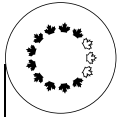


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NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

No.	2024-D15
To	Board of Directors
Date	2024-06-20

For INFORMATION

Subject/Title

Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project – Project Update

Summary

- This submission provides an update on the progress of the Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project (ABRP) and outlines the next important milestones and opportunities.
- The Alexandra Bridge, a crucial structure for the cityscape, silhouette and connectivity of the National Capital Region (NCR) and part of an iconic and symbolic view for Canadians, has reached the end of its lifecycle and must be replaced.
- The Integrated Project Team, composed of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) and the National Capital Commission (NCC), has made significant progress in recent months:
 - Engagement with Indigenous communities and key stakeholders has accelerated;
 - The Independent Review Panel (IRP) has been onboarded;
 - The project has been presented twice to ACPDR;
 - Planning, studies, and analysis have made significant progress.
- The progression on those activities is feeding the concept designs that are being initiated by the Technical Advisor (TA)
- The concept designs will be ready to be presented for a public consultation in Fall 2024
- The construction of a new bridge offers numerous opportunities including enhancements to mobility for active and sustainable modes, design, public space, bridge expression, and visual experience, all of which the project team is actively exploring, that will contribute to the long-term vision of the NCR, in line with the Core Area Sector Plan and the Confederation Boulevard Planning and Design Guidelines.
- The Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project scheduled for construction between 2028 and 2032.

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Risk Summary

The budget and schedule risks are being assessed and will be included in the Treasury Board Submission led by PSPC. Beyond budget and schedule risks, the project faces significant challenges from confusion and disruption to public outreach efforts, caused by external groups either opposing the demolition of the existing bridge or promoting alternative designs publicly.

Recommendation

Not Applicable – The submission is for information


Submitted by:

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1. Strategic Priorities

- NCC Corporate Plan 2024-2025 to 2028-2029 – Strategic Direction #2:
 - Ensure a picturesque and natural National Capital Region, through conserving and enhancing natural assets, cultural landscapes and built heritage under the NCC's stewardship.
- NCC Corporate Plan 2024-2025 to 2028-2029 – Strategic Direction #3:
 - Contribute to a thriving, connected and sustainable National Capital Region that inspires Canadians, through the planning, development and improvement of the NCC's assets.
- NCC Corporate Plan 2024-2025 to 2028-2029 – Priority #2:
 - Plan, rehabilitate and revitalize key assets and transportation networks in the National Capital Region.
- NCC Corporate Plan 2024-2025 to 2028-2029 – Priority #4:
 - Demonstrate national leadership in achieving an environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient National Capital Region.

Government of Canada

- Budget 2019 – Investing in the Middle Class
- Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) Mandate Letters (2019, 2021) directed that the bridge be replaced within ten years.

2. Authority

National Capital Act, sections 10 (1), 10 (2) and 12.

3. Context

a) Historical Context

The National Capital Region (NCR) stands on the ancestral lands of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. Its rich history, development, and population are deeply interconnected with the river known to the Indigenous peoples as the Kichi Zibi, or Great River. For centuries, long before European arrival, the Kichi Zibi has functioned as a vital artery, facilitating trade and cultural exchange among Indigenous nations.

The Kichi Zibi, now commonly known as the Ottawa River and rivière des Outaouais, was central to the initial contact with Europeans, bringing many settlers in the region due to its strategic location. Over the centuries, this influx of Europeans led to the industrial development of the area and the construction of many bridges in the NCR.

Constructed after the Chaudière Crossings and the William Commanda Bridge, the Alexandra Bridge holds the distinction of being the first public interprovincial bridge in the NCR. Built

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between 1898 and 1901, it was a remarkable engineering achievement for its era, featuring a steel truss main cantilever span that was the longest in Canada and the fourth-longest in the world at the time. Originally designed to support steam railway, as well as wagons, pedestrian, and vehicular traffic, the bridge today remains one of the five vehicular interprovincial bridges within the NCR. It connects Sussex Drive in Ottawa with Boulevard des Allumettières in Gatineau. The bridge is an integral part of Confederation Boulevard, contributing over 20% to the overall length of the Capital's ceremonial and discovery route.

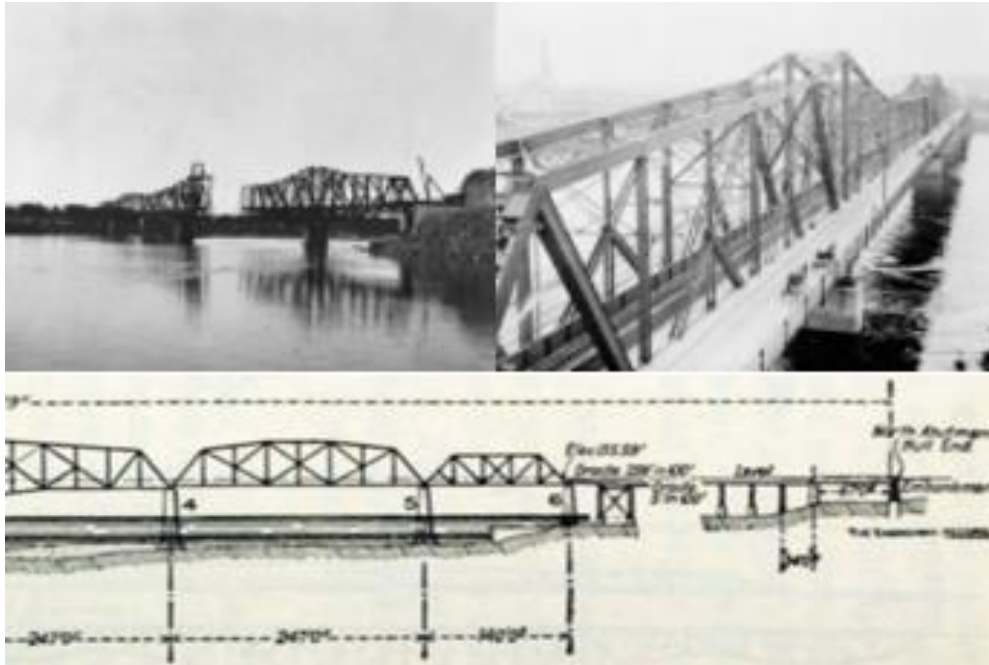


Figure 1 : Construction of the Alexandra Bridge

b) Replacement of the Bridge

The Alexandra Bridge, now over 120 years old, has reached the end of its service life. In 2019, following the completion of a Comprehensive Detailed Inspection (CDI) and a Lifecycle Cost Analysis and Replacement Study for the structure, the Government of Canada directed that the Alexandra Bridge be replaced within ten years. The analysis concluded that the Alexandra Bridge had reached the end of its lifecycle and replacement was anticipated to be the most cost-effective option. The pre-planning phase of the project was initiated, and an Integrated Project Team (IPT) comprised of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) and the National Capital Commission (NCC) resources was established to advance the replacement of the Alexandra Bridge.

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Figure 2 : Existing conditions – CDI report 2017

c) Use of the Bridge

Based on the September 2023 traffic count, approximately 18,000 vehicles cross the Alexandra Bridge each day. This accounts for 9% of the vehicle traffic on interprovincial bridges in the NCR. Beyond vehicular traffic, the Alexandra Bridge accommodates about 27% of all active users crossing the river daily, making it one of the most heavily used interprovincial bridges of the NCR.

The bridge replacement is not intended to increase vehicular traffic capacity; it will maintain one vehicular lane in each direction, as is currently the case. However, the project team is seizing the opportunity presented by the bridge's replacement to enhance active transportation. This improvement will not only benefit the 27% of daily active users who cross the river daily but will also provide an improved experience for all users, including tourists who seek to take in the stunning and rich cultural landscape from this unique vantage point including excellent views towards the National Symbols, and travel between the various sites of the Core Area of the Capital.

The new bridge is designed with vehicle lanes that can be converted to accommodate a future tramway. The design also capitalizes on multiple opportunities, which are detailed further in Section 6.

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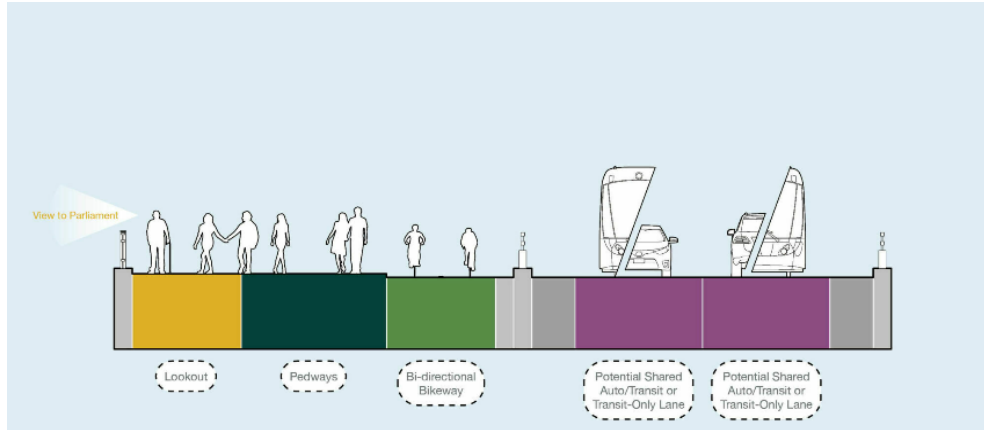


Figure 3 : Required lanes for the new bridge

d) Replacement Project Updates

As identified in the Detailed Project Description (DPD), many consultations and studies must be initiated/completed before initiating the design. Over recent months, there has been substantial progress in those areas. This progress includes refining design parameters, advancing certain studies, and continuing engagement with Indigenous communities as well as consultation with various stakeholders. These activities are converging towards the concept designs. The figure below represents a very high-level overview of the project timeline.

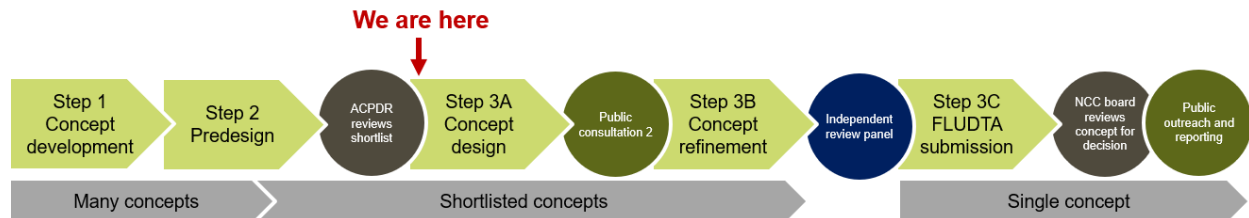


Figure 4 : High level project timeline

To provide more concrete details, the following activities have taken place over the recent months:

1. Engagement and Consultation

- i. Indigenous Engagement: The engagement with Indigenous communities is progressing continuously throughout the project's lifespan. Input on the design and environmental aspects of the project, as well as economic opportunities for the communities, is actively being sought. The feedback collected is being integrated into the project methodology and the conceptual designs that are being initiated.

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- ii. Public Consultation: The IPT led two initial rounds of public consultation: in October 2020 and December 2021. The project team is now preparing the approach for the next round of public consultation, in Fall 2024. Consultation reports from previous public consultations are available on the NCC's website.
- iii. Public Advisory Group: A Public Advisory Group (PAG) was established in Fall 2023 with membership from a broad range of organizations and stakeholders representing community associations, people with disabilities, sustainable transportation, heritage, business improvement areas, tourism, tour operators, 2SLGBTQIA+ community, recreation clubs. The first PAG meeting was held on November 16, 2023, and the second meeting was March 21, 2024.
- iv. ACPDR: The project has been presented to the Advisory Committee on Planning, Design and Reality (ACPDR), in November 2023 and March 2024 for feedback and expert guidance.
- v. ACUA: The project has been presented to the Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility (ACUA), in June 2024, for feedback and expert guidance.
- vi. Independent Review Panel (IRP): In Winter 2024, The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) was contracted by PSPC. The role of RAIC is to provide professional guidance throughout the elaboration of design solutions and ensuring that the new bridge design meets the highest possible design standards and incorporates important considerations that Canadians share. RAIC has assembled an Independent Review Panel comprising experts in multiple disciplines. The IRP is tasked with recommending a concept design to the IPT prior to the NCC Board's approval of the final concept design.

Section 12 of the National Capital Act grants the NCC the authority to approve the design of the replacement bridge. The” Federal Land Use, Design and Transaction Approval (FLUDTA) process for the Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project is described in further detail in Section 4.

2. Planning, Studies, and Design

- i. Impact Assessment Act: As a designated project under the *Impact Assessment Act*, the project is subject to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada’s (IAAC) regulatory requirements and guidance. A key principle of the Impact Assessment process is early, meaningful engagement with the Public and Indigenous communities. After submitting a Detailed Project Description (DPD) on January 13, 2023 the IAAC decided that an impact assessment is not required for the Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project based on the strength of the DPD. The IAAC made their decision public on March 23, 2023. No significant time is saved by this determination as the proponent is legally obligated to complete the commitments made in the DPD.

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- ii. Planning and Design Principles for the Replacement of the Alexandra Bridge: The *Planning and Design Principles for the Replacement of the Alexandra Bridge* were approved by the NCC Board on June 23, 2021. Those guiding principles, set out the project scope, its objectives and establishes a vision and principles for the advancement of a signature bridge design. The vision for the new structure is to create a bridge as a unique civic place, reflective of Canadian values and identity, and respectful of the integrity of the national capital's cultural landscapes.
- iii. Alexandra Bridge Replacement Performance Criteria for Bridge Design: The *Alexandra Bridge Replacement Performance Criteria for Bridge Design* were approved by the NCC's Executive Management Committee (EMC) in September 2022 and identify specific functional requirements for the replacement of the Alexandra Bridge.
- vii. Technical Advisor (TA): In spring 2023, PSPC engaged a Technical Advisor to assist both PSPC and the NCC, in coordinating and completing technical, economic, heritage, and environmental studies, and to develop the conceptual designs for the new bridge.
- iv. Heritage Impact Assessment: The TA has advanced the Heritage Impact Analysis, a crucial document that is informing the design concepts that is being initiated. Environmental and Archeology.
- v. Environmental Studies: Multiple environmental studies have progressed ;
 - Ecological field studies are being completed to characterize the natural environment in the vicinity of Alexandra Bridge.
 - Surveys were completed in 2023-24 to provide input for the bridge concept design and focused on the Project Development Area, which is the immediate area of physical disturbance anticipated because of the Project;
 - Ecological studies are being completed, in a larger study area, to gather the data required to begin planning the mitigation strategies associated with construction.
 - Terrestrial surveys include: vegetation, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, bats and land mammals.
 - Aquatic surveys include: surface water quality, fish and fish habitat
- vi. Archeological Studies The stage 1, which mainly includes historical document review and site visits has been completed. The project team is preparing for the stage 2.
- vii. Wharf and Park Jacques Cartier (JCP): Given the bridge's proximity to the existing Hull Wharf, careful consideration is needed to manage both the temporary and permanent impacts on the use of the JCP and wharf as well as navigational access, which includes consideration of the use of a boat launch in JCP. The TA has initiated the development

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of a work plan for temporary mitigation measures. The plan also includes provisions for adjusting the final layout of the Wharf if necessary.

4. Options Analysis / NCC Staff Analysis

Planning Framework and the Federal Approvals process

The NCC's Federal Approvals (FLUDTA) process has been triggered and, as such, a review of the proposal will involve ensuring that the proposal is compatible and in alignment with the strategic framework and policies of the following NCC Plans and guidelines including:

- Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067 (2017)
- Canada's Capital Views Protection (2007)
- Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan (2005) (currently under review)
- Ottawa River North Shore Parklands Plan (2018)
- Capital Illumination Plan, 2017–2027 (2017)
- Capital Pathways Strategic Plan (2020)
- Capital Design Guidelines (2023)

Given the significance and complexity of the Alexandra Bridge replacement project, the Federal Approvals review will involve a series of sequential approvals to be considered by the NCC Board of Directors at key milestones during the design development process for a new bridge. It is anticipated that the first Federal Approval milestone, 15% Schematic Design Approval, will be submitted for consideration of the Board of Directors in Spring 2025.

The Federal Approvals review of bridge design is supported by the *Alexandra Bridge Replacement Performance Criteria for Bridge Design* document which incorporates policy direction and guidance from the relevant NCC plans and was established for the Alexandra Bridge replacement to provide transparency and clarity with respect to the project's requirements and priorities within the areas of planning, heritage protection, architecture and urban design, and sustainability.

The NCC staff as part of the project team are working closely with the TA to ensure that the preliminary studies and analysis as well as the opportunities identified in section 6 are taken into account in the development of design options.

5. Financial Details

Not applicable to this submission. The financial authority for this project will be granted through a submission to the Treasury Board.

6. Opportunities and Expected Results

Given that the bridge has reached the end of its lifecycle and must be replaced, multiple opportunities are emerging. The social, economic, heritage and cultural significance of this bridge has been thoroughly demonstrated, and the *performance criteria* developed for the design of the new bridge lay the groundwork for all these opportunities. The following represents only some of the opportunities that are being integrated into the concept designs.

a) Urban Design Framework

- i. Landscapes Connection: The new bridge will serve as a structure that connects the landform to various cultural landscapes, such as the Algonquin Anishinabe Landscape, the Urban Scape, and the Central Capital Landscape. It also embodies the broader significance of the Alexandra Bridge as a cultural object, symbol, and representative of the evolving relationship with the river, known as the Kichi Zibi, rivière des Outaouais, and the Ottawa River. These names reflect the same river as viewed and interpreted by different cultures.

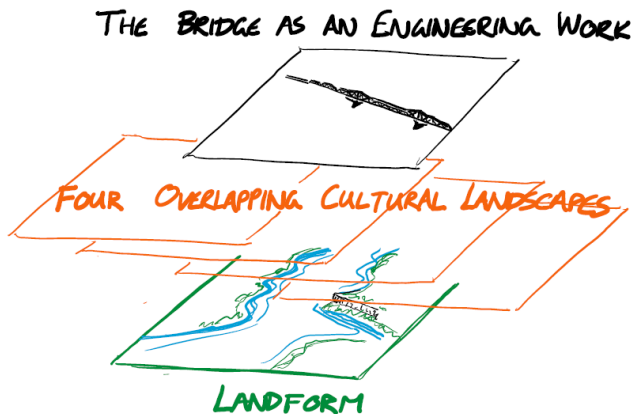


Figure 5 : Schematic illustration of the urban framework

- ii. Active Mobility: There is an opportunity to create a sustainable interprovincial transportation connection that will prioritize active mobility and highlight the symbolic importance of the site to all Canadians for many generations to come.
- iii. Impact in the river: The new design has the opportunity to reduce the number of piles in the river.
- iv. Material from the existing bridge: Opportunities to reuse salvaged materials from the existing bridge will be explored. These materials may be incorporated for elements beyond the primary bridge structure. The Heritage Impact Analysis's Cultural Landscape Approach, combined with the Heritage Conservation Approach will provide the bridge design team with parameters to inform their bridge concept designs.

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b) Public Space and Users

- i. Public Space: Originally built as a functional structure, the Alexandra Bridge has, due to its unique location and architectural expression, also become a significant landmark. The project has the opportunity to incorporate this evolution into the new design. The new bridge must function both as an integral part of the core area transportation network and as a dynamic public space. It needs to accommodate a wide range of activities, including utilitarian travel, recreation, tourist travel, sightseeing, and resting. During special events, the bridge may also serve as an urban gathering space.



Figure 5 : Picnic on Alexandra Bridge during Canada 150 Celebration

- ii. Mobility: The new bridge will enhance the mobility of various user groups by providing a safer environment for transit riders and recreational users (pedestrians and cyclists) who cross the bridge to enjoy the rich panorama of the NCR and access numerous national cultural/civic landmarks (National Museum of History, National Gallery of Canada, the Parliament Buildings, Capital Parks – Jacques Cartier Park and Major’s Hill Park). Additionally, the construction will significantly improve universal accessibility. With a new bridge design, the existing slope (> 4%) of the bridge deck as one travels from Rue Laurier and Boulevard des Allumettières intersection to the highest point on the bridge will be eliminated and the new bridge deck will be universally accessible throughout.
- iii. Connectivity: The alignment of the new bridge has the opportunity to enhance the connectivity of the Gatineau shoreline adjacent to Jacques Cartier Park, a gem that is not presently utilized to its full potential.
- iv. Uninterrupted Access: The new bridge offers the advantage of remaining open, providing the public with uninterrupted access and eliminating the unexpected closures for maintenance and repairs that currently affect the existing bridge.

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Figure 6 : Existing conditions under the bridge on Gatineau side

- v. Laurier-Allumeti re node: The new bridge alignment offers opportunities that may enhance future development of a commemorative node at the intersection of Rue Laurier and Boulevard des Allumetti res in Gatineau. A realigned intersection allows for additional commemorative space, augmented by an optimized reconfiguration of right turn near the Canadian Museum of History. These plans could significantly improve the functionality, safety and significance of this important node of the Confederation Boulevard.

c) Bridge Expression

- i. Signature Design: Given that the current bridge is acknowledged as an iconic structure, the expectation for the new bridge is to preserve qualities such as 'uniqueness' by responding to the heritage and environmental context. The new bridge should be sensitively integrated into this nationally significant landscape. Its architectural, structural, and urban character should vividly represent the identity of the "place" and the values of the country, cities, and communities it serves, providing a timeless and meaningful legacy for future generations. The architectural and structural design of the new bridge should aim to achieve the highest industry standards of design excellence and visual quality.
- ii. Climate adaptation: In addition to its distinctive expression, the new structure will be contemporary, designed to adapt and be resilient to climate change, and incorporating sustainable advancements in bridge construction.

d) Views and Visual Experiences

- i. Visual Experience: The existing views of and from the bridge are being carefully studied by the project team to preserve and enhance these perspectives as part of the vision to sustain the evolving layered cultural landscape. The new alignment will not only maintain

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the existing views but will also be designed to optimize the potential of all views across various cultural landscapes, revealing more of the Capital and its rich heritage. This approach ensures that the bridge not only connects places but also enriches the visual experience of the city's heritage and beauty.

e) Confederation Boulevard

- i. Confederation Boulevard: The Alexandra Bridge represents a significant portion of Confederation Boulevard. This project presents an opportunity to introduce design elements that are harmonious with the existing aesthetic of Confederation Boulevard while also incorporating subtle variations to enhance and modernize the overall streetscape. By carefully integrating contemporary design elements that resonate with the established character, the project aims to both preserve and rejuvenate this ceremonial route.

f) Long term vision

- i. Tramway: In keeping with the long-term vision for the NCR, the new Alexandra Bridge will be designed with the potential to convert the vehicle travel lanes into lanes for a tramway. This foresight, which is not feasible with the current bridge, positions the interprovincial connection of the NCR to adapt readily to new standards of movement within the urban landscape. This represents a significant opportunity to embrace modern transportation solutions, echoing one of the main original functions of the Alexandra Bridge.
- ii. Symbol: The new bridge will become a symbol for the National Capital Region, bridging the past with the region's new reality and integrating a vision of long-term planning. The design is guided by the Seven Generations Principle, which is embraced by many First Nations. This principle directs decision-making with a long-term perspective, taking into account the impact on the next seven generations. It promotes sustainable and responsible actions to ensure a healthy, secure, and prosperous environment for future generations.

7. Alignment with Government and NCC Policies

- *Budget 2019 – Investing in the Middle Class* and Mandate Letters addressed to the Minister of PSPC (2019 and 2021) direct the replacement of the Alexandra Bridge within ten years.
- Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus will continue to be considered throughout the design development process. The consideration of GBA Plus will be supported through the application of the *Capital Design Guidelines*. The guidelines provide detail on the application of GBA Plus to support the development of a design that advances equity, inclusion and that eliminates discrimination. A document summarizing how GBA Plus has been integrated as part of the design development will be submitted as part of the Federal Approval application for 15% Schematic Design.

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- *Alexandra Bridge Replacement Planning and Design Principles (2021)*: include guidelines to achieve universal accessibility through urban design considerations for pedestrian spaces that allow equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and appropriate size for approach and use.
- *NCC's Performance Criteria for Bridge Design (2022)*: includes criteria that require the new bridge and its approaches to be universally accessible, with attention to ensure all users feel welcomed, comfortable and safe, and able to engage with public spaces dedicated to pedestrians and active mobility.
- *NCC's Capital Design Guidelines (2023)*: clarify the NCC's expectations for the quality of spaces, facilities, architecture and structures of national importance, in keeping with its planning and stewardship mandate. The universal accessibility guidelines therein provide direction to proactively identify, remove and prevent barriers to ensure full individual participation regardless of physical, mobility and cognitive limitations.
- The *Impact Assessment Agency* of Canada has decided that an impact assessment is not required for the project to replace the Alexandra Bridge. Its decision was based on the submitted Detailed Project Description that identifies mitigation measures and commitments to be implemented as part of the project to address environmental effects and to respond to feedback received through indigenous engagement, public consultation and stakeholder engagement.
- Sustainability is identified as a key project objective. All aspects of the project including design, deconstruction and construction are being considered to ensure alignment with the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy 2022–2026. As part of the project, an application for Envision verification is planned. The framework for Envision verification is based on achieving credits based on performance indicators for infrastructure sustainability addressing subjects including climate and resilience, resource allocation and quality of life

8. Risks and Mitigation Measures

The project risks are currently being evaluated by the IPT and the TA. The Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project is complex, with a substantial number of risks for which mitigation measures are being developed. These scheduling and financial risks will be integrated into the Treasury Board Submission.

At this stage, aside from the scheduling and financial risks, a significant risk the project faces is the confusion caused by messages circulated by external groups. Many public groups oppose the demolition of the existing bridge. Meanwhile, other groups have begun to present concepts for a new Alexandra Bridge publicly and through the media. These activities, external to the project, are interfering with the public outreach efforts of PSPC and the NCC. To mitigate this, public consultations are being held, a webpage for the project is being updated, and this Public Board submission is part of the strategy to keep the public informed about the project's progress.

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9. Public Engagement and Communications

- In coordination with the project's design framework and schedule, the NCC has developed a *Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan* to support design development.
- A first round of extensive public and stakeholder consultations were undertaken in Fall 2020/2021. The feedback received informed the development of the project's requirements as defined by the planning and design principles, the Detailed Project Description, as well as the subsequent Performance Criteria for bridge design.
- A Public Advisory Group (PAG) has been established to ensure that a diversity of stakeholder and community interests are considered throughout the design development process.
- A round of public consultation is planned for this design phase of the project including ongoing stakeholder engagement. The public consultation is planned for Fall 2024 and is anticipated to include online surveys, open house events and stakeholder meetings. Additional meetings may be held with a representative cross-section of the local population, including groups identified through GBA Plus analysis.
- Regular project updates through the PSPC and NCC project websites and project newsletter, as well as opportunities for engagement will be communicated to the public.
- The Integrated Project Team is coordinating ongoing consultation and engagement with 19 Indigenous communities and organizations. Indigenous engagement for the project is grouped around three pillars:
 - Social and environmental impacts of the project;
 - Participation in the economic benefits of the project; and
 - Indigenous knowledge including integration of Indigenous culture and values in the design.

10. Next Steps

From an overall perspective, the Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project is on schedule, meaning construction is set to begin in 2028 and finish in 2032. Here are some of the upcoming major milestones:

- Spring/Summer 2024;
 - Initiate the concept designs development.
 - Finalizing the Heritage Impact Analysis.
 - Undertaking numerous technical and environmental studies, including ecological field studies (habitats, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife surveys), archaeological assessments, marine infrastructure assessment, traffic studies, noise studies, views, and visual analyses, etc.
 - Continue engagement with Indigenous communities throughout the project.
 - Continue consultation with the Public Advisory Group and stakeholders.
 - Continue meetings with the Independent Review Panel.

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- Fall 2024 – NCC ACPDR and Board presentations to present the retained concept designs.
- Fall 2024 – Public consultation to inform the refinement of the shortlisted concept designs.
- Spring 2025 – Recommendation of the preferred concept to the NCC’s Board of Directors for 15% Schematic Design approval.
- Spring 2025 – Public Consultation to inform the refinement of the Schematic Design.
- Fall 2025 – Recommendation of the 100% Schematic Design for approval to the NCC’s Board of Directors.
- 2025 - 2028 – Procurement Phase – Integrated Project Team Partner engaged to support the preparation of Developed Design and construction documents.
- 2026-2027 – Public Consultation on the advancement of the Developed Design
- 2027-2028 – Public Consultation on the Final Design
- 2028 – Recommendation of the 100% Developed Design for approval to the NCC’s Board of Directors.
- 2028-2032 – Construction

A project website, from NCC and from PSPC, is being updated regularly with up-to-date documents.

11. List of Appendices

N/A

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