

Open Letter to the BAPE concerning the Hudson/Oka Ferry proposal.

24 April 2006.

As owners of the property on Chipman's Point, immediately to the East of the Ferry on the Hudson side, we are one of those households most impacted by the ferry operation. While understanding the ferry proprietor's desire to update his operation, we have a number of serious concerns.

Noise pollution.

At present, it is the loading/unloading that is particularly noisy - threading of chains and crashing down of the gangplanks - rather than the ferry operation 'per se'. One hopes that the new wharfs will be an improvement. I have been assured by Mr. Desjardins that the new ferries will themselves be quieter.

Visual pollution.

The new wharfs will obviously be more conspicuous, and this may be a concern for those living closer to the terminals. For us the size of the new ferries (80 feet long I believe?) is rather more daunting. While two such ferries might be tenable, the prospect of a third is not.

Pollution of wildlife habitat.

The Hudson terminal is sited at the mouth of the creek, commonly termed the "Como Drain" since it flows from the fields of Como. This creek serves as a conduit for many creatures, particularly in the spring breeding season, including fish which spawn in the shallows, ducks (the woods there are ideal for the beautiful but shy wood ducks, of which we saw 14 individuals at one glance a couple of weeks back), herons which roost in the trees overlooking the lake, turtles, muskrat, beavers and many other creatures, I am sure.

Any increase in the noise and turbulence caused by the ferries cannot help but have a further negative effect on the wildlife in the creek and associated wetlands.

Traffic impact.

The present traffic level at the approaches to the Hudson ferry terminal is often chaotic, with customers crossing Main Road from Bellevue (and vice versa) without concern for traffic which might be travelling along Main Road. On many occasions the road is blocked to through traffic because of clients' fear of losing their place on the ferry. Speedier ferries might alleviate some of the parking problems but will only add to the traffic using the approaches. We hear that maritime safety is a concern, yet there has never been a serious incident. Of more importance is the traffic hazard which already has been responsible for accidents and may increasingly become so in the future.

In conclusion I would like to add that our greatest concern, and I am sure this applies to a great many of us here, is that this ferry improvement project signals for us the 'thin end of the wedge' and that we can expect more ferries (a third already mooted), more traffic problems, more pollution, a new access road dividing Como East from the rest of Hudson and bringing yet more traffic, etc., etc..... The Oka-Hudson ferry is primarily a tourist service and is not classified as 'essential', neither should it become so, despite the wishes of the "Ministère des Transports du Québec", since its location is environmentally totally unsuited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Graham Campbell".

Graham Campbell,