

Dear City Council:

**Re: Agenda item 2.3 Decision Report City Initiated Official Plan Amendment, Emma to Earl Pedestrian Bridge 2022-198.**

I am one of the silent citizens living on Earl Street who sees absolutely no need for the Emma-Earl Bridge (EEB) – especially since the city has so many other infrastructure, housing, security and financial challenges to deal with. This bridge does not help me get safely across Speedvale. Therefore, I ask you to please vote “NO” to staff’s request to approve the EEB OPA 81 and have them refocus their efforts on a Speedvale Avenue “Safe Zone” for the following related reasons:

- **Environment & “Ecological Gain”:** This section of the Speed River is home to abundant wildlife, including many species at risk or concern. Bats, snapping turtles and other species will be disrupted or extirpated due to construction and their current habitat forever altered. 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:** Wildlife and nearby residents like me will be impacted by bridge construction and truck noise for several months -- if not years.
- **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).
- **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.
- **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 west side of Speed River bridge is “essential infrastructure” since (1) vulnerable users will continue to ride/walk along/across Speedvale; and, (2) EEB’s east-west function is better replaced by the “Safe Zone” at a third the cost .

- **Planning & Demand:** There is no origin-destination data to indicate that cycling and walking will “significantly” increase due to EEB. The EA was originally based on outdated 2005 Trails Master Plan.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.
- **Financial:** EEB capital cost is low-balled at \$1.7 million but could be as high as \$2.6 million when sidewalks, lighting, operating costs and inflation are included. These scarce dollars should be invested in the Speedvale “Safe Zone”, increased police surveillance, river enhancement/clean-up and lighting on TCT.
- **Consultation:** I have never been contacted by my councillors about my EEB concerns. I’ve also heard that First Nations were never consulted but an 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). The city has yet to consult Aboriginal communities living in Guelph itself.

Thanks for rejecting the EEB OPA and I look forward to the city installing a “Safe Zone” on Speedvale.

Sincerely,

Andrew Pieczarski

