

**Hastings Bridge Closure 2012  
Public Meeting Summary  
November 17, 2011 at 7:00pm, Hastings Civic Centre**

**Present:** Mayor Hector Macmillan; Councillor Bob Crate; Mike Rutter, Chief Administrative Officer; Lynn Phillips, Community Development Officer. Parks Canada staff: Paul Woods, Chief Engineer; Sara Atkins, External Relations Manager; Lauren Dunn, Public Relations and Communications Officer.  
49 registered attendees.

**Discussion Summary:**

Mike Rutter, Chief Administrative Officer, opened the meeting at 7:00pm and welcomed all attendees. The CAO's presentation provided an overview of the Municipality's action plan to mitigate the impact of the planned closure of the Hastings bridge in the fall of 2012.

A minimum of 3 public meetings will be held by the Municipality including tonight's event to discuss marketing ideas for the planned "Open for Business" campaign; a second meeting in early 2012 featuring a marketing expert providing suggestions for individual business as well as the overall marketing campaign; and lastly, a final meeting to provide detailed information on such logistical information as detour routes, school bussing, emergency services, etc.

There was also considerable detail provided on the efforts of the Municipality thus far in investigating a temporary crossing to be made available during the main bridge closure. Currently the railway bridge is being looked at as a possibility. A meeting is scheduled in the coming weeks with an engineering firm to provide an assessment of the existing bridge and determine if it is possible to be used for vehicle crossing.

The Municipality is committed to working with the community and is quite open to any ideas and comments that may assist in mitigating the impact of the closure. In addition to continuing to investigate a second crossing, the Municipality is looking into relaxing ATV road travel restrictions in Hastings during the time of the closure only, creating a parking lot on each side of the bridge near the pedestrian crossing to allow people to leave their cars on either side, as well as providing financial incentives to businesses for marketing and promotional efforts.

Mayor Hector Macmillan and Councillor Bob Crate also gave presentations and welcomed all attendees. Mayor Macmillan reiterated Mr. Rutter's comments on the purpose of the meeting and encouraged creative ideas from the attendees. The Mayor was also very clear about the bridge being a federal asset and concerns regarding the closure and inability to provide a temporary crossing during

the closure such as a bailey bridge should be brought to the attention of the local Member of Parliament, Rick Norlock.

Paul Wood, Chief Engineer at Parks Canada provided an overview of construction plans and a brief history of the bridge's maintenance. It was confirmed that the Hastings bridge will be closing for 16 weeks beginning on October 12, 2012 for repair work. Mr. Wood stressed the importance that these repairs be done in a timely manner to maintain public safety. Many questions were asked of Parks Canada staff particularly with respect to the installation of a bailey bridge or some other form of temporary crossing. Though a temporary bridge is possible, it is simply not affordable for Parks Canada. The cost estimate for the bridge repair is approximately \$1 million, whereas the cost of installing a temporary bridge for the 16 week closure is estimated at \$5 million.

There were also questions raised regarding offering a ferry service. Parks Canada explained this is not a feasible option. The wait time to load and unload vehicles needs to be considered, and Parks Canada does not own or have access to ferries.

Lynn Phillips, Community Development Officer, then provided an overview of business disruption marketing as well as specific ideas being put forth by the Municipality.

Marketing suggestions and comments generated over the course of the evening included:

- If a second bridge crossing is achieved, bringing in a "fun mode" of transportation such as a trolley to move people around the village should be considered. This would be both an attraction as well as a practical means of transportation.
- Approach off road vehicle dealers about sponsoring/donating vehicles to be used for travel throughout Hastings.
- Concern was expressed about the lack of money that individual businesses would have available to increase their marketing efforts. A financial incentive to assist with advertising and promotional expenses may be made available by the Municipality.
- There were many concerns expressed about the daily activity and needs of local residents. For example, travel to doctors appointments. The Municipality intends to work with the Northumberland Transportation Initiative to expand their services throughout the closure.
- A suggestion was given that businesses should not wait until the closure to start marketing, but should make every effort to increase revenues and exposure in the busy summer months as

well.

- An inventory of the products and services available on each side of the bridge should be done and then satellite stores/services set up to offset the needs. For example, the post office could be approached about having a location on the south side of the river for residents to pick up their mail during the closure.
- Out of town medical appointments will become difficult for many volunteer drivers with Community Care. Again, the possibility of partnering with the Northumberland Transportation Services to expand their current service offering was suggested.
- An “adopt a family” concept was suggested. This would involve a household on one side of the bridge hosting another for meals, etc.
- Consideration should be given to the set up of a website to post volunteer opportunities and transportation needs during the bridge closure. This would greatly assist with coordinating car pooling opportunities.
- A concern about the security that would be offered at parking lots on either side of the bridge was raised. This is still in the planning phase, but certainly the Municipality will be mindful of safety issues for cars that are parked in these lots overnight and throughout the closure.
- Perhaps the local accommodation businesses could offer special packages to the contractors that will be working on the bridge.
- There were several suggestions to host special events in Hastings, such as a winter carnival, hockey tournaments, etc.
- Lastly, a request was made to improve the appearance of the load restriction signs that are currently in place. These will be posted long term, and though the signs themselves are regulated, the means of securing them can be improved upon. Parks Canada will look into this.

The public meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.