

Members of Council,

I strongly oppose the Emma Earl Bridge (EEB) OPA 81 and this project should NOT be approved. There are so many red flags to this project and I would appreciate answers.

Let's remember it's an election year.

I request staff refocus their efforts on the Speedvale Avenue **"safe zone"**:

- General: The need for the EEB has not been established given the city's current housing, infrastructure, security and financial priorities.
- Not "essential infrastructure": If the EEB was "essential infrastructure", it would have been included in the 2009 bike policy, the 2013 Cycling Master Plan and the 2021 Trails Master Plan's "Top 15" priority list. A Speedvale "safe zone" between Marlborough Road and the west side of Speed River bridge is "essential infrastructure" since (1) vulnerable users will always need to move along/across Speedvale; and, (2) EEB's questionable east-west function is better replaced by a "safe zone".
- Planning & Demand: There is no origin-destination data to indicate that cycling and walking will "significantly" increase due to EEB and staff has said this data is "immaterial". The Environmental Assessment (EA) was originally based on outdated 2005 Trails Master Plan (see note re: 2021 Trails Master Plan above). Also, 2007 Local Growth Management Plan is 10 years old.
- Environment & "Ecological Gain":

This section of the Speed River is home to an abundance of wildlife, many of which are species at risk or species of concern. Bats, **3 species of turtles** and other species will be disrupted or extirpated due to construction and their current habitat forever altered.

Contrary to information received by the City of Guelph, Blanding's turtles are still in Wellington County. There have been 3 reported sightings since 2016. Blanding's have special protection under the OMNRF.

All species of turtles in Ontario are in peril as a result of habitat loss, road mortality and poaching.

This project cannot proceed until a thorough EA has been conducted in order to determine what wildlife habitat in particular, turtles will be impacted and exactly how the city will mitigate any interruption.

Removing "historical fill" and restoring vegetation habitat can be done without building the EEB while higher "net ecological gain" can be achieved by installing Speedvale "safe zone".

- Noise: a noise study will need to be completed. Wildlife and nearby residents will be impacted by bridge construction and heavy truck noise. This negativity impacts quality of life.
- Garbage: The Norwich, Speedvale and Riverside Park bridges are used as dumping grounds for everyday garbage and needles. A new bridge would bring more of the same, further compounding the environmental/noise disruption for wildlife (both locally and downstream).

Just take a look at the disrespectful graffiti and garbage under the Niska bridge. Once a heritage feature of the city and a very important, active turtle nesting area is now a party area for youth.

- Cycling, Pedestrian and Neighbourhood Safety: Current high level of assaults, burglary, vandalism, graffiti and drugs on and near the Trans-Canada Trail (TCT) could increase since this area is rarely patrolled by police and the bridge will provide law breakers with an additional exit route.
- Consultation: There has been an extreme lack of communication between city staff and the public, especially impacted neighbourhoods. There was no information provided between June 2017 and August 2020.

First Nations were never consulted but RSSA's Oct 2020 bump-up request to MECP has ensured that the city must do this with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River (Elected Council and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council). Staff have yet to consult Aboriginal communities living in Guelph itself.

Let's show some respect please.

- Financial: EEB "preferred alternative 2b" capital cost is low-balled at \$1.7 million (<https://pub-guelph.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=8594>) but will be much higher when sidewalk infrastructure, lighting, operating costs and inflation is included. These scarce dollars should be invested in Speedvale safe zone or road diet, underpass, increased police surveillance, river enhancement/clean-up and lighting on TCT.

Regards,

Sandy Nicholls