

Feb. 17, 2016

Dear Mayor Avis and Council - Town of Fort Frances:

Re: Concerns / suggestions about future highway and utility (re) construction projects

I am one of many who endured and survived the 2015 King's Highway reconstruction project from York Ave. to Wright Ave. In light of possible future similar plans for work on east Scott Street, etc., I wish to share my past experiences and hopefully constructive suggestions for the safety and well being of Fort Frances's businesses, residents and traveling guests.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Citizens directly affected by construction road and sidewalk closures, interrupted drinking water service, etc. need regular, accurate updates delivered in a timely fashion to their homes. (We appreciated the few, general announcements for the public that were communicated via the FF Times / Bulletin and local radio.)

#### **Past Problems:**

- A) There were frequent occasions our water supply / fire hydrants were "tampered with" by construction workers without notification or attention to requirements legislated by the Ontario Safe Drinking Water Act, 2000. (I contacted NWHU Public Health Inspector Brian Norris re several infractions.) E.g. Only one Drinking Water Advisory (DWA) dated Aug. 13, 2015 was delivered to our home yet there were multiple connects / disconnects, breakages of water mains and temporary water lines that would have affected our water supply and many more local up/down stream businesses and residential consumers.
- B) Street accesses / exits were often left to drivers and pedestrians to puzzle through. From hour to hour we never knew what changes were coming next. Road construction signs were often inaccurate, blown over, outdated, or missing altogether. (No notice of road or sidewalk temporary closures were ever received.)
- C) Our grandchildren and others lost the enjoyment and safety of Legion Park and West End Sports Field (green space) for most of the summer. Passing or parked loaders, graders, transports, company vehicles, etc., often endangered, minimized, or eliminated parking for parents and children near this usually busy playground.
- D) The inadequately fenced portion of the Green Space was used for a sprawling supply storage / (dis-)assembly site, construction trailers, loads of gravel and garbage, storage vehicular parking, tangled masses of temporary waterlines, etc. Even the nearby graveyard was inappropriately used for an office trailer site, workers' parking, etc. (The Green Space, Lillie-Webster Ave. east-west connecting alley and Lillie Ave., both were hard-surfaced, now remain crumbled, dusty, rutted and unkempt.)

SUGGESTIONS for Future Similar Construction Projects:

1. Keep businesses and residents, likely to be directly affected by the project, informed in timely fashion.
2. For the SAFETY of all Fort Frances businesses and residents, ensure the requirements of the Ontario Safe Drinking Water Act are rigorously enforced.
3. Communicate to all businesses and residents contact information for a Town of Fort Frances employee who is charged with monitoring of all aspects of the project. Provide a 24 hour construction company emergency contact person / phone number.
4. Avoid using public parks and green spaces as marshalling / storage yards for construction supplies, etc. (For the 2015 project likely ample acreage was immediately available at the former Alexander Mackenzie school site.)
- 5) Strictly enforce end-of-project construction contract deadlines to minimize protracted inconveniences to all businesses, residents and passing visitors / guests. (The highway project, scheduled for completion in early September 2015, still is not finished.)

Hopefully this letter communicates a true desire to provide helpful suggestions to you, Mayor Avis and Council, so as to minimize problems and protect and keep safe our community's businesses, residents and guests. Your written response to the above is invited.

Sincerely



Merv Ahrens, Taxpayer

535 Webster Avenue, Fort Frances

email: mlahrens@sympatico.ca

C.c. Ms. Lisa Slomke, Clerk  
Mark McCaig, Acting CAO  
✓ Doug Brown, O & F Manager  
Doug Herr, Environmental Superintendent  
Milton Strachan, Transportation Superintendent  
Travis Rob, Acting Planning and Zoning

Editor, Fort Frances Times