

Speaking notes for Dwight Duncan
WDBA Annual Public Meeting
November 24, 2017

Good afternoon / bonjour.

It is a pleasure to be here today and I would like to welcome our stakeholders who are with us this afternoon and those who are watching these proceedings on our webcast.

We appreciate your interest in the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

I would like to preface my remarks today by speaking about commitment.

I quote the Prime Minister, “the Government of Canada is strongly committed to the Gordie Howe International Bridge project”.

That commitment is evident in the government’s steadfast support of Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority as the Crown corporation tasked with delivery of the project and is evident through the progress WDBA continues to make on moving the Gordie Howe International Bridge project forward.

Earlier this month, Minister Sohi announced that the Government of Canada has provided for an expansion of our Board from five to a maximum of nine members.

This provides the organization with additional expertise and oversight to support WDBA as we move towards completion of the procurement process and the start of construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Yesterday, our new board members met with the existing board for the first time.

I am proud to be part of a Board comprised of committed and highly qualified individuals who want to make a difference and make a better Canada.

I am pleased to welcome these talented individuals who, together with all of our board members, bring a diversity of talent and strong skillsets that reflect the complex and wide nature of the project.

I ask the Board members to raise their hand as I call your name.

- Karla Avis
- Marie Campagna
- Judi Cohen
- Shelly Cunningham
- Rish Malhotra
- Craig Rix

As you are aware, WDBA’s President and Chief Executive Officer has been on a leave of absence related to personal matters since August of this year.

The Board of Directors has appointed André Juneau as WDBA's Chief Operating Officer to lead the organization during this critical time as we move forward towards the construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Mr. Juneau previously sat on WDBA's Board of Directors and has now resigned from the Board to assume his new responsibilities.

He has both extensive experience and a stellar reputation in intergovernmental affairs and infrastructure delivery.

Welcome André to your first Annual Public Meeting as Chief Operating Officer.

I would also like to introduce Ms Linda Hurdle, WDBA's Chief Financial Administrative Officer.

Thank you all for your commitment to Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority and to the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

WDBA's Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing the business activities and other affairs of the Crown corporation.

But perhaps the most important task of the Board of Directors is to steer the organization's strategy.

We are in the midst of what is arguably the single most important task that WDBA will undertake - the procurement process to select the private-sector partner to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

The process is well underway. An estimated 2000 people representing the three Proponent teams are working on their submissions which are due in May of next year.

We will announce the Preferred Proponent in June 2018 to reach Financial Close in September 2018.

In advance of the selection of our private-sector partner, WDBA is undertaking significant preparatory activities on both sides of the border.

WDBA has successfully moved ahead on its other 2016-2017 strategic priorities, including:

- Preparatory activities at the Canadian and US Ports of Entry, and
- Relocation of over 25 kilometres of pipelines and cables.
- Last year at this time, we reported that 50 percent of properties needed in Detroit were under Michigan's control and were vacated.
- I am pleased to tell you today that more than 80 per cent of the properties required for the US project components are under Michigan Department of Transportation's control and are vacated.
- That number increases to 93 percent when you include properties which are under a court order to vacate.

This achievement is a result of the strong commitment by Governor Snyder and our Michigan partners to acquire the needed properties in order to start significant construction of the bridge in 2018.

Let me assure you that we will have every required property by the date needed.

Our Chief Operating Officer will speak in more detail about our strategic priorities in his remarks.

WDBA is taking steps and moving ahead on other fronts right now.

We are awarding contracts and assigning roles to consultants to help us during the construction stage of the project.

In short, we are getting ready for construction.

Our meetings with community leaders, agencies and residents of Sandwich and Delray have resulted in over 200 ideas and suggestions of what they would like to see included in community benefits.

An example of a suggestion that we had heard overwhelmingly, was the incorporation of a dedicated multi-use path that will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. WDBA was able to take this feedback from public consultation and work with border agencies to make this a reality.

I want to be clear that a community benefits plan is not just a requirement for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project, but community benefits is a top priority for WDBA.

Importantly, we continue to build our relationship with local Indigenous Peoples, including Walpole Island First Nation, based on collaboration, mutual trust and respect.

We are also actively working with the mayors and staff at the Cities of Windsor and Detroit. We appreciate their ongoing support and their dedication to help us continue to make progress.

It would be remiss not to mention the recent ruling by the US Court of Appeals for D.C. that reinforced the validity of the Canada-Michigan Crossing Agreement and served as yet another victory for the project through a long history of court challenges.

As you will see, the theme of this year's Annual Report is "Momentum" which is particularly apt given the work that has been completed, is currently in progress and is planned for the months ahead.

The Board of Directors is committed to seeing, and I use the words of Prime Minister Trudeau and President Trump in their joint statement, "the expeditious completion of the Gordie Howe International Bridge".

Their statement underscores the importance that both governments place on this project.

The Board's work has been made easier by the tremendous efforts, professionalism, dedication and commitment demonstrated by WDBA staff.

I would also like to thank our partners - the Michigan Department of Transportation, Infrastructure Canada, US Federal Highway Administration and the Michigan Governor's Office.

Our partners are equally committed to this historic project which will benefit communities on both sides of the border for many years to come.

Together the momentum grows.

Thank you.