

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Council and City Staff

As you know GCAT has advocated for years for the creation of connected trails under the Speedvale Bridge over the Speed River. This would serve populations seeking safe access along the river to and from Riverside Park West, thereby avoiding the dangerous crosswalk currently near the east end of the bridge. Ultimately this connection would be another link between Downtown and the Guelph to Goderich Trail.

You may recall that an interim solution for the trail on the south side of the bridge has been accepted by Council. However I hope you understand that this interim solution does not provide a usable underpass, it simply improves the existing south trail approach to and from Speedvale Avenue. Users will have no other option except to continue using the crosswalk and stop traffic on this busy arterial road. Data collected by City Staff show large numbers of bicyclists and walkers using this crosswalk daily. Considering the huge investment being spent on Speedvale Avenue construction to improve traffic flow it makes sense to reduce the number of times vehicles are stopped. An underpass will certainly solve much of this problem.

However on the north side of Speedvale things are more complicated. City Staff is recommending the north side trail connection be delayed - possibly for decades - until the west side retaining wall is reconstructed.

More importantly, GCAT would like to remind Council of our suggestion for a trail connection at street level on the north side of Speedvale that would loop around and descend to the underpass being built at around the time of the bridge reconstruction. We note that the Speedvale Avenue and bridge reconstruction project already includes a well-designed system of multi-use paths extending from Riverview Drive west to the intersection with Woolwich. The loop we are proposing would branch off of the north side multi-use path just west of the bridge. It would also connect users to the existing East side trails in Riverside.

This is not a new idea. GCAT presented it to Council on [date] but to our knowledge there has been no action on it. The idea has been endorsed by the Guelph Hiking and Trails Club and recently has been discussed with City Staff.

GCAT would like to see this idea considered in a serious way so that its feasibility can be established and budget allocated for it. We respectfully request that Council direct City Staff to investigate it. GCAT have discussed this concept with Parks staff and are encouraged by their response and would be happy to work with Staff on the concept of the loop.

To explain how important an underpass is for the safety and enjoyment of users but more importantly how it provides for a more equitable transportation system I want to share with you a recent experience I had at this location.

I was on my way home along the Trans Canada Trail and approaching the crosswalk at the Speedvale Avenue bridge when I noticed a man at the push button area. He was attempting to cross but was clearly having issues making his feet and legs work. He made it a few feet and shuffled back and by this time the light changed. I asked him if he was ok and he said he was ok. Attempt 2 was unsuccessful as well so I waited. This time he decided to start his attempt to cross before the walk signal which alarmed me as I have witnessed many red light runners at this crosswalk. However as I walked across beside him he fell to his knees about half way across. I reached out and he extended his hand but he was hard to control so I put my arm around him and held my hand up for traffic to wait as the light had turned green. I finally got

him barely across and he fell again but fortunately a fire truck was returning from an incident and blocked traffic and 3 firemen jumped out to help me and him. Both of his knees were bleeding from the falls on the rough pavement.

That is when he said he had Parkinson's.

I thanked the firemen and they thanked me and he stayed with them.

I don't know why but it really affected me and my emotions were running high thinking about what just happened. This experience has definitely changed my attitude and increased my empathy towards those less fortunate than me.

GCAT fully supports the 3 recommendations being presented for approval and are extremely happy with the Parks Staff engagement with our stakeholder group.

We hope that Council directs staff to consider our reasonable to investigate the feasibility of our early solution to the Speedvale Underpass.

Thanks

Mike Darmon

President GCAT

und him and we moved a bit but then fell down again. As I pulled him up about three quarters of the way through the crosswalk I thought a driver was going to try and pass through so I put up my hand to st

park and beyond to either Guelph Lake or the TransCanada Trail and Guelph to Goderich Trail

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