

New study identifies economic benefits of new international crossing

(Windsor, Ontario, Jan. 28, 2021) – Windsor and Detroit should establish a transportation, distribution, and logistics cluster to best reap the economic benefits of the new Gordie Howe International Bridge, says a new study out of the University of Windsor’s Cross-Border Institute.

Building on existing regional expertise and capacity, the cluster would consist of truck yards, facilities where containers can be transferred between trucks and rail, climate-controlled warehouses with on-site inspection areas for agricultural goods and pharmaceuticals, truck stops, customs brokers, and other firms involved in the movement and storage of goods. But first, a new international agency should be created to make sure the cluster grows in a coordinated fashion on both sides of the Detroit River, with appropriate land use and servicing, environment assessments, and community consultation.

“Our study is focused on the permanent economic benefits that will arise due to improved cross-border transportation services that the new bridge will provide once it’s open,” said Bill Anderson, director of [the Cross-Border Institute](#). “Based on our background research and consultations with numerous industry players, we have concluded that the transportation, distribution, and logistics sector presents the most significant and attainable opportunities for the development of new economic activities or expansion of existing activities stimulated by the new bridge.”

The Institute is a renowned research centre that studies the movement of people, goods, services, and funds across international borders. Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority commissioned the 68-page report to look into how the region could best position itself to benefit from the bridge after it’s constructed.

“Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) is committed to the region’s economic success,” said CEO Bryce Phillips. “The Cross-Border Institute’s [Economic Impacts and Opportunities Study](#) is an example of WDBA working with regional educational institutions such as the University of Windsor and Michigan State University, businesses, and community groups to help realize the regional economic and community development opportunities stemming from the Government of Canada’s investment in the Gordie Howe International Bridge project. The unique opportunities identified in the study are just some of the ideas the business community and local agencies can capitalize on to benefit from this new border transportation system.

“We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with our stakeholders on both sides of the border during the construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project and during the operations phase of the crossing.”

Canada and the U.S. have the second-largest bilateral trade relationship on the globe, exceeded only by the trade flows between the U.S. and China. Manufactured goods, crossing mainly in trucks, account for more than half of the cross-border shipments of both countries. A large share of manufacturing trade is in materials and parts that move between factories on both sides of the border. By far the largest crossing point for this trade is through the Windsor-Detroit corridor.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge, with an estimated completion date in 2024, will provide a direct, freeway-to-freeway connection from Highway 401 via the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway to U.S. Interstate I-75. The entire route will employ the latest intelligent transportation systems, logistics, and security technology and is designed to accommodate future technological advances.

The study estimates the new route will save about 850,000 hours per year for trucks, translating into billions of dollars in savings over the bridge's lifetime.

Anderson said, while the main focus of the research was on the large volume of commercial traffic that crosses at the Detroit River, the analysis also considered impacts on personal vehicles that will cross the border at the new bridge.

"Dr. Anderson's research plays a significant role in identifying and understanding the ways to maximize the economic benefits of the new Gordie Howe International Bridge both in our region and internationally," said University of Windsor President and Vice-Chancellor Robert Gordon.

"The University of Windsor is ideally positioned to play an important part in assessing the new bridge's impact now and into the future. I'm both pleased and proud of the efforts the Cross-Border Institute has provided as a valuable resource to the international trade community."

The study finds that a robust transportation, distribution, and logistics cluster would provide local employment opportunities that could be filled by workers from both Canada and the United States. These new jobs would range from routine manual tasks to cutting-edge positions in information and communications technology. The cluster would enhance the competitiveness of other industries in the region, including manufacturing, agrifood, and e-commerce.

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CONTACT:

Lori Lewis
Manager, News Services
Office of Public Affairs,
University of Windsor
llewis@uwindsor.ca