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JANUARY 23, 2020

From: Glen Harris < >
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2020 10:50 AM
To: Sarah Merrifield < >

Have you seen the Bridge?

We live in a coveted community here in The Blue Mountains. A place where the economy runs on scenic value. The Bay, the rivers, the Escarpment, the forest trails and the sense of community. It's important. It's why people in the know continue to migrate here. That's worth protecting right?

In Clarksburg and Thornbury we're lucky enough to have the meandering Beaver River, and also just a few blocks from downtown there's Clendenan Conservation Area. This 857 acre parcel of land is coveted and appreciated by everyone.

At the entrance is Clendenan historical footbridge. Built in 1930, the iron-structured piece of our heritage is packed with rivets and worn concrete, it fits in well with its surroundings inside the conservation boundaries. A sign of days gone by.

Originally this one-way bridge was drivable—something I remember as a teenager growing up here. It was a shortcut to Slabtown, and a backroad option. A good route for the apple farmers during the weeks of harvest.

In 2011 the bridge was deemed too dangerous for vehicles and since then has lived on well as a pedestrian bridge.

This footbridge means no through traffic rumblings. Instead it's the end of the road from either side. Time to walk. A quieter conservation area.

This footbridge works well for us. It serves a loop trail for dog walkers, rows of kids on field trips from the nearby school cruise this bridge. Meditation happens here, yoga is scheduled, sightseers and bird watchers stand on this bridge and enjoy the vantage point. Below the bridge is a world-class fishing hole. No cars allowed, making it safer and quieter for the wildlife and those seeking nature.

The historic Clendenan footbridge needs to be protected and conserved. It's located well within the conservation area boundaries on both sides. Big time scenic value. Appreciated by everyone.

Lately there's been some chatter on turning the entire 10th Line into a bypass because some residents are not happy about the traffic along Highway 26. Specifically, waiting at the light that intersects Thornbury downtown and the road to the harbour and beaches. As it stands, a few days a year, in the summer mostly, people need to wait at the light for a few minutes. Maybe even two lights worth of waiting. Not an actual traffic jam, but definitely a little irritating.

To get around that some think that the 10th Line (with two dozen homes and growing, soccer fields and cemeteries honouring earlier generations, just three blocks from main street) should be instead turned into an actual highway bypass. This would include paving a bypass through the Conservation area, tearing down peaceful Clendenan footbridge, and replacing it with two lane highway bypass bridge complete with streetlights.
Also, turns out that googlemaps and some signage can help solve the problem of highway 26 'through traffic congestion' anyhow. It'll do that by redirecting drivers to the faster route to Tobermory around our towns and up Grey road 40.

Weighing the options I would say to those who want to turn a community road that leads into a beautiful quiet conservation area into a highway bypass that they should just perhaps wait at the light once in a while.

And while waiting there, know that in doing so you're making our community happier and safer.

Know that you're not directing local and weekender traffic away from our downtown businesses. And know that in just a few moments, you'll be fine.

If that's not enough, you can also take a few turns and park down at the conservation area, walk out onto the historic Clendenan bridge, take a deep breath, and enjoy nature and solitude that you helped conserve.

Cheers

Glen