

# WINDSOR-DETROIT BRIDGE AUTHORITY

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE PLAN

2023-2024



# INTRODUCTION

## Land Acknowledgement

WDBA acknowledges that the land where the Gordie Howe International Bridge project 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.

## Who We Are

Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) is a Canadian Crown corporation established in 2012 to deliver and operate the Gordie Howe International Bridge between Windsor, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan. We are responsible for overseeing our private-sector partner, Bridging North America (BNA), and, as bridge operator, we will set and collect tolls. WDBA reports to Parliament through the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities and we are guided by our Board of Directors.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge project is North America's largest bi-national infrastructure project valued at \$5.7 billion (CDN). It includes the delivery of four major components – the longest cable-stayed bridge in North America, the largest Canadian and US Ports of Entry (POE) along the Canada-US border and a direct connection into the Michigan Interstate system. The project is a once-in-a-generation undertaking that will deliver much-needed transportation improvements for international travellers. It will also provide jobs and opportunities for growth to the Windsor-Detroit region and includes features that make this project truly distinctive.

## What We Value

In 2019, WDBA facilitated a process to develop Corporate Statements that were endorsed by the Board of Directors and represent the purpose, team description and values of the organization. The Corporate Statements are the result of employee engagement and reflect staff members working together to grow and enhance WDBA's corporate culture.

### Corporate Statements:

**OUR PURPOSE**

Together, we are responsible for the Gordie Howe International Bridge - a legacy landmark that connects nations, economies and cultures.

WDBA / APWD

**OUR TEAM**

At WDBA, we value our people and their contributions in an environment of trust, support and dedication.

WDBA / APWD

**OUR VALUES**

We treat each other with kindness and respect.

Talent and diversity are the cornerstones of our success.

Passion drives our creativity and innovation.

Our communities inspire us.

We take pride in our work and celebrate accomplishments.

WDBA / APWD



## Our Commitment to Excellence in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Practices

The Gordie Howe International Bridge project is being built to a 125-year life span. WDBA's Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Plan will allow the organization to actively support the creation of a thriving and sustainable future for employees, bridge users and the communities where we operate throughout the project's life cycle.

WDBA recognizes that the interrelationship between the workplace, employees and the community supports the organization's commitment to manage the social, environmental and economic effects of fulfilling its mandate and mission. Further, WDBA recognizes that alignment of our organization's actions with ESG values is important to the public, community and future bridge users. WDBA's inaugural ESG Plan summarizes the organization's commitment to existing and new corporate and project-related activities that address workplace aspects such as human rights, corporate culture, community development, environmental protection, emergency response and good governance.

Through WDBA's commitment to ESG, the WDBA team will further deliver upon its Corporate Statements while demonstrating that WDBA is:

- a **preferred place to work**
- an **integrated and respectful member of the communities** where we work and where the Gordie Howe International Bridge is being constructed and will operate
- dedicated to **conducting business in an environmentally and socially responsible manner**
- committed to **responsible governance and oversight** of all business activities, in alignment with the latest best practices.

Several internal and external assessments and engagement activities informed the development of the ESG Plan including employee focus groups, employee pulse and engagement surveys, an internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion survey, an accessibility survey, work related to sustainability initiatives and Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) and an external Environmental and Social Value Assessment. Through these activities WDBA reviewed and addressed areas of improvement and opportunities for enhanced corporate activities which were incorporated into commitments in this Plan.

## Alignment with the Government of Canada Priorities, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

The activities and objectives within the ESG Plan support the achievement of several Government of Canada priorities:



As the Crown corporation responsible for overseeing the construction and operations of an international border crossing, WDBA is uniquely positioned to have influence on local, regional, national and international levels, and as such, the organization is well-situated to support actioning of the 2022 to 2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy that connects the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to the work of federal organizations across Canada. WDBA's ESG Plan supports achievement of the following goals:



### United Nations Sustainable Development Goals





# ANCHORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE

The Plan's activities connect to at least one of WDBA's four anchors of ESG, including commitments to steward a healthy environment, enhance the local community and create a thriving corporate culture, all delivered while ensuring responsible corporate conduct aligned with the latest best practices. Appropriate goals and targets will be established in each of these areas throughout 2023-2024.

This Plan is a formal approach to fulfilling commitments outlined in WDBA's 2023-2024 Corporate Plan. Specifically, activities under the following strategic objectives:

- "WDBA is a high-performing Crown corporation" with the activities within this Plan supporting the organization's prioritization of being recognized as a front-runner in sustainability by industry experts and an organization that positions its employees to succeed.
- "WDBA has positive and transparent relationships with its shareholder, Michigan as co-owner and stakeholders." WDBA's ongoing engagement with the shareholder, the State of Michigan and its stakeholders (including the community, Indigenous Peoples and future bridge users), proactively managed through meaningful and transparent dialogue, is critical to the success of the Gordie Howe International Bridge.



## ENVIRONMENT



WDBA is committed to protecting the environment both on and adjacent to the Gordie Howe International Bridge site and in the communities where we work. Activities to support this commitment include:

- Creating the ESG Committee which supports WDBA to conduct business in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.
- Creating and delivering WDBA's ESG Policy and Framework that capture WDBA's commitment to support all three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – and provide WDBA employees with strategic direction on how to incorporate sustainability into daily business activities.
- Tracking, monitoring and reporting on WDBA's efforts to reduce waste production and carbon footprint and facilitating Climate-Risk and Opportunity Assessments (CROA) through Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) reporting.
- Overseeing the design and construction of border assets to sustainable building standards, including the Canadian and US Port of Entry facilities being designed to meet LEED v4 Silver rating and the bridge and surrounding roadways achieving the Envision™ Platinum Award.
- Incorporating and investing in active transportation infrastructure within the project footprint and in adjacent communities.
- Overseeing daily inspections of several integrated environmental components on the project site and performing regular assessments to determine the effectiveness of current actions and guide future improvements.
- Identifying, monitoring and mitigating several environmental categories on the Canadian and US project sites throughout the life of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project. This work is in accordance with commitments in the approved Environmental Assessment Report and Federal Screening Report in Canada and the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision in the US.





## COMMUNITY



WDBA and the broader project team are integrated and respectful members of the international communities where the Gordie Howe International Bridge is being constructed and will operate. We are committed to strengthening community ties and leveraging WDBA's operations of this significant investment in public infrastructure to bring about social and economic benefits in the Windsor-Detroit region.

WDBA's community building efforts:

- Investing in and creating opportunities for local people and organizations through delivery of the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan during the Design-Build Period of the project, including implementation of the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy and Workforce Development and Participation Strategy.
- Participating in community-based events and programming through WDBA's Community Engagement and Youth Engagement Plans.
- Engaging with students of all ages within the education system to raise awareness about the project and broader border transportation system and career paths in related industries.
- Building and maintaining relationships with First Nations.
- Celebrating and promoting the creativity, culture and history of the region through the project's Visual Art Program including investments into Public Art and community-based art on the project site, in west Windsor and in Southwest Detroit.
- Identifying opportunities, as appropriate, to engage community and stakeholders through consultation to inform decisions.
- Seeking out opportunities to collaborate or partner with other local organizations to achieve shared goals.



## CORPORATE CULTURE



WDBA is committed to creating and maintaining an employee-centric corporate culture that fosters diversity, accessibility and inclusion, makes employees feel valued and engaged and positions them to succeed. Employees are provided opportunities to thrive professionally while also supported to engage with colleagues in informal ways, be active members of their communities and disconnect from work outside of office hours.

WDBA's corporate culture activities include:

- Creating various committees and associated activities, such as:
  - » The Corporate Culture Committee whose principal objective is to support a thriving and inclusive employee-centric culture at WDBA and associated activities.
  - » The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEI&A) Committee which conducts research, provides recommendations and delivers policy guidance on DEI&A to WDBA's Executive Team.
- Delivering a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEI&A) Action Plan, including defining DEI&A terms and initiatives for the organization and providing relevant training to WDBA staff.
- Implementing WDBA's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which supports inclusion and identifies, removes and prevents barriers for persons with disabilities.
- Supporting employees' health at work, including environmental and mental health, through provision of ergonomic resources, offering mental health supports through a benefits program, providing flexible work arrangements and supporting employees to disconnect from work after hours and when taking time off.
- Providing financial and in-kind support to local programs and organizations through corporate fundraising and volunteering activities.
- Incentivizing personal volunteering through an annual paid time off allocation.
- Funding employee professional development through training and memberships and investing in organization-wide training models.
- Planning recreational events for staff to engage with colleagues in informal ways, such as group outings to sporting events, annual challenges, trivia and board game events, etc.



## CORPORATE CONDUCT



As a Canadian Crown corporation, WDBA is committed to transparency and responsible oversight of public resources. The organization's Board of Directors and staff are required to act honestly, diligently, carefully and in good faith and carry out duties in accordance with various regulatory requirements and Acts, including adherence to:

- Canadian Environmental Protection Act
- Taskforce for Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)
- The Access to Information Act
- The Financial Administration Act (FAA)
- The Official Languages Act
- The Privacy Act
- WDBA's Anti-Corruption, Anti-Bribery Policy
- WDBA's Code of Conduct
- WDBA's Disclosure of Wrongdoing Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Committee to provide a safe and healthy working environment while preventing accidents and occupational diseases.

Additionally, WDBA seeks out opportunities to advance corporate conduct activities in alignment with best practices or in response to feedback from employees, stakeholders, its shareholder and communities to further accomplish corporate citizenship commitments, including:

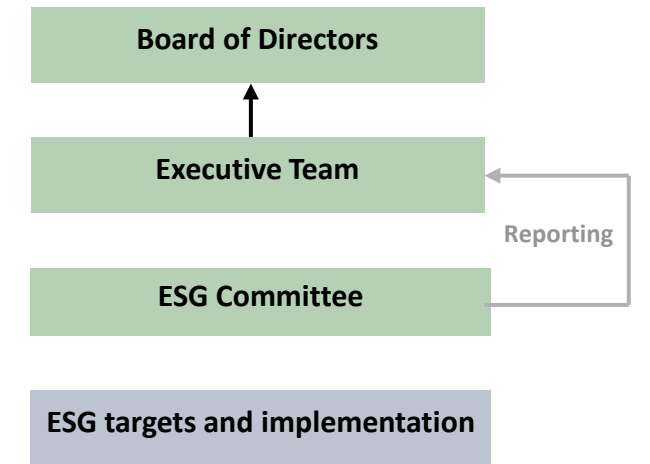
- Undertaking a pay-equity assessment to create a work environment that promotes equality and fairness for all jobs, with a sensitivity to issues pertaining to gender bias and the undervaluing of female job classes. This includes the creation of WDBA's Pay Equity Committee.
- Sustainability-focused procurement activities, such as conducting research and identifying opportunities to include ESG-related language within the organization's procurement documents, as appropriate.
- Reselling or purchasing used corporate assets through Public Services and Procurement Canada.
- Providing hybrid work options for staff, where appropriate.
- Maintaining meaningful and transparent dialogue with the shareholder, stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, the community and future bridge users through strategic and inclusive communications practices to keep these groups apprised and updated on WDBA operations and project progress, demonstrate transparency and build strong and enduring relationships.
- Creating a corporate objective to obtain zero-emission or hybrid vehicles for any new fleet vehicle leases.
- Promoting sustainable activities for staff during and outside of work hours through organization-wide communications, offering battery recycling receptacles at offices and promoting active lifestyles through the Annual Steps Challenge.
- Supporting the development and adherence to the Emergency Response Plans for the project and WDBA.
- Managing a Mass Notification System to provide warnings of emergency and high-risk situations to WDBA staff.

## GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING

Delivery of the ESG Plan will integrate a robust documenting and reporting structure that includes oversight by WDBA's ESG Committee at the operational level, as well as the Executive Team and WDBA's Board of Directors through the Governance and Human Resources Committee.

Appropriate ESG targets and associated data will be established and reported by the ESG Committee. Progress will be reported through quarterly updates to the Executive Team and an annual update to the Governance and Human Resources Committee of the Board of Directors, or as requested.

Public reporting on ESG Plan outcomes and achievements will be incorporated into a new quarterly Sustainability Report to be launched in 2023, as well as WDBA's quarterly Community Newsletter, annual TCFD Report and Annual Report. It may be included in other communications activities including the project website and social media channels.







## CONCLUSION

As the Crown corporation responsible for overseeing the construction and operations of an international border crossing with a 125-year life span, WDBA is uniquely positioned to have influence on local, regional, national and international levels. Through the inaugural ESG Plan for the organization, we proudly state our commitment to leveraging WDBA's business operations and the design, construction and operations of the Gordie Howe International Bridge to bring about social, economic and environmental benefits in the communities where we work.

WDBA's activities to steward a healthy environment, enhance the local community and create a thriving corporate culture, all delivered while ensuring responsible corporate conduct, will be implemented by staff with oversight at the operational, executive and board level. Communications about ESG accomplishments and outcomes will be done transparently through regular public reporting.

WDBA is committed to reviewing ESG activities and targets regularly and revising the Plan, as appropriate, to align with best practices or in response to feedback from our staff, stakeholders, its shareholder and communities. WDBA will also undertake a fulsome review in support of the corporation's transition to operations recognizing the possibility for new or revised activities and targets as the bridge operator.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WDBA would like to recognize the Board of Directors, Executive Team, employees and stakeholders engaged through various assessments, for their guidance in the preparation of WDBA's inaugural ESG Plan.

## Stay Connected



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Design: Corporate Affairs and External Relations