

New campaign supports Kettle Island crossing

> Laura Cummings

East-end community groups and elected officials are banding together in a campaign to continue pushing Kettle Island as the ideal location for the future interprovincial crossing, as residents further west rally against the study operators' preferred corridor.

"They've been talking about this bridge for longer than I've been alive," says Stephen Blais, speaking on behalf of the Convent Glen Community Association, of the Kettle Island Bridge Now! campaign. "After 25 or 30 years of talking about this bridge, it's time to get it done. All we're doing is wasting time and money."

In September, Kettle Island was put forward by study operators as the technically-preferred corridor for the crossing, resulting in a heated public meeting where residents – mainly from the area surrounding the proposed link – expressed various frustrations at the selection, including environmental concerns, quality of life issues and the impact on truck traffic through the downtown core.

While the report detailing the crossing's environmental assessment thus far – originally slated

to appear before the city's transportation committee next month – has been pushed back until January, Orléans Coun. Bob Monette says a campaign website has been launched to provide resources and information on the issue.

In the meantime, community association representatives from Queenswood Heights, Fallingbrook, Cardinal Creek, Riverwalk, Chatelaine Village, Convent Glen and Blackburn Hamlet have also met to discuss the new timetable, he explains.

"(The groups) felt it was important they voice their opinions once again on the preferred location," Monette says, adding that the east-end organizations previously signed letters of support for Kettle Island. "We feel strongly it is now time to move ahead with the Kettle Island option."

The interprovincial crossing is part of the "bigger picture" of fixing transportation needs in Ottawa,

continues Blais, and an integral part of finding a solution to problems like east-end commuter frustration.

Launching the campaign, he adds, comes from the desire to get Orléans residents on board with the push for Kettle Island and illustrate their stance "with one voice" to local politicians.

"We're trying to show the elected officials that the community is 100 per cent behind (the project)," Blais explains.

This is the third technical study calling for Kettle Island as the preferred corridor for the interprovincial crossing, continues Philip Berthiaume, president of the Queenswood Heights Community Association, with

the latest protest over the findings "absolutely" raising concerns that operators will head back to the drawing board and select a less-than-ideal location like Petrie Island.

"After 25 or 30 years of talking about this bridge, let's get it done."

Stephen Blais,
Convent Glen Community Assoc.

Continues on page 3