

December 18, 2020

For Immediate Release

Imperial Road Bridge in Port Bruce Reopens to the Public

Central Elgin, ON – On December 18th, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. the Imperial Road Bridge in Port Bruce reopened to the public. A small group of Elgin County Councillors, Malahide Township Councillors, Kate Young, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (FedDev Ontario) and Member of Parliament for London West, and Peter Fragiskatos, Member of Parliament for London North Centre, on behalf of Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Karen Vecchio MP for Elgin-Middlesex-London, the Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and staff were on site to mark the occasion.

On February 23, 2018 the bridge collapsed leaving only one access point in and out of the village. In addition to the inconvenience that this caused the residents of Port Bruce, the loss of this critical piece of infrastructure created several logistical and safety concerns, particularly related to emergency service access to the village. The safety of Port Bruce residents was of the utmost importance and the Council of the day mobilized to arrange for the installation of a temporary bridge while the planning of a replacement bridge was underway.

In February of 2020 County Council awarded the construction tender to Hayman Construction Inc. to build the replacement structure at the site of the collapsed bridge. Construction was anticipated to begin immediately and be completed by December 2020.

“Investments in rural communities ensure that they have the infrastructure needed to improve resiliency and competitiveness, while creating jobs and contributing to Canada’s economic recovery,” said Kate Young, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (FedDev Ontario), and Member of Parliament for London West, Ontario, on behalf of Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development. “The Imperial Road Bridge replacement ensures safe travel in the area for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. These types of projects demonstrate how the Government of Canada is making strategic investments in public infrastructure to improve the quality of life for Canadians living in rural communities to enable them to thrive.”

“This bridge has served the people of Port Bruce since its construction in the 1960s. As a point of connectivity, it is vital and its reopening is critically important for the community and Southwestern Ontario more generally.” Said Peter Fragiskatos, Member of Parliament for London North Centre, on behalf of Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development.

"Reopening the Port Bruce Bridge after almost three years of community turmoil brings great relief to the municipality and county," said Jeff Yurek, MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London and Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. "I am very proud that the Ontario government recognizes the value of this critical infrastructure and prioritized support for a safe and stable new structure."

"I am very excited to be here today to officially reopen the Imperial Road Bridge", said Warden Tom Marks. "This project has been a priority of this Council and of great interest to the community. Despite some COVID-19 related delays along the way, I am happy to be able to say we completed the project within our previously specified timelines".

The total expected project cost of \$5.1M included the removal of the remaining portions of the collapsed bridge, the installation of a new three-span steel girder bridge and reconstruction of the road approaches on either side.

The County of Elgin received funding in the amount of \$2.5M from the Federal government and \$1.67M from the Provincial government as part of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP).

"On behalf of County Council, I want to thank the Federal and Provincial governments for the funding that Elgin County received under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure program", said Warden Tom Marks. "This investment allowed the County of Elgin to undertake this critical bridge replacement without sacrificing other important projects in our communities. Funding programs from senior levels of government are crucial to closing the infrastructure gap in rural communities".

The temporary bridge installed in August of 2018 will now be closed to the public, removed and repurposed for the replacement of Meeks Bridge in Southwold Township.

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