

Speaking Notes
for
Bryce Phillips
Chief Executive Officer
Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority
at the
2019-2020
Annual Public Meeting
November 20, 2020

Check against delivery

Thank you Heather and good morning everyone.

Thank you for joining us today.

I would like to start by thanking our Chair and the WDBA Board of Directors for their ongoing time, dedication and commitment to the organization, and indeed, to the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, especially during these unprecedented times.

Our Annual Public Meeting allows us the opportunity to reflect on accomplishments over the past fiscal year and to talk about the work we continue to do to advance the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

But, more than that, it is another opportunity for us to connect with the public, community members and our stakeholders, to solicit your feedback.

The theme of this year's annual report is People, Progress and Partnership.

Yet, it is more than just the theme of our report – it is the backbone of our organization.

As you saw in our video just moments ago WDBA has accomplished much over the past fiscal year.

We made significant progress on our strategic priorities by establishing a strong governance framework that provides comprehensive oversight of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

Significant construction progress continues on all four components of the project – the Canadian and US Ports of Entry, the Michigan Interchange and the bridge itself. For example,

Transmission relocation at the Canadian Port of Entry as well a new four-kilometre Perimeter Access Road surrounding the Port of Entry were completed;

Continuation of preparatory activities required in advance of construction on the Canadian and US Ports of Entry;

Securing possession of all the US properties required for the project;

Three existing road bridges crossing I-75 were demolished as part of the Michigan Interchange work;

And, Importantly, installation of the 24 drilled shafts that will support the massive bridge towers, along with the base of these towers themselves.

We have successfully achieved our current staffing goals to deliver this enormous project and we continue to analyze our operational requirements. I am pleased to report that over 2019-2020 we neared gender parity in our workforce with a male-female ratio of 54 to 46 per cent.

We continue to work with the host communities and our stakeholders on both sides of the border. In 2019-2020, we met with over 2000 stakeholders, participated in over

360 engagement events and responded to almost 900 inquiries.

As well, we opened our Sandwich and Southwest Detroit community offices to provide a venue for members of the host communities and other stakeholders to meet with the Gordie Howe International Bridge project team.

In June 2019, together with our private-sector partner, Bridging North America, we announced a comprehensive Community Benefits Plan and, later in the fiscal year, released the first funding for several initiatives on both sides of the border.

In January 2020, following significant consultation with the community, we announced the selection of the aesthetic design for the five new pedestrian bridges to be constructed as part of the Michigan Interchange work.

We have also commenced planning for the transition from the design-build phase to the operations phase with development of an operational readiness plan.

The end of the fiscal year presented challenges with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since March, WDBA and our private-sector partner, Bridging North America, have taken steps to ensure the project moves forward without compromising safety or compliance with government directives on work or public gatherings.

The pandemic is ongoing and the way we conduct our daily lives has dramatically changed.

We have been introduced to a new way of life and work.

The pandemic has impacted the way we do business. Public events have been rescheduled and held virtually. Our offices have been closed to the public and our employees are working remotely.

WDBA was quick to adapt to implement measures in response to this unprecedented situation to ensure the health and safety of our employees, our partners and the communities in which we live while, at the same time,

reducing the impact to the project and continuing to do the job that we need to do.

Our employees deserve recognition for their continued dedication and for the successes of 2019-2020. Their passion, inspiration, talent and diversity drive our accomplishments.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge my senior leadership team. It is through their expertise and guidance that we have been able to continue to do our work without interruption.

Michelle Balga, Director Human Resources,

Heather Grondin, Vice President Communications and Stakeholder Relations,

Leslie Martin, Executive Vice President Engineering and Operations,

Phil Simpson, Vice President Project Management

Mike St. Amant, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer,

And

Vicky Tuquero, General Counsel.

I would also like to thank our private-sector partner – Bridging North America for their partnership as we together deliver the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

Thank you.