

January 2022
Delegation Presentation to Thorold Council Budget meeting
By Bill Klassen re:
Funding of the Rehabilitation of the South Main Street Bridge,
Port Robinson East
Aka...The Port Robinson Ecological Park

1.) On behalf of the residents of Port Robinson,
THANK YOU... to Mayor Ugulini and the members of Council who were able to attend some of the Public Information Centers related to this project that were held in September and October of 2021.

THANK YOU, also, for funding and completing the two Consultants' reports to get us to this point, where we now have a final, conceptualized proposal... for rehabilitating the South Main Street Bridge in a form that...going forward... is in line with the stated wishes of our Village residents.

It's an EXACT, SIMPLE REPRODUCTION of the Existing Bridge...

as a full length, plain, wide, flat, unobstructed, open-deck Bridge... with straight railings.

2.) It is our understanding that Council agrees with...and shares...our COMMUNITY VISION that this is a once-in-a-lifetime investment to solidify the ongoing enjoyment of the Creek's natural habitat and ecosystem features... by Port Robinson residents...and visitors... for DECADES to come.

3.) As background information for this Budget meeting... you all received, by e-mail... a document that we prepared to emphasize "The IMPORTANCE OF THE SOUTH MAIN STREET BRIDGE to PORT ROBINSON and HOW WE USE IT..." as far more than just a pedestrian walkway. It's a COMMUNITY-based, FAMILY-oriented, NATURE-related, OUTDOOR, RECREATIONAL FACILITY and RESOURCE.

4.) What I would like to highlight tonight are some of the LOGISTICAL REASONS why it is important to approve funding THIS YEAR to get this project started.

As outlined in the RJ Burnside Consultant's presentation to you ...

in the Council meeting on Nov.16th, and shown on the City's website of Capital Projects...

this project will be undertaken chronologically in 4 PHASES, which will take several years to complete.

5.) The Barn-Swallows and all the Turtles in the ecosystem are officially-classified as "*SPECIES-AT-RISK*", due to their generally-declining populations in Ontario.

THEREFORE, items in Phase One...

A.) Include the Barn-Swallow nesting box...MUST BE IN PLACE BY THE DEADLINE OF APRIL 30

...for 1 full year...prior being able to undertake any Bridge re-building activities...

to provide an alternative to the removal of their current nesting sites, on the underside of the Bridge...during its re-construction.

B.) And the Turtle-Nesting Mounds...

to provide alternatives to the current turtle-nesting sites in the roadside gravel under the guardrail along River Road.

The RJ Burnside Consultants indicated that... by Government Regulation...

these alternatives must be in place for one-year...

before Phase Two...rebuilding the Bridge... can begin.

So getting these items done as early as possible this year is crucial.

This will also provide a whole year of time for the City's Operations and Engineering Staff to prepare for Phase 2...

the Bridge replacement in 2023.

6.) It is ALSO very important to emphasize that before the start of Phase 2...

IT MUST BE FORMALLY-RECOGNIZED that during the time of the construction activities of rebuilding the Bridge, it could be out-of-use for a significant amount of time. This presents the **risk** of putting **significant human pressure** on the ecology and the **sensitive habitat areas** of the mature ecosystem that exist, in the Creek area, surrounding the Bridge.

This has NEVER been mentioned in **any** Consultant's reports

or in **any** City Staff reports to Council on the subject of Saving the South Main Street Bridge.

7.) THEREFORE, our concern and emphasis is, that this must be officially-acknowledged and properly-addressed

BEFORE

the Bridge is “permanently-closed” for rehabilitation.

SPECIFICALLY...

A.) The ramifications of stopping all uses of the Bridge **must be accounted** for prior to its “official” closing... especially-related to fishing activities.

The Bridge is a popular fishing “pier”.

Being unable to fish from the Bridge, will restrict fishing activities to primarily be “Land-Based” only,

meaning...fishing only from the Creek shoreline.

Over the years, we have found that a significant percentage of people who fish at the Bridge, come from many other Regional municipalities...including Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Welland, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, other parts of Thorold...and even Beamsville!

It is a reasonable assumption, that they are not necessarily as knowledgeable as our residents of all of the ecological sensitivities of the Bridge-area

ecosystem.

B.) Therefore...it is essential that

**PEDESTRIAN ACCESS to the WHOLE AREA of
turtle shoreline habitat on the WESTERN side of
the Bridge...**

from the water's edge....

right up to the "temporary" asphalt pathway...

**must be totally-prohibited...cordoned-off/fenced-
off...prior to the start of PHASE 2.**

**C.) The denial of access to this area must be
properly-explained with appropriate signage...**

to prevent human access to this area...

to prevent it from being trampled, which will have
adverse effects on the turtles' access to their egg-
laying area...

the gravel "turtle mounds" to be built in Phase 1.

**As previously-mentioned, all turtles in Ontario
are officially-designated as "*Species-at-Risk.*"**

D.) The Bridge fulfills MANY important, valuable, and unique functions to ALL residents...of ALL ages...at all stages of life.

The Bridge is ESSENTIALLY-IMPORTANT...

to preserving the

QUALITY uses,

QUALITY experiences and

QUALITY values

that we...the Residents of Port Robinson... derive from this very simple, yet ICONIC BRIDGE...

because of its strategic location and vantage

point surrounded by a mature Creek ecosystem.

E.) The BRIDGE provides its users with a natural, outdoor “experience” that is ELEVATED...and a “MID-STREAM-VIEW”.

Strategically, it SEPARATES the people using it, from trampling and destroying the sensitive natural habitats of the area.

That prevents degrading the quality of the ecosystem and from negatively-impacting its inhabitants."

F.) Therefore, the Bridge facilitates and expedites the essential theme of respecting this natural environment:

ENJOY IT...DON'T DESTROY IT!!

8.) So, IN CLOSING, while the Bridge is "officially-closed" and under re-construction, we are formally-asking that the essential theme of

ENJOY IT...DON'T DESTROY IT... be given top priority.

9.) Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation. We look forward to getting this project started in 2022.