



CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In developing the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan, it was key that community input helped inform the initiatives selected for implementation on both sides of the border and specifically focus on enhancing the communities of Sandwich and Delray.

CONSULTATION APPROACH

WDBA and its Michigan partners meaningfully engaged and empowered the Windsor and Detroit communities in all stages of development of the Community Benefits Plan. Bridging North America (BridgingNA) joined this consultation process after Financial Close in September 2018.

The approach to developing the Community Benefits Plan along with the initiatives to be implemented have been 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 and workforce development agencies. While the plan will bring many benefits to the region, special attention was given to those who reside or provide services in the areas of Sandwich/west Windsor and Delray/Southwest Detroit.

Phase One Consultation

The first phase of the extensive consultation work ran between 2015 and 2018 and included public meetings, one-on-one meetings, online submissions, focus groups, social media, tours and direct correspondence. As a result, more than 230 suggestions for community benefits were submitted for consideration.

Most of the submissions fell within five priority areas including local workforce and training strategies, limiting construction and operations effect on the community, community safety and connections, aesthetics and landscaping and regional economic and community development opportunities.

Additionally, BridgingNA undertook their own consultation efforts during the Request for Proposals open period including meeting with community groups and actively participating in the Community Group-to-Business meetings arranged by WDBA in 2016.

Throughout these activities, stakeholders requested further involvement in the finalization of the Community Benefits Plan. As such, WDBA, BridgingNA and the State of Michigan committed to undertaking further consultation with the community and relevant authorities in the six-month period after Financial Close.

Phase Two Consultation

Building off of the feedback received from 2015-2018, the additional six-month consultation period occurred from October 2018 to March 2019. A shortened list of possible benefits was shared for feedback. During this time, over 70 meetings were held with more than 1000 stakeholders. A survey to prioritize short-listed initiatives was also made available electronically and in hard copy resulting in more than 400 additional responses.

A number of priorities from within the original five categories were identified during the second phase. Themes emerging from the feedback included trail system connections and cycling infrastructure, economic development, local road enhancements, support for community programming, recognition of area history, recognition for environmentally sensitive areas, a home repair program and workforce development strategies.

This targeted consultation also took into consideration efforts already underway by municipalities, senior levels of government and other agencies to improve or enhance the communities. Initiatives in the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan will not duplicate or replace such efforts and in some cases may work to enhance these efforts through further collaboration.

The public consultation process was driven by the following principles:

Openness and Inclusivity

Comment from any member of the public or stakeholder group with an interest in the project and in Community Benefits will be welcome.

Transparency

Results and progress information will be communicated.

Clarity

Roles and responsibility will be defined.

Flexibility

The process will consider the needs of participants, their differing interests, areas of expertise, and availability.

Evaluation

The consultation plan may be modified to respond to participant feedback or changing conditions.

CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT

Community consultation and outreach will continue during the delivery of the Community Benefits Plan on specific initiatives, such as the selection of specific local road improvements, interpretive sign content for the Windsor-Detroit Cross-River Tour and youth art projects to move forward in the Sandwich and Delray neighbourhoods. Municipalities and other agencies will also continue to be engaged for permitting and other necessary requirements.

The Local Community Group (LCG) to be formed in summer/fall 2019 also will be consulted as informal partners to WDBA and BridgingNA during in the implementation of the Plan. The LCG will assist in application review on the selection of annual community organization investments along with providing feedback and recommendations to the project team.

The Community Benefits Plan is posted on www.GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com and quarterly reports on progress and results will be posted through the delivery period.