

Howe bridge highlighted during Trudeau-Trump meeting



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President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau participate in a joint news conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Monday, Feb. 13, 2017. *PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS / AP PHOTO*

U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau signalled their commitment to the Gordie Howe International Bridge Monday in a joint statement that said they “look forward to the expeditious completion” of the project.

The value of the Canada-U.S. trade relationship, which is critical to Windsor’s economy, was also recognized, following the first meeting of the two leaders in Washington, D.C.

“The United States and Canada recognize the importance of co-operation to promote economic growth, provide benefits to our consumers and businesses and advance free and fair trade,” said the joint statement.

“Given our shared focus on infrastructure investments, we will encourage opportunities for companies in both countries to create jobs through those investments. In particular, we look forward to the expeditious completion of the Gordie Howe International Bridge, which will serve as a vital economic link between our two countries.”

The reference to the new bridge reassures regional business leaders who count on the free-flowing movement of goods across the Windsor-Detroit border crossing, which handles 25 per cent of all trade between the two nations.



Rendering shows one possible cable-stayed concept of the planned Gordie Howe International Bridge. COURTESY OF WINDSOR-DETROIT BRIDGE AUTHORITY

Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority chairman Dwight Duncan was “delighted” to hear the Howe bridge was mentioned so prominently in the joint statement.

“It was the only project referenced,” he said. “I’m very happy and this confirms what we have been saying, that despite the change in (U.S.) administration, this project would be a go and top priority for both governments.”

The planned six-lane Howe bridge should see construction begin some time in 2018 after a project contractor is selected at the end of this year by the bridge authority headed by Duncan.



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Construction is expected to take about 42 months with completion likely to occur in 2022.

The joint Trudeau-Trump statement also noted Canada is the most important foreign market for 35 U.S. states with more than \$2 billion in two-way trade “flowing across our shared border every day.”

“Millions of American and Canadian middle-class jobs, including in the manufacturing sector, depend on our partnership,” the statement said.

“We affirm the importance of building on this existing strong foundation for trade and investment and further deepening our relationship, with the common goal of strengthening the middle class.”



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President Donald J. Trump and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau held their first official meeting today in Washington, D.C. and affirmed their
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Windsor-Essex Chamber of Commerce president Matt Marchand said thousands of local jobs are connected to the U.S. and the discussion about the importance of trade between the two countries was “heartening to hear.”

“Obviously it was a good sign this administration will value the relationship with Canada — not just with trade, but as friends and allies.”

The fact Trump acknowledged the importance of the trade relationship “should go a long way in restoring confidence and end any concerns of a trade war,” Marchand said.

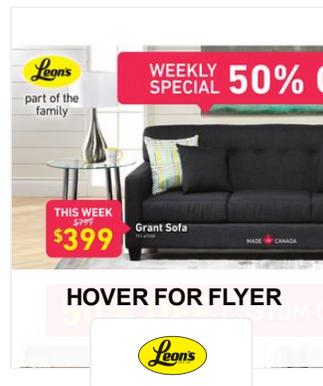
Topped off by the prominence of the Howe bridge in the statement, the meeting certainly turned out to be “very positive for the Windsor-Essex County region,” he said.

“It’s clear the (Trump) administration was very well-briefed on the importance of the relationship between the two countries,” Marchand said. “That’s a credit to our diplomatic corps and their preparation for the meeting.

“Their efforts clearly paid off here.”

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