

Media Release

For Immediate Release

BRIDGE CLOSURES WITHIN THE CITY OF PORT COLBORNE

Port Colborne, ON - October 6, 2015

Mayor Maloney and members of city staff met yesterday with officials of The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, Region of Niagara, Emergency Medical Services, Niagara Regional Police and Ministry of Transportation to discuss the current and upcoming bridge closures within the City of Port Colborne.

On Wednesday, September 30th Bridge 19 (Main Street/Highway 3) was closed after being hit by a ship. The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation is still assessing the extent of the damage to the bridge and what repairs will be required. The bridge will remain closed to vehicular traffic until after the close of the shipping season in December. Repairs will begin in early January.

Prior to the above closure, rehabilitation plans were set for the Weir Bridge on Main Street/Highway 3. It will be closed from October 13th to approximately November 27th. The decision was made to proceed with this rehabilitation at the same time as the closure of Bridge 19. Otherwise, the closure would have to be scheduled for April and May 2016 and businesses in the area would be affected again.

"We are working with the Seaway to install appropriate signage indicating businesses are open and how to access them," stated Mayor Maloney. "Our Main Street business area is an important commercial network for our city and the viability of these businesses is our utmost concern."

Emergency services plans were also discussed. "We will be working with the members of our Fire Department, Niagara Regional Police and Niagara Emergency Medical Services to ensure our residents have access to emergency services if needed," stated Mayor Maloney. "The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation has given us assurances that we will have access across the canal at all times in the event of an emergency," added Fire Chief Tom Cartwright. "We would ask that motorists be mindful of emergency vehicles, especially if one of the other bridges is raised for shipping traffic."

Ron Hanson, Director of Engineering and Operations noted "we are working with the Region of Niagara and the Ministry of Transportation to develop an alternate truck route to encourage truck traffic that would have previously travelled along Highway 3, to seek an alternate route. We hope that this will help to relieve some of the congestion that may occur at Bridge 19A."

Mayor Maloney stated that "while our residents are very familiar with dealing with bridge closures and raised bridges, they may want to use Bridge 21 Clarence Street as their main crossing, or if travelling north of the city, use Hwy 58 to Townline Road. This will divert some of the traffic from Bridge 19A."

Welland Transit is currently reviewing the existing bus routes to the east side of the City, which previously crossed the Weir Bridge and Bridge 19. Temporary routes will be posted on the Welland Transit and City of Port Colborne websites.

“Through no fault of our own, traffic across the canal may become a bit trying for a period, but with a little patience and understanding, the community will get through this,” Mayor Maloney commented, “and whenever possible, please support the impacted businesses.”

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For more information, please contact:

Mayor John Maloney
905-835-2900 Ext 302
mayor@portcolborne.ca