



News Norfolk & Region

Causeway bridge down to one lane

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The Long Point Causeway bridge has been reduced to one lane. MONTE SONNENBERG / SIMCOE REFORMER

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LONG POINT -

Norfolk County has put in place a plan that it hopes will keep open a key bridge in the Long Point area until repairs are made.

In a news release, Norfolk public works said it has identified the problem that has caused stability issues with the bridge on the Long Point Causeway, near George Lane.

The county said that a 16-foot horizontal portion of the bridge's southbound lane "has experienced significant deterioration."

The bridge's north-bound lane is in better shape and will be relied on to carry traffic for the time being, the county noted. Portable traffic lights have been installed and will be responsible for alternating north- and southbound traffic.

As a precautionary measure, vehicles weighing more than 11 tonnes are not allowed to cross the bridge. As well, the speed limit has been reduced to 30 km-h.

The weight restriction means a variety of vehicles are prevented from entering or leaving Long Point.

"This will have the unfortunate effect of functionally preventing water haulers, tractor trailers, sewage haulers, garbage trucks, full-size school busses and similar vehicles from utilizing the bridge until a medium-term solution can be put in place," the county release said.

"County staff are working on developing alternative measures for service provision."

As a precautionary measure, Norfolk Fire and Rescue has stationed three fire vehicles in Long Point. Norfolk ambulances weigh less than 11 tonnes and are unaffected by restrictions.

A structural engineer will inspect the bridge daily until it is repaired.

In the release, Norfolk public works said there was no evidence of deck failure when an engineering inspection was conducted in April. The county suspects severe weather this spring may have accelerated the bridge's decline.

"Members of the public are asked to respect and comply with the posted load restrictions and speed limits. Drive times entering and leaving Long Point will be increased. The county will provide further updates when it receives technical advice on how to best remedy the structural compromises."

Any sort of bridge, culvert or road-bed failure on the 3.2-kilometre causeway is a problem because it is the only road in and out of Long Point. Norfolk has plans this summer to rebuild the causeway but the bridge wasn't slated for repairs until 2024.

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