

**Submitted to:** *The Infrastructure and Recreational Committee, Town of the Blue Mountains*

**Submitted by:** Peter Brown, Slabtown

**Subject:** *Access To The Community Of Slabtown  
Schedule 'B' Class EA, C.C. Tatham & Associates Ltd.*

**Date:** March 2, 2010

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- First, I want to acknowledge the work of committee members in offering their time and skills in service of the wider community. Coming forward to serve as you have is much appreciated by our Slabtown community.
- I am speaking on behalf of those who live beyond the bridge in Slabtown. Some of my neighbours and I have been talking to Reg Russworm and Michael Cullip about the proposals for a solution to the upgrading of the Slabtown bridge.
- From what I understand, the EA Report is suggesting an access road out to the west end of Slabtown Rd to Grey Rd 13.
- Some of the neighbours were at a meeting in August 2009 with Russ and Michael. We conveyed to them at that time that every one would rather **not** have another road out but wants to replace the existing bridge.
- Since that meeting, the EA Report has been completed and brought to this committee. The report recommends **Alternative F2 (Road to Grey 13, Maintain Existing Road for + - 20 years, then no bridge)**
- **On behalf of Slabtown residents, I want to restate clearly that we do not want this Alternative Plan F2.**
- I want to give some reasons why **Alternative C (Replace Bridge in Same Location) would be a better solution for all concerned:**
- Building an access road will open up both sides of the road for development of lots of various sizes. Some of the lots that are currently being used for **agricultural purposes** will be lost in the acquisition of land for the proposed road out to Grey 13. One parcel of land is currently one large field being cropped as such. If subdivided even into large parcels, it will not lend itself to agricultural use, a feature that has been a large part of **our township's cultural heritage and a critical part of its visual appeal.** I would remind the members of the *Community Vision Statement:*

*The Town of the Blue MT will be a progressive 4 seasons community, building on its agricultural and recreational facilities, offering a healthy and supportive lifestyle to a diverse range of residents, businesses and visitors.*

- **A new bridge structure (Alternative C) would preserve the visual beauty and cultural heritage of Slabtown.** The township also has a sustainability plan. One of its main goals is to “preserve and enhance the community’s natural and environmental features.” A new structure in the same location would do just that.
- The bridge has been worked on before. At that time the township simply used a temporary road through the orchard and hay field. This route could be used again while a new bridge is constructed with little work since most of the road still exists.
- However, this solution in the assessment of alternatives was called a “throw away cost of detour”. But we question the opposing costs of maintaining a permanent township road for 50 years. (gravel, grass cutting, snow removal, etc.)
- At a higher elevation, Alternative F2 (Rd to Grey 13, Maintaining Bridge for 20 years, then no bridge) would prove to be a hazardous in the winter months with high winds and drifting. In addition, the report clearly states that with the new road, there would be **“no winter maintenance of bridge and thus more circuitous routings would result in the winter period.”**
- We are also very concerned about **the increased travel time that F2 would pose for emergency vehicles to access our community.** A new bridge **accommodating heavier vehicles would facilitate a quicker response time in all seasons and therefore ensure the safety of and services for our residents.** It would also ensure that there is no erosion of pre-existing services as we are currently experiencing, for example, with garbage pick up.
- **Alternative F2 (Road to Grey 13, Maintain Existing Bridge up to 20 years, then no bridge), recommended by the engineering firm, carries with it by their estimation 13 negative impact points:**
  - 1 out of 3 physical**
  - 1 out of 2 natural**
  - 5 out of 7 social**
  - 2 out of 3 cultural and**
  - 4 out of 4 economic!!!**

**& 7 positive impact points**
- **Alternative C (New Bridge) carries with it by their estimation 6 negative impact points and 12 positive impact points. Listed as positive are:**
  - 4 out of 5 physical**
  - 2 out of 3 natural**
  - 2 out of 3 social**

**2 out of 3 cultural and**

**2 out of 2 economical!! Lowest long-term cost and no land acquisition**

- **The residents of Slabtown put forward Alternative Plan C for approval.** The EA Report presents **Alternative F2** as its recommended alternative. Their own report establishes 4 out of 4 negative economic impacts. **Alternative C** of the report claims “lower longer term costs and no land acquisition costs.” However, Page 16 of the report provides a bottom line cost difference of \$ 44,000 over 50 years for a new bridge. Again we want to remind you of both the Community Vision Statement and the township’s own sustainability plan.
- Finally, the “action” taken on this issue should be a win/win situation for the township and for our Slabtown community. It must include costs, most certainly. **But** we know, and can point to examples in our township where the cheapest solution at the time was **not**, in the long run, **the best** . Thank you for hearing some of our concerns.