

Draft petition to MTO – May 5, 2023 – Re: Rideau Canal Bridge Project

The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario must eliminate the two-year detours of Colonel By Drive and Queen Elizabeth Driveway included in their plans for the replacement of the 417 bridge over the Rideau Canal.

Background:

After more than five years of work, MTO has a new "preferred option" for replacing the deteriorated 417 bridge over the Rideau Canal that would require 90-week-long detours of Colonel By Drive and Queen Elizabeth Driveway traffic beneath the bridge.

On the Old Ottawa East side, drivers, pedestrians and cyclists would have to take a detour using Main and Hawthorne and on the Glebe/Centretown side they'd have to take Elgin and Argyle.

The consequence would be that Main-Hawthorne and Elgin-Argyle would have far more traffic than they are designed for with resulting lengthy delays and more dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. MTO has conducted no traffic studies to assess the impact of their "preferred option."

The MTO consultation on the bridge replacement has been completely unsatisfactory for the affected Ottawa downtown neighbourhoods. Notifications and consultations for the wider Ottawa population who may use these routes daily has been equally unsatisfactory. Information provided by MTO to other orders of government about community consultations has skewed the decision-making process by bodies such as Parks Canada, the National Capital Commission and City of Ottawa departments.

In 2019, MTO presented a plan for bridge replacement that had no substantial detours. Three years later, they have sprung this new plan on residents, with details buried within the documentation posted on-line in November of 2022, claiming it was necessary to save the two buildings at and near the northwest corner of Hawthorne and Echo.

The bridge replacement project is not likely to happen for another four or five years but it is just at that time Old Ottawa East will just be recovering from the massive Greenfield-Main-Hawthorne construction project.

The undersigned are petitioning the Government of Ontario to direct its Ministry of Transportation to develop construction alternatives for the Rideau Canal Bridge Replacement project that do not include long-term traffic diversions on either Queen Elizabeth Driveway or Colonel By Drive. Further we petition to have open consultations with local communities and with other government agencies, already engaged in this process, prior to completing a Transportation Environmental Study Report for the ongoing Environmental Assessment process.