

Meeting Agenda



City of Guelph

River Systems Advisory Committee

September 19, 2018

City Hall, Meeting Room B

From 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Chair: Mariette Pushkar

Agenda Items

Welcome to all

Item 1, 2 and 3

Item 1, Roll call and certification of quorum

Item 2, Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Item 3, Approval of Minutes of August 8, 2018 meeting

Item 4

Ward to Downtown Pedestrian Bridge

- Information from City staff and project team
- Hearing of delegations
 - Bill Mungall
- In Committee discussion – motion

Item 5

Information Items

1. Project Update: Presentation on the Speedvale Trail Underpass
2. Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan Information Session

Next Meeting:

November 21, 2018 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. City Hall, Meeting Room B

September 19, 2018
River System Advisory Committee

Item 2 Ward to Downtown Pedestrian Bridge – Environmental Implementation Brief
Report provides an overview of the Environmental Implementation Brief that has been prepared to inform the restoration of the west bank of the Speed River between Macdonell Street and Neeve Street.

Proposal The City of Guelph initiated the detailed design of the Ward to Downtown Pedestrian Bridge project upon approval of an Environmental Assessment which studied the impact of two potential pedestrian crossings over the Speed River to connect the Ward to Downtown. This project includes the detailed design to 50% of 'Alternative 1.' In addition to the bridge, the scope of work includes a trail between Arthur Street and the bridge, and a trail along Wellington Street between Macdonell Street and Neeve Street.

Location The study area is located close to the Macdonell Street and Wellington Street East intersection and is bound by the Guelph Junction Railway (GJR) tracks to the north, the property known as 5 Arthur Street to the east, Neeve Street to the south and Wellington Street East to the west.

Background

- An EA and EIS were completed in 2017 to review the environmental impacts of two pedestrian bridge locations over the Speed River.
- RSAC provided input at the EIS Terms of Reference stage at which time the committee passed the following motion:

THAT the EIS include:

- o an expanded study area which covers the entire reach from MacDonnell to Neeve Street;
- o confirmation of candidate Significant Wildlife Habitat through field study, where appropriate;
- o policy context and analysis sections;
- o an analysis of cumulative impacts;
- o a recommended ranking of alternatives; and

THAT the Fluvial Geomorphology work include:

- o multiple water quality grab samples collected to facilitate seasonal characterization; and

THAT the City return to RSAC with the DRAFT Project File (and attached EIS) to receive advice from RSAC on the preferred alternative.

- o The EIS recommended the restoration of the west bank of the Speed River between Macdonell Street and Neeve Street.

- RSAC was also consulted at the Draft EA stage at which time the committee passed the following motion:

THAT The River Systems Advisory Committee supports the recommendations of the Ward to Downtown Bridges Class Environmental Assessment Project File (Schedule B) prepared by GM Blue Plan and dated Feb 6, 2017 and associated technical studies, including the recommended preferred alternatives 1 and 2.

THAT The River Systems Advisory Committee recommends that the City include restoration of the Natural Heritage System (focused on

vegetation communities) along the entire west valley slope of the Speed River within the Study Area into the detailed design phase of the Environmental Assessment for Bridge 1 by including an invasive species management and restoration plan in the scope of the project.

THAT The River Systems Advisory Committee requests that the detailed design phases of the Environmental Assessment return to committee for review and input.

THAT Alternative 2 design does not rely on the existing retaining wall, so that opportunities exist in the future for the wall removal and bank ecological improvements.

- The City and consultant are currently working through the detailed design of Alternative 1 which is directly adjacent to the Guelph Junction Railway bridge.
- A Public Open House was held in April 2018 to present three pedestrian bridge design concepts. A preferred bridge design has been selected. A second Public Open House will be held in the fall to obtain feedback on the entire study area including trails and the river bank restoration.
- An Environmental Implementation Brief and preliminary detailed design drawings have been prepared for staff and committee feedback.
- Within the study area, the west bank of the Speed River is dominated by a woodland characterized as Dry-Fresh Manitoba Maple Deciduous Forest Type. A complex of Mixed Mineral Meadow Marsh Type occurs along open areas within the floodplain and adjacent to the river.
- Within the study area, the Speed River is an average depth of less than two metres and contains little to no aquatic plant species.
- Habitat for Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), a special listed as Special Concern by the province, occurs within the study area.
- Significant Wildlife Habitat in the form of Waterfowl Overwintering Habitat occurs within the study area.
- The Speed River provides poor to moderate quality habitat for fish, and is considered a cool water system.
- The Speed River valley is considered a Significant Valleyland system.

Report

The Environmental Implementation Brief prepared by BioLogic Incorporated (June 15, 2018) provides broad direction on site preparation, invasive species management, seeding and planting, wildlife habitat enhancement, restoration planting recommendations, and short-term management requirements.

Overall, the Environmental Implementation Brief and Landscape Planting Plan (L-103) do not currently provide adequate detail to address requirements laid out in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Environmental Impact Study (EIS) completed for the Ward to Downtown Bridges. A detailed, balanced landscape restoration plan and supporting Environmental Implementation Brief that considers site-specific conditions, constructability and cost should be developed. Staff suggest that the goals of restoration should be to increase native vegetation communities, reduce invasive exotic vegetation and enhance wildlife habitat. The EA/EIS suggest the following methods to achieve the goals of the restoration:

- Site Preparation
 - Control existing invasive exotic vegetation using an Integrated Pest Management approach.
 - Prepare timing and planting recommendations for invasive species

- management and restoration plantings.
 - Migratory birds are to be protected per the Migratory Birds Convention Act. No construction, tree removal or site preparation work is to occur during the generalized nesting period of April 1 to August 31.
 - Amend soils to meet specific vegetation community needs.
- Seeding and Planting
 - Identify populations of existing native species suitable for salvage.
 - Seeding and planting native species to establish a mosaic of targeted vegetation communities.
- Wildlife Habitat Enhancement
 - Create habitat features and structures for target wildlife species (e.g. woody debris, nesting tubes, nesting boxes, etc.).
- Short-term Management
 - Monitoring the establishment of seeded and planted native species and adapting restoration establishment and maintenance requirements.
 - Continued control of invasive exotic vegetation using an Integrated Pest Management approach and adapting methods/frequency to meet control targets.
 - Implementing a Sediment and Erosion Control Plan.
- Phasing Considerations
 - Restoration required following construction of bridge.
 - Restoration required along the remainder of the west bank of the river, which may be paired with trail construction.

The Environmental Implementation Brief should also include the avoidance, mitigation and compensation recommendations made in the EIS to ensure protection and maintenance of natural heritage features and functions within and adjacent to the proposed pedestrian bridge:

1. Prepare and implement an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan as part of detailed design.
2. Install and monitor a silt and sediment control barrier. The plan should note that silt fencing must be inspected weekly during construction and following a storm event of 25mm of rainfall within 24 hours. The plan should also note that ESC measures must be kept in place until trail construction is completed and disturbed soils have been vegetated.
3. The area of construction disturbance shall be kept to a minimum.
4. Control access and movement of equipment and people.
5. Minimize the use of heavy equipment in sensitive areas.
6. Works are to be located as far away from the feature boundary as possible.
7. Equipment is to be limited to the construction allowance area and is into to encroach within the adjacent urban forest or watercourse.
8. Accumulated sediment and debris to be removed before silt fence is removed.
9. All disturbed areas will be re-vegetated or restored with site-appropriate indigenous plants.
10. Prioritize trees 467, 517 and 600 for preservation when selecting a preferred bridge alignment and developing construction plan.
11. Implement a comprehensive Restoration, Compensation and Invasive Species Management plan within the areas of impact associated with the construction of the bridge.
12. Ensure all abutments are located at existing infrastructure (i.e. retaining

walls) to reduce impacts to the valleyland slopes.

Characterization of site conditions, soils and existing vegetation communities should be included in the Environmental Implementation Brief. Background information on existing conditions is available in the EIS prepared as part of the EA. Species selection listed in the interim Environmental Implementation Brief should reflect an ecologically-based vegetation community. Possible target Ecological Land Classification communities include: Fresh-Moist Hardwood Deciduous Forest (FOD6-5) with basswood, oak, hickory, red maple and others (noting site-specific requirements, including soil pH), or Fresh-Moist Lowland Forest (F)D7-3, 7-4 or 7-5) with elm willow, walnut, basswood, black maple, etc.

The Planting Plan (L-103) should reflect recommendations made in the Environmental Implementation Brief (following from recommendations made in the EIS and EA) and should reflect an ecologically driven design appropriate for a natural riparian corridor and supporting coolwater fish habitat. For example, the central portion of the Planting Plan (L-103) indicates Riparian Mix A, which includes shrubs, grasses and forbs. Deciduous trees must be included throughout the Planting Plan. Overall, the Planting Plan reads as a landscape plan, rather than an ecological restoration plan. The focus of plantings should be redirected to enhancing biodiversity, wildlife habitat and the natural heritage system. One exception to this may be at the intersection of Wellington Street and Neeve Street to address safety and maintenance concerns.

Suggested Motion

Staff recommends that the River System Advisory Committee conditionally support the Environmental Implementation Brief prepared by BioLogic Incorporated in support of the preliminary detailed design of the Ward to Downtown Pedestrian Bridge, with the following conditions:

THAT the following items be provided to the City's satisfaction through an addendum:

That adequate detail to address requirements laid out in the EA and EIS be provided to improve the ecological condition and function of the west bank of the Speed River from Macdonell Street to Neeve Street.

That site-specific conditions be incorporated.

That the goals of the restoration plan be specified and reflect an increase in native vegetation communities, reduction in invasive exotic vegetation and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

That methods for achieving the goals of the restoration plan be specified.

That considerations for phasing to address restoration following bridge construction and restoration along the remainder of the west bank of the river be incorporated.

That avoidance, mitigation and compensation recommendations made in the EIS be incorporated.

That characterization of site conditions, soils and existing vegetation communities be incorporated, and used to guide the Landscape Plan and removal of invasive species.

That the selection of native species and seed mixes and Landscape Plan be revised to reflect the goal of restoring an ecologically-based vegetation community.