

November 5, 2017

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Council:

Please read and consider this letter as I cannot make a deputation in person at the COW meeting on November 6.

Although staff has provided you with 3 options for the Speedvale underpass, I request that you support their original recommendation (Option B) unless wording of Option A can include two more words: **“Investigate alternative design options on or under Speedvale Avenue that comply with the Official Plan and Zoning By-law”**. In doing so, staff can further analyze the on-road "safe zone" concept I proposed to Council on October 2 and, even better, revisit the Speedvale "road diet" option presented by staff during the 2014-15 EA but unfortunately rejected by Council.

Road Diet

As you recall, I supported a 6-12 month road diet pilot project as did Speedvale residents and 150 people who signed an on-line petition¹ between July 16-20, 2015, for the following reasons:

- improve quality of life (especially for Speedvale residents);
- promote equality of all road users of all ages (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists) by restriping road with 1 car lane and 1 bike lane in each direction, with middle turning lane running the length of the street;
- increase safety of all modes due to slower speeds, less weaving/passing and easier property entering/exiting;
- decrease overall traffic and potentially divert truck traffic;
- keep existing right of way and homeowners' property intact (despite loss of millions already spent on property purchases to date)
- prevent an increase in the City's road operations budget (e.g. snow plowing);
- produce real travel and safety data to see if road diet design could work by end of 2018;
- set a precedent for Speedvale Avenue west of Woolwich saving millions more while making that part of the street safer for all modes.

According to engineer Andrew Janes, Speedvale road construction will not commence until 2020 (due to private property negotiations and underground utility planning). As a result, there is plenty of time to test the road diet and gather real data in order to make a final decision on this superior design. If made permanent, the much safer 3-lane cross-section would eliminate the need for any of the other project options (i.e. underpass, safe zone, Emma-Earl Bridge), meet several city policies that are currently not being followed (cycling, heritage/trees, access) and save up to \$10 million that can be re-allocated to other sustainable transportation projects throughout the city. Council and staff can learn much from Toronto's Bloor Street road diet

¹ <https://www.change.org/p/guelph-city-council-vote-for-safe-speedvale-avenue-test-a-road-diet-design>

pilot (2.4 km)² and Burlington's New Street pilot (2 km)³ -- both of which could be made permanent by the end of 2017.

Safe Zone

If council again rejects a road diet pilot for fear of a slightly slower drive for car drivers, then a "safe zone" pilot must be considered as an option (see graphic here⁴). When Speedvale is widened, it will induce more traffic at higher speeds. Yet pedestrians and cyclists (as a legal vehicle recognized under the Highway Traffic Act) will still use the length of the road, especially in the area where the Trans-Canada Trail meets it. In terms of design:

- The safe zone would be similar to a school safety zone with speed limit of 40 km/hr maximum – or preferably 30 km if the province allows it.
- A large crosswalk zone would be created that extends from west side of bridge/river to Marlborough Road (220 meters).
- The existing crosswalk and signalization in front of the fire station would be moved to west side of bridge. Traffic lights would be added at Marlborough.
- The zone would be painted a bright colour to warn drivers they are entering the safe zone -- and preferably “raised”.⁵
- East and west approaches should also include signage, rumble strips and 3D crosswalk designs.⁶

In terms of benefits, this design...:

- solves staff's concerns about river habitat/flood zone destruction, access and potential lawsuits.
- allows for safe east-west travel along Speedvale at all times. Pedestrians, runners, cyclists and those in wheelchairs would be able to move across the street from north to south when traffic signals are activated.
- provides motor vehicles with safer ingress/egress from side streets and private driveways. Large fire trucks will have a far easier time moving in and out of the station on the north side of Speedvale.
- renders the Earl-Emma Bridge proposal redundant.
- saves between \$2.5 and \$6 million in infrastructure costs, staff time, potential lawsuits. The money saved should be used to install a similar “barrier free” design at other trail/road conflict locations throughout the city (e.g. Eramosa, MacDonnell).

Options and Voting

If council and staff are truly committed to safety for all road users, environmental protection and fiscal responsibility, you'll vote for Option B or Option A (with inclusion of additional words):

² <https://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=18ccded2f6711510VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

³ <https://www.burlington.ca/en/services-for-you/New-Street-One-Year-Pilot.asp>

⁴ <http://www.martincollier.ca/assets/Speedvale%20Crosswalk%20Solution.pdf>

⁵ http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures_detail.cfm?CM_NUM=7

⁶ <http://icelandmag.visir.is/article/photos-video-3d-crosswalk-isafjordur-helps-slow-down-speeding-motorists>

1. **Option B – Original staff recommendation; not proceed with Speedvale underpass as currently proposed, and pursue an alternate location.**
2. **Option A (reworded) - Investigate alternative design options on or under Speedvale Avenue that comply with the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.**

By supporting one of these options, staff can include an analysis of a Speedvale road diet and safe zone when they report back to Council in early 2018.

Thanks and please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Martin Collier, MES (Pl.)