

Guelph Trail Master Plan – 2021-147

General Correspondence – Revised Agenda

Dear Council,

Once again I register my complete lack of support for the Emma-Earl bridge, on both environmental and financial grounds. Financially, this bridge should not be a priority - it is a want, not a need, and the city needs to ask some meaningful questions about what we spend our money on over the next few years, including in terms of projects that will support the increasing numbers of vulnerable people in this community. This bridge is infrastructure folly even in 'good' times, and especially foolish given the contexts we're currently in. The costs of this bridge will have only ballooned in the time since the initial proposal.

In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the EA that was undertaken in the area was flawed and incomplete. The bridge will affect wildlife habitat and increase the flow of garbage into the Speed River. A more detailed EA is necessary to demonstrate the realities of the potential impacts of this bridge. I don't understand why there is resistance to doing this properly. Although I have listed animals that will be affected by this bridge before, I'm going to do it again: I have personally observed 5 species of ducks, beavers, minks, herons, a significant diversity of songbirds (including cardinals, orioles, black and white warblers, house wrens, chestnut-sided warblers, etc), 4 types of woodpeckers, snapping turtles (including a nesting ground that would be specifically affected by the proposed bridge and increased area foot/bike traffic), among other animals that are using this naturalized corridor extensively. We don't need more development along the Speed River.

We should remove the Emma-Earl bridge from the Trails Master Plan, and think about 1) fiscally responsible choices, and 2) supporting wildlife habitats first. Stepping away from this bridge is both an economic and environmental win.

For reference, although I live in a neighbourhood close to the proposed bridge, I do not live on either Earl or Emma.

Best,

Beth Finnis