

Hello,

By way of this email, please register my comments for consideration at the June 13 public meeting.

My comments relate to the proposed pedestrian bridge to connect Emma Street to Earl Street.

If the objective is primarily a way to expand the infrastructure for walking and cycling within downtown Guelph and to connect trails running east and west, then I support the project.

But after reading the news shared on GuelphToday.com my understanding is that the primary objective of the Emma to Earl bridge is to compensate for the absence of bicycle lanes in the proposed design for reconstruction of the Speedvale Avenue bridge. For this purpose, this solution makes little sense.

As a resident of the Wolfond Park Neighbourhood, I use the path system along the Speed River for running, walking and cycling almost daily. I often cycle along the trail to Riverside Park with my 9 year old son and the stretch along Speedvale to the crosswalk feels quite unsafe. I observe the flow of traffic as being along the trail that runs North-South along the River. I observe mostly recreational use - adults and many young families. I also see commuters using the trail system. The main connection point of the trail system that I use and observe others using is at Speedvale, just East of Woolwich where the trail ends at the South side of Speedvale and then starts again about 100m to 200m farther East on the North side of Speedvale. The Emma-Earl street bridge will not divert this flow of traffic. It's too far out of the way. Users who want to get across Speedvale using the trail system will continue to go across Speedvale, where the trail systems connect most closely. I believe the best and necessary solution for providing a safe crossing from the South side trail to the North side is to create a bicycle lane along the stretch of Speedvale running Eastbound. It should start where the trail ends on the South side of Speedvale and stop at the existing crosswalk on the South side of speedvale. I also suggest creating a small fork in the trail to connect the trail to the crosswalk on the North side of Speedvale. This will help divert cyclists from riding on the sidewalk on the short stretch between the cross walk and the current trail start on the North side of Speedvale. An alternative is to reposition the crosswalk directly at the trail start on the North side of Speedvale. This might also help with people who make right hand turns off of Riverview Rd onto Speedvale and continue through the cross walk when it is the pedestrian's turn to cross. I have had to hold my son back multiple times for people speeding through the cross walk. On that note, I also recommend a more prominently marked crosswalk.

Before moving ahead, it would be ideal to gather more opinions and ideas from other users of this trail system and who frequently cross Speedvale at the trail location.

Thank you for considering my user experience and suggestions.

Elizabeth Stewart