

New pedestrian, cyclist bridge over Rideau River opens ahead of schedule

Adàwe Crossing connects Overbrook and Vanier with Sandy Hill, uOttawa; old bridge fell in 1952

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A new bridge is expected to bring an end to the days of frustrated pedestrians wading, in their bare feet, across the Rideau River to get to neighbourhoods on the other side.

The new Adàwe Crossing connects pedestrians and cyclists looking for a quicker route between Ottawa's Vanier and Overbrook neighbourhoods and Sandy Hill, the University of Ottawa, and the downtown core.

"We're absolutely ecstatic," said Rawlson King, president of the Overbrook Community Association and one of dozens of people who came out for Friday's official opening of the \$9.2-million bridge.

The crossing, which had been in the works since 2011, opened six months ahead of schedule, city officials said in a statement.

Connects Donald, Somerset streets

Adàwe Crossing connects Donald Street and Riverain Park in the east with Somerset Street East and Strathcona Park on in the west.

Without a crossing, people would either wade through the shallow waters or head north to the much busier Cummings Bridge, said King.

"This is wonderful because it's just singularly for pedestrians and cyclists," King said.

Rickety bridge lost in 1952

The last time a crossing existed at this spot on the Rideau River was in 1952, when a rickety wooden bridge connected the two sides. It was swept away in a torrential downpour.

The new crossing will also feature two stainless steel reflective spheres, each 1.5 metres in diameter, that will offer reflected panoramic views of the scenery.

As for the name: "Adàwe" is an Algonquin word for trade, one that symbolizes the the river's historic importance, said the city.

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