

Province to Replace Musquodoboit Green Bridge

By Richard Bell

The province has chosen a very oblique way of letting the people of the Eastern Shore know that the Department of Public Works has decided to replace the aging “Green Bridge” on Highway 7 over the Musquodoboit River.

The first public announcement we have been able to locate was a notice in the November issue of the *Cooperator* that Public Works had given “notice that a submission has been added to the Common Project Search pursuant to the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* ... [and] has deposited a notification of minor work”

The “minor work” includes “replacing the existing Musquodoboit bridge. The current 47-metre long metal truss bridge is in disrepair and will be replaced with 48-metre-span, 65-metre long, 13.25-metre-wide plate girder bridge. The new bridge will offer 7.8 metres of clearance above the ordinary high-water mark.”

On the federal Common Project Search site, the “Notification of Minor Work, Registry 8463” provides some additional information about the project. “The new bridge alignment will be approximately the same as the existing bridge alignment. A temporary bridge will be constructed directly north of the existing bridge for traffic diversion. The construction of the temporary bridge will require 50.5 m2 of temporary stream infilling. The stream will be restored to its original grade once the project is complete and the detour is removed.”

The *Cooperator* contacted Public Works with several questions, starting with the location of the temporary

bridge. If the temporary bridge is built on the north side of the existing bridge, the temporary road would cross at least two properties, one of the east side and one on the west. If the bridge should be located on the south side of the existing bridge, the temporary road would cross at least two properties on the west side, and one on the east side. Each of the PIDs involved has one home, four of which are owned by local residents, and one of which is owned by an out-of-province corporation. In addition, one of the five is also the location of a small business.

A previous bridge was located at the end of Riverside Drive, where the abutment on the west side is still visible. It is unlikely that the province will consider reviving this old route, given that this route would involve routing the busy Highway 7 against a much larger number of houses.

Although the Common Site Research description says that the temporary bridge and road will be north of the existing bridge, the *Cooperator* asked Public Works to provide documentation on the decision to choose the north side rather than the south side. Public Works Media Relations officer Gary Andrea said in an email on November 17 that “This project is in the early stages of design and staff are working on all possible options. The multiple year project is not expected to begin until fiscal 2024-25 at the earliest.” We also asked Andrea about whether there would be any public consultation. Andrea wrote that, “Public



consultations are not required with the proposed project, however if a property owner is impacted by the installation of a new bridge, the department will consult with them.”

We asked for a drawing of the proposed bridge. Andrea wrote, “The department does not typically release engineered drawings for bridge projects in advance of the tendering process.”

As to the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, we asked Public Works to explain why this Act was relevant to the Green Bridge site, given that the river is flowing over a series of rapids before and after the current bridge, and is clearly not navigable except by kayakers risking their lives for a thrill ride during high water. Public Works has not replied to this request.

New MLA! New Minister! New Minister!

By Richard Bell

As if being a new MLA was not enough of a challenge, Preston MLA Twila Grosse found herself as the new Minister of not one but two departments, African Nova Scotian Affairs and the Public Service Commission. We caught up with her in a short phone interview to hear a little about what she’s been learning as she takes on these new responsibilities.

“I’m learning so much about how government works, how things actually get done,” Grosse said. “Sometimes the first month has been a bit overwhelming, but it’s been a great experience thus far.”

As the winner of a by-election, Grosse doesn’t have a class of other new MLAs who are on the same learning curve she is on. “As an MLA, there’s an excellent orientation that you go through about your role as an MLA, how you can best represent your constituents, and what supports are there,” Grosse said. “And I’ve been getting great advice from my fellow MLAs. A lot of MLA work is about working collectively with all levels of government.”

As the head of two ministries, Grosse has had an extra dose of briefings to absorb in addition to being an

MLA. “It is indeed a balancing act,” Grosse said. “For the ministries, it’s dividing time between the two. Sometimes you’re needed more in one department than the other. My first task has been getting acquainted with the priorities of each department, about where we are right now.”

Striking a balance is hard. “I am really grateful for the good solid team around me in all three positions,” Grosse said. “They are definitely assisting me all the way.”

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Seasons Greetings

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Happy Holidays

MLA MEMO

Building the Future, Faster

The province is focused on building the future. We’re expanding our skilled trades workforce to construct more homes and the infrastructure Nova Scotian need. Over the next three years, up to 5,000 new apprentices will be added. The province is introducing tuition waivers for in-demand construction trades, assisting students with tool costs, and providing extra classroom tutors. Additionally, the standard ratio is being increased from one journeyperson per two apprentices to one journeyperson per three apprentices in most trades.

This work builds on existing initiatives to attract, train, and retain more skilled tradespeople including the More Opportunity for Skilled Trades tax rebate program. For more information about eligibility or to apply, visit: <http://novascotia.ca/MOST>

Suite Incentive to Increase Housing

The new Secondary and Backyard Suite Incentive Program will provide up to 50 per cent of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$25,000 in forgivable loans to eligible homeowners who create an affordable secondary or backyard suite in their home or on their property. This pilot program represents an \$8-million investment over three years and is expected to result in more than 300 secondary or backyard suites during that period.

To qualify for the pilot program, homeowners must:

- provide housing at a maximum rental rate that is 80 per cent of average market rent in the area for a minimum of five years
- not make suites available for short-term rentals while homeowners have an active loan under the program.

Tenants must be at least one of the following:

- below the household income limits for their area
- a parent, 65 years or older, of one of the homeowners
- an adult child of a senior homeowner.

The landlord-tenant relationship will be subject to the Residential Tenancies Act. More information available soon, please contact your MLA’s office.

Province Taking Action to Bring Cell Service to ALL Nova Scotians

The province is investing \$47.3 million to start the new Cellular for Nova Scotia Program, which will expand telecommunications infrastructure and communications networks throughout the province. All Nova Scotians deserve access to cellular service, no matter where they live or travel.

Having reliable cell service is essential for Nova Scotians. It’s a matter of safety, and it’s something we all count on constantly. Build Nova Scotia will lead the program, which will include a comprehensive strategy to improve cell coverage for both civic addresses and roads. The strategy will involve partners across the telecommunications industry as well as other levels of government.

Phase 1 of the program will improve cell coverage in the short-term using existing infrastructure. In Phase 2, the aim will be closing remaining gaps in coverage with new infrastructure.

The province will also invest \$3.3 million to build four new trunked mobile radio towers to expand radio coverage for first responders in West Bay Road/Marble Mountain and Pleasant Bay in Inverness County; Framboise, Richmond County; and Greenfield, Queens County.

New Mobile App Provides Better Access to Care & Information

YourHealthNS helps Nova Scotians better navigate the healthcare system – it is a one-stop shop to book services, navigate care, and find information easier and faster. Healthcare services, resources, and information are now a tap away with a new mobile app that connects Nova Scotians with care. Downloadable on your mobile device through the app store.

Key features of this first-of-its-kind app for Nova Scotia include:

- a home screen that can be personalized with information most important to the individual
- the ability to book blood tests, X-rays, flu shots and COVID-19 vaccine appointments
- a search tool to find the nearest health services

- predicted emergency department wait times
- access to vaccination records
- access to free, same-day virtual care
- the option to chat with a care navigator to help find the best service or information needed and, if appropriate, direct people to a virtual care visit.

Accessing virtual care has also become easier for Nova Scotians. People on the Need a Family Practice Registry can receive comprehensive care from Nova Scotian healthcare providers who can order diagnostic tests and provide referrals to specialists. Those on the registry will also have access to general consults and prescription refills 24/7, 365 days a year through a partnership with Maple, one of Canada’s leading virtual-care platforms.

Nova Scotians who are attached to a primary care provider will also have access to virtual care, which will include general consults and prescription refills. The province will cover two visits per year.

Nova Scotians without a mobile device can access YourHealthNS online at: <https://www.yourhealthns.ca/>

Expanding Mental Health Services

The province is creating a new Nova Scotia Firefighter and Ground Search and Rescue Volunteer Assistance Program. This pilot project will provide volunteer first responders access to mental health support, including personal and family counselling, stress management, nutrition support and more. More information can be found here: <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20231109003>

Additional Resources for Mental Health Support:

Mental health crisis line: 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free); it operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis or people concerned about someone else.

For non-crisis support, people needing treatment and care for mental health and addictions can contact the mental health and addictions intake service at 1-855-922-1122 to be matched with appropriate services.



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Merry Christmas! May your holidays be filled with Happiness and Joy.



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We Woof You a Merry Christmas!



Musquodoboit Harbour & District Lions

We are Lions!! Hear us ROAR!!
Where there's a need, there's a Lion

Tis the season to be Jolly! Unfortunately, although this is true for many in our community, some will find the holiday season a struggle. The Lion's Club is especially proud at this time of year of our close association with the Food Bank and the Railway Museum. These associations provide an opportunity to ensure others experience the joy of the holiday season.

The Railway Museum will once again be running the **Fill Your Caboose Community Food Drive** in association with the Food Bank, accepting donations to be distributed to local families just prior to Christmas. It will come as no surprise that the Food Bank is dealing with an increasing number of requests for help this year. **We encourage all to give generously** – the Food Bank does a tremendous job of helping to make sure many in the community have nutritious meals. Lions help on this project with packaging and distribution; a volunteer event that fills our hearts with the joy of the Christmas season.

Lions will be participating in the **Christmas Parade of Lights Saturday December 2nd 6:00PM**, including the Tree and Museum lighting. Lions will be set up that evening at the Railway Museum serving up Corn Chowder, Chili, and Holiday Greetings. This is a very fun event and we look forward to seeing the community come together to kick off the holiday season.

The Lion's Club Christmas Tree lot is open again this year at the Railway Museum.

**Saturday and Sunday 9AM to 5PM and
Monday through Thursday 2PM to 5PM**

Trees \$35. Wreaths \$20.

Please remember that if you, or anyone you know, is in need – we are here to help. Our mission is to serve. Contact us at 902-889-2645 or via Facebook private messenger.

Wishing one and all a Safe and Happy Holiday Season and the very best in the New Year.



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Christmas Eve Morning Service, Dec 24th – 10:30 a.m.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Dec 24th – 7:00 p.m.

And the angel said to them, “fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11 ESV)



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