



City of Guelph – Budget 2026

Emma-Earl Bridge Public Inquiry and Descoping Speedvale Avenue

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Residents for a Safe Speedvale Avenue

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/safespeedvale>

November 18, 2025

RSSA Recommendations/Motions:

1. Allocate \$50,000 for independent public inquiry into Emma-Earl Bridge fiasco in terms of:
 - **Planning** – changes to OPA, EA, Guelph Trail Master Plan
 - **Design** – wider than the Trans-Canada Trail
 - **Environmental Impacts** – evaluate “net ecological gain” and emissions
 - **Communications and consultations with public and First Nations**
 - **Finance** – cost increase from \$1.13 million in 2015 to \$7 million in 2025
 - **Community Benefits** – Up to 50 companies involved, maybe 2 based in Guelph, heavily skewed to male employees

2. Descope \$40 million Speedvale speedway design by building “Safe Zone” or “road diet” to save up to \$15 million for other city priorities and/or tax relief.

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

George Santayana,
The Life of Reason,
1905





Since 2016, the RSSA asked Guelph council and staff to leave the Speed River like this – the way it has been centuries.

Guelph brands itself as a progressive community “making a difference” environmentally and socially. Yet most politicians and some cyclists supported the Emma-Earl Bridge (EEB) despite the fact it doesn’t help the majority of vulnerable road users travelling along and across Speedvale Avenue.

This is a waste of **\$7,000,000.00** when the city has far more important transportation, housing and affordability priorities. **More than 100 km of on-street, separated bike lanes could have been built with these funds** to create a true network for all Guelphites and tourists – assuming \$50,000/km cost (reference City of Toronto).

The City hasn’t built the EEB in accordance with the provincially approved Environmental Assessment Project file (2023) as it relates to:

- **Cost** – City said bridge cost would be \$1.13 million in 2015 then \$2.6 million max in March 2023 but it now stands at almost \$7 million -- at least 95% of this amount goes to non-Guelph companies;
- **Flawed Consultation** – “Scamsultations” spanning 9 years and not fulfilling commitments to Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation;
- **Habitat protection** – City used a different alignment than the one proposed with existing hydro pole footprint and didn’t removing historic fill to improve habitat, as promised – there has been no “Net Ecological Gain”.



Before the **\$7,000,000** destruction began –
follow the disappearing hydro poles...



Before the **\$7,000,000** destruction began –
follow the disappearing hydro poles...



During destruction - follow the disappearing hydro poles...



Hydro poles gone (for \$250,000+?) –
and noisy bedrock pile driving begins...



Hydro poles gone... and urbanization well under way.



Before east side destruction...



East side destruction underway...



East side destruction... for “net ecological gain”?



East side destruction... urbanization underway.

The \$7 million Emma-Earl Bridge, which was proposed to reduce emissions due to increased biking and walking, must be analyzed for embodied GHGs spewed during heavy construction and operations. This includes emissions from:

1. Materials (concrete, aggregate, steel, matting lumber) and equipment (excavators, bulldozers, pile drivers, diesel generators, toilets) which have been trucked in from Southern Ontario, Quebec, Texas, China and South Korea.
2. Bridge designers, construction contractors and labourers who live outside Guelph drive their F-150s from locations 50-150 kms away for at least 8 months.
 - For example, one Looby construction worker drives F-150 from/to Stratford $5 \times 140 \text{ km} = 700 \text{ km/week} = 2,800 \text{ km/month} \times 8 \text{ months} = 22,400 \text{ km}$ for job (minimum). Will take at least 243,478 bike/ped bridge trips to recover emissions from this one employee.
3. Operations – lighting, cleaning, snow removal, garbage and maintenance.
4. Nature - Loss of natural CO2 absorption due to new infrastructure construction and loss of habitat.



Emission spewing trucks and construction equipment
destroy natural areas quickly...



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destroy natural areas quickly...



Emission spewing trucks transporting construction equipment
up to 900 km away from site...



Emission spewing trucks and construction equipment disrupt life in neighbourhoods – sometimes under guise of “Road Maintenance”.

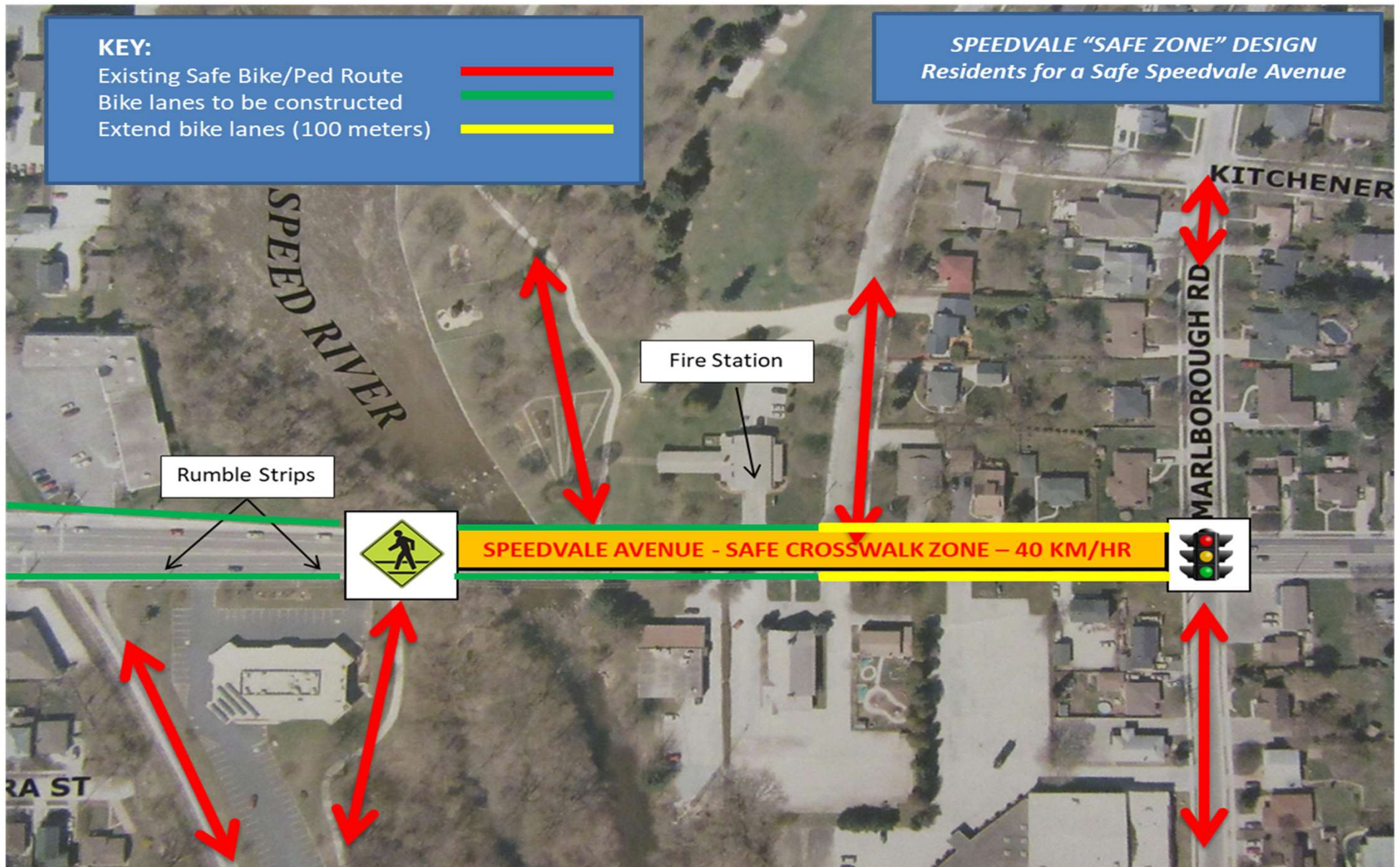


Construction company employees drive emission spewing pick-up trucks up to 150 km each day.



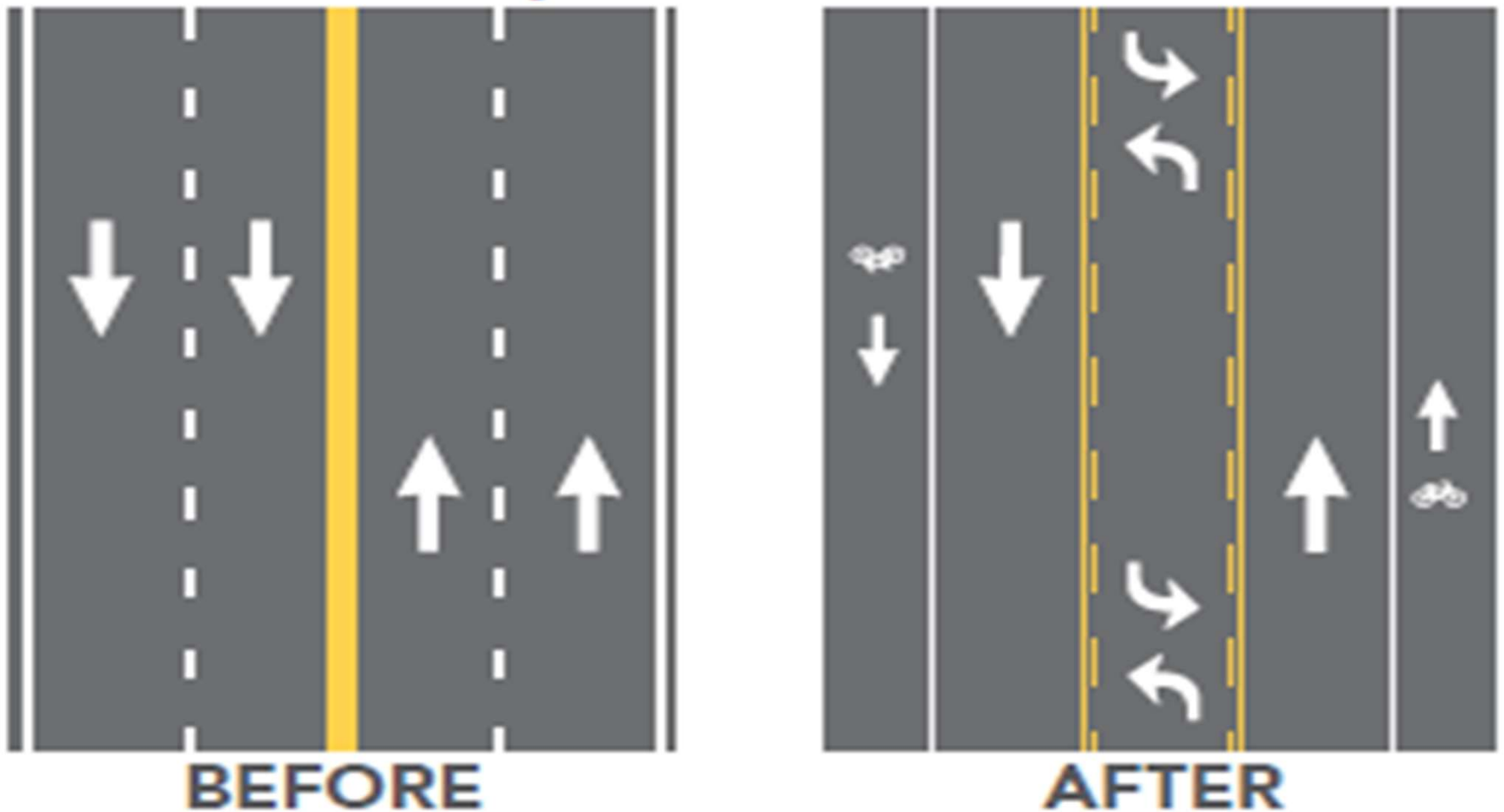
Good-bye Speed River habitat as we knew it...

Though it is now too late to save this section of the Speed River valley, the RSSA's "Safe Crosswalk Zone" solution is still required to ensure Speedvale Avenue can be traversed by vulnerable road users – at less than 5% of the EEB's \$7 million cost.



A Speedvale Avenue road diet extending from Woolwich to Stevenson could save up to \$15 million of the \$40 million Speedvale reconstruction costs for better on-street active transportation infrastructure and other city priorities.

Example of a Road Diet



Speedvle road diet variations have been piloted several times since 2020
– and drivers survived!



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Good-bye Speed River. We'll remember you...

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