



Important Message

To APPHA members
To the citizens of Potton
To the Municipality of Potton
To the Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications
To the Quebec Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility
To the Member of Parliament for Orford

Hello,

Following the publication of the call for tenders for the demolition of the Frontière Bridge, we have received several questions from our members, citizens, and journalists. We will therefore attempt to present the exact facts that led to the decision by the Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility (MTMD).

First, let us recall that the Ministry of Culture and Communications (MCC) classified the Border Bridge as a heritage building on October 28, 2024, thereby ensuring its permanent protection.

Since that date, Mr. Pierre L'Heureux, Vice-President of the Potton Heritage Association (APPHA), and I have been regularly following up on the file to find out the next steps: the nature of the work to be undertaken, the planned start date of the work, etc. Despite several communications with the MCC (via videoconference, email, and phone calls), we have received no response other than that nothing could be disclosed to us and that we would be informed when the information became available. We also contacted the MTMD, which gave us the same response.

On September 17, 2025, Mr. L'Heureux and I were invited by the MTMD to a videoconference during which we were informed that the MTMD planned to demolish the covered bridge before December 31, 2025.

Mr. Thelland, Regional Director for Estrie at the MTMD, informed us that the MTMD had received a notice from the Infrastructure Branch (an MTMD agency) in the fall of 2024 instructing them to find a solution for the Frontière Bridge before December 31, 2025, otherwise the adjacent bridge, owned by the MTMD, would be closed to traffic, depriving residents of the area of access to their homes. According to the notice from the Infrastructure Branch, the covered bridge is in such a state of disrepair that it could collapse and damage the adjacent bridge currently in use. Following this notice, the MTMD called in experts to conduct a detailed study of the current condition of the Border Bridge and the risk posed by its collapse. This study confirmed the fragility of the bridge and its advanced state of deterioration. The ministry also concluded that it would be very difficult, if not dangerous, to repair the bridge due to the high costs involved, safety issues for workers, and possible damage to the adjacent bridge.

The ministry also rejected the relocation scenario. Given the current condition of the bridge, relocation would pose too great a risk to the safety of workers and users of the adjacent bridge. The cost of relocation, with no guarantee of success, would also be very high. The MTMD's decision is therefore based on safety concerns. The MTMD has therefore chosen the safest and least expensive option, which is demolition. The ministry reminded us that it does not own the covered bridge and that its intervention on this bridge is solely for the purpose of securing the adjacent bridge, which it does own.

Given these facts, Mr. Paré, Regional Director for Estrie at the MCC, had no choice but to endorse the MTMD's decision, since the safety of citizens takes precedence over the protection afforded by the classification.

The MTMD has informed us that its decision is irrevocable and that the December 31, 2025 deadline is set in stone.

APPHA deplores the lack of communication between the government agencies involved and the lack of transparency. The MCC and MTMD have been aware of the nature of the Infrastructure Branch's notice since the fall of 2024. Why was this hidden from us? Were Potton's municipal officials aware of this? And what about the municipality's inaction and wait-and-see attitude?

It is also deplorable that the Border Bridge has been left to its own devices, forgotten since its last-minute relocation in 1968. It is not surprising that it is in such an advanced state of disrepair, since no maintenance or restoration work has been carried out for nearly 60 years. Not only has it been forgotten, but it is also orphaned, as no owner could be identified during the classification process.

Since the announcement of its demolition, expressions of sympathy for the bridge and intentions to take action to save it have been pouring in from all sides. But isn't it too late? Who can cover the costs of saving the bridge and legally ensure the safety of workers and citizens during restoration work? Since the bridge appears to have no owner (the municipality claims it does not), who could assume the risk of damage to the adjacent bridge and the environment if the bridge were to fall, in whole or in part, into Mud Creek?

That is where we stand at this time. We continue to monitor developments in this matter.

Lorraine Rouillard

**Lorraine Rouillard, President
Potton Heritage Association**