Damaged bridge spells trouble for Long Point

Residents and cottagers in the Lake Erie community of Long Point have been dealt a blow ahead of the arrival of the May long weekend.

FREE PRESS STAFF Updated: May 18, 2018

Norfolk County is monitoring the condition of a critical bridge on the Long Point Causeway now that its deck is falling apart. Plans are to install portable traffic lights and reduce traffic on the bridge to one lane until the situation is stabilized. (MONTE SONNENBERG / Postmedia Network)

Residents and cottagers in the Lake Erie community of Long Point have been dealt a blow ahead of the arrival of the May long weekend after

the only bridge into the Southwestern Ontario community has been closed to large vehicles.

Earlier this week engineers determined the Long Point Causeway Bridge had been structurally compromised, prompting a further inspection that revealed a five-metre span of the southbound lane had significantly deteriorated.

As a result of the finding, all vehicles requiring anything other than a G or M licence have been banned from the bridge, the only road access between Long Point and Port Rowan.

"This will have the unfortunate effect of functionally preventing water haulers, tractor trailers, sewage haulers, garbage trucks, full-size school buses and similar vehicles from utilizing the bridge until a medium term solution can be put in place," said a release from the Long Point Ratepayers Association (LPRA) issued Friday.

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

Non-restricted vehicles are allowed to tow trailers only if the combined weight is less than 11 tonnes. A 30 km/h speed limit has also been put in place.

Norfolk firefighters have stationed three vehicles on Long Point – located 100 km southeast of London – in case of an emergency. Weighing less than 11 tonnes, ambulances will still be able to use the bridge.

The causeway bridge was last inspected in April. No structural compromises or deficiencies were found at that time and it's unknown whether the spring flooding may have contributed to the deterioration of the structure.

"Members of the public are asked to respect and comply with the posted load restrictions and speed limits," the LPRA said.

"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."

BRIDGES (HTTPS://LFPRESS.COM/TAG/BRIDGES)

LONG POINT (HTTPS://LFPRESS.COM/TAG/LONG-POINT)