Comments on the Eastern Bridge Project Initial Project Description

Reference 90709

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By: John Savage, resident of rue Jacques-Cartier, Gatineau within 200+ meters of proposed bridge

Introduction

The National Capital Region has a large Indigenous population who are not always consulted as a community on many important projects, on various levels. As this urban region grows, urban development is becoming less and less representative of the Indigenous values of the land. In time, as people intermarry and the Indigenous population grows, it is conceivable that the majority of residents will be of Indigenous descent and won't be living in a urban region that is representative of their ancestral family values, but instead according to today's dominant colonial values. Keeping this in mind, I am providing my comments concerning the Eastern Bridge Project as a Metis resident of rue Jacques-Cartier, Pointe-Gatineau, a heritage waterfront community that was classified as a "Most Disadvantage of Vulnerable Communities (see: Figure 15-1: Vulnerable Communities, Summary of the initial project description of a designated project). My home, daily activities, and longstanding community involvement are directly connected to the section of the Ottawa River that would be affected by the proposed project. In 7 generations, I hope that this corridor will strengthen our Urban Indigenous community, reminding them of their ancient presence on the same Kichi Sibi.

This project impacts me beyond just that of a resident and property owner. For more than three decades, I have been actively involved in waterfront planning, recreational development, Indigenous place making, environmental stewardship, and community advocacy relating to the Ottawa River corridor between the Chaudière Falls and Lower Duck Island, including Kettle Island. I am concerned as someone who has defended Indigenous heritage in our community regularly to different levels of government (and within government as a public servant), including leading an initiative that created Place Abinan Park to commemorate more than 7,300 years of Indigenous presence in the area. I am also concerned as a producer of two paddling programs and two rowing programs for this section of the river bringing thousands of people to the Kettle Island waterway. In Gatineau, I helped plan a recreational paddling district to install a network

of non-motorized boating docks next to Kettle Island, to take advantage of one of Canada's most beautiful and accessible paddling locations in any city. And, I regularly speak about history and cultural issues related to the river in annual Jane's Walks and recently at the Ottawa Architecture Week, when I shared the story about how this bridge project is an existential threat to our historical community values.

I have contributed to numerous National Capital Commission public consultations including those directly impacted by this bridge project:

- the redevelopment of rue Jacques-Cartier in Gatineau
- the restoration of the former Ottawa New Edinburgh Club (ONEC) Boathouse rededicated as the NCC River House
- the Sir George-Étienne Cartier waterfront plan.

I even participated in the Westboro Pavilion consultations, which I have noticed the NCC hasn't yet planned a bridge run over that facility yet.

Since 2008, this project has affected me greatly already, drawing me away from more productive activities to defend our community values related to this stretch of the Ottawa River. It still baffles me why a bridge would be selected for this area, however, after reading this ***Summary of the Initial Project Description***, I now have a clear understanding why the government may want to destroy this tranquil recreation nature corridor with a bridge – it has a blind spot, a big one that comes from a lack of knowledge about this Island and how it and the waterway around interacts with the animals and people in our community.

Nowhere was it listed in this document how the community uses this section of the river as a social gathering place, fitness, mental health, to commune with nature, conduct Indigenous ceremonies, and celebrate our riverfront heritage here as generations before us have. Nowhere in this description is a study concerning the waterfront and how this waterway around Kettle Island is used by Indigenous peoples and the residents, how the activities and the infrastructure built along it represent the strong community values that prize the heart of our capital city. Nowhere in this report does it explain how this area helps to provide a strong identity for our National Capital Region, that will be erased after a bridge is built.

Most major cities have a waterfront plan, based on studies, but not in our capital city. At least none is referenced in this document, which suggests why there is a blind spot in the judgment formed by the project team. Without such a plan, this is just a project designed without the insight to make a fully informed decision. It seems there has been consultation short-cuts to determining the true value of the region to the community and

the cost of what we will pay for losing this special place. This has set-up a situation where there is a win-lose for the community – the commuters win and everyone else who appreciates this special location loses (residents, users of the NCC River House, users of the river, wildlife, tourists, and dignitaries).

Best practices for most progressive cities include a waterfront plan, not just for one side of a river, but both sides and the waterway itself. Such plans help direct how infrastructure will avoid threatening cherished community places, before the infrastructure is ready to be built. Not in our nation's capital. We have one Sir George Etienne Cartier plan fresh off the press after the bridge project was first launched and a City of Gatineau recreation plan that I contributed towards, as an advisor just a couple years ago. Neither of these plans are complete, because they only cover half the river, split it two by two provinces and two cities that cannot coordinate their plans. (Why can't we have a real integrated capital?)

The Sir George Etienne Cartier Plan had a public consultation process and even took my advice to put a canoe launch in Rockcliffe Park, only that they located it at the foot of a bluff. When I asked the NCC staff who put it in their plan there, rather than the place I suggested, they told me it would be cheaper and more convenient, because there was a parking lot there already. They did not know the landscape, so they put it there across from the cliff where to safely launch a canoe would be nearly impossible unless you were a daredevil. That's an example of the kind of project planning we have with this bridge and too often with other projects along the river, when those with experiential knowledge of the area are not fully and meaningfully engaged in the process. It's cheaper to put in a Kettle Island Bridge when the real cost of destroying a special area of value to the community isn't costed, as result of not trying to understand its value. The true costs of destroying this community needs to be addressed, quantified by proper assessment techniques, which I intend to do in the next phases of this consultation if I can secure funding from the funding application program. I'm afraid only Mark Carney who wrote the book Value(s) on such things would understand this immediately – as a librarian, I suggest this is a good book to read to guide this project.

The other major blind spot that the project team has results from an Indigenous consultation process that does not take into account the realities of how Indigenous people need to be engaged. For example, the project team seems to have repeated the same practice of informing a bunch of Indigenous communities that are far away, often over 100 kms from the affected area in question, then try to bribe them with promises of employment and supplier set-asides. This is offensive and a clear conflict of interest to any Indigenous person familiar with how our ancestors were exploited. It's a practice used by colonial officials in the past that should not be used today without careful reflection. It is my experience that most Indigenous communities don't really care all that

much about how a project impacts our local community, so they may easily fall for such enticements.

Also, they have little or no interest in sheltering the rights of Urban Indigenous people who live here and are to be heavily impacted by their decisions to support, oppose, or ignore these consultations. The two primary rights holders, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg (KZA) and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nations (AOPFN), are over 100 kms away. Neither one have an urban reserve here at all, like is the practice in other communities in other parts of Canada. They may want one, but at present they have no local interest in urban planning that directly affects them and their members. Therefore, they have little stake in an Eastern bridge project, except to extract some concessions like employment and supplier set-asides. With great respect for their situation because I truly appreciate KZA's capacity challenges, it makes more sense for them to focus on their own community anyway. Any attention they can provide such a project in support of other Urban Indigenous residents who live here is greatly appreciated, but we understand why it is a barrier for them to participate, when the project team has not fully engaged with them.

Other First Nations communities and the Metis of Ontario, are not as involved either, out of deference to the traditional rights of the KZA and AOPFN. One representative told me that they won't respond to this consultation, because they don't want any confusion that they are pretending to have any rights in the KZA and AOPFN territory. Even though this is Canada's capital, designed for all Canadians, even all Indigenous peoples, outlying Indigenous communities don't participate, because they fear offending the KZA and AOPFN. That fear undermines how these projects may benefit from their voices too, as traditional travelers through this region or even those who may have lived here at some point in history. Again, this undermines the interests of Urban Indigenous peoples who could benefit from having their needs supported by a larger Indigenous collective to promote all our interests as Indigenous peoples in our National Capital Region, just like the settlers from all across Canada have input as well.

If the project team for this Eastern Bridge want to learn about the impact of this area, it will have to be more sensitive to Indigenous engagement. That may mean hiring more Indigenous staff who have cultural literacy to assist them in this practice. My recommendations in this respect are:

1) Create an ***Urban Indigenous Project Advisory Group (UIPAG)*** to inform the project team on their needs and concerns. Their ideas can then be shared with KZA and the AOPFN to gain their feedback or support, sheltering our rights under theirs.

2) Expand funding for Indigenous individuals and organizations to participate, recognizing that Indigenous peoples often have more research to undertake in consultation with other Indigenous peoples to understand overlapping rights and interests, to build consensus and avoid conflict.
3) Work with the AOPFN and KZA to invite the other Indigenous communities to engage on this project, as one of national significance. With the AOPFN and KZA as co-hosts for this consultation, the others may feel more willing to participate.
4) Refrain from promoting employment opportunities and business set-asides for this project, as this promotes a conflict of interest that undermines the consultation if those favours corrupt the consultation and even cause unnecessary division. Those programs should already exist and mentioning them in this Initial Project Description is offensive as a colonial practice designed to buy support and divide Indigenous peoples. Whether or not intended, the NCC and City of Gatineau have a history of employing divisive tactics, so continuing this sort of practice compromises the fairness of this process and reminds us of the bad old times when our ancestors had to deal with government doing similar things.
5) Create safe public consultation spaces for Urban Indigenous people to participate, without fear of misunderstanding or to have their voices drowned out in a group of non-Indigenous people.
6) Defer the deadline for this consultation for Indigenous people to better prepare. KZA has just hired someone to take responsibility for this consultation, so until they are fully in place to start working on this, it makes it hard for other Indigenous groups and individuals to work with them as the primary rights holder. It is disrespectful of other Indigenous peoples not to engage them beforehand, so not providing a deferment is tantamount to the Federal government trying to frustrate Indigenous peoples' consultation capacity.
7) Create a space on the NCC Board of Directors for an Urban Non-Indigenous person with some experience related to public interest advocacy and urban planning.
8) Review your Ombudsman's recommendations from the past dealings we had with the NCC concerning the abuse of our Indigenous residents' rights on the redevelopment of rue Jacques Cartier, otherwise, you will be repeating similar mistakes.

Area affected:

The affected areas noted in the Kettle Island Bridge plan encompass areas of great value to our Indigenous and overall community as:

Nature preserve on Kettle Island that interacts with the Duck Islands as well as a nature corridor, migratory bird sanctuary, nesting site for approximately 94 great blue heron and great egret nests or more.

It violates the heritage recreational uses of the region that the city was developed around. You cannot move the NCC River House to another place. This boathouse was developed according to community values of the time that have remained constant since,

Our Ottawa River waterway at Kettle Island will be affected by bridge piers in the middle of the river blocking navitation for two sailing clubs, two rowing clubs, and paddlers. There is no speed limit through there as well, in one of Canada's busiest unmanaged waterways making this a hazardous obstruction to manoeveur around at high speed for motorboaters. There have already been collisions and deaths on this section of the river, as a result of an unmanaged and high speed motorboating through a section of the river that should be protected more so for tranquil recreation. The Federal government is directly responsible for the poor waterway management of boat traffic already, so adding bridge piers in the middle of a chaotic waterway will further hinder navigation, especially for non-motorized boaters, including the Ottawa New Edinburgh Club's childrens camps, sailing schools, and rowing programs (rowers have difficulty looking backwards, so these obstructions will make it even harder for them to avoid the piers and other boats coming around them). A rower can potentially slice open or decapitate another boater with their carbon fibre blades, if they collide. Transport Canada and its Minister need to be consulted on this, as they are the department that has failed this community in safeguarding the waterway, however, this too is a symptom of a community without a holistic waterway plan that is long overdue and which fails to inform this bridge project team about how this ad hoc project will integrate with the uses of the river.

Community values also need to be respected, as documented by multiple consultations related to rue Jacques Cartier (2006 to 2014), NCC River House renovation, Sir George Etienne Cartier plan, and those embodied in the nature preservation designation for Kettle Island and the Duck Islands. Sightlines of special value were documented in these reports by the same NCC that is guiding this process.

Concerns that a bridge will restrict future potential for this area, including:

1. **National Urban Park** or expansion of the **Rideau Canal National Park** and future benefit to tourism, Indigenous peoples, and residents from all over Ottawa-Gatineau and Canada.
2. A waterway procession way to Parliament, based on how the Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall were escorted along this corridor in 1860 and 1901.
3. Reconnecting Indigenous peoples to the river within just a couple of kms from Place Abinan (increasingly used for ceremonial purposes) Odawa and Wabano, where the Ottawa community is clustered or where 13.5% of Pointe-Gatineau's

population identifies as Indigenous with even more descended from Indigenous ancestors.
4. An urban reserve potential at the western tip of Kettle Island, where the bridge will link up with Montee Paiement by the Tecumseh Golf Course.

The following are my comments related to specific parts of this report (due to the rushed nature of this consultation, I wasn't able to properly format or edit the remainder of this document):

3.2 Stakeholder and Public Engagement

• Study process—Throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2A, members of the public expressed a strong desire to participate in the evaluation and had questions about the study methods, planning process, and consultation process. There were questions about the factors and subfactors being used in the evaluation and suggestions for new subfactors or changes in how subfactors should be evaluated. There was an overall desire for fairness and transparency in evaluation methods.

As noted above, we formally need an Urban Indigenous representation in these consultations.

We don't need pay-off with promises of Indigenous employment and set-asides.

We need more Indigenous engagement, not less. Invite Indigenous communities with overlapping rights and interests in a less intimidating manner by asking KZA and AOPFN to be co-hosts, as I noted earlier.

We need more understanding of the great value this section of the river has to Ottawa's heritage, current uses, and future potential (e.g. National Urban Park, tranquil recreation zone [as noted in the Sir George Etienne-Cartier Plan]).

• Natural and socioeconomic environmental impacts—Participants expressed concerns about how a new crossing might impact the natural environment. Concerns about how increased traffic, noise, and reduced air quality could affect nearby residents were frequently heard from Ottawa residents. Some residents expressed concern about the potential impacts to residential land values. There were also some concerns about how increased traffic could affect schools, hospitals, community centres, and other institutions.

Nature protected status for Kettle Island alone does not cover how Kettle Island is linked to the Duck Islands as a nature corridor. As I have surveyed for the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the island holds 94 nests of great blue herons and great egrets (one of the largest in Quebec – egrets this far north are rare – spooked by noise that a bridge would bring), bald eagles, and osprey habitat, deer, coyotes, etc. This is a nature corridor that links Gatineau Park via paths and river shoreline to the Kettle-Duck Islands to Greens Creek and Mer Bleue. This is a crossing already, under threat by a human crossing overtop of it.

• Need and justification for a new crossing—Some members of the public requested details about why a new crossing was needed over improvements to public transit. Some opposition to any new crossing of the Ottawa River was encountered from Ottawa residents.

Without integrated planning between all jurisdictions, this is just **an exercise in one government creating a solution for a problem that the other jurisdictions don't agree with**. Why push through something like this that will destroy and damage the community. ***It creates a win-lose, whereas if we built the bridge elsewhere and forever preserved this section of the river as a National Urban Park, that would be the win-win that the politicians would be glad to get behind.***

• Cost—Some participants emphasized the importance of fiscal restraint and suggested that the Project could be funded, or costs recouped, through bridge tolls.

Some say a key deciding factor is cost, yet the government has done nothing to assess total costs that include cost to property values, loss of use cost to the community for a tranquil area forever harmed, cost to community values destroying a river section used for eons, etc.

• Truck traffic—Increases in truck traffic on roads approaching the new crossing were a frequent concern, especially for residents around Aviation Parkway, which is currently closed to trucks.

Linkages with where trucks will be going as population expands east and the warehousing district around the Gatineau Airport and its air freight operations. Trucks avoiding going up the steep hill on Montee Paiemont will turn right onto Maloney Blvd, adding to the heavy traffic flow during peak hours. Seems obvious to many of us.

• Design—Participants expressed the importance of design aesthetics and making the bridge a "world-class" structure within the NCR.

No design will be pleasing enough to not notice a bridge blocking the *exceptional views* lauded in various NCC consultations of the past, endure traffic noise, and its piers acting as a navigational hazard in the heavily used section of river by boats. Nature will always look better. No design will please the birds when it obstructs migratory bird flight paths, resident bird flight paths, or interference with one of the largest and important great blue heron and Great egret nesting areas in Quebec. No design will be pleasing enough to cast a better shadow over those

who traditionally use the beaches on Kettle Island to enjoy summer swims, suntanning, and picnics. No design will be pleasing enough to convince Indigenous peoples that their rights to a place where they can reconnect with the spirits of their ancestors is overridden, like the Federal government did when it failed to protect the Chaudiere Falls from a crass condo development under the Stephen Harper Government, when it failed to intervene.

• **Urban integration—Some participants expressed the importance of integrating the Project with existing infrastructure and ensuring it improves, rather than impedes, community cohesion**.

How does this project reconcile that it will forever conflict with the users of the NCC River House that was designed to be like a community cottage in a natural area looking downriver towards Kettle and Duck Islands? The NCC River House is a third place, where people gather to enjoy summer swims, eating and drinking on upper decks looking downriver, or gathering in the ballroom to witness the splendor of the Ottawa River. This bridge will symbolize how community interests, community values are immediately disregarded whenever someone in the Federal government starts pushing for infrastructure that abuses our interests to safeguard those spaces we depend on for mental and physical health to relax and exercise, apart from city hustle and bustle in a cottage country setting. All those hours of participating in NCC public consultations about the renovation of that building according to our community values was wasted and the whole process proven to be a sham, when these community values can be overridden like that. Again, read Mark Carney's Value(s) book and learn about what he says about similar situations – basically, ***that public infrastructure should be designed to respect community values.*** Jane Jacobs wrote similar things too about how communities need to be designed by those who use them, like users of the NCC River House who will not want to go there when a hunking bridge obstructs their view. Go down and stand at the Ottawa Rowing Club, if you need a perspective of what that will feel like after a Kettle Island Bridge destroys the ambience of a tranquil recreation zone.

• **Expropriation criteria—Landowners requested transparency in how lands to be expropriated, if any, would be identified and how compensation would be determined**.

Landowners along rue Jacques-Cartier understand how the government has failed us in expropriation, after repeated flooding. We warn the community overall, that the government has a poor track record in expropriating properties. They will likely wait as long as they can until the prospect of a bridge drives down property values, then make a settlement below what the market value would be without that threat. Expropriation needs to be conducted according to best practices, not dirty dealing.

3.2.2 Recent Engagement: Public Advisory Groups (PAG)

It should be noted that this project seems does not engage any Urban Indigenous peoples, who pay property taxes locally in their own Public Advisory Group (PAG). Many of us come from all over the country, displaced by colonialism, to major urban centres. As repeated from above, while cities are

designed to conform to European adopted values, this capital does not engage its Indigenous residents in urban planning. With declining birthrates among non-Indigenous Canadians, an increasing Indigenous population, and more and more intermarriage, there may come a time when most Canadians will have Indigenous ancestry, yet our cities and our capital won't have been designed according to our values. We will end up with bridges and infrastructure destroying any natural area we hold sacred. Eventually, it will look like meaningless ductwork in the movie Brazil, pushed through by bureaucrats unable to control the process.

Also noted, is that it seems no representatives who use the river were included in this PAG. Specifically, the PAG does not include representatives from the Ottawa Rowing Club, who have used this section of the river since 1867; the Ottawa New Edinburgh Club established in 1883, or the Rockcliffe Yacht Club, or marina owners who I convened in meetings to discuss how to protect the Ottawa River by creating a speed limit. It also does not include waterfront residents. For this reason, there are other concerns that are not represented, including current and future potential uses of the river that will be affected by a bridge.

***Nature Conservancy of Canada Bridge Alignment & Environmental Impact: Concerns about the bridge's alignment and its potential impacts to the biophysical values protected under the Provincial Nature Reserve on private lands designation*.**

This statement in the description does not include reference to one of the largest nesting sites for great blue herons and great egrets, in the middle of Kettle Island. I have taken people to the island to regularly view them from the water, including the bald eagles that perch exactly where the different bridge options cross the island. Once a bridge goes overtop the island, those birds will disappear.

The Survey Findings (on page 21) do not include other considerations that are important to this area, such as recreation (swimming, paddling, sailing, rowing, pleasure craft), opportunity cost destroying a scenic tranquil recreation zone, Indigenous considerations by Indigenous peoples.

Questions and concerns (page 22) do not include opportunity costs, including alternative uses for the area that are more compatible with the urban planning and Indigenous values (e.g. National Urban Park, recognition and protection of zone as a heritage recreational refuge based on ONEC boathouse values, past and current uses).

3.2.3 Plans for Future Engagement (page 27)

Starting in Round #2 *Partner and elected officials* need to be informed about the importance of this area historically, currently, and potentially. They need to understand the political costs to them and that they will be destroying a section of the river that has been a celebrated 3rd place, gathering place by

Indigenous peoples, royalty, politicians and dignitaries, and the community at large. They need to also be informed about the opportunity cost, value in use, and cost to nature that will be borne. They need to know that a bridge will forever damage a refuge for the city, to enjoy the last natural section of waterway and beaches within just a few kilometers of Parliament. They need to know that this will have a political cost to them as well, as a win-lose for the community, a win for traffic engineers, but a loss to everyone who values this area as it is. Rather, they could benefit from a win-win by choosing an alternative to protect the area as a **National Urban Park** to protect this area, **and put a bridge elsewhere** in an area that is already distressed from two sewage plants on either side of the river and where there are fewer residents impacted. Bridges can be moved downriver, the NCC River House cannot. Put it where there are two sewage plants in an already distressed section of the river, where few want to swim, relax on the shore, or paddle.

As stated above, Public Advisory Group meetings need to include Urban Indigenous residents, especially those who pay local property taxes and who will be the most affected. We would appreciate engagement with other Indigenous groups, so that they understand our needs and those potential needs of their urban members.

For these engagements, drawings need to be designed to show how this bridge will impact the view. We want images that include how they will impact paddling, rowing, sailing, flight paths. These must update all the drawings used in previous public consultations that supported the redevelopment of the NCC River House, rue Jacques-Cartier and its linear parks and lookouts, and the Sir George Etienne Cartier plan, as those were used to sell the public in the past on public investments and their involvement in those discussions. Not providing them would indicate that the public were defrauded by the NCC when it conducted those consultations. If you are going to change the vision for those projects, we need to see what that looks like, otherwise it will appear that the NCC was dealing in bad faith and defrauded the public on those consultations – especially as it is now promoting this bridge in contradiction to those other plans.

Targeted meetings with stakeholders should include those focused on specific neighbourhoods that are going to be impacted; waterway users - including both individuals and clubs that have rowing, paddling, and sailing programs; Urban Indigenous peoples who use or have an interest in this area as users and potential users, and not just KZA or Pikwakanagan who undeniably have traditional territorial rights over this area, but who are not into sheltering other Indigenous peoples' rights in this region; naturalists and environmental groups who understand the natural value of Kettle Island; tourism agencies that understand the value of this section of the river and its potential for attracting active tourists interested in tranquil recreation in the area; and users of the NCC River House. Outreach will have to be done to ensure that these segments are represented properly.

4 Summary of Engagement with Indigenous Communities

There are two primary Indigenous groups that are affected by this. One is not engaged, KZA, as far as I'm aware and by this report there is an acknowledgement they have yet to enter into an agreement.

Others, are reluctant to get involved, respecting the traditional territorial rights and interests of the KZA and AOPFN.

This sentiment complicates things, as the capital is supposed to represent the values of all Canadians, including all Indigenous peoples, not just those who live in KZA or AOPFN and may not be as interested in these issues. This situation leaves the vast majority of Indigenous peoples in the NCR without any Indigenous organization or nation representing our interests. I noticed that the NCC didn't even reach out to Friendship Centres, where Urban Indigenous peoples often receive services and engage in programs, so it is a shortcoming of the Indigenous consultation that it did not include those institutions as well.

Urban Indigenous people in the NCR are a mixture of peoples, linked by the Kichi Sibi to their communities throughout Canada. They are both a diaspora of Indigenous peoples from all across Canada and Algonquins from here who cannot get meaningful representation from KZA or AOPFN. The NCR is suppose to reflect all our values, yet Urban Indigenous have little or no representation at these consultations, in any Public Advisory Groups. This means that the capital city does not reflect our values disproportionately, when it could benefit from our input.

This document may seem to suggest that the NCC has done a great job of consulting Indigenous communities from outside the local area, but not those who live here. This raises the question why is the NCC following the bare minimum of consultation, excluding discussions with local Indigenous residents and only consulting those who live over 100 kms from this area and who will not have as close of a relationship to the lands and waters around Kettle Island, as those who live here and were not engaged at all? Was this a deliberate tactic to exclude our interests? It smacks of gross colonialism, undermining our local interests by going to Indigenous representatives who do not have a direct daily interest in the prospect of a bridge impacting the immediate area around where they live. In the old days, government representatives would find Indigenous people from outside the immediate area to buy the land from under the feet of those Indigenous people actually living on it. These unscrupulous land transactions seem no different that the current practice, where the National Capital Commission has ignored local Indigenous peoples with intimate knowledge and interests in this area around Kettle Island to engage those willing to sell-out our interests for theirs hundreds of kilometers away in many cases. Is this the best standard of Indigenous consultation that our Federal government can employ, to override our own local Indigenous interests? It's not much different than in 2014, when I had to lead an occupation protest

over the way the NCC conspired with the City of Gatineau to rush through an archaeological dig on my street, because the traditional territorial representatives in Kitigan Zibi Aninshabeg were unable to intervene because their local community members did not seem informed or greatly concerned. Why would they anyway, as they don't live here?

By not engaging us, it separates us from the possibility of having our views learned about and supported by these other communities that could also shelter our interests under their traditional territorial rights, if given the opportunity to do so. We are the ones with land and water knowledge that other Indigenous communities need to understand through these consultations, but the NCC has deliberately compartmentalized these discussions so that we cannot engage in a form of traditional consultation.

Urban Indigenous people understand that they live on the traditional territories of the Algonquins, however, we also want to have input on our Indigenous interests too, especially on urban planning issues that directly impact us and contravene our values too. It is true that we must try and work with communities, like KZA or AOPFN traditional territorial land rights

Is the NCC attempting another tactic to divide and conquer Indigenous peoples on this project, like other colonial governments have on other kinds of infrastructure projects? Those local Indigenous people who were around in 2014, know how the NCC and City of Gatineau manipulated the Indigenous community, traditional territorial rights holders and Urban Indigenous people with overlapping rights in many cases. The NCC-City of Gatineau's redevelopment of rue Jacques-Cartier was a fiasco. Despite our participation in various public and private consultations, my own Indigenous rights and that of a another resident, a non-Status Algonquin, were ignored when we asked to have our safe access rights preserved. I had to get both the NCC and City of Gatineau's ombudsmen to investigate and confirm that our rights were ignored.

As Urban Indigenous people live and work in this area, they often have insights that the traditional territorial rights holders here do not, through their own Indigenous lens. Ottawa and Gatineau are home to thousands of Indigenous peoples (Metis, First Nations, and Inuit) from all over Canada. As a result of colonization and even Federal Public Service employment policies that prevent Indigenous peoples from being employed in their own communities, they relocate to this region. That doesn't mean they don't want to live according to the values of their ancestors, in a city if possible. It means they have not other choice, but would appreciate having their interests heard too, especially when they have a direct interest in the project as users of the affected area.

It is also noticed that no Native Friendship Centres like Odawa, Wabano, Gatineau-Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre were included in this consultation. As these institutions are the ones providing services in the area, you would imagine they may have something to share on this especially when it comes to potential future uses of the area to connect their members to paddling.

Funding Indigenous participation:

Funding is being made available by PSPC to ensure the Indigenous communities and organizations have the capacity to participate throughout the Project. (page 29)

My consultations with different communities suggest that the funding process is too complicated. Whether or not this is true, it undermines this statement by the project team.

Budget funds have been allocated over a multiyear period. The IPT began working with primary group Indigenous communities in 2025 to develop collaboration agreements that will include five- year budgets and work plans. These agreements will support the community's ability to plan and make commitments for activities. It is understood that the funding and work plans will be revisited as the Project evolves. It is expected that regular meetings with primary group communities will occur once collaboration agreements are signed. ***Indigenous Participation Pans Support*** *will be provided to Indigenous communities and organizations as they seek funding, collaboration, and other forms of support from other Government of Canada departments and agencies, other levels of government, training and educational institutes, unions, and contractors to increase the economic participation of their members. (page 29)*

Other activities include identifying community-led activities in support of information gathering for the Eastern Bridge Project. This involves confirming the budget and timing to arrange community activities, as well as undertake or participate in studies. **(page 29)**

What are these *community-led activities* referred to? I have led community activities that have included Jane's Walks, OAW, and canoe excursions including inviting politicians, Indigenous peoples and local residents to paddle with me and learn about how this bridge will damage our local environment.

I have also produced a documentary on paddling in the area that was intended to be used in this consultation. Without an Urban Indigenous Project Advisory Group, that would be hard, wouldn't it?

A workplan was included in the Collaboration Agreement with the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation (AOPFN) to ensure funding is available to support community engagement and to fund several studies that the community wishes to undertake to assess potential impacts to Indigenous rights. Efforts are underway to provide similar opportunities to Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg (KZA) through the

development of a Collaboration Agreement. Engagement and outreach will continue through all phases of the Project. (page 30)

Over the past couple weeks, I have been in contact with KZA and it seems that they are not yet fully up to speed on putting their team in place to handle this consultation. Just this week, they hired a new person to deal with consultations. I suggested in an email earlier that I will include in this appendix that we delay this stage of the consultation to accommodate those working on provincial and municipal elections, and in the same way I ask that you delay to allow KZA to get organized as well. It makes little sense to me that you would claim to have an interest to have KZA participate in this consultation, yet not have a Collaborative Agreement like AOPFN has. This suggests that you are not consulting with them and those of us who are working with them, in a meaningful way, violating the Duty of the Crown to uphold meaningingful consultation. Not having a meaningful consultation with KZA and those who need to shelter their own rights under their advocacy, is an abuse of process.

Again, these engagements failed to include:

Indigenous individuals who use this section of the river or may potentially want to use this section of the river for activities such as paddling, harvesting, hunting/fishing, meditation, or ceremonial purposes.

Metis Nation of Ontario citizens, along with Non-Status First Nations who have historically ranged through this section of the river as voyageurs, traders, hunters, fishers, and other forms of employment.

Urban Indigenous residents of the area (Metis, First Nations, Inuit) who have an interest to see the community they live in today, reflect their values too as part of urban planning that is more inclusive and respectful of Indigenous values. As local taxpayers, they deserve to have their values reflected too, as their communities are traditionally accessible by canoe via the Kichi Sibi to most parts of Canada. (Use a quote from Canadian Urban Planning Council)

5 Environmental Studies, Regional Plans ands Assessments (page 31)

There is no impact assessment concerning how this will affect the waterway, including how people use it. Not surprising, as I'm not aware of any comprehensive waterway plan, how this will affect boating clubs, residents, etc. All the plans seem focused entirely on land, not waterways. This is a major deficiency of this and other plans that the NCC has developed. How many communities are as negligent as our nation's capital by not even having a waterway plan? For example, unlike Toronto, Vancouver, Saskatoon, Victoria and Halifax, there are protected areas for non-motorized boaters

and no speed limits set by a Vessel Operation Restriction Regulation (VORR) that Transport Canada can implement. Because both cities and the NCC have not asked for one, we may have the busiest and most uncontrolled waterway in Canada. Is that how to plan a city with three major rivers running through the middle of it? Furthermore, other cities have Federal Waterfront Commissions, yet this area does not, which is probably the reason why the waterfront is neglected and abused by short-sighted planning focused entirely on land impacts and none on the waterway and its frontage. The Federal government cannot claim that it is disadvantaged in this manner by having to deal with two cities, two provinces, two primary Algonquin communities as territorial rights holders for not having a comprehensive plan that includes the waterway and its uses.

I noticed in *Table 5-1: Other regional and municipal planning documents* that there are no waterway recreational plans from both cities, which is surprising, because I had input on the City of Gatineau's waterway recreation plan a few years ago that called for promoting the use of this section of the river for paddlers and rowers. That plan included a proposed non-motorized boating facility and docks for safe launching at *Baie Bord de l'eau*, where an old brothel used to be located at 1267 rue Jacques-Cartier, Gatineau. The city council even granted the project a budget, that has yet to be spent. Without a comprehensive waterway plan, that includes an exhaustive account of how this bridge will impact on this section of a Parks Canada designated Canadian Heritage River , the government will **not be building strong, but building dumb and blind**.

When such a plan is developed, we need consideration to its use as a:

- Heritage river procession way, hearkening back to the Royal visit of 1860 when paddlers in 150 canoes met and escorted the Prince of Wales to the foot of the Rideau Canal to begin his visit to Bytown.
- A National Urban Park / extension of the Rideau Canal National Park
- A shared waterway to support tranquil recreation and protect the rights of the Ottawa New Edinburgh Club, Rockcliffe Yacht Club, and the Ottawa Rowing Club to safe navigation – as those clubs have a pre-existing presence on the waterway before any other motorboat facilities were built.

We need a Waterfront Commission:

In major cities in Canada, there is a Federal role to help plan waterfronts, however, there is no such practice as I am aware of in our national capital region. Why? Without a plan, this bridge is being built blind to the needs of those who have interests in using and protecting the waterway.

In 2023, I organized a dozen marina owners, commercial boating operations, and non-profit boat clubs to design a plan for a shared waterway. Unfortunately, that intiative

was paused due to the municipal election and was not restarted since, due to distractions from flooding. We need the Federal government to create a Waterfront Commission to include Indigenous people in the preservation and planning for it.

We need a ring road study as well. Bidirectional traffic flow is an alternative that should be studied, as it affects the whole traffic grid.

7 Project Purpose and Need (page 37)

The project purpose does not include respecting pre-existing community values for the area or other factors aligned with Value(s).

It does not prioritize building a bridge in distressed sections of the river, rather than those with a heritage value to the community that values them.

This section does not mention that the Gatineau's population growth is primarily projected for areas further downstream from Kettle Island.

There is no project purpose to prioritize bi-directional traffic flow over creating a larger funnel to draw even more people closer to where the traffic needs to be diverted from. This provides a magnet to attract commuters from north, west and future growth areas east. Funneling also creates bottlenecks and pressure points in surrounding roadway infrastructure that needs to be considered. For example, if the bridge will simply draw more people into the core of Ottawa-Gatineau along roads that are already congested at rush hour, then this does little to alleviate the problem, whereas a ring-road potentially can more evenly spread traffic bi-directionally, giving more choice to commuters and truckers how to get where they may go without lining up to cross another downtown bridge in close proximity to the others.

Another purpose should be to provide a crossing that during times of crisis, may support public safety and security. Clustering bridges together in the downtown does not do that as well as a ring-road. Is there a Defence Department advisory group that can advise the government on how bridges should be located to support defensible positions and provide the movement in times of crisis? If Canada is going to be resilient, we need to take that consideration into account. For example, during the Convoy protest, it was conceivable that seizing the bridges close to downtown would have been possible. Spreading them out further apart would potentially be more secure.

Gatineau's Population Growth: (page 33) It is noted that the working population of Gatineau is expected to grow beyond 2025 and needs to commute across the river. It should be understood that Ottawa-Gatineau are about the same size Toronto was in the late 1950s when it was building its subway system. If population is expected to grow, like it did in Toronto, why is it that Ottawa-Gatineau not planning to develop a better public transit system? If it is too difficult planning such a system, maybe it is time to learn from the Washington, DC example and merge the two transportation systems together and plan one integrated system that works better. This would help people like the receptionist at my father's

retirement home in at Metcalfe and Isabella Streets. He lives near the Gatineau Hospital, where it takes him nearly 90 minutes to get to work everyday, whereas I can drive that distance in just 25 minutes or so. We need a proper transit system for commuters on the scale required to accommodate population growth and work travel needs.

***Governance and Coordination—While agencies collaborate on cross-river transit, there remains opportunities to improve regional collaboration and coordination to help guide and prioritize transportation capital investments*. (PAGE 34)**

Cross-river public transit is a mess. Unlike the region around Washington, DC, this region has two separate transit commissions and all the inefficiencies and incompatible planning that goes along with that. Before focusing on a bridge, it would be advisable to postpone a bridge decision until the two commissions can be merged like WAMATA and work with that new entity to plan public transit for the whole region. Otherwise, this is **just another ad hoc piece in a uncoordinated public transit system**. As it can be argued that public is a matter of national security for a capital like Ottawa-Gatineau, why is it that the Federal government that's responsible for interprovincial public transit is not involved in creating or supporting the merger of OCTranspo and STO?

Heavy truck traffic routed through downtown neighbourhoods to access interprovincial crossings has negative impacts on residents' health, safety, and quality of life. The LTIICP explores various alternatives to reduce impacts from heavy trucks in the downtown core. A new interprovincial crossing in the East, combined with multijurisdictional policy measures to limit heavy trucks from targeted corridors, would be the most effective means of diverting heavy trucks from the core area. Improving logistics for the movement of goods and shifting deliveries to smaller trucks and different times of day were also highlighted as a means of reducing impacts. (PAGE 38)

This project focuses on bringing the same *negative impacts on residents' health, safety, and quality of life* to Gatineau, by pushing it through an area where people come to restore their health in a safe environment, to enjoy quality of life. The King Edwards corridor won't be fixed by an Eastern bridge, rather its use will remain the same as the population grows. Those who live there moved there when this problem existed. The values of their properties reflect that negative influence already, so we shouldn't blame the owners along that corridor hoping that their property values will go up, especially the slum landlords along KERWN who are looking for a win-fall, at the expense of Manor Park, Rockcliffe Park, Viscount Alexander Park, Wateridge Village, Pointe-Gatineau, etc. Retrofitting a major artery through a residential area is not exactly a good way to improve another area that was built that way years ago. Buildings there were designed accordingly, not in residential areas.

12 Project Alternatives (page 56)

Bi-directional traffic flow – widening Highway 50, bridge downriver, ring public transit system

National Urban Park or extension to the Rideau Canal National Park to forever protect this area for wildlife and human tranquil recreational uses.

Build the bridge elsewhere, where the river is already distressed, such as where there are two sewage plants on opposite shores closer to the Gatineau Airport where there are trucking and air freight warehouses and where the slope to Highway 50 isn't as steep to navigate in icy conditions, and where there are fewer residences impacted with lower property valuation impacts.

The Kettle Island Bridge alternative *scored higher on visual intrusion and Indigenous interests but scored lower on other subfactors. Because it is located in a more populated area closer to the cores of Gatineau and Ottawa, this alternative could potentially impact community cohesion and social equity. However, this can be mitigated by providing multimodal connectivity between communities on either side of the corridor*.

The project team did not seem to reconsider the importance of this area for other purposes that a bridge – for example, as a recreational and social hub where a sizable portion of our citizens connect with the water and one another. This is a heritage river, and this section of that heritage waterway, holds the most importance to Canadian society, as it was used as a Royal processionway when the Prince of Wales visited here in 1860 and the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall too witnessed a regatta here in 1901. It is just around the bend from an 7300 year old archaeological that still attracts Indigenous people to come enjoy the waterway. This is the key aquatic recreational district in our region, yet the weighting system used does not reflect the value to the community and how this area interacts with the overall community. This area is so special, that it truly could be considered a candidate as a National Urban Park or extension to the Rideau Canal National Park, for its combination of social, cultural, and biophysical and natural qualities. Many people already paddle, row, sail, and cruise around and to Kettle Island to enjoy a picnic or swim. No one wants to paddle and swim in the fetid Baie McLaurin, near where where there's two sewage plants on either side of the Ottawa River there – already a distressed environment without any recreational or social value to the community. The Kettle Island corridor has pre-existing infrastructure that was built as a demonstration of our community values – the NCC River House, shoreline parks and lookouts, and even rue Jacques-Cartier that was developed with the *exceptional views* to be presented to the public, exactly where the same NCC now wants to obstruct those views with a noisy commuter and trucking bridge. If the Feds did their job at the beginning, it would have conducted a waterfront plan for both sides of this section of the river, that would have reserved this area as a *tranquil recreation nature zone* on behalf of the whole community, all Indigenous peoples, and all Canadians who care about the history and attracted to its swimming and recreational boating opportunities. Before this proceeds, a proper assessment of the value of this section of the river needs to be examined. Unfortunately, this bridge exposes how dysfunctional planning has resulted in a decision to proceed with a plan that is not part of an overall plan, just an ad hoc project in an incomplete transportation plan without consideration for other urban development concerns focused on the needs of residents and waterway users affected by this.

It seems this is a mess of a grading system, designed without considering community values for this section of the river at all.

21 Potential Impacts on Health or Socio-economic Conditions of Indigenous Peoples (page 135)

Nothing was mentioned in this section about the current healthy uses and future potential for the Kettle Island area for Urban Indigenous peoples. Undoubtedly, the impact of a bridge that will forever destroy a tranquil recreation zone on the health of Indigenous users of the waterway and Kettle Island. There will be physical and mental health impacts for urban Indigenous peoples, when this tranquil recreation zone is no longer available as a refuge to paddle, swim, meditate, harvest fiddleheads, fish or relax from the urban hustle and bustle. Baie McLaurin won't be an alternative option for us, as that place is a fetid wetland wedged between two sewage plants. That area is a good alternative for a bridge, but not for those who want a tranquil recreation spot. This will complete the displacement of Indigenous values of the land and waters around Kettle Island and I doubt that we will be invited to go live in Kitigan Zibi to follow their ancestors after they too were displaced from here in the mid-1800s.

Putting a bridge at Kettle Island will affect the health of the Indigenous population that lives here and it will remove an opportunity for the Indigenous community to reconnect with the river through paddling programs. Certainly, the NCC has been unhelpful in the past at responding to my inquiries about hosting an Indigenous paddling program out of its NCC River House, so the bridge will be a final obstacle it will wield to forever destroy my own interests to bring Indigenous people to the river in canoes again.

The NCC and PSPC have to stop trying to divide and conquer Indigenous communities. It was bad back in the old days and it is bad today, enticing some with gifts to sell out their communities and Indigenous allies, just to make a buck. This not only divides us, but it pits Indigenous peoples, those who want to stand up for community values from those willing to sell out their communities for their own economic gains. If the Federal government wants to support real Indigenous employment and business programs, don't do it through this program. People can find these opportunities on their own through other channels. Linking these pay-offs to supporting the bridge option presented is despicable.

To provide economic participation support to Indigenous communities, PSPC have developed tools including the following:

• Directive on the Management of Procurement—Ensures increased participation in contracting by mandating a minimum target of 5% of the total value of contracts is awarded to Indigenous businesses annually

• Capacity building—Addressing long-term, lasting, meaningful and sustainable participation/inclusion to Indigenous communities, Peoples and businesses.

• Careers—Leveraging the human resource capabilities of PSPC and NCC to hire and train Indigenous people (page 135)

It is better not to deceive Indigenous people that there is a meaningful employment in the Federal Public Service, especially after accounts of it being a hostile employment environment. This kind of promise to

Indigenous people is a tactic used to buy the support of vulnerable Indigenous voices, and puts the Federal Public Service in a clear conflict of interest by doing so. It is unethical and deceptive to use this kind of enticement as leverage to push through a Kettle Island Bridge that will clearly undermine Indigenous interests in our urban waterfront community.

It should be noted that the Federal Public Service may hire talented Indigenous people, but it has a retention problem in that Indigenous people are just as vulnerable as others to have their programs cuts, layoffs, etc. Since the mid-1900s, the Federal Public Service has pretended to be a good employer to Indigenous peoples, yet it is merely a revolving door of opportunity for many, hiring quotas followed by lay-offs without any retention programs designed. Added to the conflict of interest raised above, is the unsuitability of employment in a colonial institution that seeks many ways to undermine our Indigenous interests everytime there is another infrastructure project on the horizon. It is best to keep these fake promises and enticements separate from this process entirely, especially when those employed in the Federal Public Service are effectively muzzled when it comes to defending their community interests when handcuffed into such careers. Any encouragement through employment or business opportunities on this project that will undermine our rights and interests should not be promoted at all. Getting Indigenous people to sell out their people is a hostile practice and a form of bribery. If you really want to hire Indigenous people, create a National Urban Park and employ them to take care of it in perpetuity, not through temporary careers that end with lay-offs, no pensions, or temporary supplier scams. Certainly, some far away Indigenous communities, without any interests in the local environment and cultural-sociological interests we have in the bridge area will want some benefits, but they should understand that they are selling out the interests of those who must live with this bridge running through an ancient place that all our ancestors were connected to.

ADDENDA:

Request to postpone this phase of consultation:

By John Savage

Request to Extend the October 9, 2026 Consultation Deadline for the Eastern Bridge Project

On September 1, 2026, the National Capital Commission (NCC) announced a public consultation for the Eastern Bridge Project, with submissions due by October 9, 2026. While this timeline may suit the internal pace of the project team advancing a Kettle Island bridge option, it is unreasonably short for a project of this magnitude - one that will permanently shape our community forever, undermining community values and the future of our protected Kettle Island nature reserve, also destroying what the National Capital Commission has recently recognized as the last tranquil recreation waterway used for generations. A six-week window is insufficient for residents, neighbourhood associations, Indigenous

organizations, and other stakeholders to review the project materials, examine the historical context, consult their communities, and prepare meaningful responses. Many non-profit organizations rely on volunteer boards that meet monthly; they cannot simply accelerate their governance processes because a federal project team is in a hurry. The timing is also inappropriate due to elections on both sides of the river. Stakeholder capacity is already constrained, and it is well-established that Indigenous communities, in particular, require longer timelines to conduct proper consultation within their own governance traditions. Accelerating this process disproportionately burdens Indigenous participants and undermines the integrity of the consultation. Reference: Ottawa council wants to extend public consultations on new bridge Expedited Consultation Undermines the Legitimacy of the Process Throughout this process, the project appears to be “frog-walked” toward a predetermined conclusion. A six-week consultation period for a major interprovincial infrastructure project makes the exercise appear performative rather than substantive. To restore public confidence, the NCC must extend the deadline and allow time for genuine engagement, analysis, and response. Anything less resembles outdated political tactics that restrict democratic participation to promote a bureaucratic agenda. Indigenous Rights and the Honour of the Crown As a Métis resident of this watershed - whose Chippewa and Métis ancestors lived and travelled along the Kichi Sibi - I assert my right to participate meaningfully in this consultation. I also raise these concerns on behalf of the broader Indigenous community, many of whom will wish to participate but cannot do so under such compressed timelines. Legally, the Crown’s Duty to Consult requires meaningful, good-faith engagement. A six-week window does not meet this standard and risks violating the Honour of the Crown, a constitutional principle tied to section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. The Supreme Court of Canada has been clear: Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia (2004) The duty to consult is grounded in the Honour of the Crown and must be given full effect to promote reconciliation. The Crown’s duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal peoples, even prior to proof of asserted Aboriginal rights and title, is grounded in the principle of the honour of the Crown, which derives from the Crown’s assertion of sovereignty in the face of prior Aboriginal occupation. The Crown’s honour cannot be interpreted narrowly or technically, but must be given full effect in order to promote the process of reconciliation mandated by s. 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982. Haida Nation v. British Columbia (2004) The duty arises when the Crown has knowledge of potential Aboriginal rights and contemplates actions that may adversely affect them. The foundation of the duty in the Crown’s honour and the goal of reconciliation suggest that the duty arises when the Crown has knowledge, real or constructive, of the potential existence of the Aboriginal right or title and contemplates conduct that might adversely affect it. Indigenous organizations cannot simply abandon their paid work or community responsibilities to meet an arbitrary deadline set by federal bureaucrats or pro-bridge political actors. The NCC must reconsider the timeline in light of its constitutional obligations. Conflicts with Elections in Ontario and Quebec The October 9 deadline directly conflicts with major elections: City of Ottawa municipal election: October 26, 2026 Ottawa City Council has already publicly stated that the NCC’s deadline does not allow elected representatives to participate meaningfully. Quebec provincial election: October 5, 2026 Many potential participants are heavily involved in this election period and cannot simultaneously engage in a complex infrastructure consultation. These overlapping elections significantly reduce stakeholder capacity. Many of us are also working full-time jobs while supporting our neighbourhoods during the election period. The NCC’s chosen timeline is simply unrealistic. Requests I formally request the following:

1. Extend the consultation deadline until after the City of Ottawa's October 26, 2026 election, so residents can engage with newly elected representatives and so Indigenous communities can participate in accordance with the Duty of the Crown to properly engage us.

2. Extend the deadline until all applications to the Participant Funding Program have been reviewed and decided. Participants cannot plan their involvement without knowing whether their time will be compensated. Proceeding without this information creates an unnecessary barrier to public participation.

3. Commit to avoiding short-notice consultation deadlines for future phases of this project. Major federal infrastructure projects typically follow longer, more respectful timelines. Agencies such as the Canadian Transportation Agency and the CRTC provide examples of fair and transparent consultation practices. I propose you review those standards and report back to us what new more fair standard the NCC proposes to follow in the future for this project.

4. Increase funding allocations for Indigenous participants to reflect the additional time required to consult broader community stakeholders according to Indigenous governance protocols.

5. Avoid repeating past adversarial practices, including those documented by Kitigan Zibi in 2008, and ensure that consultation is conducted in a respectful, good-faith manner. (The press release from Kitigan Zibi concerning the failings of the expedited 2008 Kettle Island Bridge consultation process attached touches on the historical failures of this process that should be avoided then and now.) If the Federal government intends to fairly engage the public and the Indigenous community on important infrastructure projects, it must do better than using old style political tactics that muzzles our community's voices. This Government should aspire to a higher standard, based on best practices for our nation's capital. Should you require clarification regarding any of these requests, please contact me. Miigwetch,

John Gaudaur Savage 1191 rue Jacques-Cartier Gatineau, Quebec 819-700-1742

Another example how the NCC has ignored Urban Indigenous interests in this section of the river, when they failed to respond to this and other emails asking about using the NCC River House for an Indigenous paddling program. This sort of false support of Indigenous interests needs to be addressed at some point.

Subject: Questions for Annual Public Meeting
Fri, Sep 24, 2021 at 5:03 PM
To: NCCInfoCCN
From: John Savage

I would appreciate it if you could submit these questions to the National Capital Commission Board of Directors at the 2021 Annual Public Meeting coming up. Please let me know if you have any questions and what their response may be. Thanks. Questions for the Board of Directors:

1) It seems that the NCC is nearing the end of it renovation of the old Ottawa New Edinburgh Club boathouse, a place that will be a new access point for the public. As a Metis person who has a concern about protecting Indigenous access to the river for our own programs and the promotion of our history on this ancient waterway, I am concerned we have been left out of the planning around this. My requests to discuss Indigenous concerns have been ignored by your staff, so my my questions to you are: Why wasn't the public properly consulted regarding the reconstruction of the Ottawa River Facility (former Ottawa New Edinburgh Club boathouse that has been recently renovated), including Indigenous groups that have a pre-existing right to access the river for their traditional activities, such as canoeing, kayaking, and rowing? I have tried to connect with your NCC team on this and have yet to get a response from them on how this facility could be used by Urban Indigenous people who live here and pay taxes. For example, it would make a great location for hosting Indigenous paddling and rowing programs, along with an exhibit space for showcasing our history on this Great River of special importance to Indigenous people across Canada. As I established the Ottawa Rowing Club Historical Interpretive Archive and various paddling and rowing programs out of this boathouse, I feel I at least deserve a conversation after my repeated requests for one. Would the Board task a staff member to enter into a meaningful dialogue with me on this matter, as I assert my Indigenous right to be consulted on this matter and on behalf of my community?

2) The National Capital Region has a large Indigenous population who are not always consulted as a community on many important projects, on various levels. As this urban region grows, urban development is becoming less and less representative of the Indigenous values of the land. In time, as people intermarry and the Indigenous population grows, it is conceivable that the majority of residents will be of Indigenous descent and won't be living in a urban region that is representative of their ancestral family values, but instead according to today's dominant colonial values. For this reason, for the sake of reducing institutionalized anti-Indigenism why doesn't the NCC organize an advisory group of concerned citizens and representatives to work with its staff on various planning issues, rather than having one or two people represent the entire nation here? Would you please task someone in your organization to discuss this with me, so that best practices to overcome institutionalized racism can be developed on such an important matter of lasting consequence? (Former MInister McKenna was supposed to put this request forward for me this past summer, but the election came and so perhaps this request wasn't made afterall.)

3) Since 2015, I have spent over $18,000 in lawyer fees to try to convince the NCC and City of Gatineau to respect the right of Indigenous paddlers and rowers to safely access the Ottawa & Gatineau Rivers as a result of the rue Jacques Cartier redevelopment in Gatineau. Up until 2015, Indigenous people on rue Jacques Cartier shoreline could safely launch a canoe, as they had for 7300 years, based on archeological evidence. The project team rejected my request for a meeting and their duty to consult with Indigenous people, as set out by various courts. As a result, I am out of pocket for these funds and our rights are undermined by an unsafe shoreline to launch from. In fact, the City of Gatineau Ombudsman found in 2019 that there is no longer any safe access for paddlers and rowers along rue Jacques Cartier, where I live, just motor boat docks and a shoreline of rebar and rubble. I asked your own NCC Ombudsman, Mr. Saville to investigate the NCC role, however, he found he didn't have the authority to do so. Even so, he did write to me in an email in 2019, that my complaint was a reminder of NCC's ongoing symbolic and actual responsibility to continue to actively promote and protect the rights of Canada's Indigenous people in the conduct of its business affairs and that he'd inform the Board of my concerns. To follow this up, as the NCC is the Federal agency legally and morally responsible for advocating on behalf of Indigenous citizens in this region, will it set a new policy to make it a funding condition for joint projects

with the cites of Gatineau and Ottawa, that they both promote and protect the rights of their Indigenous people on all their projects, whether or not jointly funded with the NCC? And, will the NCC help compensate me for my legal fees, as an act of reconciliation and recognition of its own Duty of the Crown failure to consult me in a meaningful way at its various joint consultations with the City of Gatineau on the rue Jacques Cartier project?

Sincerely,

John P. Gaudaur Savage