



BURNSIDE

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Meeting Notes

Community Workshop Summary Niska Road Bridge Environmental Assessment

Meeting Date: June 27, 2013

Date Prepared: July 18, 2013

Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Location: YMCA, 130 Woodland Glen Dr. Guelph ON.

File No.: 300032275

Those in attendance were:

Brad Hamilton	City of Guelph
Rajan Phillips	City of Guelph
Don Kudo	City of Guelph
Allister McIlveen	City of Guelph
Joanne Starr	City of Guelph
April Nix	City of Guelph
Leonard Rach	R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited
Doug Keenie	R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited
Philip Rowe	R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited
Ashley Gallagher	R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited
Councillor Karl Wettstein	City of Guelph, Ward 6
Councillor Andy Van Hellemond	City of Guelph, Ward 2
Councillor Bob Bell	City of Guelph, Ward 1
Constable Daniel Mosey	Guelph Police
Sergeant Peter Mitro	Guelph Police
86 Community Members	

The following notes summarize, in general and by topic, comments made by workshop attendees and are not intended to be a complete and exact record of individual comments. Comment sheets were provided at the workshop for attendees to provide individual comments.

1. Introductions and Workshop Agenda

- 1.1 Don Kudo of the City of Guelph welcomed everyone to workshop and introduced City of Guelph staff, Councillors and Guelph Police staff in attendance.

- 1.2 Leonard Rach introduced Burnside staff in attendance and reviewed the proposed agenda for workshop. In general, the plan for the workshop was for the Project Team to conduct a formal presentation (45 minutes), followed by group break-out sessions (1 hour) and a wrap-up discussion (15 minutes).
- 1.3 Residents expressed concerns about workshop agenda organization and noted that not enough time was allotted for questions and answers.
- 1.4 One resident requested that the question and answer period be conducted before the presentation.
- 1.5 Residents expressed concerns relating to traffic and community safety. Residents were concerned about the safety of driving out onto the streets from their driveways and within their neighbourhood, and/or navigating heavy traffic during peak-AM and peak-PM hours.

2. Issues and Concerns of Project Background Including Project History, Traffic Data in Project Area, and Niska/Stone Road Extensions

- 2.1 The following bullets summarize, in general and by topic, the concerns raised by residents:

2.2 Traffic Volume Projections

- Residents voiced concern that a two-lane bridge would entice more traffic from Hwy 24; concerned with increased traffic as people take Niska Road as a short cut to or from the Hanlon Parkway.
- In general, residents felt that projected traffic volumes are significantly low especially considering projected development near Kortright Hills community (e.g. residential (dense-row housing, see below) and commercial (future Costco on Whitelaw Road)).
- Another resident added that the City of Guelph Official Plan includes a plan for dense-row housing on a plot of conservation authority–owned land that is currently an open field west of Ptarmigan Drive. Noted concerns with increased truck and car traffic if this development commences.
- Resident asked what assumptions are included in traffic projections.

2.3 Traffic Data Collection/Planning

- Resident expressed concern that an 18-year planning horizon (2031) was not appropriate and asked Project Team to consider a shorter (e.g. 2-5 year) planning horizon instead to increase accuracy of representation.
- Residents questioned whether 2008 and 2013 numbers were taken at the same time of year.
- Residents asked where the traffic data results came from and who collected them.
- Resident raised concern with potential bias behind traffic data, noting concern that the type of bridge had already been chosen for the Niska Road crossing.

2.4 Traffic Distribution

- Residents stated that a lot of the traffic entering the community is from the Hanlon Parkway and from out of the City. There was a resounding concern from the residents in attendance that a lot of the traffic entering the community is not local.
- Resident asked how it is determined where traffic is coming from.

2.5 Stone Road Extension

- Resident suggested that if Stone Road and College extended west, traffic on Niska Road would be alleviated.

2.6 Other Concerns

- Resident voiced concern that not enough time allotted for public comment, and that public will not have enough time to comment before decisions are made.
- Several residents raised concerns with safety of bikers and pedestrians if Niska bridge becomes 2-lane.
- Concern raised that current Niska bridge is a 'turtle back' bridge, and that widening would have to occur to reduce erosion.

3. **Discussion Regarding Traffic Bylaw Enforcement**

3.1 Constable Mosey outlined that currently vehicles speeding in area are being charged. Many of the charges issued to drivers are local residents. Constable Mosey explained further:

- Existing Niska Bridge has 5,000 kg. max. load for trucks, and there is a charge for disobeying this bylaw.
- Guelph Police are readily involved with traffic bylaw enforcement in this area including charging trucks and speeding vehicles.
- Most trucks charged with infractions are not local, as GPS units are navigating drivers through Niska Road, without indicating presence of truck weight restriction.
- Guelph Police have submitted a proposal to amend the existing heavy truck bylaw to allow for the determination of whether a truck fits the definition to be accomplished without using scales. Proposal would see definition based on Registered Gross Weight which is detailed on the vehicle permit.

3.2 In general, residents raised concerns with current traffic speed and use of Niska Road by trucks.

3.3 Residents expressed concern about who is currently enforcing traffic bylaws such as truck weight restrictions.

3.4 Resident asked why surveillance cameras aren't installed to ensure bylaws can be enforced. Also concerned that truck ban not being enforced as it should be.

3.5 Resident concerned that the only way to know the weight of a truck is by weighing it, therefore difficult to enforce bylaw.

3.6 Resident who is a truck driver commented from experience that there is an obvious sign stating truck ban restrictions, but that signage needs to be improved because trucks are still using bridge. Suggestion was made to have signs posted further in advance to area or put weigh scales in at bridge.

3.7 Resident concerned that there aren't enough trained police officers to issue tickets against trucks disobeying the 'no trucks' sign, nor enough police officers to ensure that speeders are caught.

3.8 Resident commented that residents should not count on traffic enforcement with so few police resources available.

- 3.9 Several residents offered potential solutions such as a yield sign, foot path and stop and go light to allow for safe passage on the bridge.
- 3.10 Resident noted that although bridge does need repair, his main concern is the safety of residents. In particular, he voiced concern with traffic safety and speed on the bridge and from Foxwood Crescent to Downey Road between 7 and 8 a.m. (due to school busses stopping on Ptarmigan).
- 3.11 Resident asked if increasing the size of the bridge would increase the amount of weight the bridge can support thereby encouraging more truck traffic.
- 3.12 Resident noted that the road network needs to be analysed in a more holistic way, including other roads in the area (i.e. Downey, Ptarmigan and Niska).
- 3.13 Resident suggested that all-way stop signs be put at all intersections in the area to slow traffic.

4. Issues and Concerns Over Environmental Assessment Process

- 4.1 The following bullets summarize, in general, the concerns raised by residents:
 - Resident asked how the Study Area of the bridge was determined. Concerned that whole affected area not included in Study Area.
 - Resident asked why the Downey / Niska intersection is not part of Schedule B EA.
 - Resident asked what stage of the EA we are currently in.
 - Resident asked whether meeting regarding alternatives has been held yet.
- 4.2 Resident inquired whether local organizations (such as Wellington Birders and Guelph Field Naturalists) would be used as resources for this project.
- 4.3 Resident requested a list of speakers from the workshop.
- 4.4 Resident brought up concern that bridge will need to be widened.
- 4.5 Resident asked if there was a set timeline for the EA.
- 4.6 Resident asked if a Schedule B and Schedule C are 'the same', why not conduct a C.
- 4.7 Resident asked whether Burnside was conducting a Schedule A+ EA for Downey intersection, and if so could the Schedule A+ for the intersection and Schedule B EA for the road/bridge be combined into one Schedule C EA.
- 4.8 Resident asked how study area is defined because they are concerned that study area not large enough or that affected areas (e.g. Whitelaw subdivision) were not included/notified. Resident expressed concern about inadequate research of affected neighbourhoods and lack of delivery of notices of workshop to residents in Whitelaw subdivision.
- 4.9 Resident asked whether alternatives considered would change the study area.
- 4.10 Resident asked what environmental agencies are involved in the EA, and whether there was a representative from the GRCA at the workshop.
- 4.11 Resident asked why Stone Road Extension was stopped.
- 4.12 Resident suggested the bridge be closed and turned into a footpath and a new bridge be built elsewhere. Many residents in attendance agreed with suggestion.

5. Issue and Concerns with Road and Bridge Challenges

- 5.1 The following summarize, in general, the concerns raised by residents.
- 5.2 Resident offered idea to replace bridge with new single lane bridge with traffic signals on both sides.
- 5.3 Resident voiced concern with fatalities of youth on bridge due to 'getting air' over bridge. Suggested that fixing bridge may exasperate this trend by increasing use and allowing higher speeds on the bridge.
- 5.4 Resident asked the City what the purpose of Niska Road Bridge is.
 - Local traffic? Emergency traffic? Traffic from west? Traffic from Hanlon Parkway? If the bridge is expanded, will it still fulfill this purpose? Stated that statistics validating the purpose of this bridge need to be provided.
- 5.5 Resident asked why there is no light at Woodland Glen Drive and Downey Road.
- 5.6 Resident voiced concern with current traffic speed on Ptarmigan Drive and potentially similar future traffic on Niska Road if the bridge is widened. Stated that traffic enforcement plans need to be developed for study area and surrounding areas to ensure safety.
- 5.7 Resident noted concern with traffic speed and flow on Downey Road being excessive.
- 5.8 Resident noted that the local area including Niska Bridge and river valley area, is a "Piece of Paradise", noting examples of watching deer, etc. She noted that she does not want the natural area to be changed.

6. Stone Road Extension

- 6.1 Councillor Van Hellemond asked for clarification on why the Stone Road extension was removed.

7. Workshop Adjourned

The City Project Team will take the issues and concerns raised by the stakeholders and address these issues and concerns within the scope of the EA Study.