

Hopes for U.S. Consulate in Windsor



By [Joel Boyce](#), Windsor This Week

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Having Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Windsor on Friday was good timing for the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce's push to reinstate a U.S. Consulate.

Harper, along with Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, announced the agreement for the second bridge linking Detroit and Windsor – more work, more trading.

Matt Marchand, president and CEO for the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, has met with the U.S. Representative Gary Peters officer in numerous occasions over the past month to discuss this process.

“We've had conversation with Peters office for the past number of weeks – over telephone and emails,” Marchand said. “They understand the trading relationship between our two countries. They understand this is the only area that doesn't have a U.S. Consulate with a visa-issuing operation. It's shocking just based on our closeness, proximity and trade value.”

The Windsor-Essex region used to have a U.S. Consulate, but it was closed by the U.S. Government back in 1969. Today, in a move to acknowledge interest in facilitating greater trade, tourism and travel between the U.S. and Canada, Marchand has written a letter to the U.S. Ambassador that supports a reopening of a new U.S. Consulate in Windsor.

Reopening a U.S. Consulate in Windsor as a visa-issuing and reporting post is important to Marchand and many others, because Windsor-Detroit is the busiest border crossing in North America. With over \$350 million in good crossing the borders every day, Windsor is the only major border city that does not have a visa-issuing post within 125 kms.

“It makes a lot of sense to have one. If someone needs a visa they're going to have to drive to Toronto,” Marchand said. “We have a Canadian Consulate in Detroit. It seems reasonable that that the U.S. Consulate with visa-issuing be available in Windsor so people don't have to drive to Toronto.”

For residents living in Southwestern Ontario, Toronto is the closest location to get a visa. For people in Windsor, the drive up to Toronto is almost 400 km away.

“Feedback is good right now on both side,” Marchand. “These things will take time.”

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