



A key feature of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project is the inclusion of a Community Benefits Plan. Launched in June 2019, the Community Benefits Plan reflects community priorities and includes two components – the Workforce Development and Participation Strategy and the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy.

The Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy is a \$23 million (CDN) direct community investment on both sides of the border. As of 2024, 51 projects in Windsor and Detroit were included in the strategy focused on enhancing the communities of Sandwich/west Windsor and Delray/Southwest Detroit.

In 2025, 11 new initiatives were added to the plan and 12 existing initiatives were expanded upon as a result of a Call for Proposals undertaken in 2024. These initiatives were valued at \$3.5 million and include the following:

CANADA

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CENTRE POW WOW AND YOUTH CAMPS (Expanded)

Partner: Aboriginal Education Centre - Turtle Island (University of Windsor)

Categorization: Community partnerships

Turtle Island Aboriginal Education Centre will continue to deliver March break and summer camps for Indigenous secondary-school students and the annual 2025 Student and Alumni Pow Wow event. This programming and event provides Indigenous students an opportunity to connect with their culture and build a strong sense of self, in addition to creating opportunities to celebrate and cultivate a strong Indigenous culture locally.

WEST WINDSOR SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (Expanded)

Partner: United Way Centraide Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent

Categorization: Food security and wellness

Funding will allow United Way to continue delivering the West Windsor School Lunch Program, a free school lunch program offered in four Sandwich area schools at least one day a week throughout the school year. Extended funding will allow the program to expand into two additional schools, support secondary school students and continue for an additional seven months.

SANDWICH TOWN BICYCLE TOURISM (New)

Partner: Olde Sandwich Towne Business Improvement Association (BIA)

Categorization: Regional tourism and economic development

The Sandwich Town BIA will undertake a marketing campaign highlighting Sandwich as a destination for cycle tourism. Additionally, the BIA will engage subject matter experts to provide education for community and BIA members on the benefits of bicycle tourism and resources to support local businesses and tourism-focused organizations to successfully engage cyclist communities.

THE COMMUNITY MEAL AND INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIALIZATION PROGRAM (New)

Partner: South Asian Centre of Windsor (SACW)

Categorization: Food security and wellness

SACW will deliver a weekly inter-generational lunch and wellness program for newcomers and seniors at Bedford United Church in Sandwich. The community building program will include guest speaker presentations and educational sessions covering a range of topics to support community education, socialization and belonging.



THE WEST WINDSOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (Expanded)

Partner: Small Business and Entrepreneurship Center (SBEC), a division of Invest Windsor-Essex

Categorization: Economic benefits and business development

Through the West Windsor Business Development Program, SBEC will continue to offer services, resources and programming to small businesses in Sandwich and west Windsor, including consulting, seminars and events, a digital adoption program for entrepreneurs and a hackathon event to engage local students and business owners.

FRANCOPHONE TOURISM IN WINDSOR-ESSEX (New)

Partner: Association des Communautés Francophones de l'Ontario Windsor-Essex-Chatham-Kent (ACFO WECK)

Categorization: Regional tourism and economic development

ACFO WECK will enhance the Francophone tourism industry through the creation of a map and a guide highlighting the Francophone heritage and culture in the Windsor-Essex Region.

TRIPLE TREE IMPACT - GREENING SANDWICH PROGRAM (Expanded)

Partner: Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA)

Categorization: Aesthetics, landscaping and green initiatives

ERCA will extend the Triple Tree Impact Program into 2025, delivering three neighbourhood tree planting events where community volunteers will plant approximately 150 large stock trees, facilitating three community cleanup events and hosting a tour highlighting the environmental benefits that have taken place in Sandwich/west Windsor.

SANDWICH BIA BEAUTIFICATION, EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING (Expanded)

Partner: Olde Sandwich Towne Business Improvement Association (BIA)

Categorization: Economic benefits and business development

Funding will support the Sandwich Town BIA to deliver up to 12 community events in 2025, including holiday-themed programming and various markets. Funding will also support the development and implementation of a beautification plan to create a unique sense of place in the BIA district.

BI-NATIONAL TOURISM TRAIL EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT (New)

Partner: Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island

Categorization: Regional tourism and economic development

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island will develop and publish 'two-nation destination' itineraries and planning tools promoting things to see and do in the Windsor-Detroit region. Experiences will feature trail tourism ideas, promotion of the communities closest to the Gordie Howe International Bridge and broader Windsor-Detroit region. A dedicated webpage will feature these tools, complemented by educational workshops to support local businesses to become tourism-ready.

UNITING THE WEST END AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM (New)

Partner: Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation (Windsor Essex CHC)

Categorization: Community partnerships

In partnership with McBride Youth United, Windsor Essex CHC will provide Sandwich community youth with afterschool opportunities focused on educational enrichment. Programming will include mentorship, tutoring, homework assistance and recreational activities.

NIGHT LIGHT ARTS AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL (New)

Partner: Art Windsor Essex

Categorization: Regional tourism and economic development

Night Light will be a weekend-long arts and cultural festival celebrating light. The festival will include interactive art installations displayed throughout downtown Windsor, complemented by education, workshops, shows and a closing community event.

US

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VITA) (New)

Partner: Accounting Aid Society

Categorization: Economic benefits and business development

Accounting Aid Society will provide no-cost IRS-certified, bilingual tax return preparation, filing services and education to over 2,000 residents of Southwest Detroit. No-cost services for Southwest Detroit businesses including education on how to use financial statements for business planning and ensuring tax-compliance, and the importance of accurate record keeping and point of sale systems.

CAMP FREEDOM AT MIDNIGHT (Expanded)

Partner: The Detroit River Project

Categorization: Local history and culture

Camp Freedom at Midnight, an international heritage camp that encourages local youth from Detroit and Windsor to discover the history, culture and heritage of the Detroit River region, will receive continued funding through 2025. Programming will include delivery of an annual Emancipation Celebrations Kid's Edition Day event and a tour guide training program.

AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMMING (Expanded)

Partner: Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC)

Categorization: Community partnerships

Funding will continue to support comprehensive afterschool and summer programming at DHDC for youth in Southwest Detroit. Additionally, DHDC will deliver street outreach, community healing circles and a clothing and resource closet.

SOUTHWEST DETROIT COMMUNITY FOOD AND WELLNESS (New)

Partner: Southwest Detroit Community Development Corporation (SDCDC)

Categorization: Food security and wellness

SDCDC will provide a holistic approach to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents and families in Southwest Detroit through food distribution, education on food preparation and health and fitness, and by delivering specific food programs for seniors and unhoused people. Programming will enhance local food security, reduce social isolation and provide access to important community resources for residents.

EXPERIENCE SOUTHWEST DETROIT (New)

Partner: Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA)

Categorization: Regional tourism and economic development

SDBA will develop and deliver a comprehensive guide and campaign to enhance the tourism appeal of Southwest Detroit by highlighting the area's rich history and local attractions. The campaign will be complemented through education and resources for local businesses and the development of cross-border partnerships and events.

BILINGUAL BRIDGE FOR BUSINESSES (Expanded)

Partner: Puente de Conexión/Puente Cultural Integration, LLC

Categorization: Economic benefits and business development

Puente de Conexión in collaboration with Puente Cultural Integration will continue providing bilingual free Open Office Hours, business coaching, networking and resources for Southwest Detroit-based small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs in 2025. Programming will broaden to include a new digital platform called Lazos Global that will host virtual workshops, a bilingual digital networking forum and provide an online directory and opportunities

LUZ Y SONIDO (LIGHT AND SOUND) (New)

Partner: Inside Southwest Detroit in partnership with Motor City Street Dance Academy

Categorization: Local history and culture

Through programming delivered directly in local Southwest Detroit schools, students will have an opportunity to engage in self-selected, creative visual and performing arts afterschool activities taught by experienced teachers. The programming will culminate in a Day of the Dead festival featuring student performances.

YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALING (Expanded)

Partner: Congress of Communities (COC)
Categorization: Community partnerships

Funding will support continuation of the Youth Environmental Healing group that teaches young people how to be sustainability leaders through stewardship of the land owned by COC. Programming will be complemented by additional education for Southwest Detroit residents about environmental sustainability, sustainable building practices and community gardening.

HEALTHY HABITS PROGRAMMING (Expanded)

Partner: Community Health and Social Services (CHASS) Center
Categorization: Food security and wellness

Healthy Habits programming will continue in 2025, delivering a range of programming to address food security and support wellness in the Southwest Detroit community. Activities will include hosting the CHASS Mercado, providing prescriptions for fresh produce, cooking classes and wellness activities and food distribution for local residents.

CANADA AND US

WINDSOR-DETROIT REGIONAL CYCLING TRAIL GUIDE (New)

Partner: Bike Windsor Essex in partnership with Detroit Greenways Coalition
Categorization: Regional tourism and economic development

Funding will support creation of a guide and map of Windsor-Detroit region trail networks that connect to the Gordie Howe International Bridge's Multi-Use Path. The physical and digital products will be complemented by an advertising campaign to promote the region's unique, international cycling network.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION INVESTMENT INITIATIVE (Expanded)

Partner: Local Community Organizations
Categorization: Community partnerships

Extend the Community Organization Investment Initiative one additional year and increase funding from \$100,000 to \$150,000 (CDN) per country for the 2025 funding cycle to support events, programming or infrastructure projects delivered by non-profit and/or charitable organizations in the host communities.