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CBSA & MCA LAUNCH COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE BORDER CROSSING EXPERIENCE AT CORNWALL PORT OF ENTRY

CORNWALL — The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) are pleased to announce the launch of a co-developed strategy to improve the border crossing experience at the Cornwall port of entry (POE).

The MCA-CBSA Border Collaboration Initiative was officially launched today, and aims to improve the daily lives of all who work, utilize or travel through the Akwesasne-Cornwall border crossing. The initiative has been in development for several months and includes plans for immediate-, short-, medium- and long-term priorities with some improvements already implemented or underway.

“MCA and CBSA have taken steps in the past year to forge ahead on a new, positive path that is mutually beneficial,” said Grand Chief Abram Benedict. “Through this shared desire to improve the border experience, we’ve developed plans together for tangible improvements and long-term changes. Consideration of a domestic lane, improved communication, and dialogue on matters that affect Akwesasronon are just some of the components of the initiative.”

While the relocation of the POE from Kawehno:ke (Cornwall Island) to the city of Cornwall in 2009 brought challenges to both the CBSA and MCA, in April 2019 Government of Canada and Akwesasne officials convened for a ground-breaking two-day session that used Design Thinking methodology to collaboratively identify potential solutions.

Design Thinking is a strategic method of designing or improving a service or product with the user in mind. It encourages an organization, for example, to consider who they are creating services for, which then naturally improves the user experience.

Through open and honest dialogue between Government of Canada and Akwesasne officials, a co-developed vision for potential solutions emerged from the two-day Design Thinking workshop with all parties supporting user-based improvements.



“This innovative approach is of particular significance for us, as it is the first time the CBSA has used Designed Thinking in a Nation-to-Nation context. A positive relationship with Indigenous Peoples is a priority for our Agency, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Mohawks of Akwesasne First Nation and other communities near ports of entry to address challenges and leverage opportunities with border crossing,” said CBSA President John Ossowski.

The initiative includes immediate improvements such as enhancing service capacity at the POE, along with medium- and long-term improvements, such as exploring options to improve processing for domestic travelers and to support economic development.

CBSA and MCA will share joint updates as the initiative progresses.

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