



Report on the NECA Meeting with the Mayor, Feb. 6, 2017 Regarding the Impact of the CSST on New Edinburgh

A NECA delegation met with the Mayor and some of his staff for over an hour on February 6. The purpose was to discuss our community's concerns regarding the impact of the planned CSST project on the community, and to challenge the City to undertake a range of mitigation and remediation measures to lessen the damaging impact of the project. The desired measures had been outlined in a letter to the Mayor dated February 2, 2017.

Introduction.

We began by noting that NE residents support the Ottawa River Action Plan and the CSST component of it. We also noted that our residents are angry about the lack of any meaningful consultation, distressed with the lack of information being provided by the project and scared of the very serious health and safety risks for themselves and their families, which are being downplayed by the City.

We noted that the project appears to have been planned on the basis of engineering considerations, but with no consideration of the human impacts.

We acknowledged that there are unavoidable harms to our community from this project: 4 deep shafts to be blasted/dug in our midst, with the attendant dangerous noise, pollution, etc.

We also stressed that there are avoidable harms that can be mitigated; the major one being to simply start the E-W tunnel at the West end.

We then asked the Mayor for his personal commitment to do everything possible to mitigate the avoidable harmful effects of this project on our community.

The Mayor did not directly answer the question with a "yes" or "no" answer. However, when repeatedly pressed throughout the meeting, the Mayor did indicate that "[The City] is going to have to take the steps to make the project more palatable to the community."

The Mayor stated that they have hundreds of capital projects in play at any given time and that often communities become very anxious and concerned at the start, but that sometimes when a project is underway, the situation turns out to be not as bad as residents had anticipated. Officials invited interested residents to visit the Chamberlain Avenue site where work on the North-South tunnel is already under way, to get a better sense of what the CSST project is like in practice.

Following on, we moved to the Feb. 2 NECA letter to the Mayor, which outlined one primary objective and several secondary objectives that our delegation wished to achieve.

Relocation of the primary extraction site.

We spent most of the meeting on Objective #1: discussing our rationale/reasoning for the relocation of the primary extraction site for the E-W tunnel of the CSST. We stressed our view that the City approved the project design with incomplete engineering and human health risk assessment information.

We made a request for an independent study of the health and safety impacts of the project. The City's position: they have done what they were legally required to do with respect to all health and environmental regulations at the Provincial and Federal level. They did not see a need for an independent study of this kind. And, they noted that the contractor is responsible for health and safety issues, and that City staff on site will ensure the contractor is adhering to all relevant regulations.

Curiously, when presented with the community's view that the incremental costs associated with switching the direction of tunneling in the East-West CSST tunnel could be offset by cost and schedule gains realized at LeBreton, the Mayor appeared disinterested in this possibility. He suggested he'd nominate one of our delegation as successor to Pope Francis if we could produce such an outcome.

The Mayor's reaction/responses, summarized:

1. The primary extraction site will not be moved.
2. He is not going to "look into" moving the site
3. Access to City Council to make a presentation will not be granted.
4. If the community can supply appropriate engineering, cost and health risk data that would indicate that City Council has made their decision on the basis of materially-incomplete information, we could present that data to Alain Gonthier, the City's Director of Infrastructure Services. This would need to be done soon.

Asked if a presentation to the City's Environment and Climate Protection Committee might be possible, Chair David Chernushenko indicated that he did not anticipate such an opportunity at this point, but that he would be prepared to review any new information that the community might wish to bring forward and consider its implications.

Mitigation and Communication.

We noted that one overarching community issue is information/transparency. Residents have not known what is going on, when certain activities will happen and what to expect. Greater disclosure is required.

In response to these concerns, the City has proposed two "solutions."

The first was to have a direct line to a "point person" with some monitoring responsibilities for the project who could be easily contacted during hours of project operation, including evenings, on issues of immediate concern to residents, such as trucks idling or speeding, excessive noise, etc..

The second was the creation of a Community Construction Monitoring Committee that would:

1. Receive regular updates from the project team, including the City, constructor, and consultant team.

- >These updates will focus on construction and communications/outreach.
- > Updates on noise and vibration monitoring will be provided as part of the update.
- 2. Receive regular updates from the community representatives on issues affecting the community and requiring adjustment.
- 3. Identify and ensuring implementation of any remedial actions where possible to address construction related issues identified.
- 4. Visit the construction sites regularly to review construction progress and see firsthand the activities taking place onsite.
- 5. Identify opportunities for engagement between City, contractor and the community.
- 6. Review draft documents developed by the City with respect to construction operations in New Edinburgh to provide comments.

The City proposed that the structure and membership of the committee would include these provisions:

1. Meetings will be chaired by the Manager of the CSST project.
2. Minutes will be taken and circulated to the members for approval.
3. Members will include:
 - >Designated NECA representatives
 - >Councillor for Ward 13
 - >CSST Project Team Staff including:
 - Director, Infrastructure Services, City of Ottawa
 - CSST Program Manager
 - Field Ambassador
 - Contractor and consultant staff when required

The first meeting could be held in March 2017 and on a monthly basis after that until the end of construction in New Edinburgh anticipated in 2019. Frequency of meetings can be adjusted as agreed upon by the Construction Monitoring Committee.

The delegation consisted of three representatives with young families who live in the Stanley Avenue section of the community that will be most directly affected by the project: Marta Klepaczek, Dr. Sonny Dhanani and Pamela Howson, plus the two co-chairs of the NECA CSST Task Force, Joe Chouinard and Sean Flynn, and Tim Plumptre, NECA President.