National Capital Commission
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# Chaudières Crossing Rehabilitation Projects

## WORKSHOPS WITH THE CYCLING COMMUNITY

CONSULTATION REPORT
FEBRUARY 25, 2021

Canada

## Table of Contents

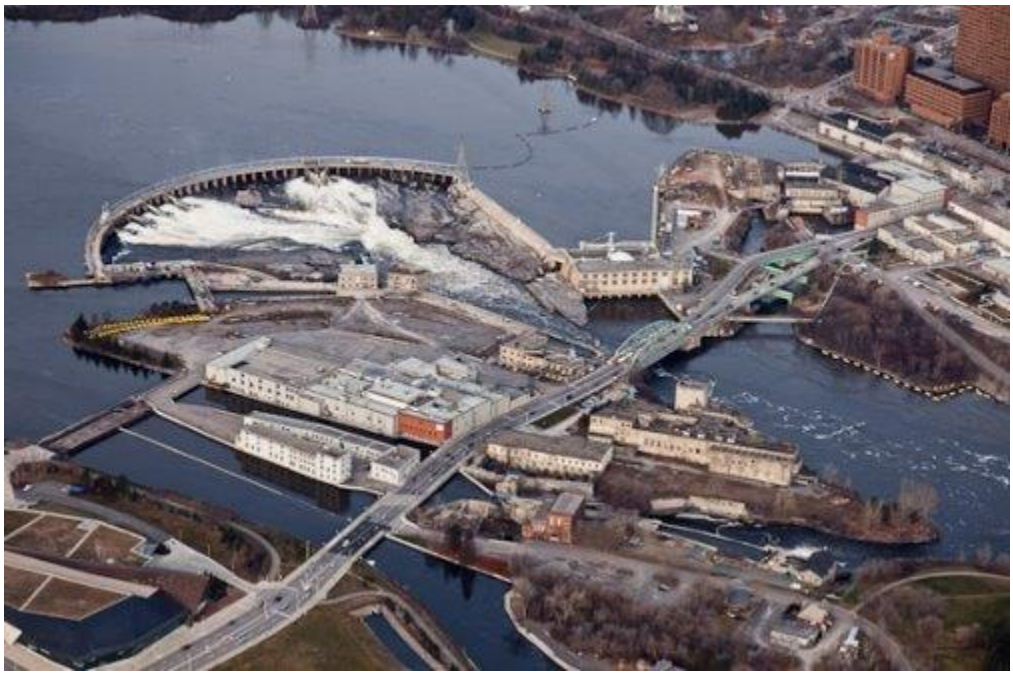
I. Project description ..... 2
A. Context ..... 2
B. Background ..... 2
C. Project objectives ..... 3
II. Public consultation process ..... 3
A. Overview ..... 3
a. Consultation objective ..... 3
b. Date and time ..... 4
B. Consultation procedure and tools ..... 4
a. Stakeholder workshops ..... 4
C. Invitation and promotion ..... 4
D. Participants ..... 5
a. Stakeholder workshops ..... 5
III. Summary of feedback ..... 5
IV. Response to public feedback ..... 6
V. Next steps ..... 7

# I. Project description

## A. Context

As part of a multi-year rehabilitation program, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) will be improving cycling infrastructure on the Chaudières Crossing. The proposed design for the crossing is aligned with that of a “complete street.”

In partnership with PSPC — the department responsible for the management of the Chaudières Crossing — the NCC is providing support to this project by facilitating the public engagement process.



## B. Background

**Union Bridge**

The Union Bridge is one of the eight structures forming the Chaudières Crossing. This crossing is one of five interprovincial bridges between the cities of Ottawa, Ontario, and Gatineau, Quebec, and serves as an important urban transportation link. The Union Bridge is a 71.5-metre-long single-span through truss, spanning the Ottawa River downstream from the Chaudières Falls and Chaudières Dam. The existing bridge is the fourth structure to cross the main channel of the Ottawa River. It was constructed in 1919.

The current structural condition rating is 3 (poor). The rating is primarily driven by advanced deterioration of stringers, floor beams and the truss members located in the splash zone. The concrete deck was constructed without a waterproofing membrane or sacrificial wearing surface, and exhibits defects indicating an advanced state of deterioration. The ballast walls are severely deteriorated, creating a significant risk of failure.

**Hull Causeway**

The Hull Causeway structure spans the tailrace of the Portage Power Hull No. 1 Generating Station, and connects the Chaudières Crossing to the Quebec shoreline of the Ottawa River. Constructed in 1956, it carries one lane of vehicle traffic in each direction. In its current configuration, it is a three-span (each is 30.5 metres) slab-on-steel girder bridge, with two steel transverse trusses acting as intermediate piers. The clear distance between the parapet walls is nine metres, and there is a two-metre-wide sidewalk on the east side of the bridge.

The current structural condition rating is 4 (fair). This rating is primarily driven by the minor work required on primary components. After the closure of the Hull trestle bridge, which was previously used to accommodate southbound traffic, the Hull Causeway was turned into a two-way traffic street. This triggered safety concerns for cyclists.

## C. Project objectives

The objectives of the project:

- Rehabilitate the Union Bridge and Hull Causeway to safeguard the structural integrity of the Chaudières Crossing.
- Improve the safety of the crossing for active mobility users by widening sidewalks and constructing dedicated cycling lanes across the entire length of the Chaudières Crossing.

# II. Public consultation process

## A. Overview

Public consultation on the Chaudières Crossing Rehabilitation Projects consisted of two workshops with stakeholder groups.

### a. Consultation objective

The objectives of the workshops:

- Inform the cycling community of upcoming work being conducted on the Chaudières Crossing.
- Consult on the design of the raised cycle track.

### b. Date and time

Workshop 1

- February 25, 2021, 3 pm to 4 pm

Workshop 2

- February 25, 2021, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm

## B. Consultation procedure and tools

### a. Stakeholder workshops

The meetings with stakeholder groups were held virtually via the Microsoft Teams platform. During the first part of the meeting, members of the project team provided an overview of the project.

This was followed by a Q&A session and discussion period. During the discussion period, we asked participants for their feedback on the proposed raised cycle track and its surface treatment.

## C. Invitation and promotion

In collaboration with PSPC, the NCC developed a list of key stakeholders for the project. This included the following groups:

- Action Vélo Outaouais
- Association des résidents de l'Île-de-Hull
- Bike Ottawa
- Bike Ottawa – Advocacy Working Group
- Centretown Citizens Community Association
- City of Ottawa – representative, bike initiative
- Claridge Condos LeBreton
- Club Oxygène
- Club Vélo plaisir
- Cycling Vision Ottawa
- Dalhousie Community Association
- EnviroCentre
- Escape Bicycle Tours and Rentals
- Kanata Nepean Bicycle Club
- MADD Ottawa
- Mobi-O
- Ottawa Bicycle club
- Ottawa Riverkeeper
- Ottawa Voyageurs d'Ottawa Walking Club
- Pathway Control
- RentABike
- Réseau Vélo Boulot

- Responsible Cycling Coalition
- Safe Road Ottawa
- Vélo Tour
- Vélo-Services
- Vison Centre-Ville Gatineau
- Zibi group

An email invitation to the workshops was sent to the groups listed above.

### D. Participants

#### a. Stakeholder workshops

- A total of 10 participants

## III. Summary of feedback

The dimensions of the cycle track (2 m, including a 0.5-m buffer) were considered to be appropriate by some participants. Some participants weighed the virtues of a narrower versus a wider buffer — a narrower buffer creating more space for cyclists on the track, but possibly creating a false sense of safety. A wider buffer was thought by some to be safer by virtue of inducing a greater sense of caution among cyclists. This was deemed especially important due to the risks associated with cyclists attempting to pass each other in a relatively restricted space so close to vehicle traffic. Signage was raised as a possible way to discourage this behaviour, though the most popular means of encouraging single-file movement along the cycle track was to widen the track in certain areas to allow cyclists to safely pass each other.

Some participants were concerned that the buffer itself would be used to pass, and discouraged the use of a painted buffer that would be slippery in wet conditions. A textured buffer subjected to skid resistance testing was instead preferred. One participant suggested installing seasonal plastic posts along the buffer as a traffic-calming measure. In a similar spirit, a participant suggested moving the proposed barrier such that it would separate the cycle track from vehicle traffic, rather than the cycle track from the sidewalk. Other priorities for surface treatment included ensuring adequate drainage and visual harmony across the full length of the cycle track.

There was some resistance among participants to the proposal to lower the raised cycle track at intersections, namely the one at the entrance to Portage Power. Some argued that it was more inconvenient for cyclists to change elevations than for vehicles to cross over the cycle track. Some participants recommended depressing the buffer at intersections rather than the entire cycle track, thus leaving the track at full height. Others urged the project team to ensure that the experience of crossing depressed curbs along the full length of the cycle track would be as smooth as possible.

Some participants wondered about the use of the triangular-shaped space at the Portage Power intersection. One participant recommended that visual cues be used to dissuade drivers from

using it as a parking space. Another participant suggested using this space as a rest area for cyclists, with a bike rack and some seating.

A few participants made recommendations to improve the safety of the Jos-Montferrand intersection: creating a raised intersection, and making the intersection a no-turn-on-red-light to prevent motorists from turning into active mobility traffic.

Other miscellaneous items raised by participants included interest in installing an all-mode traffic counter south of the Union Bridge, and in adding a sidewalk on the west side of the crossing to allow active mobility users to enjoy views of the falls.

## IV. Response to public feedback

**Buffer width**

PSPC favours leaving the buffer at 0.5 metres to increase cyclist safety. However, we will consult with specialists to see if there are guidelines specific to cycling paths.

**Signage**

PSPC has no jurisdiction on signage, whether it is to discourage passing other cyclists or to address the speed limit. We will raise the question with the City of Ottawa and Ville de Gatineau.

**Widen the cycle track in certain areas to allow passing**

Only the area on the west side between the Union Bridge and the Hull Causeway would allow for a wider track. PSPC favours keeping a uniform width across the Chaudières Crossing for consistency with the east side. However, there will be space on the west side where cyclists can pass, should they wish. We will consult with the Ville de Gatineau on this matter.

**Seasonal plastic posts (delineators) along the buffer**

PSPC recommends textile delineators such as rumble strips. We will ask our consultant to explore different options.

**Moving the proposed barrier such that it would separate the cycle track from vehicle traffic, rather than the cycle track from the sidewalk**

This option is not possible, since the sidewalk is on one side only. This would introduce a number of issues when transitioning from the Hull Causeway to the Union Bridge, including the use of crash attenuators, potential conflict with utilities and so on. It would also require widening the Hull Causeway westward to create snow storage space.

**Surface treatment including adequate drainage and visual harmony across the full length of the cycle track**

PSPC recommends coloured concrete (black) for harmonization with the bike path network and to allow for faster melting during the winter season. Surface treatment will be addressed by the consultant, and it will include the buffer zone area to improve skid resistance. Use of asphalt for cycling lanes was not adopted due to its shorter durability compared with concrete.

**Keep the cycle track raised at intersections, namely the one at the entrance to Portage Power**

PSPC believes that a raised track at the intersection of Portage Power could cause problems for snow removal. We will engage with the Ville de Gatineau, Portage Power and our consultant to explore the possibility of lowering the raised track from 150 mm to 75 mm.

**Depressed curbs along the full length of the cycle track to be as smooth as possible**

We will ensure that depressed curbs along the full length of the cycle track are as smooth as possible.

**Use of the triangular-shaped space at the Portage Power intersection as a resting area for cyclists, with a bike rack and some seating**

PSPC will explore this possibility with its partners and technical staff.

**Safety of the Jos-Montferrand intersection**

This item is outside PSPC's jurisdiction. PSPC will follow up on this suggestion with Zibi and the Ville de Gatineau.

**Safety of the Jos-Montferrand intersection with the no-turn-on-red-light**

This item is outside PSPC's jurisdiction. PSPC will follow up on this suggestion with Zibi and the Ville de Gatineau.

**Installing an all-mode traffic counter south of the Union Bridge**

Installing a counter is outside PSPC's scope of work.

**Adding a sidewalk on the west side of the crossing to allow active mobility users to enjoy views of the falls**

Adding a sidewalk on the west side of the bridge is not feasible due to space constraints.

## V. Next steps

PSPC will aim to incorporate the above-mentioned changes to the final design.

Construction is expected to start in August 2021.