

# Chamber of Commerce wants government to provide more border road money



*CRAIG PEARSON, WINDSOR STAR*

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Matt Marchand is photographed at the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce offices in Windsor on Monday, December 15, 2014. *TYLER BROWNBRIDGE / WINDSOR STAR*

Windsor may have recently missed out on the provincial government's Connecting Links program — despite that Windsor hosts the largest Canada-U.S. border crossing — but the head of the local chamber of commerce hopes the area will have another shot at it.

At the Ontario Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting in Oakville this weekend, representatives from 50 or 60 chambers voted to push the government for a one-time \$30-million allocation of Connecting Links grants to communities that missed out the first time around.

“Windsor wasn't the only area left out of the Connecting Links program,” Matt Marchand, president of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce said Sunday after the meeting. “So collectively, we passed a resolution to have a one-time allocation for Connecting Links. I think it's a good message to send to the government that this is an excellent program and a lot of communities across Ontario depend on it.”

Officials in Windsor expressed shock last month when the city was left out of the program — designed to fix roads near border crossings — which it normally is included in. Some people wondered allowed if perhaps the fact that Windsor has no Liberal MPPs had anything to do with the snub.

The City of Windsor had applied for \$2 million under the \$20-million Connecting Links program through Ontario's transportation ministry to renew Huron Church Road between Tecumseh Road and E.C. Row Expressway.

The request was for roughly half of the estimated \$4-million bill to repair the six-lane road which is often gridlocked with trucks heading to and from the Ambassador Bridge.

Instead, the MTO awarded \$20 million to 23 municipalities elsewhere in Ontario.

Marchand said the chamber representatives passed 35 resolutions on a wide variety of topics.

Among other issues discussed with other chambers of commerce were: asking the Canadian government to defer negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership until after the U.S. federal election, closing the skills gap, encouraging the use of domestic steel for federal and provincial government projects, and creating transparency for development charges in municipalities across the province.

“We want to have apples-to-apples comparisons for development charges across Ontario,” Marchand said. “So we’d like all municipalities to post their development charges online so people can easily compare them.”

Marchand said he was glad to see chamber representatives passed a number of the initiatives unanimously, showing resolve to join together in pushing for government change.

“We had a very positive discussion,” Marchand said. “It was an outstanding meeting.”

## Windsor Flyers

