

**Speaking notes for Bryce Phillips Chief Executive Officer Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority at the 2018-2019 Annual Public Meeting, February 27, 2020**

Thank you Heather and good morning everyone.

Thank you for joining us today.

I would like to start by thanking our Chair and the WDBA Board of Directors for their time, dedication and commitment to the organization, and indeed, to the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

As a Crown corporation, we are required to share information on our operations and activities for the previous fiscal year.

It is also a time for us to celebrate the accomplishments of the past fiscal year and to talk about the work we will continue to do over the months ahead.

But, more than that, it is an opportunity for us to connect with the public, community members and our stakeholders to solicit your feedback.

The theme of this year's annual report is Building Foundations and we are doing exactly that – not just in terms of construction, but also in terms of relationships.

Several members of our host communities and our stakeholders are here with us today. As are representatives from our private-sector partner, Bridging North America. Thank you all for your contributions to the project.

As you saw in our video at the beginning of the meeting, WDBA has accomplished much over the past fiscal year.

During 2018-2019, we continued with our preparatory activities at the Canadian and US Ports of Entry and the Michigan Interchange.

This work included advancing property acquisition on the US side of the project.

I am pleased to say that all of the properties required on the US side of the project will be in possession by September of this year.

The project team is also undertaking essential work such as utility relocation, building demolition, property remediation and site preparation on the US side of the project.

At the Canadian Port of Entry, progress continued on the Perimeter Access Road which surrounds the Port of Entry.

This four-kilometre road is now complete and provides access for customers, employees and emergency vehicles to local businesses.

In preparation for the construction of the bridge, the project team undertook vital wind tunnel testing at a laboratory in Guelph, Ontario. This helped gauge the stability of the bridge structure.

And we conducted a review of the bridge soffits at a manufacturing facility in Quebec City. These soffits which have both a functional and aesthetic purpose, are one of the first components of the bridge structure to be manufactured.

During the 2018-2019 fiscal period we took some time to celebrate as well.

On July 5, WDBA announced the selection of the Preferred Proponent, followed a few weeks later with the start of Michigan Advance Construction.

In September, we announced that we had reached Financial Close with our private-sector partner.

Bridging North America will design, build, finance, the Gordie Howe International Bridge project and will operate and maintain the new crossing over a 30-year period.

WDBA has in place stringent oversight mechanisms to ensure that the requirements of the Project Agreement signed by us and Bridging North America are delivered.

I look forward to working collaboratively as “One Team” over the years to come.

And, of course, on October 5, 2018, the project team was proud to welcome the Prime Minister of Canada as we launched the official start of construction.

As with all major infrastructure projects - before you build up, you have to dig down.

So, achieving these milestones allowed us to start last year, the construction of the most visible symbol of the project - the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Our work has been recognized by leading financial, legal, engineering and communications organizations worldwide.

Since 2018, the Gordie Howe International Bridge project has received twelve international awards which I understand to be unprecedented.

These accolades would not have been possible without the leadership and support of my executive team:

Michelle Balga, Director Human Resources,

Heather Grondin, Vice President Communications and Stakeholder Relations,

Leslie Martin, Executive Vice President Engineering and Operations,

Anne Mullen, Corporate Secretary and Chief of Staff,

Phil Simpson, Vice President Project Management

Mike St. Amant, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer,

And, Vicky Tuquero, General Counsel

And, of course, I thank all the employees at Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority for their dedication and for their hard work.

It is their sense of purpose that has made this project successful over the past year.

And it is that sense of purpose that keep all of us energized every day as we continue building the foundations of one of the largest infrastructure projects in North America.

Thank you.