



Windsor & District Chamber of Commerce
TRANSPORTATION POLICY STATEMENT

Section 1

Border Management

Transportation is a major component associated with the success of the Windsor and Essex County business community. The movement of goods, services, and people is a vital factor in the success of our region. Windsor-Detroit is the corridor of choice for the majority of the shipments between Ontario and the United States between Michigan, Laredo, Texas and Mexico. The impact of increased traffic volume and lengthy delays has created major concerns among businesses and residents. The functioning of the Windsor-Detroit border and the roads system in the Windsor region has become inadequate to handle present and future requirements.

The Windsor-Detroit international trade corridor is the busiest crossing in North America. The volume of traffic currently using the Windsor-Detroit crossings accounts for more than twenty million (Bridge and Tunnel Operators Association) vehicle border crossings annually. The commercial truck traffic component accounts for approximately 3.5 million vehicles of which 95% use the Ambassador Bridge and Huron Church Road to connect with destination links across the Border. Based on Statistics Canada data for the year 2000 the commercial vehicle traffic through Windsor-Detroit related to over \$155 billion dollars in trade conducted between Canada and the United States. The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce represents over 1400 member businesses that operate within the busiest international corridor in North America.

The operation of the Windsor corridor greatly influences member businesses as it relates to customer/supplier access, service and delivery. When the corridor fails to function there is a direct impact on the Windsor Region business community as well as impacts on the economy of the Province of Ontario and Canada.

The impact of the corridor traffic has been identified as a significant issue for several years. The need for action has become acute since the heightened security following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce has identified the following items as significant transportation issues affecting Windsor residential quality of life, the regions business community, and the prosperity of the Province of Ontario and Canada as a whole:

The Border Issues and Management

- The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce recognizes the need for immediate action to address short-term border and management issues to



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facilitate the optimization of the corridor and reduce the impacts on the local community. Opportunities exist in the following areas:

- i. Enhancement of Infrastructure
 - ii. Technology Enhancements
- Increased security measures are required for protection of our city, country and the infrastructure of the corridor.

Huron Church Road is a Provincial connecting link that has become the sole source infrastructure for international trade traffic through the Windsor-Detroit border. The City of Windsor is the only major crossing in Ontario without any direct Provincial highway system connection to the city's two-border crossings.

- It is imperative that the Bi-National Partnership study on the Windsor-Detroit border crossings be completed using an accelerated time table to address the infrastructure needs and border functionality related to international trade through the Windsor-Detroit transportation trade corridor. The projected completion and construction an additional crossing of 2013 is not acceptable.

Background on Border Issues and Management

In recent years, there has been an increase in the traffic utilizing the Windsor-Detroit corridor for access to trade markets. This increase has had adverse impacts on the community and created difficulties for the trading partners that use the infrastructure. Following the terrorist attacks in New York City, heightened border security initiatives of the United States Government illustrated the regions dependence on the corridor and the inability of the corridor to function when stressed by loading.

- **Enhancement of Infrastructure**
There is an immediate need to redefine the operation of the corridor and maximize the function for corridor throughput or facilitation. Loading of the highway and municipal road infrastructure has reached critical levels demonstrating the inability of the resources to meet the demand of the trade route.



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Chamber Position

The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce supports the City of Windsor position for improving the corridor as published in the "Schwartz Report". This report provides a foundation for action that addresses the regional national needs while abating local impacts of adjacent residents.

The Chamber recommends support of all levels of government to expedite the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

The Chamber further supports a narrowing of the focus of the bi-national planning to form an action plan on the viability of a maximum of two to three alternative crossings. This position is based on the broad base acceptance for the Schwartz report proposal for a industrial crossing location in the central study corridor.

- **Technology Enhancements**

It is recognized that there are opportunities for improved movement of low risk traffic through the Windsor-Detroit corridor utilizing technology and information systems. The use of pre-clearance and technological interfaces with regular low risk users of the border will support improved throughput in the corridor.

Chamber Position

The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce supports continued expanded use of technology for passenger and commercial traffic clearance to increase traffic flow efficiencies through the border.

The Chamber further supports immediate design and implementation of accessible "LOW RISK FAST LANES" to direct traffic volumes in the border crossings that will optimize all border crossings.



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- **Enhanced Security and Reverse Inspection**

The need for establishing higher security to protect the assets of the corridor is recognized as an issue for immediate action. It is difficult to assess the magnitude of the impact should one or both of the crossings currently in use be damaged or incapacitated in some way.

In conjunction with this initiative, there will be a need to redesign the corridor throughput to maximize the efficiency of the present infrastructure and reduce the impact on the communities of interest that surround the routes in question.

The exposure of the corridor to tie ups and delays is created by the heightened security required to clear people and goods through the trade route.

As a result, roads and crossing resources have become stressed. The loading, which has occurred, has had a direct impact on the quality of life for the residents of the communities of Windsor and Detroit. In addition, these delays have created difficulties for the business community to respond to customer just-in-time supply demands and customer access to facilities for commerce and recreation.

Chamber Position

The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce believes that the Canadian Government should complete discussions with the United States Government to facilitate the implementation of enhanced border inspection that will provide seamless integrated pre-screening and pre-clearance on both sides of the border.

The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce supports flexibility in the administration of advance inspection for people and goods as a part of enhanced border inspection.

In addition, the Chamber supports Canadian and Provincial Governments jointly allocating the funds necessary to implement immediate improvements to the corridor. This will mitigate the impact on local communities from loading and it will provide for inspection of vehicles destined for the United States prior to entry to the crossing structures.

- **Provincial Highway System Connection**



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The Windsor-Detroit corridor is the only crossing in Ontario that has no direct linkage from a provincial highway to the crossing. As a result, the taxpayers of the City of Windsor have to bear the cost of maintaining this international trade route. The Province of Ontario should have the responsibility to assume the cost for the continued maintenance of North America's busiest crossing while relieving the taxpayers of the City of Windsor of that burden.

Chamber Position

The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce believes that the Province of Ontario should agree to immediate financial responsibility for Huron Church Road.

The Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce believes that the Province of Ontario, having jurisdictional and financial responsibility for trade routes within the Province, should establish direct Provincial highway connections between the border crossings and the Provincial Highway System.

- **Bi-National Partnership**

The Bi-National Partnership study process for the Windsor-Detroit border crossing has become bogged down in bureaucratic paralysis. The study must be defined as a plan for action and proceed with defined timelines that will accelerate the process, address all mitigation requirements for the sighting of new infrastructure and control structures used by the crossings. As already stated, the projected completion and construction of an additional crossing by 2013 is not acceptable.

- **Accelerated Environmental Assessment**

The delays in initiating the needs study for the long-term corridor development is anticipated to be mired in extensive environmental studies. The demand projection of throughput on the existing infrastructure calls for the immediate sighting of a third crossing. Given the identified urgency the federal, state and provincial Ministries of Environment must agree to fast-track the system of approval that would shorten the time needed to complete a unified environmental impact assessment study.



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Chamber Position

With the acceptance of the Schwartz report the Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce supports a defined time period and a focused environmental assessment for fast completion of the Schwarz border solution.

The Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario, in consultation and cooperation with the appropriate United States approval agencies must adopt a bilateral fast-track system for measuring environmental impacts and granting approvals for the project.

This should include mitigation of residential impacts to facilitate immediate development and completion of an additional crossing in Windsor-Detroit.