



May 10, 2011

Mayor and Councillors,

I am asking for your support to help save the Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge. This important infrastructure project will benefit the communities it will serve, rejuvenate Fort York, support Tourism in Toronto, and further revitalize Toronto's Waterfront.

On Tuesday April 26, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee voted to investigate other more affordable designs for the Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge.

Though entirely well intentioned, this motion could effectively take this project off the table entirely for a number of reasons I outline in this letter.

This bridge has been 30 years in the making and has already cost the city 1.3 million in planning and design costs. It is an innovative design that has received a great deal of media attention and is applauded by the urban design, cultural and economic development communities, as well as by developers who are currently invested in the area.

More importantly, however, the bridge is a crucial piece of waterfront infrastructure that seeks to link hundreds of thousands of people north and south of the rail lands to each other, to the waterfront, and to major attractions like the CNE and Ontario Place. It is also a vital component of the overall plan to revitalize the historic Fort York site, by making the site more accessible, dynamic, and visually compelling.

The building of this bridge is extremely time sensitive: the construction becomes more complicated and more costly if it follows rather than precedes the construction of the Metrolinx Air Rail Link. Secondly the bridge construction has been scheduled for some time to be completed in advance of the bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812.

In essence, the bridge, along with the proposed Visitor's Centre, is a cornerstone in the City's Fort York revitalization plans. It has helped the Fort York Foundation leverage millions of private dollars of investment in the historic site.



The project is funded by Waterfront Revitalization Project Budget. The Waterfront Project is funded by three orders of government. The city receives two dollars for every one dollar it spends on waterfront revitalization. A revised estimate for the bridge has come in 4 million dollars over the originally budgeted amount. Local developers, however, assure they will financially support the building of this bridge. Ultimately, the money can be found if the political will for this project can be re-established. Conversely **it is difficult to imagine this bridge ever being built if the current momentum is lost and existing approvals are allowed to expire.**

While looking for potentially more affordable options may seem entirely reasonable and prudent, major modifications to the design will effectively delay the bridge for several years, as the necessary approvals, bids and tenders will have to be sought all over again (EA, bids for architectural work, new drawings, new bid process for construction, etc).

I have submitted this motion in an effort to both maintain the project in its current configuration and address the cost increase. I remain steadfastly committed to finding creative solutions to keeping this vital project alive and I look forward to working with you to that end.

Sincerely,



Mike Layton



Councillor Mike Layton
City Councillor - Ward 19 Trinity-Spadina

