

Staff Report

Report From: Mayor Bazinet and Members of Council

Meeting Date: October 21, 2024

Subject: Menesetung Bridge Request for Funding Update

Attachment(s): 1. Deanna Hastie, Treasurer - Menesetung Bridge Request (October 7, 2024)
2. Menesetung Bridge Association – Bridge Repair Letter (March 4, 2021)

Recommendation:

THAT Goderich Town Council provide direction to staff on how they wish to proceed with the Menesetung Bridge Association's funding request.

Report Summary:

To provide an update to Council on the Menesetung Bridge Association application to the Government of Canada's Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) Tourism Growth Program.

Background/Analysis:

History of the Menesetung Bridge Association, the Bridge, and its Heritage Designation

The Menesetung Bridge Association (MBA) has been managing the Menesetung Bridge since 1990.

The Menesetung Bridge was designated by the Town of Goderich in 1993 for its architectural and historical significance under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.



Built during the summer of 1906, this former CPR bridge spans the Maitland River near its entry to Lake Huron. The CPR railway line was constructed from Guelph to Goderich. The bridge has six piers and two abutments; each of the seven spans is 104 feet long by 12 feet wide and weighs 38 tons. The total bridge length is 750 feet and it was the longest bridge in Ontario at that time. The destination CPR station was completed in 1907 with the official opening of the line on September 19, 1907. The bridge was converted to a pedestrian bridge in 1992.

Request for Funding

At their September 9, 2024 meeting, Council received a deputation from Mike Dawson, MBA Board member, with a request for funding of priority concrete repairs on the Menesetung Bridge.

On October 4, the Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), announced an investment of over \$4.2 million, through the Tourism Growth Program, for thirty (30) organizations across southern Ontario that are diversifying their tourism offerings and contributing to attracting new visitors to the region. This announcement included a funding contribution of \$200,000 to the Menesetung Bridge Association.

At their October 7, 2024 meeting, Council received a Staff Report (attached) from the Town's Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, Deanna Hastie, with potential funding options to support the \$150,000 funding request from the Menesetung Bridge Association.

At their October 7, 2024 meeting, Council deferred this item regarding the funding request from the MBA until the next Council meeting. Council additionally tasked staff with investigating the scope of the work that is needed and can be completed before March 31, 2026, and provide a follow-up report for Council's October 21, 2024 meeting. Additionally, staff were tasked with reviewing MBA's funding application and report back to Council regarding the budget they submitted.

MBA's Tourism Growth Funding Application

I am pleased to provide Council with the following information from Menesetung Bridge Association's FEDDEV Tourism Growth Funding application:

- An initial Engineering Report from BM Ross in 2020 identified from their structural review of the bridge that the biggest concern was the gradual deterioration of the concrete for piers 2, 3, 4 and 5, and also the south abutment bearing seat. The anticipated costs for this work are very high.

- A preliminary engineering study was prepared by BM Ross in 2021 (attached) focusing on the highest priority work; obtained an estimate from one of the companies that performs this type of work.
 - All of the capital work recommended in the Ontario Structure Inspection Manual (OSIM) report involves difficult site access and specialized concrete rehabilitation experience. The following is a list of sub-projects, in order of priority:
 - Patch repair concrete of abutments and ballast walls \$ 30,000
 - Patch repair the tops of piers 2, 3, 4, and 5 \$400,000



These capital costs include allowances for mobilization, site access and engineering, but does not include HST. If the repairs to the tops of the piers is broken into different stages for funding purposes, the sum of the different stages will increase because of the cost of remobilization. On an individual basis, each pier top might have a cost of about \$120,000. Of the four pier tops, pier 5 (the most northerly of these four) is the highest priority. Without any repairs to the bearing seats, the concrete deterioration advances to the point of undercutting the bearing plates of some of the girders. At some point, the recommendation will come to close the bridge to use because of the lack of support to some of the bearings. This situation could be in the range of 15 years (report dated 2021), but an earlier failure of bearing support is possible. It is unlikely that there will be a sudden failure of a girder span without some warning that comes from observations of concrete deterioration under the bearings.¹

MBA's Tourism Growth Funding application demonstrates that the engineers are ready to put to tender the proposal to repair the tops of pier 3, 4 and 5, and to repair all of the concrete for pier 3. If MBA tenders the project in the 1st quarter of 2025, they expect work to be done in

¹ BM Ross 2020 Structural Review of Menesetung Bridge letter (March 4, 2021)

2025, and into 2026. The MBA are aiming for a project in the \$700,000 range. Some of the work can be tendered as “provisional” to allow the contract to proceed if tenders exceed anticipated costs. Additional provisional items will be tendered to allow further work to be done if funds allow it. MBA has approached the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and has permits to proceed with work on the bridge, which will include access from the river.

Community Partners Funding Commitments To Date

MBA has been working on securing funding commitments from various community partners (Township of ACW, service clubs, local businesses, and individuals). To date, MBA has received community partner funding commitments totaling \$225,000, and \$200,000 from FedDev Ontario grant. This leaves a funding shortfall of \$275,000 in relation to the proposed \$700,000 work.

Email communication with MBA member Mike Dawson on October 9 demonstrates that the MBA will continue with their community campaign over the next 6 months, with a more general outreach once the tendered bids are in and they know more clearly what their fundraising target is. The bulk of the expenses will come due in 2025.

NOTE: At a minimum, the Menesetung Bridge Association must have community partner funds to match the Government of Canada’s Tourism Growth Program grant of \$200,000, to secure the funding and to proceed with the project.

Linkages:

- Corporate Strategic Plan Priority #3: Strong Local Economy

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

The financial impact and the source of funding is based on Council’s decision on the funding request from the Menesetung Bridge Association.

Approved By: Janice Hallahan, Chief Administrative Officer
Andrea Fisher, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk