

Name the bridge 'Wakonrori,' I told you so!

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Editor*

Brantford Mayor Chris Friel may have got a little more than he bargained for when he dropped in on Six Nations Band Council last Tuesday to announce the city's latest plan to cross the Grand River.

A \$3.5 to \$4 million dollar pedestrian truss bridge will, if all goes well, span the Grand River and carry water and sewer lines under it.

Brantford city council approved the latest plan Monday night to carry water and sewer lines to the Northwest industrial park. The pedestrian bridge comes after an several attempts by the city to drill under the Grand River failed when the drill hit a boulder and

could not pass through it.

Friel said the new plan will see the construction of a steel truss bridge will be built just west of the Brant Park Conservation area. The bridge will link up with the planned Trans-Canada trail, Brant Park and touch down on an island in the middle of the Grand River.

Friel joked they haven't decided what to name the bridge yet that sparked a reply from Six Nations

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I told you so...

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Councillor John Peters, "Why don't you find out how to say 'I told you so' in Mohawk."

Turtle Island News contacted Six Nations Cayuga Royanni, Jake Thomas who supplied the word for 'I told you so'. 'It's Wakonrori,' he said.

The construction will see spans measuring from 5.6 metres (or 22 feet) in height cross a 60 metre (or 180 foot) span. The bridge will touch on an island owned by Six Nations in the Grand River. The span on the island was an added thought after Band Council Chief Wellington Staats asked the city to consider providing access to the island.

"I thought it would be good, for in the future, if we ever decide to use it for economic development purposes like a pow wow or something," he said.

Friel said the city had considered constructing the bridge away from the island. But, the idea was rejected because of costs. He said it would cost more to put the pipeline's northern connections on stilts until it connects with TCG Materials Ltd., on Hardy Road.

Councillor Dave Hill told Friel, if he was looking for Six Nations support, "are you going to hire our guys to put up that bridge. We got a lot of iron workers down here that can put that up for you right, the first time."

Friel said the city would consider the matter.

The upper deck of the bridge will be a wooden walkway for pedestrians, cyclists and skiers. The watermain and two sewer pipelines will be located under the deck on a lower level and an enclosed containment pan would catch any possible leaks to prevent them from entering the river below.

The city showed two concepts to Six Nations Band Council. A

smaller structure with more supporting posts and a larger bridge with posts spread out more widely. The difference in costs was estimated at \$500,000.

Friel said the city expects the bridge will be flooded in spring or if there is a heavy ice build up. City engineer Alf Gretzinger told council the area is a flat valley area. "So any flood will span out in that area."

He said the river's north channel will be temporarily filled temporarily with a small dam to allow construction of the supports and steel spans.

Friel said monitoring devices to detect any leakage will be placed on the bridge. "We're hoping to get your support of this project so we can move ahead."

The city says construction would take five months and be completed by the fall of 1999. Public open houses will be held including one at Six Nations. Band Council Chief Wellington Staats said the open house at Six Nations will not be held at the band administration building. "A lot of people don't feel comfortable coming here so we'll hold it somewhere else."

The city will have to truck in tonnes of dirt and vegetation to replace the trees and bushes and holes dug during the drilling. "We are going to have to do a lot of landscaping in the area to put it back to its natural conditions," and embarrassed Friel said.

Friel faced protesters from Six Nations who objected to the drilling fearing the effects it would have the environment.

Protesters, including the late Mohawk Chief Richard Maracle maintained the drilling would not cross the river.

Staats told Friel, there would be no support given Tuesday night. "Council needs to look this over first and discuss it."