

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



CONSOLIDATED MARCH 6, 2015

Council Chambers, Guelph City Hall, 1 Carden Street

DATE Wednesday March 11, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.

Please turn off or place on non-audible all cell phones, PDAs, Blackberrys and pagers during the meeting.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

2015 TAX SUPPORTED OPERATING BUDGET

Delegations

Randalin Ellery, Guelph-Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Barb McPhee, Guelph-Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Sarah Haanstra, Guelph-Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Jane Londerville, Wellington-Guelph Housing Committee
Vince Hanson
Susan Ratcliffe
Nicole Abouhalka
Sandy Nicholls
John Hart
John Gruzleski, Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association
Allan Dyer
Kathryn Hofer
Lars Sterne
Elizabeth Smith
Yvette Tendick
Kithio Mwanzia, Guelph Chamber of Commerce
Bill Gardner
Elizabeth Dent
Oxanna Adams
Allan Boynton
Ted Pritchard, Fair Tax Campaign-Guelph
Carolyn Lentz, Fair Tax Campaign-Guelph
Ken Jeffrey, President of Corporation 42, Riverridge Condominiums
Maggie Laidlaw
Keith Poore
Jason Dodge
Susan Watson
Reid Gilmore
Laura Murr
Alexandre Côté
Steven Petric

Correspondence

Sandy Nicholls

Cynthia Folzer

Joan Barham

Lisa Mactaggart

Sylvia Watson

Jason Dodge

Oxanna Adams

Bill Gardner

Jim White

ADJOURNMENT

2015 February 24

Good day,

The Capital Budget should NOT include the absurd amount of millions of dollars of taxpayers money for the inevitably environmentally damaging two lane bridge with bicycle paths and walkways on the environmentally sensitive Speed River and surrounding sensitive wetlands.

Widening Niska from Ptarmigan to the bridge only to cross onto Whitelaw's current narrow conditions on the west side of the bridge sounds like a bad idea. The hedgerows provide habitat for wildlife and should be protected. The view scape will be altered.

In my opinion, the cost of replacing the single lane Niska Road Bailey Bridge with a two lane bridge is wrong in every way. It will only create an even more dangerous short cut commuter TRAFFIC CORRIDOR of speeders recklessly driving through our residential neighbourhood and Grand River conservation lands.

95% of the residents that live in the Kortright Hills community have made very clear they do not want a two lane bridge. We do not want to pay for a two lane bridge.

Wouldn't it make sense to close the bridge and turn it into a pedestrian bridge and save millions of dollars? This would give everyone the opportunity to experience the beauty and peacefulness of the Grand River Conservation Lands for health and wellbeing. This would ensure no environmental damage would be done to this important green space.

Or repair the charming single lane historical bridge for \$800,000 or so, and perhaps focus on spending tax dollars on the things that really matter to the residents of this community and the City of Guelph.

Please take the extra million and a half and allow the Guelph Police Service to hire more traffic enforcement officers who are needed throughout the growing city! Install bus shelters for those individuals that can't afford a vehicle or the elderly that can no longer drive, so they can be protected from the elements. Install much needed traffic calming measures on Niska and other problem speeding areas within the city. There are so many ways that the city could put this money to better use.

It seems drivers have a licence to speed on Niska Road, and they know it!

Let's reflect on the driver who was caught doing 100 km/hr over the single lane Niska Road Bridge.

If the city has requested "one" additional traffic officer in 2015, that will bring the traffic department, which consists of four platoons of two officers per platoon to grand total of nine traffic officers.

I believe the population of Guelph has grown to approximately 140,000. Nine traffic officers for 140,000 residents, not to mention all the commuter traffic.

Please ensure taxpayers money is allocated to hiring more police officers for traffic enforcement. Please consider increasing the traffic department to a suitable complement to meet the demands of the growing city.

The "Municipal Environmental Assessment" has disclosed that **75% of the traffic on Niska Road is commuter traffic**. It has clearly become a short cut from the Hanlon to Hwy. 124 (to Kitchener, Cambridge and large stores on Paisley, etc.).

The city wants to tear down a unique heritage single lane bridge which is the **only effective traffic calming measure we have on Niska Road**, and replace it with a two lane bridge? Why? This sounds like even more incentive to speed.

In 2011, Louis Wickline, Traffic Technologist with the City of Guelph issued a letter stating that Niska Road qualified for traffic calming measures. To date we have received two signs "Residential Area Drive Slowly". This type of signage is not effective. When I followed up on this with the City, I was told there was no money in the budget for traffic calming on Niska Road.

I have personally requested stop signs at Foxwood, Tanager and Pioneer Trail. First, I was told there was no money in the budget. Then I was told the issue would have to wait until the EA was complete.

This was retrieved from the City of Guelph's web page entitled: RE the Environmental Assessment

Notice of Public Information Centre #1
Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study

Will/Can the EA consider traffic calming measures?

The Project Team will be exploring options for traffic calming measures during the course of the EA study.

These measures include: enforcement of truck restrictions, enforcement of speed limits, community signage, consideration for speed humps, and traffic lane markings (such as tiger teeth or hatched areas).

Who exactly, is going to do all of this enforcement?

Guelph Police have made it clear that they do not have the required equipment to deal with truck restrictions.

Please specify exactly what and more importantly, when any of these traffic calming measures will be implemented.

Note the word "consideration" ... for the suggestions that could actually make a difference. Apparently Niska will only have consideration for speed humps, not bumps? I would prefer speed bumps.

I was a member of the required process - Municipal Environmental Assessment "Community Working Group". I spent hours of my personal time on this initiative, only to discover my thoughts, concerns, ideas and input would not be considered. I found it to be a one sided and very frustrating process.

- The large majority of the Community Working Group made it very clear that we were completely opposed to the two lane bridge but the Study Team disregarded the opinion of the majority of members of the CWG, who happen to live in the area, as well as their stand to preserve and protect the existing Heritage single lane Niska Road Bailey Bridge as well as the Speed River and surrounding sensitive wetlands.
- **Why did the Study Team get to make the decision of the "Preliminary Preferred Option" of a two lane bridge?**
- Is there the perception of an inherent bias because the engineering company stands to gain by going ahead and designing and possibly building the costly two lane bridge? Perhaps the entire process should have been run by a neutral third party, someone without a perceived vested interest in the outcome of the process? Could this be construed as a conflict of interest?

I found the RSAC meeting I attended on Wednesday, February 18th, 2015, rather frustrating. RSAC had many questions that the members Kortright Hills had the answers for, however, we were NOT permitted to speak.

Instead, we had to sit and listen to questionable statistics with respect to a survey the Study Team conducted. Drivers were asked a question when they crossed the bridge. They were asked "How important is the Niska Road Bridge to your trip?" I was asked "How important is the Niska Road Bridge to you?" I answered very important, because of the heritage value of the bridge. I want this bridge preserved for future generations. Therefore, my answer got lumped in with the people who were rushing off to work and answered yes the bridge was important because they can shave three minutes off their drive. I was not the only one that this happened to. We pointed this out to the Study Team. Can this study be completely accurate if we are asked different questions?

Several of us were permitted five minutes to speak about heartfelt reasons for preserving the bridge area and not wanting the two lane bridge.

There was a lot of giggling from the other side of the room during the meeting which seemed unprofessional to me.

How can the RSAC possibly make an educated decision based on information they do not have?

During the CWG meetings, I was alarmed when the Study Team referred to Niska as "a traffic corridor". A traffic corridor running right through our quiet neighbourhood and conservation lands? Niska is **not** the Stone Road extension!

Niska is a small collector road that was designed to carry **local** traffic to arterial roads. Should commuters be using Niska as a short cut traffic corridor? Should commuters be using arterial roads, such as the Hanlon to Wellington to Laird, etc., which were designed for carrying large amounts of traffic?

The large volume of wildlife killed on Niska and Whitelaw is already substantial. It will only continue to increase if and when our tax dollars are spent to provide an even faster short cut route for the 75% of commuter traffic to reach their very important destinations as quickly as possible.

I happen to live here. I bought here to be close to the beautiful "conservation" lands, for the peace and quiet that the neighbourhood once was. Now, I can't sit in my backyard without hearing the constant roar of traffic on Niska.

My daughter crosses Niska to catch her school bus. We walk our dogs here.

- I regularly see aggressive drivers speeding at alarming rates of speed along Niska. Poor sight lines and grades make it even more dangerous for pedestrians to cross.
- I regularly see erratic drivers fly through the one, and only stop sign located at Niska and Ptarmigan.
- I regularly see large transport trucks cross the single lane bridge in either direction, clearly exceeding the weight restrictions. (An officer told me anything larger than a cube van will exceed the weight limit).
- I regularly have very aggressive drivers pass me at high rates of speeds when I adhere to the 50 km/hr current speed limit.
- I regularly hear impatient drivers lay on their horn when I slow down to turn into my court.
- I regularly do not see any police officers around to witness any of this.

I experienced a dangerous incident of road rage on Niska which occurred in the early hours of the morning when it was still dark. A very aggressive driver in a black SUV drove what seemed to be inches from my bumper and tailgated me all along Niska with his high beams on, over the bridge and then passed erratically because I did the 50 km/hr speed limit.

Guelph is a "Places to Grow" and anyone can see the tremendous amount of growth and sprawl that has occurred in the past several years. Because of the growth, one officer explained that there are many new problem areas within the city so they can't be on Niska 24/7. They do their best with the resources they have. We appreciate their efforts however, they simply do not have the manpower for the required amount of traffic calming Niska Road needs.

The last time I contacted the Guelph Police to ask for additional enforcement on Niska, I was told that the only traffic officer scheduled for work that day had called in sick. I understand that traffic officers are scheduled for POA court appearances, have vacation time and do get sick. I would like to be able to call them to ask for more enforcement and get it. I would be happy if my tax dollars went toward this.

A very serious problem exists on Niska Road. This problem has been identified and reported to the City and Police Service for literally, years. I know neighbours that have moved from the area because they grew tired of

continuously advising the City of Guelph about the problem with no results. The police have limited resources. The City of Guelph is well aware of this issue and yet it continues. How can this situation be rectified?

My daughter had to cross the dangerous intersection of Niska and Downey to get from her bus to the YMCA/YWCA. I contacted the city to request a crosswalk there. To date, the city has done nothing about it. Would this be an important item to budget for? Or perhaps a set of lights at Niska and Downey?

I was shocked that the Study Team mentioned the ludicrous idea of possibly putting in a roundabout at Niska and Downey. We, the taxpayers of Guelph recently paid for that intersection to be repaved! More importantly, a roundabout would prove very dangerous for the young children that cross there to get from Kortright Hills Public School to the YMCA/YWCA. It is a very active pedestrian crossing and absolutely not an appropriate location for a roundabout.

Realistically, if Niska has qualified for traffic calming since 2011 and has received nothing to date ... what are the chances we will receive anything in the future? Is it possible the two lane bridge with bicycle paths and walkways will cost more than the estimated amount? Will we hear there is no money left for traffic calming after the two lane bridge has drawn excessive amounts of uncontrollable traffic to the area?

The folks that live on Exhibition and Barton have 30 km/hr speed limits and speed bumps. How many vehicles travel through their neighbourhood daily? Literally thousands of cars and trucks speed through Niska, Downey and Ptarmigan each and every day. We all pay our taxes. Do the residents that live in Kortright Hills not deserve the same respect that the residents in the downtown area receive? Should we not be able to cross our residential streets to retrieve our mail in safety? The scales are unbalanced.

The current situation on Niska Road requires immediate traffic calming measures and police enforcement.

I have spoken with many of people that live in this area who will be very negatively affected if the single lane bridge is replaced with an unnecessary two lane bridge. Many have expressed a two lane bridge will destroy the peace and tranquility of the residents that live in Kortright Hills forever.

Please take the large amount of taxpayers dollars allocated for this elaborate and costly project and put it to good use. Allow the Police Service to hire more traffic officers. Implement adequate traffic calming measures on Niska Road and other problem roads within the city.

We do not want our hard earned tax dollars wasted on an unnecessary two lane bridge! Repair the bridge.

Please consider delaying funding for the two lane bridge for three years.

The following is from a CWG meeting:

CWG member – Asked for further explanation regarding Leonard Rach’s comments about the bridge being unsafe.

Leonard Rach (RJ Burnside) – The bridge is in poor condition and should the load of the bridge be exceeded it would be considered a safety hazard.

CWG member – Is it possible or probable that the bridge would fail if a car passed over the bridge following a truck?

Leonard Rach (RJ Burnside) – Yes anything is possible. If the bridge does not receive repairs it could become a hazard for all traffic in the future.

Better yet, close the bridge!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sandy Nicholls

Hello Mr. Mayor,

I don't know much about you or your values ... but I voted for you

To hopefully have a better Guelph.

Can you please advise when the Hanlon Creek Conservation Master Plan (developed and approved by the City of Guelph and the GRCA in 1982) has been implemented?

Please advise why two million dollars allocated in the past Capital Budget for a sports complex on the GRCA/Kortright lands happened without any public consultation?

Does Guelph have a Green Spaces Master Plan that will protect natural spaces in perpetuity?

Why were the GRCA lands previously zoned P1 "conservation" re-designated for residential?

This is extremely disturbing to me.

I purchased my home here ten years ago because of the surrounding "conservation" lands, what used to be a quaint, quiet country road and the unique single lane Bailey bridge.

I realize no one but me could care less, but I will have to endure the inconvenience and cost of moving if these "conservation" lands are ever developed.

This green space is very important to me for my health and well being and for many people that live in this neighbourhood.

Thank you,

Sandy Nicholls

Niska Road and the Balley Bridge are important and impact the safety of the neighborhood and the adjacent natural heritage. I often ride my bike along the Speed River on the approach to Niska Road and it is one of the few, if any, remaining areas where you can see frogs and tadpoles. I have seen displaying grouse there. Please either remove the bridge or leave it as a one-lane bridge for pedestrians and cyclists.

With regard to the library. The library is a very busy place . Students use it for study and for research. It is time we move on building a new downtown library. I do not believe the library should be a private -public project.

Cynthia Folzer

To Guelph City Councillors:

As a resident living in the Old University Area, I support the position of our Old University Resident Neighbourhood Association (OUNRA) with respect to shared rental housing which will be presented to Council on March 11th.

Drawing on the experience of the neighbourhood around Queen's University in Kingston, where inappropriate housing policy and procedures lead to a neighbourhood with very negative social impacts on the city and University, we cannot be complacent about such issues in the Old University Neighbourhood or indeed any part of Guelph where there is shared rental housing.

OUNRA was sufficiently flexible to change their initial, and preferred, action, for a position suggested by Council.

The PBEE report 14-29 recommended the addition of "one full-time proactive inspector and a comprehensive communications and education plan" which was accepted by Council on 2014 August 25.

Delaying such approved action will indeed magnify the current concerns that shared rental housing is bringing. Ones that result in negative community impacts and degrade the City of Guelph. Cutting such Council approved action from this budget sends a negative message as to how this Council sees the quality of life and personal experiences for persons living in shared housing in Guelph.

Joan Barham

Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

I was very disheartened that the City decided not to license shared rental housing last fall. Again I was discouraged when the recommendations from the staff report on licensing were not part of the proposed City budget. I am very concerned with the safety and security of residents living in this type of accommodation, having observed at close hand two such properties within Guelph. As well, it is not that long ago that I was a tenant living in a poorly wired apartment in another city. Tenants should not have to evaluate whether their rented quarters are safe. Parents sending their children to our city should be assured that rental properties are being properly maintained and that there remedies to ensure that it is so. It is our responsibility as a city to ensure that all the housing stock is safe and secure for occupants. For an extremely reasonable cost, the City of Guelph can hire an additional bylaw inspector and implement the recommendations made in the Shared Rental Housing Report. The property owners residing near the campus have been seeking some sort of assistance for years to deal with degradation of their neighbourhoods and having a poorly maintained housing stock is a great part of our concerns.

It would be horrible to have a death in a fire in my city. Let's do what is needed to make sure that doesn't happen.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Lisa Mactaggart

Mayor Guthrie and Councillors,

You are well aware that over the past 6 years both the city and citizens have engaged in a discussion as to how best deal with shared rental housing. The city rejected licensing but at a council meeting of Aug 25, 2014 approved an alternate approach. This approach was to include an educational component (Reference Item 2-76/77 "Communication and Educational Plan for Shared Rental Housing") and the hiring of another inspector to allow for the city to be more proactive (Reference Item 2-78/79 "Zoning Inspector I"). Unfortunately, neither of these items have been recommended for funding.

As someone who lives in a rental zone, I have first hand knowledge as to how absentee landlords do not follow zoning bylaws, do not obtain building permits before converting a family home and ignore fire codes. The city needs to take a leading role in ending such substandard rental housing. You are also naive to believe that these actions are restricted to a small number of absentee landlords.

For the health and safety of all tenants, please support the inclusion of these two items pertaining to shared rental housing. If you do not, then if at a future date there is a fatal fire in an illegal lodging house, you will be part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Thanking you for your consideration of this issue,
Sylvia Watson

To the Mayor and members of Council,

This article appeared in "Perspectives" an information and advertising magazine that was included with the Globe and Mail (December, 2014) promoting Waterloo Region. I would like to highlight the following sentences from the article. "Our community investments have included the protection of heritage neighbourhoods, vibrant downtowns, cultural events and attractions, cycling routes and diverse choices for business location. These are all assets we need to protect. At the same time, we need to attract new investment that will build on these great community assets." Guelph does not exist in a bubble; we are in direct competition with surrounding communities, including the Waterloo Region, for new business investments. In my presentation I will explore whether the capital and operating budgets reflect this reality.

Oxanna Adams

We

Mostly!



Sidewalk Winter Control Belongs in the Budget Despite Flaws



Dr. Bill Gardner
Ward 1 Resident
11-Mar-2015

Some complaints...

1. Didn't handle mammoth Christmas 2013 ice storm well
2. Some sod damage especially on streets with narrow sidewalks
3. Plows don't come around soon enough on some streets

But it's working, say, 85% of the time.

Not sensible to throw out an "85%" program because it doesn't work on 100% of cases.

Sensible to try to improve on the weak spots!

Clear that neighbouring residents-shovel programs are not 100%

How's it working in KW?

- Mayor wants review of sidewalk shoveling rules (CBC Feb/26/15)
 - Complaints from residents about shoveling to bare pavement with “heavier snowfall and persistent low temps”
 - Complaints that city “not able to respond” to “chronic offenders” even with \$300-500 fines
- “If you are going away during winter months, **please arrange** for your sidewalks to be cleaned” (city brochure)
- Time to talk about sidewalk cleaning (K. Scian, Waterloo Chronicle Mar/4/15)
 - “Many of you are not shoveling your sidewalks”
 - “I really don’t want to live in a nitpicky community that spends its time calling the bylaw hotline on each other. It’s not healthy.”
- Forget your snowblower and start shoveling, or face \$300-plus bill in Kitchener (C. Thompson, Waterloo Region Record Feb/13/15)
 - Woman’s snowblower not good enough, given notices
 - City: “down to the pavement” is “the only standard we can go with”
 - “Inundated with ... thousands of complaints” on neighbours

Down shovels: the city should clear the sidewalks (Macleans Mar/17/11)

- “Many Canadian cities plow their sidewalks, as well as roads ... basic municipal service”
 - Cited Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Fredericton, most of Metro Toronto
- “One of the **great bargains** of municipal governance”
 - Winnipeg <\$7 year (Guelph is cheaper!)
- City still liable even if residents shovel: 2000 Ontario Court of Appeal decision
 - “Snow and ice accumulating on public sidewalks ... are the legal responsibility of the municipality, not the property owner” “regardless of bylaws or fines”
 - “Homeowners ... inevitably produce widely varying results”
 - “No upside to sidewalk shovelling”
 - “All Canadians should demand their cities provide snow-free sidewalks”

Guelph is evidently in the vanguard of progress!

Is clearing sidewalks a “civic duty”?

Agreed!

But essence of democratic government is when free citizens decide to **delegate** some duties, along with tax money

- Prime example: household waste
- Different reasons: usually because government can do it cheaper and/or better
- Residents could also delegate to private contractors, but at far higher cost

It's not either/or:

- Yes, it's a civic duty
- AND we can continue to delegate it to the city

Conclusion:

Don't give up on sidewalk plows!

- Work on the recognized flaws (underserved streets)
- Don't expect perfection, especially in rare extreme conditions
- "The residents will do it better" is an illusion
- Don't make us rat out our neighbours!
- Don't make us afraid to leave town for >24 hrs!
- **Recognize that Guelph is actually a MODEL on this file**

Re: Written submission for your consideration of Including Snow Removal From City Sidewalks in your 2016 Budget.

Your Worship & Members of Council:

I would respectfully like to make this representation to you on behalf of Guelph's Seniors & the many other citizens who because of health problems or even gender are not able to engage in this physical demanding job of removing snow from city owned sidewalks.

I think you are well aware for most of our seniors it is a struggle to stay in our homes & most of us are not able to cut our grass never mind remove snow from city sidewalks.

We struggle to pay our taxes even though we are not able to enjoy many of the activities that our taxes help finance & I would ask at least you consider supporting & continue the snow removal program from city sidewalks which helps all citizen particularly our most vulnerable seniors & other physically challenged citizens.

I would draw your attention to the fact that even our Doctors caution all citizens to be careful of vigorous outdoor activities in the winter such as snow shoveling as the cold weather does cause restriction in our blood vessels & so care must be exercised as strokes, heart attacks, or serious muscular strains could be the result especially if we are not physically fit, & how many of us can say we are physically fit in today's society.

On examination the cost of snow removal from our sidewalks, is indeed a small part of the City's Budget. Based on the current published population of 121,688 & the estimated cost of \$100,000 that works out to 0.83 cents per capita which is a small price to pay for this valuable service provided to your citizens.

I realize Council has many things to consider in your budget for 2016, but I hope you are able to see your way clear to including snow removal from city sidewalks as part of this budget.

It is a benefit to most of our citizens including your seniors, citizens with health problems, & even most of our female population whom I think you will agree are not able, & whom we really don't want to be doing this physically demanding work.

Yours Sincerely,

Jim White