

## Statement

For Immediate Release

### **Statement from Minister François-Philippe Champagne on the Community Benefits Plan for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project**

June 14, 2019      Ottawa, Ontario      Infrastructure Canada

Today, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, made the following statement commending Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority and Bridging North America on their announcement of the Community Benefits Plan for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project:

“The Gordie Howe International Bridge project demonstrates Canada's commitment to investing in modern and resilient infrastructure that grows the economy. The new crossing between Windsor and Detroit will strengthen this important trade and transportation link between Canada and the United States. It will positively impact the flow of traffic and goods, helping businesses get their goods to market, and making it more efficient for travellers, commuters and shoppers to cross the border.

The bridge project, which is made possible by a strong, collaborative partnership between Canada and Michigan, has now reached another important milestone. After nearly four years of consultation and meaningful engagement with over a thousand stakeholders and citizens, Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority and Bridging North America have announced a comprehensive Community Benefits Plan that will have wide-ranging positive social, economic and environmental impacts on Windsor-Essex and Detroit.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge is a once in a generation project and its Community Benefits Plan is a direct response to the specific needs of the local communities. By integrating community benefits into major infrastructure projects, we extend our investment into local neighbourhoods, increasing economic prosperity and improving the lives of residents.

In addition to the 2,500 direct jobs Bridging North America expects to be created by the project, targeted workforce development initiatives will foster training, business opportunities, and local employment for workers including First Nations, youth and women. The Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy will provide \$10 million each for Sandwich and Delray, resulting in social and economic improvements, including green neighbourhood initiatives, such as a multi-use pathway for cyclists and pedestrians.

The benefits plan demonstrates that close collaboration and partnership between Canada and Michigan can ensure the prosperity and well-being of our communities on both sides of the border. It shows what can be accomplished when we engage and listen to one another, and work together to better the lives of our people.

We look forward to seeing the many direct benefits for residents and businesses in Windsor, Sandwich, Delray and for Walpole Island First Nation as the plan is implemented with community partners over the coming months and years.

As Canada continues to invest in 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure, the Gordie Howe International Bridge project will serve as a leading example of how to leverage these investments to achieve transformative social, economic and environmental impacts in our communities.”



Infrastructure  
Canada

### **Associated links**

Infrastructure Canada: <http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/>

Gordie Howe International Bridge project: <https://www.gordiehoweinternationalbridge.com/en>

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## BACKGROUND

### Supportive Statements

For the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, community benefits are identified opportunities that can advance economic, social or environmental conditions for the local communities. In developing the Community Benefits Plan, it was key that the initiatives selected for implementation would provide positive outcomes for the Windsor-Detroit regions.

### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"On behalf of our many project benefactors, community partners including Friends of the Detroit River (FDR) - a leading fundraiser for this project, and our fiscal manager the MotorCities National Heritage Area, the Fort Rouge Gateway Partnership (FRoG) appreciates the support of Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority, as we move forward with making the Fort Street Bridge Interpretive Park in southwest Detroit a reality. This project not only preserves an important piece of our automotive and labor history, but it also creates an oasis of recreation in one of the city's most industrialized neighborhoods, creating a sense of place and pride for its residents. Coming on the heels of a significant grant by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, we anticipate the first phase of the park can be fully completed."

- Tricia Blicharski, Director of Operations, Friends of the Detroit River

"The Accelerator is impressed at how the Community Benefits Plan is being taken from the planning to the execution by WDBA and Bridging North America and excited to play our part in helping the economic prosperity of Windsor through our business start-up and improvement initiatives."

- Siddique Sheikh, Special Projects Manager, Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator

"We are very excited to partner with WDBA. The Gordie Howe International Bridge project and Community Benefits Plan that it comes with is going to be a great social, economic and visual asset to the community."

- Reza Shahbazi, Executive Director, New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc.

"From a tourism innovation perspective, the Gordie Howe International Bridge and Community Benefits Plan will enable local businesses and non-profits to develop new products, experiences and partnerships that will enhance our tourism offerings, create new opportunities for the industry, raise our destination profile, and ultimately attract more visitors to our region. It's really exciting!"

- Justin Lafontaine, Program Lead for the Windsor-based Ontario Tourism Innovation Lab

"The Community Benefits Plan presented by the Gordie Howe International Bridge will help build connections and strengthen the future of our community. Not only will this plan add economic benefits to the area it will also provide opportunities for beautification in the West End of Windsor. Life After Fifty is proud to be a delivery partner of this exciting initiative."

- Joyce Nixon, Executive Director, Life After Fifty

"On behalf of the CHASS Board of Directors, I wish to thank the WDBA for their commitment to supporting transportation for our patients through the donation of a van to CHASS. In light of the current and future barriers resulting from bridge construction, ensuring access to health care via safe transport is of paramount concern.

We also want to thank WDBA and MDOT officials for maintaining open communication about CHASS', and the community's concerns, and working to mitigate many community impacts. We look forward to continuing our role as a member of the Community Advisory Group and having open dialogue about challenges faced by residents throughout bridge construction and beyond."

- Felix M. Valbuena, Jr. MD, CEO, Community Health and Social Service Center

## **Senator Stephanie Chang on the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan**

June 14, 2019

“I am thrilled about today’s announcement from the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority regarding community benefits in relation to the Gordie Howe International Bridge. This marks a critical milestone in a long journey for the Delray and Southwest Detroit communities. For more than a decade and a half, residents and community leaders have been advocating for quality of life protections and enhancements near the bridge; many have made significant sacrifices to make way for this development.

“I am excited that the WDBA has committed to home repair funding for Delray residents; support for community organizations in Delray and Southwest Detroit serving children, families and small business owners; workforce training and readiness; a grant program for community initiatives; local street enhancements; improvements to parks and connectivity; and much more. These build on the already-delivered programs that are providing families options for renovated homes, long term health and air studies, and investment in jobs training. I look forward to continuing the work with all stakeholders involved to ensure these community benefits initiatives are implemented successfully.

“Today’s announcement is an important testament to the tenacity and perseverance of residents in my district, as well as the strong relationship we have developed over the years with the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority and State of Michigan. It is also a refreshing reminder that strong community benefits processes work, when the needs of the community are taken seriously, when residents’ experiences, perspectives, and research are listened to with sincerity, and when the community and decision-makers work together in a spirit of transparency, collaboration, and partnership.”

*Stephanie Chang is the State Senator from Michigan’s District 1 (Detroit and Downriver) and serves on the Community Advisory Group.*

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**June 14, 2019**

**WERCC to Partner with WDBA and Bridging North America**

The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce was invited to join WDBA and Bridging North America as a delivery partner for the implementation of the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan. The Chamber will partner in the following initiatives:

- Support the planning of and outreach for information sessions directed at vendors;
- Support the planning of and outreach for a vendor summit;
- Invite BNA to participate in relevant meetings and events with subcontractors and vendors to deliver information regarding how to participate on the Project;
- Post and share information about procurement opportunities on the Project.

“The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce is delighted to be a partner for the implementation of the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan. The plan will bring positive outcomes to our members and the region as a whole. We look forward to engaging with WDBA and Bridging North America to ensure that the project is successful and our members benefit from our participation.” ~WERCC President & CEO Rakesh Naidu

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