

COMMUNITY BENEFITS



PONT INTERNATIONAL
Gordie Howe
INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

2023-2024 YEAR-IN-REVIEW REPORT

APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024





THE GORDIE HOWE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE PROJECT

is a once-in-a-generation undertaking. Not only will the project deliver much-needed transportation improvements for international travellers, it is also providing jobs and opportunities for growth to the Windsor, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan region and includes features that make this project truly distinctive.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge will be a six-lane, 2.5 kilometre/1.5 mile, cable-stayed bridge, connecting Windsor and Detroit. The project is being delivered through a public-private partnership (P3). Windsor-

Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) is a not-for-profit Canadian Crown corporation responsible for the delivery of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, including oversight of construction and operations.

Bridging North America (BNA) is WDBA's private-sector partner and is also responsible for delivering the Community Benefits Plan in collaboration with WDBA and the State of Michigan.

A key project element is the inclusion of a Community Benefits Plan, which complements various other positive outcomes integrated into the project including the multi-use path, mitigation measures and community engagement activities.

The project consists of four components:



THE BRIDGE



CANADIAN PORT OF ENTRY



US PORT OF ENTRY



MICHIGAN INTERCHANGE

ABOUT COMMUNITY BENEFITS

On the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, community benefits are identified opportunities that can advance economic, social or environmental conditions for 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 region and specifically focus on enhancing the Sandwich, Ontario and Delray, Michigan communities, the neighbourhoods closest to the project area.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the Sandwich community and land in Canada where the Gordie Howe International Bridge is being constructed sits on Anishinaabe Territory. The Anishinaabeg in the Windsor area are known as the Three Fires Confederacy which consists of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. This land has also served as a place of refuge for the Huron/Wendat people.

Cover Photo: View of the Gordie Howe International Bridge from the Malden Park Observation Area in Sandwich, Ontario.

BACKGROUND

The mandate to include a Community Benefits Plan as an integral part of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project originates in the Canada-Michigan Crossing Agreement signed in 2012. Recognizing the opportunity to leverage the significant investment of this public infrastructure for the benefit of the Windsor/Sandwich and Detroit/Delray communities, Canada and Michigan incorporated the requirement for a Community Benefits Plan for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project into the Crossing Agreement that includes:

- the manner in which stakeholders and community are to **continue to be involved**
- the manner in which host **community input** relating to community benefits and stakeholder involvement are to be factored
- the manner in which bidders plan to work with **local institutes of higher learning, unions and others**
- the manner in which **job training and local job development** will be encouraged.

The Crossing Agreement further states benefits will be shared equally amongst the two countries.

VISION

The vision for Community Benefits on the Gordie Howe International Bridge project is to deliver a series of initiatives, based on public input, that create measurable and positive results-based opportunities for the host communities. The plan is:

- providing economic opportunities in the host communities
- contributing positively to workforce development programs
- delivering neighbourhood improvements
- ensuring clear commitments and accountability from all parties for its delivery.

To ensure this vision is achieved, the Community Benefits Plan is specifically tailored to the project, satisfies all requirements of the Crossing Agreement, is based on community input and is measurable, quantifiable and achievable. The principles of the **I-Care Framework** continue to be followed, ensuring that Community Benefits shall be:



INTEGRATED

an integral component of the project carried out during the construction and operation periods



COLLABORATIVE

reflect the input of the host communities and be delivered through partnerships, ensuring that the interests of the respective communities are taken into account



ACCESSIBLE

easy to understand, easily accessible, regularly measured and publicly reported



REGIONAL

reflective of the character of the region, tailored specifically for the region and provide value to the region



ENTERPRISING

comprised of new methods, ideas and innovative approaches to engage and benefit the neighbouring communities.



DEFINING THE COMMUNITY



The approach to developing the Community Benefits Plan was defined by the local communities on both sides of the border, including:

- adjacent residents and businesses
- community groups
- public agencies
- educational institutions
- not-for-profit organizations
- elected officials
- workforce development organizations.

While the plan brings many benefits to the region, special attention was given to those who reside or provide services in the areas of Sandwich and Delray.

GOVERNANCE, REPORTING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP

Established in 2019, the Local Community Group works with the project team as informal partners on the implementation of the Community Benefits Plan. This group includes 16 membership roles that collectively represent the communities of Delray/Southwest Detroit, Sandwich/west Windsor, Windsor-Essex County and the Greater Detroit Area.

Group members contribute by:

- participating in quarterly meetings
- providing input into the implementation of Community Benefits initiatives including providing feedback on proposals under consideration for Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy funding.

Volunteer members serve two-year terms, some of which ended in 2023. Recruitment to fill the volunteer positions including resident roles representing Sandwich/west Windsor, Delray/Southwest Detroit, Windsor-Essex County and the Greater Detroit Area occurred in fall 2023. Fourteen eligible applicants applied for the roles. Results of the recruitment included two incumbents continuing their roles and four new members joining the group. A full list of current Local Community Group members is available at GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In 2023, the project team facilitated public consultation to understand priority investment areas for the Sandwich/west Windsor and Delray/Southwest Detroit communities. This consultation included engagement with the Local Community Group and key community stakeholders to develop a shortlist of programming investment areas that are relevant to the objectives of the Community Benefits Plan and align with current priorities for each community. The shortlist of investment areas was incorporated into a survey where respondents could note their preference for priority investment areas for each community. The project team received 275 survey responses, leading to the expansion of community investment priorities, which serve as key areas of alignment for community benefits initiatives, summarized below.



Aesthetics, landscaping and *green initiatives



Economic benefits and *business development



*Tourism



Community partnerships



*Local history and culture



*Food security and wellness



Community safety and connections

*New priorities identified in 2023

The Community Benefits Plan is comprised of two components:



THE NEIGHBOURHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY focuses on collaborating with stakeholders and community members through consultation to develop and implement a community betterments strategy based on priorities identified through public consultation.



THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGY is geared toward engaging businesses and individuals and focuses on supporting workforce, training and pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship opportunities.



NEIGHBOURHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy includes \$23 million in direct community investments for Sandwich/west Windsor and Delray/Southwest Detroit. When the Plan was announced in 2019, a portion of the total funding was purposely left unassigned with the intention to assign it later in the delivery period to expand existing projects or add new initiatives.

In January 2024, WDBA extended the Community Benefits delivery period by an additional year, with delivery running into 2026, and added \$3 million in available funding. At the end of March 2024, over \$5.5 million remains for allocation.

All investments relating to Community Benefits are noted in Canadian funds.

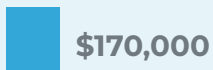
\$23 million in direct community investments to be spent over six years



Allocated funds: \$17,463,419
Funds disbursed: \$9,096,900
Unallocated funds: \$5,536,581
(as of March 31, 2024)

Community Investments as of March 31, 2024:

Local History and Culture



Food Security and Wellness



Economic Benefits



Community Partnerships



Community Safety and Connections



Aesthetics, Landscaping and Green Initiatives



2019-2023
2023-2024

Over \$9 million invested in community-identified priorities

2023 NEW COMMUNITY BENEFITS INVESTMENTS

In February 2024, the project team announced a \$2.6 million investment in 13 new initiatives to be delivered in Windsor and Detroit. These new projects were identified through a process undertaken in 2023 that involved consultation, identification of community investment priorities and a public Call for Proposals.

Canada

- Arts-Based Youth Programming (Art Windsor-Essex)
- Community Outreach Programming (Assumption Cares)
- Green Space Development at Maryvale (The Summit Centre for Preschool Children with Autism)
- Historical Interpretation Enhancements at the Duff-Bâby Mansion (Les Amis Duff-Bâby)
- School Lunch Program (United Way Centraide Windsor-Essex County and COOK Up)

US

- Mobile Wi-Fi and Charging Stations (Bridging Communities, Inc.)
- Healthy Habits Programming (Community Health and Social Services Center)
- Unity House Improvements and Programming (Craft Living Studios)
- International Heritage Camp (The Detroit River Project)
- Environmental Stewardship Programming (The Greening of Detroit)
- AmeriCorps Urban Safety Programming (Wayne State University-Center for Urban Studies)

Canada and the US

- Community Capacity Building Summits

Since the launch of the Community Benefits Plan in 2019, the project team has partnered with over 80 US and Canadian partners leveraging local resources and enhancing efforts already underway by local government and agencies. Key achievements of some of the projects from the past year are highlighted in the following pages. Visit the project website for more information on Community Benefits Plan initiatives and delivery partner updates.

FOOD SECURITY AND WELLNESS

CHASS Mercado Summer Program Community Health and Social Services Center (CHASS)

With funding provided through the 2023 Community Organization Investment initiative, CHASS expanded their Mercado during the 2023 season leading to the successful introduction of a voucher-based food program and summer programming for youth. Five hundred vouchers were provided to over 150 Southwest Detroit residents and over 100 youth and families took part in cooking classes promoting healthy eating. The success of this program led to further investment in CHASS' Healthy Habits Programming through the 2024 Call for Proposals.



Local youth learn about healthy eating in cooking classes held at CHASS.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Programming and Support Sandwich Business Improvement Area (BIA)

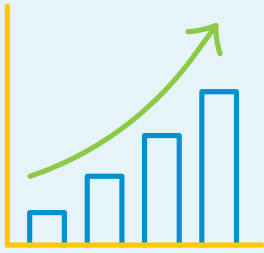
Funding supported the hiring of a Windsor-based creative agency to launch the marketing campaign, 'Road to New Sandwich', to inform the community and BIA membership about the Sandwich Street Reconstruction project. Funding also supported delivery of multiple markets and events in 2023 including events such as Open Streets, Miracle on Sandwich and a three-day Halloween event 'Nightmare in Sandwich' which attracted over 5,000 attendees. [Photo credit: Sandwich BIA]



Market-goes in the Sandwich BIA district in Windsor.

Business Development Programs in west Windsor and Southwest Detroit

The Sandwich Business Development Program, delivered by the **Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre** and the **Accelerator** in Windsor, and the Bilingual Bridge for Businesses by **Puente Cultural Integration** in Detroit, provided free supports and resources for small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in the host communities.



In the past fiscal year, these organizations have provided services to over 130 businesses, hosted 30 events, workshops or seminars and have helped facilitate at least eight successful grant applications.

“[SBEC] helped me through the process of incorporating my business, as well as gave me vital direction and resources for writing a business plan, applying for loans, and training employees.”

- Dan Gibbs, Dan Gibbs Moving Services Ltd.

Windsor-Detroit Cross-River Tour

In 2023-2024, the project team worked closely with project stakeholders, local historians, community members as well as professors and students from the **University of Windsor** and **University of Michigan** to identify and research interpretive sign content that reflects the unique culture, history and diversity of Sandwich and Delray and the broader Windsor-Detroit region. The signage will be installed before the bridge opens to traffic in publicly accessible areas at both Ports of Entry, where they can be enjoyed by locals and visitors to the region.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Indigenous Youth Programming and Events

Turtle Island - Aboriginal Education Centre (University of Windsor)

A three-day Pow Wow was held at the University of Windsor in May 2023, in partnership with St. Clair College. Through a celebration of music, dance and community, the Pow Wow provided an opportunity for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students to connect with their culture and build a strong sense of self and identity when living in an urban setting. Additionally, the Pow Wow provided an opportunity to share Indigenous culture with approximately 2,000 attendees of different ages from the Windsor-Essex area.

Funding also supported March Break and Summer Camp programming in 2023 where over 60 local students engaged in various recreational and educational activities, as well as workshops including Indigenous cultural activities hosted by multiple departments across the University of Windsor campus.

“This event is a celebration of the resilience and strength of Indigenous cultures and traditions. By sharing these traditions, we can help to build bridges of understanding and ensure that Indigenous cultures continue to thrive for generations to come.”

- Dr. Beverly Jacobs, University of Windsor Senior Advisor to the President on Indigenous Relations and Outreach

"The Indigenous youth camps that were held at the University are more than a journey, they are a bridge between tradition and tomorrow. As Indigenous mentors, we sculpt futures in the Aki's/Earth's wisdom, nurturing the seeds of resilience and identity."

- University of Windsor Indigenous colleague and volunteer



The Grand Entry at the May 2023 Pow Wow.



Art and/or Murals Around Construction Sites (SUAMP) Urban Neighborhood Initiatives (UNI)

UNI's Southwest Urban Arts Mural Project (SUAMP) provides educational opportunities for Southwest Detroit youth. Over the summer of 2023, 13 youth artists and five lead artists, ages 14 to 22, learned colour theory and mural design, culminating in the creation of a large-scale mural in the Springwells community.

“Working for SUAMP has brought out confidence and leadership skills that I never knew I had in me. It gives me a reason to keep working on my art and keep expanding my knowledge regarding the art professional field.”

- Youth member of SUAMP

Community Organization Investment (COI) Initiative

In July 2023, \$200,000 was invested into 14 organizations for projects in Sandwich/west Windsor and Delray/Southwest Detroit.

One of these projects, **John McGivney Children's Centre's (JMCC) Rainbow Painting on Pavement**, saw three paved areas painted in the colour of the Progressive Rainbow Flag in honour of the LGBTQ2S+ community, creating a welcoming place for all.



Youth Programming

There are many youth programs being delivered in the host communities with funding provided through the Community Benefits Plan. **Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation's (DHDC) Southwest Detroit Youth Programming** offers enriching year-round programming to youth ages 4 to 24, including exposure to robotics, urban arts, summer employment and career exploration. DHDC's Teen Tech Center provides youth access to media resources and technology, fostering creativity and developing technical skills to prepare students for future careers in an increasingly digital world.



COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CONNECTIONS

Expand trail systems and connections to the Gordie Howe International Bridge

Investments into active transportation infrastructure in the host communities was highly prioritized through Community Benefits consultation. In 2023-2024, the project team continued to make progress on trail system connection initiatives in Windsor and Detroit.



Announced in February 2024, the **City of Detroit** will invest \$1 million toward additional cycling infrastructure to Jefferson Avenue and Clark Street in 2025, facilitating a connection between the Gordie Howe International Bridge multi-use path and the City of Detroit's Joe Louis Greenway.

The project team continued behind the scenes work to deliver cycling and pedestrian infrastructure in Windsor that will create a connection between the Canadian Port of Entry and regional cycling trails.

The project team regularly reviews initiative progress and feasibility to ensure that all initiatives will be successfully delivered within the required timelines. In 2023, the project team determined that the **Belanger Park Observation Area** was not likely to be completed within the required timeframe. Consequently, this initiative has been dissolved and the remaining funding will be reallocated within the community.

AESTHETICS, LANDSCAPING AND GREEN INITIATIVES

TreeKeepers Kids Youth Environmental Program The Greening of Detroit

In spring 2023, over 130 students from three Southwest Detroit schools, ranging from junior kindergarten through grade six, participated in class programming delivered through the Greening of Detroit's TreeKeepers Kids Program. The place- and science-based education program introduced students to the benefits of trees, tree mapping and provided the opportunity to help plant 26 trees at their schools or nearby parks.

"Every time one of those students crosses their playground, or brings a family member to visit, they are not only able to say that they had a positive first interaction with trees but can also say that they helped plant them."

- Monica Tabares, Vice President, Greening of Detroit



TreeKeepers Kids participants plant trees at Holy Redeemer Grade School in Southwest Detroit.

Malden Park Observation Area

The Malden Park Observation Area opened to the public in November 2023. Located at the highest vantage point and elevation in Windsor, the area provides an attractive, safe location for residents, students and tourists to observe the construction and future operations of the Gordie Howe International Bridge. The observation area includes railings, benches, binoculars, landscaping and wayfinding signage. It will remain a permanent amenity at Malden Park and will be maintained by the **City of Windsor**.

"This observation area, atop Malden Park's highest point, symbolizes our city's ongoing progress and bright future. Made possible by the Community Benefits Plan, residents and visitors can now witness the monumental transformation of our riverfront landscape first-hand."

- Mayor Drew Dilkens, City of Windsor



Aerial view of the Malden Park Observation Area during construction. A photo of the completed amenity is featured on the report cover.

Triple Tree Impact Program Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA)

As part of the Triple Tree Impact initiative, ERCA has continued their work to plant native species trees in Sandwich/west Windsor. In October 2023, 15 community volunteers planted 40 large stock trees at College Avenue Bikeway Park in Sandwich.



Since 2020, over 450 native trees or shrubs have been planted in Sandwich/west Windsor and Delray/Southwest Detroit through green initiatives.



Volunteers plant native large-stock trees at College Avenue Bikeway Park in Sandwich.

Community Home Repair Program

In 2021, the project team launched the \$4 million Delray Home Improvement Program, a free home repair program for eligible homes or duplexes in the area surrounding the Gordie Howe International Bridge and US Port of Entry construction site in the Delray neighbourhood.

After three years, over 100 properties have received repairs or are in the process of receiving repairs. All program spots have been filled and the project team is no longer accepting applications. Construction will continue on remaining homes in early 2024, after which the program will conclude.



A completed roof repair through the Delray Home Improvement Program.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

The Workforce Development and Participation Strategy focuses on creating and making jobs, training and contracting opportunities accessible to local workers, students and contractors while leveraging existing local resources to maximize these opportunities.

From September 2018 to March 31, 2024, the following workforce statistics have been achieved on the project:



12,060+

individuals oriented to the project in Canada and the US

42%

are local*



360+

co-op students assigned to the project

48

Indigenous Peoples in Canada engaged on the project



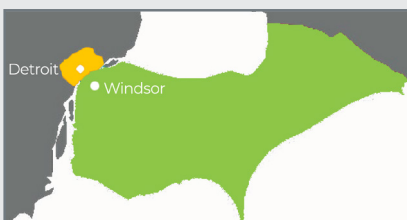
280+

local* businesses engaged on the project



715+

pre-apprentices/ apprentices assigned to the project



*“Local” is defined as being within the City of Detroit or within 100 kilometres of the City of Windsor

Construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge began in 2018. To ensure a local workforce contributes to this construction, BNA has implemented a series of initiatives targeting workers and contractors in Windsor/Essex, Detroit and Indigenous Peoples in Canada through the Workforce Development and Participation Strategy.

The project continues to exceed the established 20% local workforce goal with 42% of individuals oriented to work on the project being local to the City of Detroit or within 100 kilometres of Windsor-Essex County.

Between January 2021 and March 2024, over

\$6 million

was spent on small-scale purchases under \$25,000 from local* businesses.



Over 12,000 individuals oriented to the project since 2018

The project team is committed to engaging the public and stakeholders through educational experiences and workforce development and training opportunities.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Community Benefits team participated in:



41

Engagement activities



20

Educational activities



9

Career Fairs

BUILDING BRIDGES, BUILDING CAREERS

The project team is dedicated to providing educational experiences for local students to gain specialized knowledge and skills from this once-in-generation undertaking. Many students working on the project have been hired following their terms, including 12 students in the past year.

Sarah Chan, a University of Windsor Civil Engineering graduate, started her co-op experience with WDBA in summer 2019 during the early works stage of the Canadian POE. She returned for two additional terms in 2020, building on her classroom and co-operative learning to develop her project management and scheduling skills. One month after graduating, Sarah returned as a full-time employee, who now has co-op students of her own to share her experience with.

“To say I am a part of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, being proud is an understatement. To be able to represent female engineers of colour in the industry is extremely rewarding. It was such an honour being a part of the project when I was a student and to be able to come back as an engineer-in-training is a dream. Not only I am learning and gaining valuable technical experience, I love being able to teach and mentor those who were once in my position.”

- Sarah Chan, EIT Structural Oversight, WDBA



BUILDING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

Best Network Design & Nerds Xpress, is a low-voltage electrical contractor and security, telecommunications, electric vehicle and information technology advisory firm in Detroit. Their goal is to set the new standard for minority-owned firms in the information technology, security and low-voltage industry. Their work on the US Port of Entry over the past year has included design, implementation and installation of radio antennas, telecommunications, sound masking, PA/intercom installation and network switches.

Landscape Effects Group, based in Belle River, Ontario, is a versatile company engaged in snow and ice management, landscape design, construction and maintenance. The local company is working on the Canadian Port of Entry, providing soil hauling and landscape operations which include crafting the entry sign, integrating Corten steel landscape features and planting perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees. Landscape Effects was also commissioned to build the Malden Park Observation Area, pictured on the front cover.

“We constantly remind ourselves of how groundbreaking and historical this project is, and that millions of people will see our landscape for years to come.”

- Melissa Coulbeck, Designer & Project Coordinator

“To be a part of an historic project of this magnitude is a blessing. We are grateful for the opportunity to add value to the entire project team.”

- Eze Ejelonu, President, Best Network Design, LLC



Canadian POE landscaping.

2024-2025 COMMUNITY BENEFITS LOOKAHEAD

- Design and consultation/liaison with the City of Windsor for the Sandwich Street Enhancements initiative
- Design and construction of the Windsor Trail Connection initiative
- Planning and delivering the 2024 Capacity Building Summits in Windsor and Detroit
- Planning and delivering the Tourism Summits in Windsor and Detroit
- Finalizing Windsor-Detroit Cross-River Tour sign content and preparing for sign fabrication and installation
- Facilitation of Bike Rack Design Contests in Canada and the US
- Identifying new and expanded Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy investments through a Call for Proposals process
- Facilitating the 2025 Community Organization Investment initiative funding cycle
- Supporting delivery partner community engagement and communications opportunities
- Continued investments in annual programming partnerships
- Actioning annual commitments within the Workforce Development and Participation Strategy including activities to engage local students, job seekers, businesses and Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Alternative formats of this document can be requested by contacting the project team.

For more information about specific Community Benefits Plan initiatives or progress of Community Benefits Plan implementation, visit the project website or connect with us:

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