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## TRANSPORT ACTION CANADA

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April 24, 2022

e-mail to: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada  
22nd Floor, Place Bell  
160 Elgin St. Ottawa ON K1A 0H3

Subject: Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project (Reference # 83444)

Dear Agency Members:

Transport Action Canada is a national advocacy group for promoting public transportation. It was founded in 1976 and is a federal not-for-profit corporation and a registered charity. We have participated extensively in consultation processes related to the Alexandra Bridge and other capital transportation planning subjects for many years. Transport Action Canada is a member of the Alexandra Bridge Coalition. We are pleased to respond to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's request for comment with respect to the Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project (reference # 83444), being undertaken by Public Services & Procurement Canada (PSPC) in collaboration with the National Capital Commission.

We were glad to hear recently that PSPC has re-examined the possibility of rehabilitating the existing bridge as a green transportation facility; even though they still conclude that this is not feasible. The usage statistics show how important this bridge is for pedestrian and cycling access, and how relatively unimportant for car use, carrying only 9% of the cross-river road traffic. The load limits and the extended road closures, while preserving pedestrian and cycling use, have shown the potential for this as a permanent role for the bridge.

The centre lane of the bridge was originally designed for rail traffic and its future reinstatement as an LRT corridor seems to hold promise for public transportation. The weight distribution of LRT vehicles poses a far lower load on the bridge than other forms of traffic, including transit

and tour buses. LRT has also been demonstrated in Ottawa to well accommodate short stretches of single track for bidirectional operation where required. There is also the potential application to completing the proposed tourist streetcar route on Wellington Street and Boulevard Laurier.

We still feel that it has not been shown that the bridge could not be rehabilitated to support such uses. Yes, the pedestrian deck requires replacement, which PSPC says is feasible. Access could be maintained throughout reconstruction by first converting the opposite cantilevered road deck for pedestrian and cycling use, ultimately doubling the active transportation capacity and increasing safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The bridge has an important history in public transportation, hosting Canada's premier transcontinental passenger trains for 64 years, from 1902 to 1966, and regional streetcar service from Aylmer and Hull to Ottawa from 1901 to 1946. It also represents a Canadian engineering achievement, with the superstructure erected in less than a year without serious incidents, becoming the fourth longest cantilever span in the world when completed. It is still the oldest cantilever bridge in Canada still existing at its original site.

PCPC has shown that the necessary repairs, though extensive, are feasible, though they will probably affect the heritage appearance of the bridge. This matter should be assessed by qualified heritage experts with appropriate engineering qualifications.

Transport Action Canada believes that rehabilitating the existing bridge for active transportation is the best strategy and agrees with other organizations that a full federal Impact Assessment of the project should be undertaken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Jeanes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Jeanes,  
board member, treasurer and former President  
Transport Action Canada