

From: Martin Collier
Sent: November-15-16 11:42 PM
To: 'amos.r@aquaforbeech.com'; andrew.janes@guelph.ca
Cc: james.gordon@guelph.ca; Andy.VanHellemond@guelph.ca
Subject: Emma-Earl Bridge EA

Dear Andrew and Amos,

I am submitting my comments on the unnecessary Emma-Earl Bridge EA:

EA Scope, Planning and Demand

- The EA's scope is not large enough as it only focuses on the bridge. To assess the bridge's impacts properly, it must be expanded to (at least) north of Speedvale Avenue Bridge, west on Earl to Dufferin and east on Emma to Marlborough.
- The city is trying to use outdated plans to back up the rationale for the bridge: 2005 Trails Master Plan (TMP) and 2007 Local Growth Management Strategy. While the bridge is a dot in the TMP, it was not considered a priority until the incorrect Speedvale decision was made in 2015. Since it is difficult to know how the Bridge construction ties in with future trail/city developments and demand, this EA should be cancelled until TMP public consultations begin in 2017. Cyclists and pedestrians need a network, not a disconnected one with bridges to nowhere.
- There has been no east-west demand analysis for this area. Cyclists and pedestrians either want to move safely along Speedvale or are travelling north to the park or south to downtown. They are not walking or cycling to the General Hospital or Homewood which are the only possible destinations on the east side of the river. Exhibition Park is the only destination to the west of the river and that is too far away.

Financial

- During last year's Speedvale EA, the city stated that \$1.2 million is needed for the Emma-Earl Bridge. But moving hydro utilities, bridge design, possible expropriation (Armtec, neighbours), sidewalks to/from the bridge and unforeseen cost overruns will increase the amount to \$3 million or more. These scarce dollars should be invested on Speedvale and other cycling routes where it is most needed (e.g. Trans-Canada trail crossing Eramosa and Macdonell). Staff have concurred that there are a number of trails higher on the priority listing that showed a much higher need.

Cyclist/Pedestrian Safety

- The danger is getting across Speedvale so focus and dollars should be ensuring that happens. If millions of dollars are spent at Emma-Earl Bridge, there won't be any left for the critical underpass.
- If bridge is to be built, sidewalks to Dufferin are needed due to 36 wheeler flat-bed trucks driving to Armtec plant.

Environment and Wildlife

- This is one of the last pristine river areas south of Speedvale Avenue-- as EA photos displayed at the consultation showed. To build in this area contradicts policies put in place to naturalize the river.
- Wildlife and fish will be impacted by bridge construction. Animals that roam the area include: beavers, muskrats, minks, herons, woodpeckers (downy, woody, red bellied and pileated), kingfishers, snapping turtles, ducks (golden eyes, common mergansers, hooded mergansers, red heads, mallards, and buffleheads). Instead of developing the river, the city should leave it naturalized so these species can continue to thrive in our urban environment.

General Safety and Social Impacts

- The city stopped police patrols along the rail trail at least two years ago. This has affected the safety of the trail and contributed to increased drug activity along it. A bridge could exacerbate these issues.

- The garbage potential is significant and will further contribute to the negative environmental impacts. We already know that garbage is thrown from the Riverside Bridge and more will be thrown here if the bridge is built due to less “eyes on the bridge”. How will the city control this on both sides of the bridge?

In closing, it is well-known that Council and staff used the bridge as a bone thrown to cyclists to get their support for the Speedvale road design in 2015 – which contradicted the city’s bike policy. It is time to reconsider this decision as the Emma-Earl Bridge is not necessary for the affected neighbourhoods or the city at large – for all the financial, planning, environmental and social reasons mentioned above.

Sincerely,
Martin Collier, MES (Pl.)