

Prince of Wales Bridge: Why Isn't This a Bikeway

To The Mayor and Members Of Ottawa City Council

The Following was published on my blog The Fifth column here:

<http://the5thc.blogspot.ca/2013/06/prince-of-wales-bridge-why-isnt-this.html>

As early as 2005, after the rail line was discontinued and the City of Ottawa purchased the bridge for possible future public transit use the NCC proposed using the bridge as a pedestrian and cycling bridge (*Wikipedia footnote: The Ottawa Citizen. 15 November 2005, NCC plans to link Ottawa, Gatineau with new recreation paths*).[Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_of_Wales_Bridge]

Since then the bridge has sat idle, although I assume, since the City purchased it for future public transit use, it's structural integrity has been maintained.

Such a shame. All those wasted years when the cost to use it as a Bikeway, even if temporary, would be minimal and if action had been taken in 2005 we'd be getting to close to ten years of use now. But it is never too late to do the right thing.

All that would be needed is for a wooden boardwalk with railings to be built over the steel rails and approaches connected from the recreational pathways that are already on both sides of the Ottawa River. The timing is ideal with the newly built O-Train Multi-User Path (MUP) following the rest of the rail line on the Ottawa side all the way to the recreational pathway along the Rideau Canal. This would make an ideal link in the region's pathway system. The minimal cost would justify the expense, even if temporary, and it could be another ten years, if ever, before the bridge is used for public transit.

It is time for our elected, and unelected, officials to find ways through the bureaucratic roadblocks and make this happen for the citizens of Ottawa and Gatineau.

My message to City council is to look at this situation where the City has invested the funds to purchase and maintain this piece of infrastructure with no return on that investment for almost ten years. At least I assume the city is maintaining the bridge, the alternative, to purchase it to simply let it deteriorate is unimaginable.

Why has this been allowed to happen when for a small incremental cost the city could receive a return on its investment (actual use of the bridge by citizens and a benefit to them and the City). It does not matter if you are a bike riding pinko or the bluest fiscal conservative to see the greater cost benefit ratio in this proposal.

As to the argument about bureaucratic difficulties because it is an inter-provincial bridge. The City knew it was an inter-provincial bridge when they bought it so they obviously believe any such difficulties can be overcome.

It is time to make this happen before another ten years of expenditures on this infrastructure passes with no benefits to the citizens of Ottawa.

Who on City Council is going to have the political will to make this happen.

For a green sustainable Ottawa,

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