



2 September 2016

City of Ottawa Transportation Committee
c/o Rosemary Theriault (Committee coordinator)

Re: Truck Tunnel Feasibility Study

To Whom It May Concern:

Overview:

Action Sandy Hill (ASH) is writing to provide our comments on the recently released Truck Tunnel Feasibility Study. We are encouraged that the Study has concluded that a tunnel to divert 1700 trucks and up to 25,000 cars per day from downtown streets is technically feasible. We believe that, with this new data, decision makers at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels now have the background information necessary to move forward swiftly towards the implementation of a solution to the downtown Ottawa Interprovincial Truck problem.

Context:

We believe it is important to take the opportunity afforded by this item rising before Committee and Council to underscore once again the magnitude of this interprovincial truck problem and the need to take leadership towards a solution.

The Study has confirmed that during the peak periods of the day truck traffic reaches 200 trucks per hour. That rate translates to one truck passing through the critical Waller, Rideau, King Edward corridor every 18 seconds with the majority of these being tractor trailers. The daily rate, confirmed as 2600 trucks, translates into a total truck volume of 750,000 trucks per year. This problem is only going to worsen as the National Capital Region continues to grow.

These trucks make tight turns through several downtown intersections with pedestrian volumes of 5,000 to 10,000 pedestrians per day. This is a problem that has to be solved and in our opinion is the biggest unresolved urban planning issue in the National Capital Region. It is arguably the most serious instance of a downtown truck problem in Canada (apart from Windsor where the provincial and federal governments are spending a combined 5B\$ to solve that problem). This situation has been ongoing in Ottawa for 50 years and several previous initiatives to solve this problem (Vanier Parkway extension, Kettle Island bridge) have failed to garner sufficient public support.

Action:

With the release of this Tunnel Feasibility Study the time to act is now and our community is looking for the kind of leadership at the municipal level that can drive towards achieving the necessary consensus with upper levels of government as well as the all important social consensus needed to turn a proposed solution into a reality.

Concerns/Requests:

With our support then, for moving forward to further discussion of next steps between the Mayor and senior levels of government as proposed in the Staff Report, we would like to table several concerns which we would like to ensure are addressed:

1. Tunnel impacts under Sandy Hill. We would like to inform you that the preferred alignment for a tunnel has raised some concerns from the many Sandy Hill residents who live above the proposed route. We request then that any next steps planned by the City pay special attention to consulting with Sandy Hill residents and providing the necessary reassurance that a tunnel would not adversely impact buildings and people living above the proposed route. This is particularly important given the abundance of heritage buildings in the area and the presence of sensitive marine clay.
2. Further refinement of truck volumes: We have reason to believe that the Study has under-represented the volumes of trucks that would be diverted from downtown streets and would request that more detailed analysis be undertaken to ensure the accuracy of this number as this is an important criterion in any future benefit-cost analyses. We give 3 reasons for bringing up this point:
 - a) The Study fails to consider how many trucks could be diverted from other bridges (principally the Chaudieres) if a tunnel existed. This is a strange omission considering that such analysis was provided for car traffic.
 - b) Similarly, no estimate was made on how many additional trucks would use the tunnel as a result of future growth. This also is a strange omission considering that such a growth scenario was modelled for growth in car traffic to 2031.
 - c) Finally, the Study concludes that 1/3 of all interprovincial trucks in the downtown are local and would not use the tunnel. There is currently too high a level of confusion over this number and further clarification is required.

Based on the above, we have good reason to believe that reporting a number of 1700 as the limit of the number of daily trucks that would use the tunnel is not accurate enough for the purposes of the Mayor discussing next steps with other government partners as recommended in the Staff Report.

3. No dates for next steps: We are concerned that the report recommendations do not include any commitments for when the Mayor should report back to Council and to our communities on the status of discussions with senior levels of government. Repeated failures to follow through on previous initiatives have been deeply discouraging to our downtown communities. We are concerned about the risks that will continue unabated and consider further delays to be unacceptable.

We are looking to this Committee to make a clear commitment towards a proposed solution and to invest the time and effort that will be required to bring on board all the parties necessary to bring it to fruition.

Best Regards,



Chad Rollins
President, Action Sandy Hill