

A New Bridge Linking Indigenous and European Worlds and Providing a Meeting Place over the Historic Waters Below

Proposal: Accelerate the plan to build a new footbridge between Old Ottawa East and Alta Vista / Riverview Park in the context of such a bridge advancing Indigenous reconciliation by being symbolic of the need to bridge the centuries-old gap between Indigenous peoples and settler descendants while tangibly providing daily benefits and a daily reminder of our difficult history.

Background:

- Proposed bridge would be between Old Ottawa East and the woods of the Hurdman lands on the eastern side of the Rideau River.
- The project is listed as one of the City's 2023 Transportation Master Plan's active transportation "major structures."
- It is currently deemed a "development-related" project meaning that it will not proceed until there is a major development plan for the Hurdman lands and funding for such a development would support the new footbridge.
- The bridge would connect the proposed "healing forests" on both sides of the river.
- Ottawa's active transportation network has been greatly enhanced with a number of footbridges, including three that honour Indigenous peoples (Pìdàban at Kiwekì Point; William Commanda; and Adàwe).

Symbolic Justification:

- The Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) - with its base in Old Ottawa East adjacent to the proposed footbridge - operated many of Canada's residential schools for First Nations children and, although these schools provided educational instruction that for many decades was deemed important by many federal governments, the actual impact of these schools was devastating - even fatal - for many thousands of First Nation children, their families, and their culture and languages. In these respects, there remains a great need for recognition, reconciliation and renewal.
- Unlike a standard plaque or statue – good for reading once or gazing at from time to time - a footbridge is a practical and daily means of bringing people together and of providing them with a place to meet, gather, and reflect over the running waters of a river that was a key route of the Algonquin nation.
- In the ongoing effort to reconcile the often-catastrophic impact of European settlement on Indigenous peoples, Canada needs to bring parties together, indeed to

celebrate the sustaining lands and waters of this rich nation. What better way of doing this than to be where we've never been before: on a bridge above a river full of life and promise.

- ***NB: Before actively pursuing "A New Bridge Linking Indigenous and European Worlds and Providing a Meeting Place over the Historic Waters Below," we will need concurrence from Indigenous groups that this is a sound proposition.***

Transportation / Economic / Ecological / Community-Building Justification for Footbridge:

1. Provides a safe and convenient link to and from the east and southeast
→ the eastern end of Smyth Bridge is neither safe nor well-connected.
2. Connects communities
→ supports the OP's "walkable 15-minute neighbourhoods" and "context-sensitive approach to neighbourhood evolution"
3. Supports Hurdman transit-oriented development plans
4. Provides new cycling/pedestrian connection to Hurdman LRT.
5. Completes four-bridge canal-river loop (Flora, Corktown, Adàwe)
6. Links the two major Ottawa Hospital campuses
→ safe & convenient cyclist route to Health Campus
→ reduces traffic on Smyth
7. Missing link of midtown "cross-town" cycling route
8. Strengthens accessibility and appreciation of river
9. Provides easier and safer access to Lansdowne Park from east
10. Provides improved access to and safety of Riverside Drive greenspace and isolated Rideau River Eastern Pathway and the Rideau Winter Trail.

Issues:

1. ***Funding Timing:*** Although City staff are of the view that this bridge should be funded as part of the residential development of the east side of the Rideau River, this would likely mean decades of waiting for bridge construction. If the bridge is built in the near or medium term it will help promote development but, more significantly, it will provide active connectivity that is needed regardless of when development proceeds.
2. ***Funding Quantum:*** As demonstrated by the new Carleton-Vincent Massey Footbridge, these structures can be built at considerably less cost than what was needed for Flora.
3. ***Funding Sources:*** With part of the justification for the footbridge being for Indigenous Reconciliation, there is the potential for accessing related federal and provincial

funding sources and seeking contributions elsewhere. Flora still would not have been built had the federal and provincial governments not significantly contributed to its construction.

4. *Specific Location:* notionally the footbridge would start on the western side of the river near the foot of Clegg Street. However, a feasibility study is necessary to determine the best location on both sides of the river.

Next Steps (needs work!)

- Support of Capital Ward Councillor Shawn Menard is needed. (Initial support was given, as per meeting of February 26, 2026.)
- Most importantly, we need Indigenous governments and individuals' support of the creation of this bridge in the context of reflection, reconciliation, and renewal. To this end, we will seek perspectives and support of the City's committee on Indigenous Reconciliation (NB – need correct name) and will reach out to members and representatives of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn.
- Support of MPs Yasir Naqvi and David McGinty and MPPs Catherine McKenney and John Fraser will also be necessary.
- Meet with Riverview Park, Alta Vista and Old Ottawa South Community Associations.
- Seek support from a variety of other parties including the Rideau Winter Trail.

A Note on Existing Algonquin Names for Footbridges

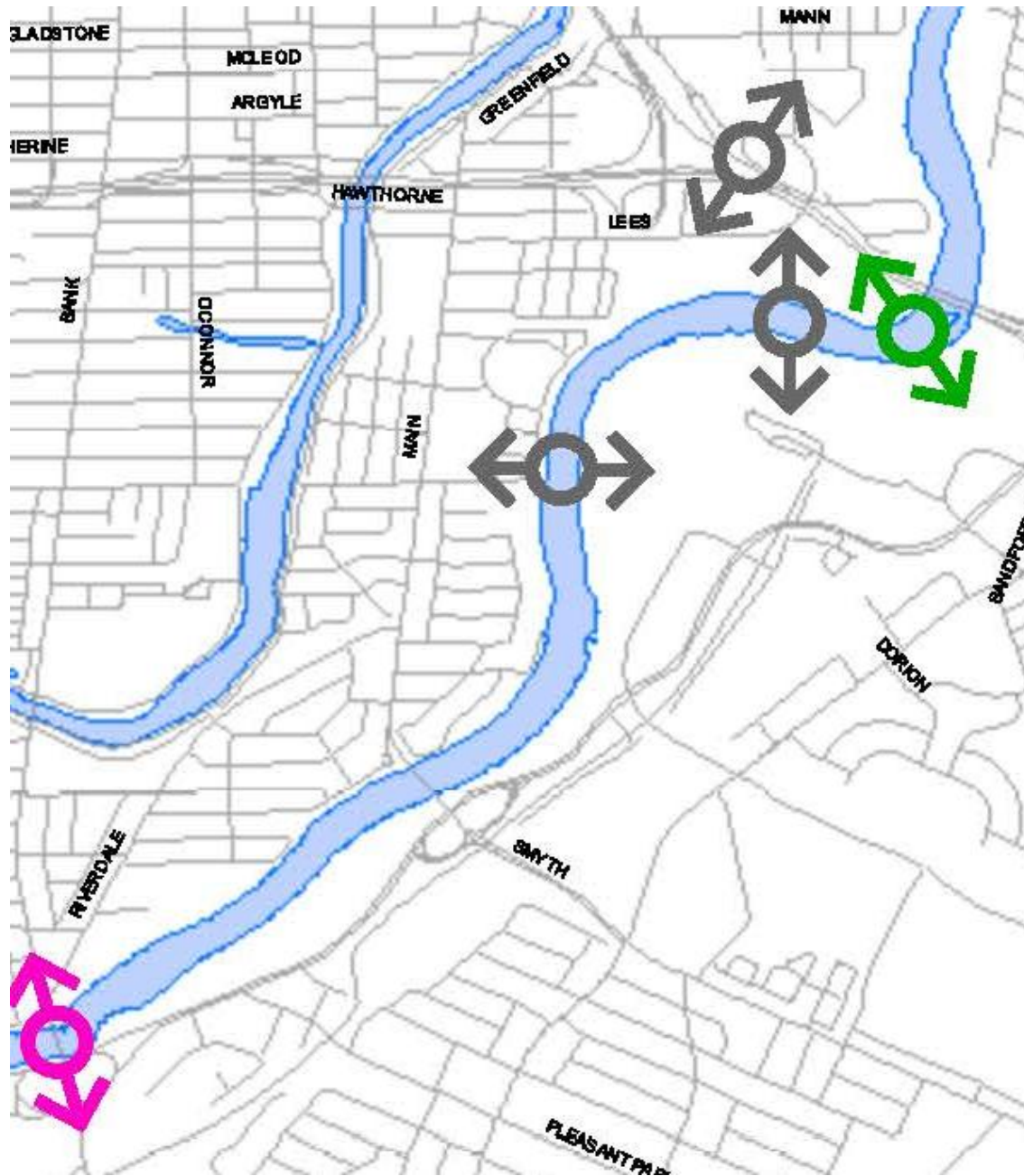
Nepean Point: Kìwekì Point (meaning "returning to one's homeland")

Pedestrian bridge: Pidàban Bridge (meaning "dawn")

"The selected names are in line with the interpretation plan for the redevelopment of Nepean Point, as well as with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. These new names contribute to the culture and language theme by providing an opportunity to highlight Algonquin voices, and to showcase elements of Algonquin culture and language.

"Furthermore, the selected Indigenous names provide a unique opportunity for Canadians visiting the site to learn more about the Algonquin Nation." (NCC website)

Adàwe is an Algonquin word for trade, one that symbolizes the river's historic importance and is symbolic of the history of the Rideau River, the Indigenous heritage of the area and the bridge's ability to link the communities on either side



Active Transportation Major Structures / Grandes infrastructures de transport actif

- ↔ Feasibility Study Projects / Projets d'études de faisabilité
- ↔ Development Related / Liés au développement
- ↔ Infrastructure Projects / Projets d'infrastructure
- ↔ In Process Facilities / En cours

March 1, 2023