

They're down on Duck Island bridge options

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JON WILLING
City Hall Bureau

Councillors representing communities in east Ottawa are urging the feds to support an interprovincial bridge across Kettle Island.

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is studying three options for a new Ottawa River bridge linking Ontario and Quebec. Two of the options cross over Lower Duck Island and into the Ottawa greenbelt, while the Kettle Island option would link up with the Aviation Pkwy.

Transport Minister John Baird met with councillors Thursday to discuss the bridge options. The Orleans community group Common Sense Crossings was also at the meeting.

"The concern we have is the protection of the greenbelt," Innes Coun. Rainer Bloess said. "We just want to make sure Minister Baird fully appreciates the concerns we have out in Orleans."

Both Lower Duck Island options, Bloess said, are "destructive to the greenbelt," which stretches through his ward.

Orleans Coun. Bob Monette said a Lower Duck Island crossing would mean traffic would empty onto Hwy. 174 when driving is already bad.

"It would bring thousands of vehicles right into the split (with Hwy. 417)," Monette said. "We don't want to congest our highway any more than it is."

Cumberland Coun. Rob Jellett opposes having the Lower Duck Island options as part of the ongoing environmental assessment.

Jellett said bringing the bridge into the greenbelt would cost more and worsen the traffic problems on the highways.

Kettle Island was originally pegged as the preferred option for the bridge, but the NCC decided to add two more locations to the study at the request of the Ontario and Quebec governments.

The Manor Park community in Rockcliffe has been rallying against a crossing at Kettle Island.

The NCC expects the environmental assessments of the bridge options won't be complete until 2013.

jon.willing@sunmedia.ca