

# Lasalle Causeway Closure

## Impact to Marine Navigation: Background and Solutions.

**Background:** On April 2, 2024, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) advised the public that a construction incident had damaged the LaSalle Causeway in Kingston, Ontario, and the bridge would be closed until further notice.

The Causeway includes a Bascule lift bridge crossing a navigable waterway at the entrance to the Rideau Canal. As of mid-April, the bridge remained closed and PSPC announced that beginning the spring navigation season on May 1 would not be possible. PSPC remains unable to estimate a reopening date while engineers devise a repair solution, but industry estimates range from weeks to months.



IMAGE: Bascule Lift Bridge, Lasalle Causeway Kingston ON

This closure is extraordinary impactful for users of the waterway, especially businesses operating in Kingston's Inner Harbor. Three passenger vessels that would normally operate on the St. Lawrence River are currently moored in the Inner Harbour, unable to leave:

- **Island Belle:** ~160 passenger sightseeing vessel, monohull, aluminum, 26ft x 70ft approx. Kingston 1000 Islands Cruises. 31 tons
- **Island Star:** ~170 passenger dinnerboat, catamaran, aluminum, 30ft x 100ft approx. Kingston 1000 Islands Cruises. 63 tons
- **Canadian Empress:** ~60 passenger overnight cruise ship, monohull, aluminum, 30ft x 108 ft approx. St. Lawrence Cruise Lines, 190 tons.

A fourth passenger vessel, the Kawartha Voyageur, would normally be entering the inner harbour in Early May, and would then complete 12 trips under the causeway during its May-October season.

Also impacted are Metalcraft Marine, the Kingston Marina, the Davis Drydock, the City of Kingston, Parks Canada, and recreational boaters who are now unable to access the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The impact scales quickly to thousands of cancelled passengers—and quickly surpasses million dollars in lost tourism economic impact—as the busy Mothers' Day and Victoria Day weekends approach. It is in the shared best interest of government, industry, and the community to ensure that this navigable waterway remains navigable.

**Solutions:** The preferred solution is to schedule several temporary lifts of the Bascule span in early May—either with the bridge's own mechanism or with a crane—even as work continues on repairing the bridge. If this is impossible, we propose an alternate option: the Lasalle Causeway has a low, fixed concrete span, which could be temporarily removed to allow passage by marine traffic. If this work is timed to coincide with the Bascule span's repair, it will result in no additional delay to the causeway's closure to vehicle traffic.

The width and draught of the concrete span is sufficient for the commercial and recreational users of the Canal and Inner Harbour. Only one span of the concrete structure would need to be removed.

To remove the span, it could be lifted in segments by crane, or it could be raised in its entirety by a barge. A submersible barge could be lowered and positioned under the bridge span, with a jacking cradle on its deck. As water is pumped out of the barge bilge it will raise the bridge, lifting it and supporting it entirely on the barge. The barge could then be floated out of the channel to allow access through the span for as long as work continues on the Bascule bridge.

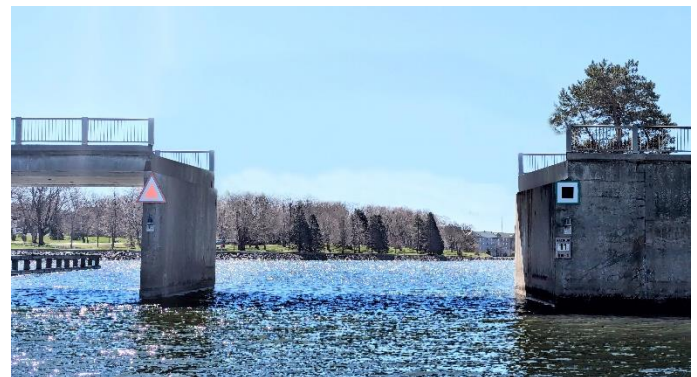
This solution has been developed in informal collaboration with local experts familiar with the site and with this type of work; it now requires validation by PSPC engineers. We urge PSPC and its industry partners to immediately devote resources to ensuring that the May navigation season can begin as scheduled in Kingston.



MAP: Inner Harbour North (UP), Lake Ontario and St Lawrence River South (DOWN)



IMAGE: Concrete Span, East portion of Causeway.



MODIFIED IMAGE: Digitally altered image showing proposed bridge span removal.

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