

**5TH REPORT OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL PLANNING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting held on April 21, 2016, commencing at 5:05 PM, in Committee Rooms #1 and #2, Second Floor, London City Hall.

PRESENT: R. Trudeau (Acting Chair), A. Boyer, L. Des Marteaux, K. Doughty, C. Dyck, S. Hall, D. Hiscott, C. Kushnir, K. Moser, S. Peirce, N. St. Amour, M. Thorn and M. Watson and H. Lysynski (Secretary).

ABSENT: P. Ferguson, B. Gibson, Dr. N. Huner, S. Levin, S. Madhavji and J. Stinziano.

ALSO PRESENT: C. Creighton, E. Lalande and J. MacKay.

I. CALL TO ORDER

1. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

That it **BE NOTED** that no pecuniary interests were disclosed.

II. CONSENT ITEMS

2. 4th Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

That it **BE NOTED** that the 4th Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee from its meeting held on March 17, 2016, was received.

3. 4th Report of the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee

That it **BE NOTED** that the 4th Report of the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee from its meeting held on March 23, 2016, was received.

4. 5th Report of the Advisory Committee on the Environment

That it **BE NOTED** that the 5th Report of the Advisory Committee on the Environment from its meeting held on April 6, 2016, was received.

5. 3rd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee – Municipal Council Resolution

That it **BE NOTED** that the Municipal Council resolution adopted at its meeting held on March 22, 2016, with respect to the 3rd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee from its meeting held on February 18, 2016, was received.

6. 4th Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee – Municipal Council Resolution

That it **BE NOTED** that the Municipal Council resolution adopted at its meeting held on April 5, 2016, with respect to the 4th Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee from its meeting held on March 17, 2016, was received.

7. Properties located at 3234, 3263 and 3274 Wonderland Road South

That a Working Group, consisting of D. Hiscott (lead), A. Boyer, K. Doughty, S. Hall and M. Thorn, **BE ESTABLISHED** to provide comments on the application by Southside Construction Management Ltd., relating to the properties located at 3234, 3263 and 3274 Wonderland Road South.

III. SCHEDULED ITEMS

None.

IV. SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

None.

V. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8. Workplan

That it **BE NOTED** that the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee held a general discussion with respect to its 2016 Work Plan.

9. Thames Valley Parkway project

That consideration of the Working Group comments on the Thames Valley Parkway project **BE POSTPONED** to the next Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee meeting in order for the Working Group to update information following a meeting with the Civic Administration with respect to this matter.

10. EIS for Richmond Street Pedestrian Pathway Connection

That the attached, revised, Richmond Street Pedestrian Pathway Connection Working Group comments **BE FORWARDED** to the Civic Administration for consideration.

11. Appointment of an EEPAC Member to the Advisory Committee on the Environment

That N. St. Amour **BE APPOINTED** as the Environmental and Ecological Advisory Committee representative to the Advisory Committee on the Environment.

12. Planning and Design Standards for Trails in ESA's (2012) Document Review and Update

That it **BE NOTED** that the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee heard a verbal presentation and received a communication from L. Des Marteaux, with respect to the third meeting of the Trails Focus Group held on April 14, 2016 relating to the Planning and Design Standards for trails in ESA's (2012) review.

VI. DEFERRED MATTERS/ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

13. (ADDED) Property located at 2397 Oxford Street West

That it **BE NOTED** that the Notice of Application to amend the Zoning By-law by 2293683 Ontario Inc., relating to the property located at 2397 Oxford Street West, was received; it being noted that the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee heard a verbal presentation from E. Lalande, Planner II, with respect to this matter.

14. (ADDED) Bird Deaths in Relation to High Rise Buildings

That the Dark Sky Initiative Working Group consisting of representatives from the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee (EEPAC) and the Advisory Committee on the Environment **BE REQUESTED** to also consider bird deaths in relation to high rise buildings; it being noted that the EEPAC Working Group consists of L. Des Marteaux, A. Boyer, K. Doughty, S. Hall, C. Kushnir and N. St. Amour.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: May 19, 2016

CITY OF LONDON

Richmond St. Pedestrian Pathway Connection

EIS Prepared By: AECOM (April 2015)

Reviewers: Lauren Des Marteaux, Sarah Peirce, David Hiscott, Norman Hüner

SUMMARY

The EIS by AECOM was thorough, well-prepared, and included a comprehensive series of management recommendations with respect to construction mitigations and ecological enhancement. Our main concerns are that the intended pathway could have long-term net negative impacts on the wildlife movement corridor between the northern and southern PSWs, and will increase wildlife disturbance/mortality, litter and/or salt contamination, and soil compaction and sedimentation. We also find that many of the wildlife inventories do not meet the 'three-season' criteria. We recommend that negative impacts to wildlife and litter be acknowledged, that mitigation of these impacts be considered, that effort is made to supplement wildlife inventories.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

It would be helpful to present the information in Figure 8 (which includes the preferred pathway alignment) earlier in the document to give context to the other figures. Specify if and where pathway lighting is to be used. If lighting will be installed, it should be done so to minimize light pollution and energy waste (this includes avoiding reflecting surfaces near lights, using lights that are low-intensity, direct downward/shielded to minimize light trespass, and timed to limit lighting duration).

Executive Summary

- 1 - Restricting the pathway to areas outside of natural heritage features will not result in a net positive impact. The path adds traffic to an otherwise undisturbed area, and that traffic bisects a corridor connecting two wetlands.
- 2 - That construction mitigation will avoid or prevent impact is, again, not a net positive impact.

2. Natural Heritage Features & Functions

The Environmental Management Guidelines (2007) (EMG), section 2, p44 states that the "standard protocol for conducting a comprehensive survey of wildlife (flora and fauna)" recommends a "three season inventory" where field investigations are to be performed "at three different times of the year per site". According to this protocol, the three seasons are spring, summer and autumn. Although the AECOM EIS does provide details of their field assessments with the dates of the field assessments conveniently summarized in Table 2

(p10), the data presented in this table indicate that the necessary “three season inventory” was performed only one (the Floral Species List) of the eight field surveys listed in Table 2. A “three season inventory” was not completed for the following surveys: amphibian and breeding bird survey, aquatic habitat assessment, significant wildlife habitat assessment, wetland boundary assessment, wetland boundary assessment, ecological land classification, and the species at risk assessment. If some of the surveys were from previous reports, there should be some indication of what was found.

We had some concerns about the timing and breadth of surveys based on EMG recommendations. Inconsistencies with the EMG are as follows:

Survey type	Surveys in the present EIS	According to EMG
Amphibian studies	April 21, June 12/24	Late March to May
Breeding bird survey	May 27, June 6	Mid-June to July
Significant wildlife habitat assessment	August 7/15, October 1	Should include spring
Wetland boundary assessment	August 7, August 15	Should include spring
Floral species list	April 21, June 12/24, August 7/15, October 1 (all in 2014)	3 seasons, multiple years
Species at risk assessment	August 7/15, October 1	3 seasons, multiple years

Recommendation: That the listed surveys be supplemented to comply with the EMG, and/or if data from missing years and seasons was taken from pre-existing documents Aquatic Habitat Assessment should also be completed for the tributary.

Why was no benthic survey completed for the tributary? The pathway is expected to have long-term impact on sedimentation and (potentially) salt run-off into tributary. Precipitation may also be a sedimentation problem long-term; topography indicates that everything from the path will drain into the wetlands and tributary.

Recommendation: That a benthic survey is completed for the tributary to provide baseline data for post-construction surveys.

2.2.1 Vegetation Communities & Plants

How does the use of conservation coefficients and floristic/weediness indices reflect the EMG? If these are not in the EMG but are standard practice elsewhere, perhaps they should be incorporated into the new EMG?

2.2.3 Breeding Birds

Will the landowners in the adjacent property be informed that nesting barn swallow was found (McWade Pl.)?

Criteria for Amphibian Breeding Habitat (Woodland) was met, but not Amphibian Breeding Habitat (Wetland). Unlike wetland breeding habitat, woodland breeding habitat does not require consideration of movement corridors (according to sources listed?). Breeding frogs were recorded in the southern PSW, and the northern PSW has potential breeding habitat. If both PSWs are treated as one complex (Arva Moraine), then it is possible that amphibians move between them. The pathway could therefore be a barrier for amphibian movement between the north and south PWSs.

Recommendation: Acknowledge the potential disruption of this wildlife corridor and consider mitigation (e.g. use alternative pathway surfaces—such as boardwalk—in the region between CUM1-1 and CUW1b).

5.2 Potential Short-term Impacts

Recommendation: If damage to trees or rooting zones occurs then tree planting should be done to compensate.

5.3.1 Design and Layout of Pathway

The report mentions that there will be a 5 m buffer from the high water mark of the watercourse. Does this include the maintained mowed area around the path or just to the edge of the path?

Recommendation: Provide clarification about where the buffer is measured from. If possible, we recommend increasing the buffer between the path and the watercourse (e.g. the EMG recommends a 15 m buffer around an intermittent watercourse) to minimize potential sedimentation and litter from the pathway.

5.4.2 Standard Mitigation

The mitigation measures during the construction phase will not fix any changes to the drainage pattern. Based on Figure 3, the path will intersect the overland flow from the cultural woodlands into the Arva moraine. What are the potential impacts of introducing impermeable surfaces in a runoff zone, so close to a watercourse?

Recommendation: If possible, increase the buffer between the path and the watercourse.

Is there a concern that the path will become inundated during floods and/or high precipitation events?

Recommendation: If possible, increase the buffer between the path and the watercourse; consider less permeable solutions for the path.

Are there any fertilizers, chemicals, or other concerns for water quality that could be carried into the watercourse from the path?

Recommendation: No winter maintenance, continuing monitoring for water quality assessment.

Which vegetative barriers will be used, and does standard practice show that this is an effective way to deter people? What is the nature of the educational signs, and where will they be placed?

5.4.3 Enhancement Mitigation

Be specific about 5-year monitoring plan - e.g. what should be included in this monitoring specifically, and who will undertake it? Who is in charge of educational signs and what information is on there?

Recommendation: Monitoring plan to include flora and fauna surveys, survey of watercourses, benthos, and invasive species.

5.5 Net Effects

The SWHTG wildlife habitat category includes animal movement corridors (which will be bisected by the pathway on the eastern side). Pathway placement will result in a land use change, as pedestrian traffic will occur in the area where there was once no pedestrian traffic. This 3 m paved path (plus 1.5 m mowing/disturbed border) is roughly the width of a small road; roads alter the natural landscape and may lead to disturbance of wildlife (Bennett 1991, 1999; Clevenger & Wierzchowski 2006). Pedestrian and cyclist traffic (in addition to strollers, pets etc.) creates a roadkill hazard for small wildlife (Kovar et al 2014). The path may also hinder wildlife movement between the two wetlands both physically (in the case of smaller invertebrates) and behaviorally (as human and pet traffic can be stressful to wildlife) (Frid and Dill 2002). Also note that dry, hot asphalt in the summer may impact herpetofauna (some species bask on asphalt, which increases their risk) (Ashley & Robinson 1996), and that diurnal species crossing the open pathway may be at increased risk of predation. If the path is to be maintained in the winter, will the use of salt be avoided?

Recommendations:

- **That steps are taken to ensure that the movement corridor remains fully functional. Consider a bridge, underpass, or boardwalk to allow wildlife movement across the CUW1b—CUM1-1 corridor.**
- **Planting to shade the pathway where it bisects CUW1b and CUM1-1 would mitigate problems associated with hot dry asphalt and allow for wildlife movement across the canopy.**
- **Mow less around the path to maintain naturalization of the corridor (and this may help with shade).**
- **Salt use for winter maintenance should be avoided to prevent water and soil contamination.**

Table 16

1.3 Degradation of soil quality through compaction/contamination

Table suggests there will be a no net effect for compaction because of the use of fences. Fences will not prevent root/ soil compaction, possible low net effect during construction

This was not considered for long-term effect, but placing an asphalt path and with increased human traffic (compaction) and consequent littering/salt use/machines (sedimentation)/other contamination, this would have lasting effects.

1.4 Increase in litter and man-made debris

This is a long-term concern due to increased human traffic.

Recommendation: Installation of garbage bins to prevent littering.

1.5 Disturbance to wildlife through noise impacts

Restriction of construction to 7am until 7pm does not ensure low to no net negative effect on disturbances to wildlife. Construction will have a negative effect on wildlife for its entire duration.

2.7 Increased sedimentation

How is “minimizing effects of the pathway by offsetting 5 m” considered a net positive effect? More details about a restoration plan to benefit this water course would be needed to justify net positive impact. A 5 m buffer may not be sufficient and the path adds impermeable barrier in a drainage area, possible low net effect especially long term once the construction sedimentation mitigation efforts are removed.

2.8 Increased anthropogenic disturbances

No mention of noise, litter, and dogs off leash in this part of the report. We disagree that no net negative effects will result from this pathway (see justification above).

Recommendation: Signage to indicate that off-leash is not permitted. Placement of garbage disposal units to minimize litter.

Figure 9

Preferred pathway appears to go straight over a few trees (south of junction between MAM2 and MAS2-1).

References

- Ashley, E. P., & Robinson, J. T. 1996. Road mortality of amphibians, reptiles and other wildlife on the Long Point Causeway, Lake Erie, Ontario. *Canadian Field-Naturalist*, 110(3), 403-412.
- Bennett, A. F. 1991. Roads, roadsides and wildlife conservation: a review. *Nature conservation 2: the role of corridors*.
- Bennett, A. F. 1999. *Linkages in the landscape: the role of corridors and connectivity in wildlife conservation* (No. 1). IUCN.
- Clevenger, A. P., & Wierchowski, J. 2006. Maintaining and restoring connectivity in landscapes fragmented by roads. *Conservation Biology Series-Cambridge*, 14, 502.

Frid, A., & Dill, L. M. 2002. Human-caused disturbance stimuli as a form of predation risk. *Conservation Ecology*, 6(1), 11.

Kovar, R., Brabec, M., Vita, R., & Bocek, R. 2014. Mortality rate and activity patterns of an Aesculapian snake (*Zamenis longissimus*) population divided by a busy road. *Journal of Herpetology*, 48(1), 24-33.