



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tunnel Committee announces more than \$3.2 million raised for restoration of Canada's First Railway Tunnel and Brockville's new Railway Tunnel Park

Committee to present revised phase one budget to Council on November 8

Brockville, Ontario – November 4, 2016 – The City of Brockville Railway Tunnel Committee announced tonight that its fundraising campaign has raised more than \$3.2 million so far toward the restoration of Canada's First Railway Tunnel and creation of Brockville's new Railway Tunnel Park. The Committee also announced that restoration work is now underway and well "on track" toward the Tunnel's official opening planned for August 2017, during Brockville's Canada 150 celebrations.

"For more than forty years, people have talked about what to do with our historic Tunnel. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our early donors, we can all look forward to exploring our Tunnel and our new Railway Tunnel Park next year as the new central hub of our city's beautiful Brock Trail", said Brockville Councillor David LeSueur, who is chair of the Tunnel Committee.

Said LeSueur, "We are very grateful to all of our donors to date who have helped us raise more than \$2.8 million to complete phase one of our project, and \$400,000 to help us plan phase two. We invite the whole community to get involved in promoting our tunnel as a new attraction for tourists in 2017".

Canada's First Railway Tunnel was completed in 1860 for the Brockville and Ottawa Railway and later owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway until being acquired by the City of Brockville in 1983. Brockville's Tunnel is a remarkable example of Canada's pre-Confederation industrial heritage that this restoration project will repurpose for recreation, tourism and economic development.

Phase one of the project includes restoration of the Tunnel and landscaping of the former Canadian Pacific Railway property immediately north of the Tunnel (commonly known as "The Gorge"). Key features of the Tunnel restoration include installation of a new paved concrete floor and drainage system and lighting systems for safety and to highlight the Tunnel's architectural and geological features. Together, the Tunnel and Gorge will become the newest section of the city's Brock Trail recreational pathway.

Phase two proposes redevelopment of the former Grand Trunk Railway lands west of the Tunnel, south of the CN corridor, with a proposed new Roundhouse-style visitors centre and tour bus parking area, and various improvements proposed for Armagh Sifton Price Park, south of the Tunnel.

Restoration of the Tunnel formally commenced in August, beginning with masonry repair. Other work is being tendered this fall in order to complete phase one in time for Brockville's Canada 150 celebrations now being planned for August 2017. Interim financing for the project is being provided by Infrastructure Ontario and is being secured by donations pledged to date.

The Tunnel Committee's campaign announcement was made at a special concert of railway-themed music at the Brockville Arts Centre tonight in celebration of Brockville's historic Tunnel, featuring well-known musicians A.J. Benoit and his Spike Drivers – John Jodoin and Mike Anderson, and local music hall of famers Tom Wilson and Mary Ross-Comstock.

Hosted by local radio personality Bruce Wylie, the evening's free concert was open to the public and was also attended by local MP Gord Brown, Brockville Mayor David Henderson and representatives of Brockville council and other local governments, and by early donors to the project.

Fundraising for the Tunnel and Railway Tunnel Park began in the Spring of 2015 following a commitment of \$300,000 from the City of Brockville. The Tunnel Committee expressed its appreciation to the following early donors:

Senior Benefactors (\$500,000 and above)

Carolyn Sifton Foundation

Benefactors (\$50,000-\$499,999)

Beatty Family Charitable Foundation, Canarm Limited, and David and Anne Beatty

BMO – Bank of Montreal

Ford Electric and the Bouwers family

City of Brockville

Canadian National Railway

Government of Canada – Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program

The Joyce family

Rotary Clubs of Brockville

Armagh L. Sifton Foundation

Thousands Island Community Development Corporation

VIA Rail

The Tunnel Committee will present a revised budget for phase one at Council's next Budget Committee meeting on November 8 that will include significant enhancements to the electrical infrastructure, lighting, sound, and safety systems planned for the Tunnel and the Gorge. A consortium of local electrical contractors and suppliers have proposed a substantial in-kind donation toward phase one and Council will hear the details on November 8, including recommendations for sourcing state-of-the-art programmable energy efficient LED lighting systems that will make Brockville's Tunnel a world-class tourist attraction. The Tunnel Committee is working to secure an additional \$1.2 million in cash donations to complete phase one with these enhancements.

A formal budget and fundraising goal have not yet been finalized for the project's second phase. The Tunnel Committee recently initiated a tendering process to hire an architectural development consultant to oversee planning and stakeholder consultations for phase two to support future recommendations to Council.

Those interested in learning more about the project and in donating to the Tunnel Committee's campaign are encouraged to visit its website at brockvillerrailwaytunnel.com or visit the Railway Tunnel Park Information centre at 66 King Street West, Brockville, from Tuesday through Saturday, between noon and 4 pm.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Councillor David LeSueur

Chair, City of Brockville Railway Tunnel Committee

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