

MEETING MINUTES



MEETING DATE	River Systems Advisory Committee February 18, 2015
LOCATION TIME	City Hall - Meeting Room 112 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
MEMBERS PRESENT	Jeremy Shute (Chair), Nicola Lower, Ian McCormick, Javier Acosta, Eric Wilson, Mariette Pushkar
STAFF PRESENT	Adele Labbé, April Nix, Abby Watts, Rory Templeton, Stephen Robinson, Don Kudo
MEMBERS ABSENT	Ryan VanEngen

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION
1	<p>Welcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roll call and certification of quorum- met ▪ Declaration of pecuniary interest or conflict of interest – None ▪ Adoption of January 21, 2015 Meeting Minutes: <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Moved by I. McCorick and seconded by J. Acosta, “THAT the Minutes of January 21, 2015 be approved as written.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion Carried Unanimous</p>
2	<p>Agenda:</p> <p>1. City of Guelph Skateboard Park</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Information from City Staff and consulting team</p> <p>Rory Templeton, Landscape Planner, with the City of Guelph provided a presentation on the proposed skateboard park. Rory introduced Heather Drost from the MMM Group who was present at the meeting.</p> <p>Presentation included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project background dating back to 2009 • Review of the proposed site- within FL zoning, project sits directly adjacent to woodlot, with the Speed River beyond. • The site specific design that takes into consideration existing infrastructure • Review of motion passed by RSAC a year ago (Feb 2014)

- Council approved a skateboard park in Silvercreek Park
- The scoped EIS includes recommendations (1. Mitigation measures, 2. Enhancement opportunities)
- Removal of Buckthorn as noted in the Arborist Report will happen before the project gets started
- 6 trees need to be removed, 3 red maples (native), 1 manitoba maple, 2 cedars (before April)
- Discussion around planting enhancements: extensive amount of planting around the skateboard park (part of capital). Areas outside are recommended as volunteer areas (not part of capital)- Trees for Guelph are interested in assisting with Buckthorne removal. Staff believe the majority of The removal is GRCA's responsibility as it is their land, but the City is willing to help. Removal of invasive species will include ways to mitigate the Buckthorn.
- Bird boxes are included within construction project, the actual design and number is still being determined
- The design of the site includes an interface between the skate park and the adjacent woodlot with enhancement plantings (native shrub, tree and seed mixes).
- Views to the river maintained
- Flood capacity not going to be effected by the skateboard park as per GRCA initial modelling tests
- LID system- large swale, will pick up some of the water from the pad and the driveway. The majority of water sheet flow off the pad and will filter into the ground, the rest will flow through a perforated pipe to an outlet at the bank of the River.
- To ensure that there will be no eroding of existing conditions, sub-angular stone, laid in a natural formation will help slow water velocity exiting the outlet.
- Trees removed from original concept that were planned inside of skateboard park. It was determined that these would not be good conditions for trees. Efforts will be put into plantings around the pad
- Vertical elements planned to be included, such as vertical sails
- Tree protection, silt fencing, etc., details standard for the City are included in drawing package

E. Wilson- EIS should have noted that the development is counter to the Rivers System Management Plan- naturalization of floodplain. Rory responded that it can be recorded and it was recorded that RSAC did not approve of this project (Feb 2014) in the RSAC Minutes of February 2014. No additional wording needed

J. Shute- asked about the Buckthorn. Adele responded that large buckthorn trees will be removed and treated and other plantings should limit colonization of more buckthorn. Comment was made that Trees for Guelph have knowledge and experience with Buckthorn removal and the GRCA have been informed of the situation and might be willing to help where they can to aid in removals.

Discussion about seating in the Plan. Rory commented that they haven't thought about it in terms of benches yet but there will be natural areas for seating based on elevations and concrete features of the pad.

N. Lower- Discussion about pedestrian access to walk around the river. It was noted that there is an ad hoc trail around the river, also an existing asphalt driveway that parallels the river.

I. McCormick- Discussions around the runoff from the driveway. Water will filter its way into the ground, overload will be directed to the pipe. There will be lots of opportunity for water to makes its way into the ground. It was noted that the pipe will be positioned so that roots will not reach it.

Hydro corridor view wont be planted with canopy trees to ensure view is kept.

J. Acosta- Discussions around garbage issues. Rory commented that garbage hasn't been looked at yet but that it will be looked into by Community Services staff. Garbage will need to be monitored over the first few years. Rory mentioned that there will be a higher level of maintenance.

b. In Committee Discussion

Moved by N. Lower and seconded by I. McCormick,

“That the River Systems Advisory Committee conditionally support the design of the Silvercreek Park Skateboard Facility, provided that the recommended mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities identified in the Scoped Environmental Impact Study are implemented.”

Motion Carried
Unanimous

2. Niska Road Environmental Assessment

a. Information was presented to the Committee by Leonard Rach and Philip Rowe from Burnside representing the City.

Burnside representatives provided an overview of the project:

- The Environmental Assessment covers Niskad Rd. between Downey and the City limits and includes both an environmental study and heritage study
- Currently at Phase 2
- Road needs to be rehabilitated and the bridge is at the end of its life and needs to be addressed
- PIC #2 will occur sometime in the fall
- Discussions about existing traffic volumes and traffic study
- EA is a holistic approach that looks at social, economic and environmental factors
- Phase 2 looks at existing conditions
- Discussion about the existing recreational use, how its being used is important
- Looked at amphibian habitat and fish habitat
- Evaluation of alternatives for the road
- Phase 3 will involve options, how will everything fit within the corridor
- Explained that this is not a road widening project and there is no intent to go from 2 lanes to 4 lanes. Shoulders, sidewalks, curb and gutter are possible options that could be added to rehabilitate the road to meet current standards
- Preliminary preferred option was a 2 lane bridge and reconstruct 2 lane road. No official decision has been made

April Nix, Environmental Planner, with the City of Guelph reviewed staff report and provided comments focused on areas that environmental planning has been involved in.

April highlighted:

- Official Plan and NHS policies
- Wildlife habitat- some known to occur and other has the potential occur
- Confirmed by MNR that this area is a deer winter congregation area. Part of a corridor that links to preservation creek is a main movement corridor for deer
- Look at design element to improve deer collision
- Species at risk mentioned in the staff report: barn swallow (bridge structure), implications for bat habitat, tree inventory for bat habitat, butternut, would come out of the detailed tree inventory- would comply with regs established MNRF
- No aquatic species at risk

M. Pushkar- asked about the proposed land use. April responded Open Space, OPA 48 is before the OMB

J. Shute- Inquired about cyclists. It was noted that the survey conducted was limited to vehicles. Numbers were looked at but not destinations

N. Lower- Questions about mortality data for other species. Discussion about turtles and amphibians.

E. Wilson- Will this become a preferred option for heavy vehicles? Burnside staff responded that they are looking at options to restrict heavy vehicles from using the bridge, possibility of removing this link in the system so that truckers wont be knowledgable that this route exists. Guelph police have been working with local trucking industry to make them aware of the load restrictions.

M. Pushkar- Discussion about speed reduction.

b. Delegations

i. Rolf Eliason

- Major concern is increased traffic along Niska with 2 lane bridge
- Maintain bridge to 1 lane
- Make area a cultural heritage site

ii. Cindy Della Croce

- Noted that wildlife is dwindling
- Traffic has become excessive including large trucks crossing the bridge
- Failure to stop at Ptarmigan and Niska is a concern- dangerous for children acrossing the street to get to school
- Two lane bridge will increase traffic
- Continued preservation of the old bridge

iii. Sandy Nichols

- Opposed to the 2 lane bridge

- Concerns about the environmental aspects of the river- salt melting into the river
- hedgerows would need to be removed- wildlife habitat destroyed
- Niska Rd. is very dangerous now and 2 lanes will make it worse
- Not happy with the preferred preliminary option
- Value as a Cultural Heritage Landscape
- Preservation of bailey bridge- repair and make it safe and provide traffic calming measures
- Close the bridge and make it a pedestrian bridge

iv. Hanna Boos

- Heavy traffic in a residential area is creating a dangerous situation for residents
- Commuters are speeding down Niska Rd
- Traffic, Noise and pollution
- Changes to road, grading, removal of hedgerow will alter the area forever
- Identifies this as a unique area of Guelph that should be designated as Cultural Heritage Landscape

v. Marlene Hart

- Discussion about the viewsapes of Niska Rd and the unique, quaint, heritage bridge
- Trail along west side of speed river is used by birders
- 2 lanes would distrust wildlife and bird habitat
- Would prefer the bridge is repaired or closed down to vehicles
- A new bridge wont fit into the landscape

vi. Vince Handon

- Provided a cross-section, comments about the viewscape being altered
- This area is a unique place in Guelph
- Surveyed 320 people in the area about the preferred solution- 95% against 2 lane bridge
- Close down bridge or replace with a 1 lane bridge
- Recommendation that there is as little disturbance as possible during the repair

vii. Laura Murr

- Natural heritage of Guelph and Wellington County
- Road alignment has been the same since the 1840s
- 40 years of forested edge growth that would be destroyed by widening the road
- Greenway plan, environmental corridor is a major link to the grand river
- As the city continues to increase density, where will the deer travel?

viii. Li Shugang

- More traffic on Niska- high speeds, large trucks is causing a dangerous situation

- 2 lane will bring more commuter traffic
- Pollution and noise will cause disaster to conservation area
- Suggested connecting Laird and Stone to Wellington Rd 124

ix. Nicole Abouhalka

- Destroying natural habitats
- Density at the expense of wildlife
- Keep bridge 1 lane and repair it- pedestrian and cyclist lanes
- Prevent trucks from use

x. Dorothy Griggs

- Climate change
- Traffic concerns
- Viewscape hasn't changed since the 1800s
- Traffic has increased
- Preservation of the Niska Rd area
- Reject the 2 lane bridge and widening of the road

Motion to go past 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Moved by N. Lower and seconded by M. Pushkar,

Motion Carried
Unanimous

b. In Committee Discussion and Motion

Motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

Moved by I. McCormick and seconded by E. Wilson,

Motion Carried
Unanimous

Came out of committee to ask Deputy City Engineer about road and traffic. M. Pushkar asked Burnside about traffic calming measures

Motion to extend the meeting.

Moved by N. Lower and seconded by E. Wilson,

Motion Carried
Unanimous

	<p>Moved by I. McCormick and seconded by N. Lower,</p> <p>“THAT the River System Advisory Committee conditionally support the preliminary preferred alternative for the Niska Rd EA subject to the following conditions:</p> <p>THAT traffic calming and volume reduction, safe pedestrian and cycling access, maintenance of cultural aesthetics, safe wildlife passage and vehicle size restrictions be included.</p> <p>THAT the River System Advisory Committee are circulated and be provided the opportunity to review the alternative design concepts for the preferred solution; the assessment of potential environmental effects of the proposed improvements and recommended mitigation / monitoring plans proposed to address any potential adverse impacts.</p> <p>THAT the City’s study team return to update the River System Advisory Committee and provide opportunities for further input regarding the EA at the first meeting available following the Second PIC.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion Carried Unanimous</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Committee Updates/Other Business</p> <p>1. Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homewood Consent Application- subcommittee and comment deadline RSAC will review independently and provide staff with a motion by email within 6 weeks. • Jeremy resigning as Chair of RSAC A new chair and vice chair will be voted in at the next meeting. Will take nominations until then.
<p>4.</p>	<p>Adjournment</p> <p>Motion to adjourn. Moved by I. McCormick and seconded by N. Lower,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion Carried Unanimous</p> <p>Adjourned 7:40 pm</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Next meeting of RSAC will be May 20, 2015</p>