 - Residents are invited to submit a Claim prepared for a professional Valuer or such other person as they may choose. The cost of this service is met by NIDCO.
 - NIDCO obtains a valuation report on the property, done by an independent professional Valuer, licensed to practise.
 - Negotiations are conducted with the Claimant or his/her representative. NIDCO is represented at these negotiations by an independent Legal Consultant and an independent Valuer. The Claimant is allowed his/her own professional Valuer and Legal Advisor.
 - Monitoring of the process is undertaken by NIDCO's internal Consultant Valuer.
 - Any proposed settlement is considered by a Cabinet-appointed Land Acquisition Oversight Committee, comprising professional representatives from several Government Ministries and Departments.
 - Any settlement proposed is considered by NIDCO's Tenders Committee as well as Board of Directors, where necessary, before approval.
 - Settlements are referred to consulting Attorneys-at-Law for title conveyancing and payment.

Since the publication of the Armstrong Report in March 2013, NIDCO has continued to consider several issues raised in the Report. In respect of the recommendations made, NIDCO has carefully considered them and where applicable and appropriate, have taken steps to address same.

Below is an account of how the recommendations of the Report were considered by NIDCO, as part of the ongoing process of consultations, reviews, re-engineering and project evaluations in the construction of the Highway:

Recommendation No. 6:

IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT a quantitative surface and groundwater hydrology model and study of the wetland as a hydrodynamic system should be undertaken in the public interest as part of Best Practice before an informed decision can be made as to whether or not this segment of the Highway should proceed as proposed.

NIDCO NOTES THAT -

The HRC's own Hydrology Consultant indicated that previous studies had met the requirements for the SHHE Project. Further, Dr. Armstrong also concluded that "In the area of hydrology and hydraulics it was felt that the Hydrology Report of 2007 fulfilled the objectives of determining the hydrologic information required for inputs to the hydraulics for bridge and culvert preliminary designs at points of intersection of the highway and river crossings" (pg. 8).

NIDCO ADVISES THAT -

- The Highway is being built using the Design-Build model. As part of its work, the Contractor is undertaking further detailed hydrological and hydraulic studies to ensure that the Highway does not negatively impact the existing drainage system along its alignment. The Drainage Division is required to approve all drainage studies and designs on an on-going basis.
- As part of the ongoing studies and reviews, NIDCO recently awarded a contract to Royal Haskoning BV of the Netherlands in association with Haskoning Caribbean Ltd. to conduct feasibility studies and detailed design consultancy services for the South Oropouche River Basin Flood Mitigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project. The objectives of this Study are to develop alternative solutions (i.e. adaptation of drainage infrastructure, water resources uses and overall watershed management) and best management practices, in order to -
 - Reduce the frequency and severity of flooding in the basin, thus reducing the risks to lives and livestock and preventing damage to public and private properties and infrastructure.
 - Increase the potable water supply, i.e. to capture approximately 3 million imperial gallons per day of storm water (through a process of flood control) for treatment and use for domestic, agricultural and other purposes.
 - Reduce the impact of flooding on the socio-economic activity in the watershed e.g. losses to the productive sector as a result of flooding disruption.

Recommendation No. 7:

IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT an Environmental Economic Study of this Project must also be undertaken to inform a decision whether or not to proceed with this Highway segment. This should include a cost-benefit analysis, comparing the economic costs of the various alignment alternatives that were assessed to demonstrate the costs of the adverse effects compared with the projected benefits.

NIDCO NOTES THAT -

- A detailed feasibility study was in fact conducted for the SHHE project in 2006 by LEA Trintoplan Consultants Ltd. In that study, an adequate economic evaluation was done for the project. A cost benefit analysis was done as part of the feasibility study. NIDCO has given due consideration to this recommendation and does not see it necessary to undertake a new environmental economic study.

Recommendation No. 8:

IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT off-site impacts, such as the impact of removing and transporting extraordinarily large quantities of aggregate to be sourced from areas far removed from the Project Area, for example, quarries in the Northern Range, also need to be determined and measures designed to mitigate any negative impacts.

NIDCO ADVISES THAT -

- NIDCO has been working with the Contractor to minimise the impact of the mining and transportation of large quantities of aggregate on the communities along the Highway alignment. In this regard, the Contractor has been purchasing aggregate from established and licensed quarries. Such quarries are regulated by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and are operated in accordance with their respective CEC conditions.



For Parts 1 & 2,
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