

Review of: **Gore Road Bridge**
Environmental Impact Study (Draft Report)

as prepared by Dillon Consulting, May 1, 2013

Reviewers: Maurice Hirst, Sandy Levin, Leila Nattagh, Dean Sheppard
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Aquatic Habitat

Recommendation 1: The storm outlet should include quality control measures to protect the warm water fishery, it being noted that the EIS for Pottersburg Erosion Remediation downstream (by North – South Environmental for Riggs Engineering, Feb 2013) noted Northern Pike in the Creek.

Recommendation 2: The Net Effects Table fails to include storm water impacts under Aquatic Habitat (p56)

Recommendation 3: Watercress (page 29) is a sign of groundwater upwelling. Consideration of this should be included in the detail design when the final location of the 2nd outfall is determined.

Recommendation 4: Any in water construction must take place before March 15 or after June 30 to minimize impact on the fishery (p.32).

Significant Natural Features

Recommendation 5: The previously unevaluated patches evaluated in this EIS have been determined to be Significant Woodlands. The change in land use designation should be made in the Official Plan. (Open Space in Schedule A and Significant Woodland in Schedule B-1)

Recommendation 6: Other features identified as significant, eg. Valleyland or habitat, or watercourse, should all be clearly depicted and delineated on the City's maps and schedules as appropriate.

Recommendation 7: Official Plan should be amended to reflect all significant natural features within the subject area.

Construction Impacts

It is not clear how long each component of the work will take, nor how construction impacts on the aquatic habitat will be avoided.

Recommendation 8: Potential breeding and overwintering habitat of snakes (Eastern Milksnake, Northern Ribbonsnake, and Queen Snake) must be done pre-construction at the appropriate time of year for identification. If such habitat is identified, consultation with MNR is required and mitigation included in the tender documents (page 32). EEPAC would appreciate being informed as to the MNR's recommendation(s). This will assist the Committee in future reviews.

Recommendation 9: If time permits, an amphibian survey should be done in 2014.

Recommendation 10: EEPAC agrees with the requirement to determine if the Barn Swallow nest is active and that the MNR be consulted re mitigation measures as this species is listed under the Provincial Endangered Species Act. EEPAC would appreciate being informed as to the MNR's recommendation(s). This will assist the Committee in future reviews.

Recommendation 11: Clean equipment protocol for construction equipment should be implemented at this site. <http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/index.php/municipalities> This includes ensuring that any stockpiles of soil during construction should be prevented from washing into the creek during storm events. A qualified inspector should be sent to the site when storm events are forecasted.

Recommendation 12: Work should be outside the core bird breeding season with a qualified biologist to search vegetation for nests prior to work starting (p.53).

Recommendation 13: No equipment should be marshaled or stored in the Meadow Marsh. This type of vegetated community accounts for less than 6% of all communities in London.

Recommendation 14: The future bike path under the new bridge should avoid the Meadow Marsh as much as possible. Garbage cans should also be installed post construction along the pathway.

Post Construction Impacts and Monitoring

Recommendation 15: Re-plantings should be with native non-invasive trees and shrubs in sufficient quantities and growth rates to enhance habitat features and functions of the Significant Corridor and Woodland (p. 53) and included in the construction project tender documents.

Recommendation 16: Shade trees should be planted along the newly reconstructed pathway and should be budgeted for as part of the construction project. The goal should be to create sufficient shade in 5 to 10 years.

Recommendation 17: Who will monitor ESC measures post construction must be specified in the final version of the EIS and included in the tender documents if it is a requirement of the contractor. It is unclear in the document (pgs 54 and 59) who does the monitoring, how often and for how long. It is also important to determine and specify the warranty period for plantings and who monitors and determines if replanting is necessary, given this will be a high traffic area for pedestrians (the report notes garbage is a problem in the study area).

Recommendation 18: The seed mix used should be appropriate for riparian valley slopes in Southwestern Ontario and include only native, non-invasive species. The seed mix to be used should be clearly specified in the EIS, tender and construction documents instead of providing only an example as presently shown in the EIS. An example is not a measure which can be planned and monitored.

Bridge Design

Recommendation 19: The design of the bridge should allow crossing motorists visibility out into the natural area and valley they are crossing instead of viewing only concrete walls. Even in this fleeting fashion, a connection and view to our natural areas is important. This must be balanced with the need to minimize salt and road oil spray entering the aquatic habitat.

Recommendation 20: The new bridge structure should be purposefully designed to offer attractive barn swallow nesting conditions. The EIS mentions that potential new nesting sites will be created (p55) but this should be designed purposefully, not left to happenstance.

Outstanding Issues

Recommendation 21: The EIS indicates further follow up is required on several issues (e.g. confirming barn swallow nesting and potential snake hibernacula). An Addendum to the Draft EIS (or a finalized EIS) should be published to fully document the outcome of all such issues, including mitigation measures required as per findings. All mitigation measures must be included in the tender and construction documents.

Recommendation 22:

Recommendation 23: Several of the Mitigation Measures in the Net Effects Table do not seem to make sense, likely a result of cut/paste errors. For example, Post Construction Mitigation Measures for Significant Valleylands do not seem to be post construction (p54) and confirming barn swallow nesting is certainly not post construction (p55). All mitigation measures should be reviewed by consultant to correct errors and detail any mitigation measures that may be missing due to mis-labelling.

Other Questions/Issues

Recommendation 24: What steps will be taken to sample for PCBs and what steps will be taken to ensure any contaminated soils/materials will be contained, collected, and removed safely?

Recommendation 25: This project should be coordinated with the downstream erosion mitigation project south of Hamilton Road to minimize impacts on the aquatic environment.