



### **FORKS ROAD BRIDGE CLOSURE – Update #1 - November 7, 2018**

**Welland, ON** - The City of Welland closed Forks Road Bridge on Friday, November 2, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. to ensure public safety. A thorough inspection of the bridge deemed the structure not safe; therefore, staff made a decision to restrict vehicular access but allow for pedestrian access.

#### **BACKGROUND / TIMELINE**

- April 18, 2016 – Close up inspection of the Forks Road Bridge found significant corrosion of structural steel supporting members. An immediate 5 tonnes maximum load restriction was posted.
- April 29, 2016 – Further engineering analysis determined that the Forks Road Bridge was unsuitable to carry any loading at all. The Bridge was immediately closed and temporary repairs were completed by Rankin Construction and Black Creek Metal
- May 12, 2016 - Forks Road Bridge re-opened to the public
- Staff anticipated the maintenance would give the bridge several more years of life expectancy

#### **KEY POINTS**

- The bridge was constructed in 1930. The lift bridge was decommissioned in 1973 and the towers were removed in 1997. The City was downloaded ownership in 2000.
- Bridges are inspected every two years and the Forks Road Bridge was last inspected in the Fall of 2018. A Load Capacity Evaluation was conducted on the structure following inspection.
- In addition to inspections, the city's Engineering Division routinely monitors the bridge's condition and structural integrity. Vehicular access is NOT permitted until further notice
- Pedestrian access remains open
- Fire and Emergency Services have developed alternate routes to ensure timely responses
- Engineering staff are working with bridge engineers to obtain information on options and costs
- The 2018 inspection and Load Capacity Evaluation found that corrosion of supporting steel members was occurring at an accelerated rate, and that the posted load capacity was no longer suitable. A decision to close the bridge was made due to the following issues:
  - Not being able to limit heavy commercial vehicles accessing the bridge,
  - winter freeze and thaw season,
  - snowplows cannot access the bridge due to weight,
  - corrosion from road salts, and
  - unpredictability of current and future effects of advanced corrosion

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- A Public Open House will be held in the near future once engineering reports are received, analyzed, and options are determined. Information about the condition of the Forks Road Bridge, potential options, and estimated costs will be provided. Bridge engineers and City Engineering staff will be in attendance.
- City staff will present Welland Council with an information report. It is expected to be presented at the December 11, 2018 General Committee Meeting
- Council will discuss and make a decision on which option will be selected to address the Forks Road Bridge issue at the following Council meeting
- Another public open house will be held to inform the public of the details and timelines associated with the selected option.

- Information will be added to the city's public engagement platform, *Your Channel*, <https://yourchannel.welland.ca> on Wednesday, December 12, 2018. Residents will be able to engage in the conversation and voice their concerns and thoughts on the future of the Forks Road Bridge

City of Welland Council and staff understand the significance and impact that the Forks Road Bridge closure has on the public and are approaching it as a priority. Future updates will be provided as information becomes available.

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**For more information contact:**

City of Welland Engineering Division at 905-735-1700 ext. 2204 or 2221