



Report: TES-DCS-18-03

Region of Waterloo
Transportation and Environmental Services
Design and Construction

To: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Planning and Works Committee

Date: January 30, 2018 **File Code:** 66114.H

Subject: **Class Environmental Assessment Study - Highway 7/8 Cycling and Pedestrian Bridge, Chandler Drive to Avalon Place, City of Kitchener**

Recommendation:

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo:

- a) approve the Recommended Design Alternative for the Highway 7/8 Cycling and Pedestrian Bridge between Chandler Drive and Avalon Place, in the City of Kitchener, as outlined in Report TES-DCS-18-03; and
- b) direct staff to file the Notice of Completion for this Class Environmental Assessment Study by means of advertisements in local newspapers and mailings to adjacent property owners, tenants and agencies, and place the Environmental Study Report on public record for a period of thirty (30) days.

Summary:

The Region of Waterloo is currently undertaking a Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study to consider a cycling and pedestrian bridge over Highway 7/8, connecting Chandler Drive and Avalon Place. A cycling and pedestrian bridge is preferred over other options such as increased transit service because it provides more active transportation choice and has a lower life cycle cost. Please refer to Appendix "A" for a Key Plan of the Study Area.

This Class EA Study is being directed by a "Project Team" consisting of staff from the Region of Waterloo, the City of Kitchener, the Ministry of Transportation, the Region's engineering consultants Brown and Co., and Regional Councillor Geoff Lorentz.

A Public Consultation Centre was held on October 26, 2017 to receive public input on the proposed cycling and pedestrian bridge, and to present a number of alternatives for the bridge location and type of bridge structure. Comments received at the Public Consultation Centre are included in Appendix “F” of this report and the Project Team’s responses to the main comment themes are included in Appendix “G” of this report.

Based on a review of the technical information gathered for this project as well as a review of all public and agency comments received, the Project Team is recommending that Regional Council approve the following Recommended Design Alternative for the Highway 7/8 pedestrian and cycling bridge:

- A pedestrian bridge located at the end of Southmoor Drive with ramps extending west along Avalon Place and south along Chandler Drive and stairs at each end of the bridge;
- A steel truss bridge structure with no roof enclosure;
- A clear width of 4.0 metres on the bridge and connecting ramps;
- New sidewalk along the south side of Avalon Place connecting to the intersection of Avalon Place and Stirling Avenue;
- A new cycling facility (type to be determined during detailed design) along Strasburg Road from the proposed bridge to the intersection of Strasburg Road and Ottawa Street; and
- Pedestrian lighting on the bridge and ramps; and
- Enhanced landscaping in the vicinity of the bridge ramps as space permits.

Please refer to Appendix “H” for a drawing of the Project Team’s Recommended Design Alternative.

Staff is now also recommending that Regional Council direct staff to file the Notice of Completion for this Class Environmental Assessment Study by means of advertisements in local newspapers and mailings to adjacent property owners, tenants and agencies, and place the Environmental Study Report on public record for a period of thirty (30) days.

The preliminary estimated project cost of the Project Team’s Recommended Design Alternative is \$7.6 Million, including the bridge, ramps, stairs, landscaping and the Strasburg Road cycling connection. Funding for the proposed bridge has been included in Grand River Transit’s approved 2018 Capital Budget and 10 Year Forecast for the year 2020. The timing of this project is subject to receipt of funding, all technical and financial approvals, and final approval of Regional Council.

The Region distributed a follow-up letter to stakeholders and all interested members of the public on December 15, 2017. This correspondence summarized the feedback received from the October 26, 2017 Public Consultation Centre, described the Project Team’s Recommended Design Alternative and notified members of the public of the opportunity to attend the Region’s January 30, 2018 meeting of the Planning and Works

Committee to express an opinion on this project.

Report:

1.0 Background

The Region of Waterloo is currently undertaking a Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study to consider a cycling and pedestrian bridge over Highway 7/8, connecting Chandler Drive and Avalon Place. Please refer to Appendix "A" for a Key Plan of the Study Area.

The Region of Waterloo's Transportation Master Plan (TMP) presents a vision for an increase in the number of walking, cycling and transit trips made by the public. The Region's Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) further identifies the need to build infrastructure supporting active modes of transportation.

Highway 7/8 is a controlled access provincial freeway under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation that acts as a physical barrier to pedestrians and cyclists. The freeway limits movements and interconnectivity between communities north and south of the freeway with the only available nearby crossing opportunities limited to Westmount Road (1.0 km to the west of Stirling Avenue) and Homer Watson Boulevard (1.5 km east of Stirling Avenue). Making a crossing at present requires long out-of-way travel routes, which is a deterrent for active modes of transportation.

The proposed Highway 7/8 cycling and pedestrian bridge will provide access to/from the Avalon Place neighbourhood to existing and planned Grand River Transit (GRT) bus routes south of Highway 7/8. The bridge would also provide a high quality active transportation link between the residential development on the north side of the freeway to services and destinations on the south side of the freeway, including the Laurentian Power Centre.

The isolated nature of the Avalon Place neighbourhood makes it difficult and costly to provide high quality transit service. A portion of the Avalon Place neighbourhood is currently serviced by Route 2 (Forest Hill), which provides connections to the greater transit network. Route 2 runs on 30 minute intervals Monday to Saturday, with service ending at 10 pm. Sunday and Holiday service is not currently provided on this route. Some portions of the Avalon Place neighbourhood fall outside the desired walking distance to the current service provided by Route 2.

The proposed bridge would connect the community to the more frequent transit service south of Highway 7/8, provided by the existing Route 3 (Ottawa South), Route 11 (Country Hills), and Route 22 (Laurentian West) as well as the future Route 205 iXpress connecting directly to the ION rapid transit corridor, making transit service a more practical option for residents of this neighbourhood without increasing GRT operating costs.

This Class EA Study is being directed by a “Project Team” consisting of staff from the Region of Waterloo, the City of Kitchener, the Ministry of Transportation, and Regional Councillor Geoff Lorentz. The Project Team also includes consultants from Brown & Co Engineering, who have been retained by the Region to assist with this Class EA Study.

2.0 Design Alternatives

Early in the Class EA Study, a series of broad alternative solutions were considered by the Project Team to determine the best overall option for providing improved transit service and active transportation access for the neighbourhood around Avalon Place. The Project Team evaluated a variety of alternative solutions, including: provision of additional transit service within the neighbourhood, constructing a new cycling and pedestrian facility crossing Highway 7/8, and the “Do Nothing” alternative (required to be considered under the Class EA process). Along with this evaluation, the Project Team considered alternative crossing locations and types, including a bridge and underpass across Highway 7/8. The Project Team’s evaluation of these alternatives was discussed in a “Study Design” document and was made available for public review and comment in July 2017 via direct mailouts to area residents, postings on the Region’s website and advertisements in the Kitchener Post and the Waterloo Region Record. Please refer to Appendix “B” for written comments received from the public in response to the “Study Design”.

Based on the Project Team’s evaluation, a new cycling and pedestrian bridge connecting Chandler Drive and Avalon Place was identified as the preferred solution to carry forward for further study. The key reasons why a new cycling and pedestrian bridge is preferred include:

- More active transportation opportunity provided by the bridge compared to the expansion of transit service within the Avalon Place neighbourhood; and
- The combined life cycle cost (including capital costs plus operating and maintenance costs) over the next 30 years is lower for the bridge alternative than for expanded transit service.

Please refer to Appendix “C” for an evaluation of alternative planning solutions.

The Project Team identified three (3) potential crossing locations for the proposed bridge between Chandler Drive and Avalon Place and three (3) potential bridge structure types. Please refer to Appendix “D” for drawings of the bridge location alternatives and bridge type alternatives developed by the Project Team.

These three location alternatives for the proposed bridge are described below:

Location 1A - Bridge located at the end of Southmoor Drive with bent ramps

Location 1B - Bridge located at the end of Southmoor Drive with straight

ramps

Location 2 - Bridge located between Stirling Avenue and Southmoor Drive with straight ramps

Each of the location alternatives listed above was evaluated by the Project Team with both stairs and ramps, or ramps only, at each end. Ramps have been included in all options at each end of the bridge in order to provide full accessibility to the bridge.

The three bridge type alternatives for the proposed bridge are described below:

Bridge Type 1 - Steel truss

Bridge Type 2 - Concrete U-Girder

Bridge Type 3 - Steel Box Girder

3.0 Public & Stakeholder Consultation

A Public Consultation Centre (PCC) was held at the Grand River Transit Maintenance Facility, 85 Chandler Drive in the City of Kitchener on Thursday October 26, 2017 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Plans showing the proposed design alternatives were on display with Project Team representatives present to answer questions and to receive feedback from members of the public. Forty-two (42) members of the public signed the attendance register. Nineteen (19) comment sheets were submitted during the hours of the PCC, followed by four (4) comment sheets and five (5) emails received in the two weeks following the PCC. Please refer to Appendix "F" for a list of the comments received.

Prior to the PCC, the bridge location alternatives were evaluated by the Project Team according to the following criteria:

Transportation

How do the bridge location alternatives compare with respect to providing access to transit services as well as active transportation connections within the community?

Social and Cultural Environment

How do the bridge location alternatives compare with respect to minimizing visual impacts of the bridge ramps, providing the best route for pedestrian and cyclists through the neighbourhood and providing the greatest potential for landscaping features?

Natural Environment

How do the bridge location alternatives compare with respect to impacts on trees or other natural environmental features?

Cost

How do the bridge location alternatives compare with respect to capital, operating and maintenance costs?

The Bridge Type Alternatives were also evaluated by the Project Team according to the following criteria:

Transportation

How do the bridge type alternatives compare with respect to traffic impacts on Highway 7/8 during construction?

Social and Cultural Environment

Which bridge type alternative provides the best user experience for cyclists and pedestrians in terms of comfort and appeal?

Aesthetics

How do the bridge type alternatives compare with respect to aesthetics, design consistency within the Highway 7/8 corridor and community identity?

Structure

How do the bridge type alternatives compare with respect to construction complexity, access for inspection, future maintenance and ease of rehabilitation

Cost

How do the bridge type alternatives compare with respect to capital, operating and maintenance costs?

Based on the preliminary evaluation of the design alternatives using the above noted criteria, Location 1B and Bridge Types 1 and 2 were selected as being preferred by the Project Team in advance of the Public Consultation Centre. Please refer to Appendix "E" for a summary of the Project Team's preliminary evaluation of the design alternatives.

The proposed design alternatives were also presented to senior management at the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO). MTO staff expressed a preference toward Bridge Type 1 (Steel Truss) due to the single-span design of the structure.

4.0 Public Feedback

The Project Team received primarily positive feedback from the public on the benefits of the proposed pedestrian/cycling bridge as well as many of the proposed design elements presented. The comment sheets asked respondents to choose a preferred Bridge Location Alternative and a preferred Bridge Type Alternative, with the following results:

- Thirteen (13) written comments identified Location 1B (bridge located at the end of Southmoor Drive) as the preferred bridge location out of the eighteen (18) comments that indicated a preference.
- Eleven (11) written comments identified Bridge Type 1 (steel truss bridge) as the preferred bridge type out of the seventeen (17) comments that indicated a preference.

Comments received from the October 26, 2017 Public Consultation Centre are included in Appendix “F”. The Project Team’s responses to the main comment themes are included in Appendix “G”.

5.0 Recommended Design Alternative

Based on a review of the technical information gathered for this project as well as a review of all public and agency comments received, the Project Team is recommending that Regional Council approve the following Recommended Design Alternative for the Highway 7/8 pedestrian and cycling bridge:

- A pedestrian bridge located at the end of Southmoor Drive with ramps extending west along Avalon Place and south along Chandler Drive and stairs at each end of the bridge (Location 1B);
- A steel truss bridge structure with no roof enclosure (Bridge Type 1);
- A clear width of 4.0 metres on the bridge and connecting ramps;
- New sidewalk along the south side of Avalon Place connecting to the intersection of Avalon Place and Stirling Avenue;
- A new cycling facility (type to be determined during detailed design) along Strasburg Road from the proposed bridge to the intersection of Strasburg Road and Ottawa Street; and
- Pedestrian lighting on the bridge and ramps; and
- Enhanced landscaping in the vicinity of the bridge ramps as space permits.

Please refer to Appendix “H” for a drawing of the Project Team’s Recommended Design Alternative.

The Region distributed a follow-up letter to stakeholders and all interested members of the public on December 15, 2017. This correspondence summarized the feedback received from the October 26, 2017 Public Consultation Centre, described the Project Team’s Recommended Design Alternative and notified members of the public of the

opportunity to attend the Region's January 30, 2018 meeting of the Planning and Works Committee to express an opinion on this project.

The Recommended Design Alternative was presented to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee on December 19, 2017.

Staff is now recommending that Regional Council direct staff to file the Notice of Completion for this Class Environmental Assessment Study by means of advertisements in local newspapers and mailings to adjacent property owners, tenants and agencies and place the Environmental Study Report (ESR) on public record for a period of thirty (30) days.

6.0 Benefits of the Recommended Design Alternative

The Project Team believes that the Recommended Design Alternative provides the following benefits:

- Increased access to existing and planned transit services for residents within the Avalon Place neighbourhood;
- Additional opportunities for active transportation and improved access to commercial amenities south of Highway 7/8;
- An aesthetically pleasing bridge design with a high degree of comfort and appeal to users; and
- The recommended steel truss type bridge structure avoids the need for a centre pier within the median of Highway 7/8, thereby minimizing traffic disruption during construction.

7.0 Project Cost

The preliminary estimated project cost of the Project Team's Recommended Design Alternative is \$7.6 Million, including the bridge, ramps, stairs, lighting, landscaping, sidewalk along Avalon Place and the Strasburg Road cycling connection.

The City of Kitchener will be considering the inclusion of additional sidewalk in the area as part of their sidewalk infill program.

8.0 Project Timing

Construction is currently tentatively scheduled for 2020 in GRT's 2018-2027 Capital Forecast. The timing of this project is subject to receipt of funding, all technical and financial approvals, and final approval of Regional Council.

9.0 Maintenance and Ownership of the Bridge

If constructed, the bridge would be owned by the Ministry of Transportation and the Region would enter into an agreement with the Ministry setting out responsibilities for the operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of the bridge and ramp structures. Winter maintenance of the bridge and ramps would be undertaken by the City of Kitchener on behalf of the Region.

10.0 Next Steps

Subject to Regional Council approval of the Recommended Design Alternative, a Notice of Completion will be filed for this project by means of mail-outs and advertised notices; and the Environmental Study Report (ESR), which will include all relevant documentation regarding the planning and decision-making process, will be placed on the public record for a minimum mandatory period of thirty (30) days. During this thirty (30) day filing period, any party may object to the results of the Class Environmental Assessment by requesting the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change grant a Part "II" Order requesting that the project subject to a full environmental assessment. A request for a full environmental assessment must be made in writing to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change with a copy to the Region's Commissioner of Transportation and Environmental Services. When the thirty (30) day public filing has expired and if no requests for a full environmental assessment are received by the Minister within that thirty (30) days, the Recommended Design Alternative will be considered approved for implementation.

Subject to Regional Council approval of the Recommended Design Alternative, this Class EA Study will be completed and filed in February 2018 with detailed design commencing in March 2018.

Corporate Strategic Plan:

The project is in harmony with the Region's 2015 – 2018 Corporate Strategic Plan in that the addition of a cycling and pedestrian bridge aligns with Focus Area 2.1 to create a public transportation network that is integrated, accessible, affordable and sustainable, and Focus Area 2.3 to build infrastructure for and increase participation in, active forms of transportation (cycling and walking).

Financial Implications:

The approved 2018 GRT Capital Budget and 10 Year Forecast includes \$7,600,000 in 2020 for the construction of the Highway 7/8 Pedestrian Bridge to be funded from development charges (37% - \$2,812,000) and debentures (63% - \$4,788,000). Staff will review eligibility of the project under Phase II of the federal government's Public Transit Infrastructure Fund, which may provide funding for a portion of the construction cost.

Other Department Consultations/Concurrence:

Nil

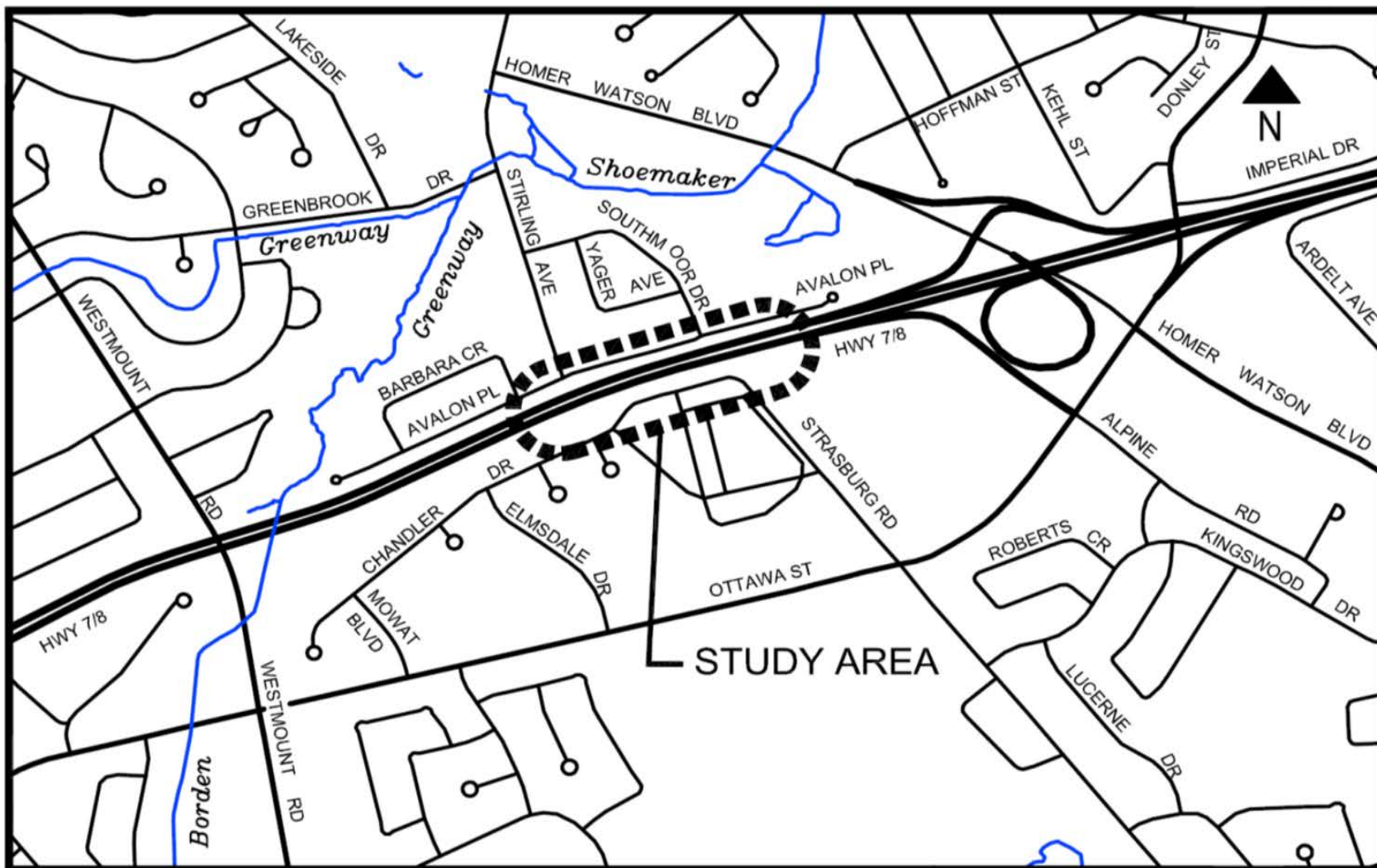
Attachments

Appendix "A"	Key Plan
Appendix "B"	Written Comments Received Regarding the Draft Study Design
Appendix "C"	Evaluation of Alternative Planning Solutions
Appendix "D"	Drawings of Design Alternatives
Appendix "E"	Project Team's Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives
Appendix "F"	Project Team Responses to Comments Received from the November 8, 2016 Public Consultation Centre
Appendix "G"	Written Comments Received from the October 26, 2017 Public Consultation Centre
Appendix "H"	Drawing of Recommended Design Alternative

Prepared By: **Skylar Van Kruistum**, Transportation Project Manager

Approved By: **Thomas Schmidt**, Commissioner Transportation and Environmental Services

Appendix "A" – Key Plan



Appendix “B” – Written Comments Received Regarding the Draft Study Design

#1 – I would like to submit the following comments on the Hwy 7/8 Multi-Use trail Crossing Study.

Under the 1.4 Background section it's noted that the freeway limits movements and interconnectivity of the communities north and south of the freeway with the only available crossing opportunities limited to interchanges and overpasses at Westmount Road (1km to the west) and Homer Watson Boulevard (1.5km to the east). Making a crossing at present requires long out-of-the way travel routes for active modes of transportation and presents higher risks to vulnerable road users.

I don't believe that 1km or 1.5km is considered a “long out-of-way travel” and having to walk “450 meters” to get to transit service isn't that far either.

These two facts seem to be the major points of the proposal and I think it's a lot of expense and work to save maybe 200 metres of walking to an existing transit stop, especially for only a limited population that may not even take advantage of the new trails (200 residential lots as per table 2). Have any surveys gone out to the residents of Avalon to see if this is something they would like or even use?

I think that the “Do Nothing” or “Improved Transit Services (New Bus Service)” alternatives should be strongly concerned. If the multi-use trails are not maintained in the Winter, and none of the trails near McLennan park are (between Westmount and Homer Watson), then these trails would not be usable in the Winter months when the services are arguably needed the most.

#2 – “Yes please add me to the study mailing list. My Dad and I often quipped wouldn't be nice to have a bridge toward the Laurentian Power Centre.”

#3 – As a resident of old Forest Hill, avid dog walker and regular shopper at the Ottawa St Rona and Zehr's my wife and I are extremely interested in the possibility of a Hwy crossing. Please keep us informed as more information becomes available!

#4 – Just wanted to voice my support for an MUT crossing in the proposed location. I bike daily between the S. Mary's Hospital area to Huron business park, so this bridge would be a significant improvement.

I think there is also a fantastic opportunity for a quick win in the form of an MUT on the east side of Westmount from Ottawa St. to the Concordia Park trail. As it currently stands, when heading to work I have the choice between (A) making a left on Westmount (across 3 lanes of fast, busy traffic) or (B) breaking the sidewalk riding bylaw and riding the sidewalk to the Ottawa-Westmount intersection. I actually choose (A) but u see numerous other cyclists taking the sidewalk, which is actually quite busy during normal commuting hours.

I really don't think it's fair to make cyclists who use this route choose between a risky route and breaking a law. Other than the underpass, there appears to be lots of room to accommodate an MUT here. I'd even support a dismount and walk for the underpass if I could avoid having to cross the busy road at this point.

Thank you for your consideration.

#5 – Great, we had this discussion some 15yrs ago as a group of neighbours, at first we thought I would be amazing and then we realized cars on Avalon and Southmoor where getting windows smashed and broken into. We realized putting up a walk way over the expressway would just make it an easier for criminals to come/go and getaway.

#6 – We would like to be added to the mailing list to receive any further information on this study as it goes forward. We would also like to go on record that we do not support a crossing, no matter its location on Avalon. We have a nice quiet neighbourhood and wish to keep it that way. We do not currently use transit and the building of the proposed crossing would not change this.

#7 – I am a resident on Avalon Place and my house is directly in front of where you are planning to build this multi- use trail from Avalon Place and Chandler.

I would love more info please on this build as I am not very happy about it. I don't see the reason or benefits to this trial

Appendix “C” – Evaluation of Alternative Planning Solutions

Criteria	Alternative Solution			
	Do Nothing	Additional Transit Service	New Connection Across Highway 7/8	
			New Tunnel (along Borden Creek)	New Bridge (Chandler Dr. to Avalon Pl.)
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not promote transit or active transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides additional transit access for Avalon Place neighbourhood - A local transit route along Avalon Place would not align with GRT’s New Directions plan for more efficient routes in a grid network - No improvements for active transportation - No construction required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimal additional transit access for Avalon Place neighbourhood - Does not increase the number of residences within walking distance of a transit stop. - Provides a new link for cyclists across Highway 7/8, and slightly more direct route for pedestrians using connecting trails - Requires multiple lane closures along Highway 7/8 for construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased transit access for Avalon Place neighbourhood, including the 205 iXpress - Increases the number of residences within walking distance of a transit stop - Provides a new link for pedestrians and cyclists across Highway 7/8 - Requires short term lane restrictions to Highway 7/8 for bridge installation

Criteria	Alternative Solution			
	Do Nothing	Additional Transit Service	New Connection Across Highway 7/8	
			New Tunnel (along Borden Creek)	New Bridge (Chandler Dr. to Avalon Pl.)
Natural Environment	- Minimal impacts	- Minor impacts associated with additional bus emissions	- Potential impacts to terrestrial/fisheries environment within Borden Creek or Concordia Park	- Minor impacts due to tree removals along south side of Avalon Place
Social Environment	- No improvement	- No improvements to connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians	- Provides new connection to existing trails - Tunnel may pose safety and personal security concerns for some users - Minor property acquisition required for creek re-alignment	- Provides new connection for cyclists and pedestrians - Provides Avalon Place neighbourhood residents more access to Laurentian Power Centre and other amenities south of Highway 7/8 - Results in more pedestrian and cyclist activity through established residential area north of Highway 7/8

Criteria	Alternative Solution			
	Do Nothing	Additional Transit Service	New Connection Across Highway 7/8	
			New Tunnel (along Borden Creek)	New Bridge (Chandler Dr. to Avalon Pl.)
Cost	- No cost	- Low initial cost - High annual operating cost	- Highest initial cost - Low annual operating cost	- High initial cost - Low annual operating cost
Conclusion	Not carried forward	Not carried forward	Not carried forward	Carried forward

Appendix "D" – Drawings of Design Alternatives

Drawing of Location Alternative 1A



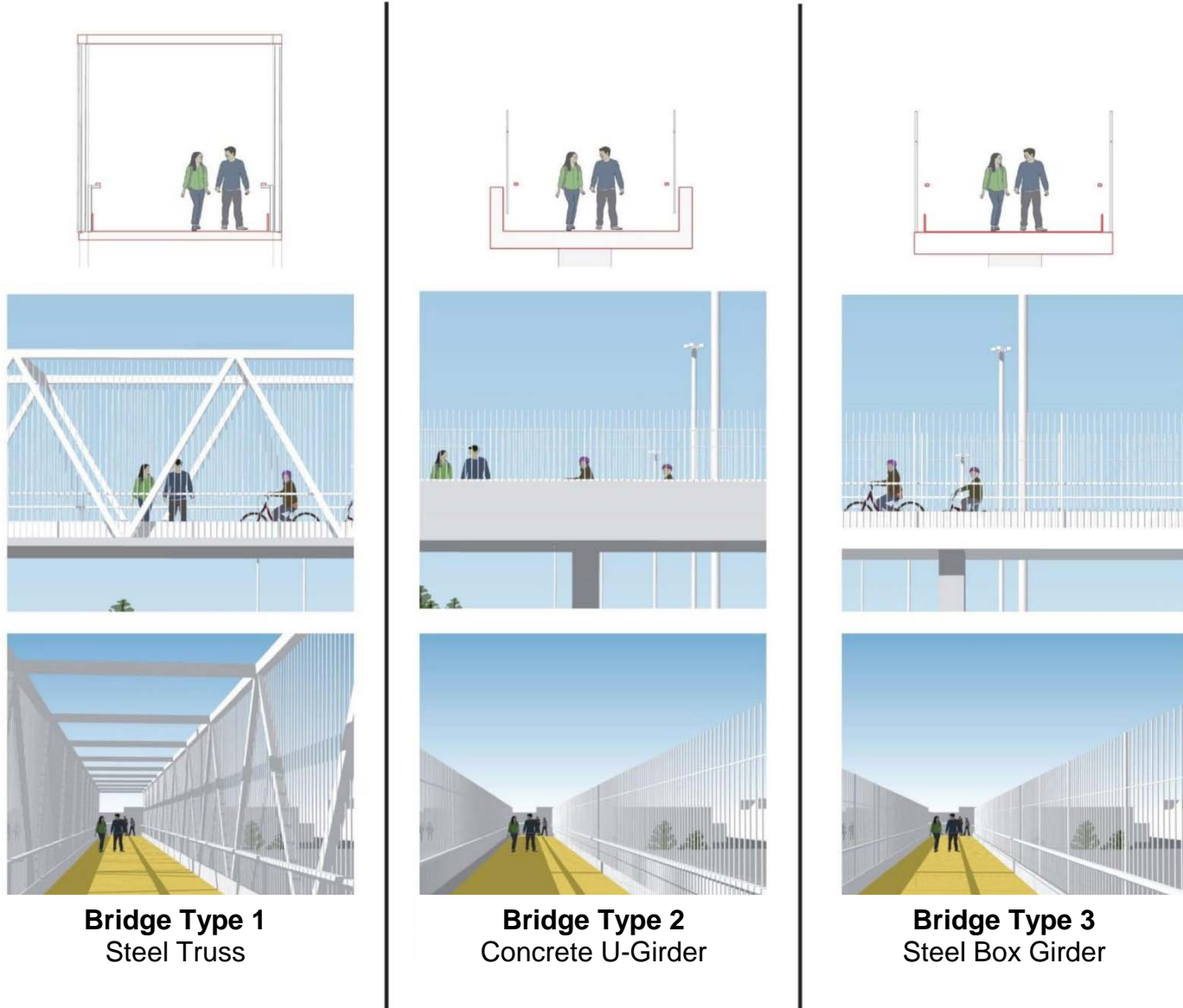
Drawing of Location Alternative 1B



Drawing of Location Alternative 2



Drawing of Bridge Type Alternatives



Bridge Type 1
Steel Truss

Bridge Type 2
Concrete U-Girder

Bridge Type 3
Steel Box Girder

Appendix “E”

Project Team’s Preliminary Evaluation of Alternative Designs

Why is Location Alternative 1B Preferred?

The following provides a discussion of why the Project Team has identified Location Alternative 1B (bridge located at the end of Southmoor Drive with straight ramps and stairs at each end of the bridge) as the preferred bridge location alternative:

Transportation Considerations:

- This location provides access to transit service to the greatest number of dwelling units compared to other alternatives
- The addition of stairs expands the number of users it services and provides better experience for visually impaired users
- This location provides the most direct route to existing and planned transit routes south of Highway 7/8
- This Alternative minimizes the length of ramps for users

Social and Cultural Environment Considerations:

- The location minimizes the visual impact of the ramps in the neighbourhood of Avalon Place

Cost:

- This Alternative has the lowest capital cost of the alternatives under consideration

Why are Bridge Type 1 and Bridge Type 2 Preferred?

The following provides a discussion of why the Project Team has identified Bridge Type 1 (Steel Truss) and Bridge Type 2 (Concrete U-Girder) as the preferred bridge type alternatives:

Transportation Considerations:

- The Steel Truss alternative eliminates the centre median pier on Highway 7/8, thereby limiting traffic disruption on the freeway during construction and simplifying future corridor expansion, if required.

Social & Cultural Environment Considerations:

- The Concrete U-Girder alternative has solid side walls which may provide a greater sense of security for users

Aesthetic Considerations:

- The Steel Truss alternative may provide the best visual appeal for users and may have greater community presence and identity.

Structural Considerations:

- The Concrete U-girder alternative is expected to have lower future maintenance needs and, when maintenance is required, would be easier to undertake.

Cost

- Both alternatives are within the same order of magnitude for capital cost and future maintenance costs.

Appendix “F”
Written Comments from the October 26, 2017 Public Consultation Centre

#1 – “Please consider putting a bench on each side of the bridge: The corner at top of the ramps would allow for rest and watching traffic.

#2 – “Not interested at all. I like our quiet nice neighbourhood the way it is. I don’t think it would get used enough to justify the cost of building it.

#3 – “I do not want this ramp at all. I would not use it, not would anyone in my home. We do not use transit at all. My concern is the crime rate on Chandler Dr. spilling over into my neighbourhood due to easier access.

#4 – “ I like this idea of a bridge. Go for it!”

#5 – “ Bridge Type: Preferred #1 Steel Truss.

Cleaner looking, stylish, no highway disruption for build.

Bridge Location: Preferred #1B

End location closer to shopping & bus stops

Long single ramp better than switchback

This change is long overdue and provides opportunities to neighbourhoods on both sides for shopping and recreation. Great addition for cyclists to link up to trails.”

#6 – “I do not support the bridge project due to increased crime in our now semi quiet neighbourhood. Easier access of crime spilling over from Chandler Dr, Ottawa area”.

#7 – “Location 2 – Most viable to connect with existing cycling & trail infrastructure “

“Bridge Type 1 – Best combination of aesthetic & long-term maintenance costs.”

“Ensure project scope includes establishing connections to existing City of Kitchener facilities – potentially on road on Stirling S (to existing multi-use trail network) and south on Strasburg (to connect with existing on-road cycling facilities). Ensure ramp geometry considers cyclist use (ie. Turns are <90 degrees). Ensure ramp exits consider how to best tie into any (existing or future) on road cycling facilities, at the safest point (ie. not in a curve)”

#8 - “Location 1B – Location along Avalon + ramp style”

“Bridge type 1 or 2 – either option is supported”

“One concern – as a cyclist I can see that the long ramp may encourage excessive cyclist speeds.”

#9 – “Location #1B – Easier access: less hill on avalon if stairs are at Southmoor Dr.”

“Bridge type 2 – Supposed to be easier to maintain in the future.”

“Although torn between an easier walking access out of our neighbourhood there is a
 2561232

fear to opening a basically closed neighbourhood to strangers/vandals/drugs etc.”

#10 (Anonymous) – “ Location 1B – Great flow for bike traffic”

“Bridge Type 1 –Single spur”

#11 – Location 1B and Bridge Type 1 selected.

“Concerned about bringing young people, gangs & drugs to our neighbourhood from Chandler, graffiti, more grocery carts – how does it affect my property value, noise, skateboarders, loitering etc.

#12 – “I am opposed to the construction of a bridge. The increased foot traffic heightens the risk of theft and vandalism. I would have loss of privacy as the proposed bridge/ramp location is across from my property. There are no sidewalks on Sterling so there might be more foot traffic on the roads.”

#13 – “Location 2 – Access to sidewalks, no sidewalk on Stirling, less automotive traffic also.”

“Bridge Type 2 – Aesthetics”

“I disagree with the construction of ALL options:

- Access to transit is still inconvenient
- Increased foot traffic puts our property at risk of vandalism and theft.
- Added litter
- Loss of privacy
- Please don't build this”

#14 – Selected Location 1B and Bridge Type 1

#15 (Anonymous) – Selected Location 1B and Bridge Type 1

Bridge Type 1 - “ I believe the greater visibility will make it safer and make it feel safer, especially for women.”

#16 – Location 2 – “Fits in best with my usual cycling route.”

Bridge Type 1 – “I don't have a vert strong preference toward any of them but Bridge 1 does look nicest.

“Seems like an exciting project. I'm looking forward to walking/cycling from the Avalon neighbourhood home to Chandler a lot quicker that how I usually do it (through Concordia Park to Westmount) which has felt dark & dangerous during late nights. Excited that the ramp would mean I don't have to dismount. I am concerned it will be too dark through – I hope it be well lit – I often take this route when it is quite dark.”

#17 – Location 1B – “This location makes most sense in middle of community, nothing but a(++++) for area, people would spend more if closer disabled, bike, ebike, walking.

Bridge Type 1 – “most stable design, cheaper on upkeep, visually appealing, benefit for

area just use ramp easier on people/ not need stairs/ ppl hate climb.”

“Please start soon as possible!! Huge impact for area, much needed. Closer to kids, parks, tobogganing, shopping, groceries, home improvement, eateries might help business to area. Have a nothing to say just be huge impact to this area of the community, business, seniors, handicapped. Young – old (also positive idea to spend tax dollars as long as budget not go overboard. Tx for the idea of project.

#18 – Location 1B – “connects better to the pedestrian/ biking trail through Meinzinger Park than Location 2 does. In addition, I agree with all the reason of stuff for preferring location 1B.

Bridge Type 1 – “I prefer Bridge type 1 because it looks the safest for the drivers on the expressway below.”

“please send me notices of all further meetings and info centres about this project and copies of all further reports about it.”

#19 – Location 2 – “Any location is fine, but personally would find easy access from Stirling and no doubling back desirable. Especially for cycling, could find straight ramps easiest.”

Bridges – “I find all acceptable and would be fine with choosing based on practical considerations (flexibility/economics)”

“Fully appreciating the already planned access to transit and cycling corridor on Strasburg, I wonder as to the feasibility of keeping a future option of a convenient and peaceful trail along the west side of the GRT lands, possibly onto the east side of Elmsdale park, and perhaps (?) a right of way across the old City Works yards to face the McLennan Park entrance across Ottawa St. This would provide lovely trail connectivity north to Lakeside Park & Highland Rd, and south to the features of McLennan Park and its rich trail access.

#20 – Alternative #2, Bridge Type 3

“In my opinion, it will never be used by more than 1%. The buses were always empty when the bus route ran on Avalon. Certainly, will deter the quietness of the existing neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is predominately made up with retirees that do not or cannot walk.

#22 – Unfortunately I cannot attend the open house. I would like to voice my strong support though of creating a bridge at this point. To me, it looks like the crossing should occur at Strasburg and Avalon, but in general there needs to be a crossing somewhere along that highlighted area. There are essentially 2 ‘communities’ divided here by the expressway. Creating a connection via a bridge will allow better access for these neighbourhoods and businesses. This sort of bridge would also improve transit access to residents. Two new roundabouts have been added to this area. Though roundabouts definitely improve movement for vehicles and even reduce the severity of any accidents, roundabouts pose challenges for pedestrians and cyclists. Roundabouts can feel intimidating to those users. Placing a bridge at Strasburg could allow many of those users to bypass the roundabouts if that is more comfortable for them.

The region is working hard to promote active transportation and is improving connections between trails, bike lanes, and transit. However, this area stands out as an area that could truly benefit from further connectivity. The expressway is of great benefit to our region, allowing many people easy access to a wide area of the region, however, for cyclists and pedestrians this same expressway actually is a hindrance in this particular area. The region can take steps to correct that and I strongly urge you to create a pedestrian bridge here as soon as possible.

#27 – Just a few years ago, I had seriously considered buying a condo on Avalon, as it was priced within my budget and was an attractive unit in a well-planned and maintained building. I decided against it because of its poor “walkability” for bus routes, and shopping. I am retired and had no children needing schools. I applaud the decision to improve that area’s amenities. Ramps to the bridge help everyone across, whether pedestrians, bicyclists, parents with strollers and youngsters, or those with mobility challenges.

Whichever of the three options is the winner, the residents will have an improved life.

#28 – Enjoyed seeing the plans of the bridge. I hope it goes through. I know I’d be using it.

#29 – Thanks for the PCC, it was a good presentation.

I have feedback as follows:

- 1) If it needs to be said, as a resident of Kitchener (St. Mary’s Heritage neighbourhood) and frequent “active transportation” doer (walking and cycling) I fully support this project.
- 2) As I mentioned to a few people (probably including yourself) note that this connection would be useful to me not only for access to the adjacent commercial developments (esp. Laurentian Mall) but also for utilitarian cycling trips to destinations further south in Kitchener. For example, up til last year I was working in the industrial area south of Bleams & Strasburg, and when for the times I cycled I would have used this bridge if it was there! (I had to use Homer Watson – ugh...) there’s a chance I’ll end up working in that area again so welcome this bridge. So even though I do understand the primary motivation for this particular project is transit connectivity, I believe that we should increase support for “active transportation” at any opportunity; and thus even for projects such as these where it’s not a central goal it should nonetheless serve to increase the imperative for (and used to promote) them.
- 3) A concern in the context of “2” above: if I were a resident of the Laurentian Hills neighbourhood (or like myself, occasionally visit a friend in this neighbourhood) this bridge would be a handy route for getting to central Kitchener provided there was an easy way of crossing Ottawa St. the obvious example solution is of a “refuge” in the middle of Ottawa St. (somewhere between Mowat and Elmsdale, I suppose) w. appropriate access to the two neighbourhoods. Again I realize such

a use is not identified as a primary for this bridge; however we may find such use not insignificant – esp. if we facilitate it!

- 4) I agree with the reasoning for location 1B
- 5) Re. bridge type, I believe there are two additional reasons to prefer the concrete U-girder over the steel truss given the higher opaque walls: (i) in my experience crossing bridges on foot, those instances in which a down-shifting truck passes below can be (startlingly?) loud. The higher walls would provide shielding from more of the roadway directly below where the truck is closer and its exhaust stack is directed upwards. (ii) less wind chill.

#31 – Location 1B: Not everyone who would use this bridge lives in the Southmoor/Avalon neighbourhood so although 1B is slightly preferred, 2 is almost equally attractive as a more direct route to Stirling.

Bridge Type 3 – Visually this option is significantly less distracting and blends most seamlessly, both from below and on top of the bridge, with the surrounding landscape. It is very much preferred!

Currently no sidewalks exist on either side of the street between Southmoor and Avalon on Stirling. Given that the #2 bus stops at Greenbrook and Stirling and that people from outside the immediate neighbourhood walk along Stirling, new sidewalks should be installed. For residents of Barbara Crescent, the adjoining portion of Avalon and people approaching from the park/trail at the end of Avalon, at least one sidewalk should be available for people to avoid the street during winter. Walking on icy snow covered streets is extremely unsafe!

#32 – Location 1B – Straight ramps are safer and easier when cycling over the bridge.

Bridge Type 1 – Winter maintenance is a major issue. The bridge will need to be kept ice free. Ideally no salt is my preferred solution as it ends up in the shoemaker creek & Grand River. The design should ideally enable the sun to melt snow, minimizing salting. I'm thinking the steel truss would handle Canadian winters better. Aesthetically, a nice design, very pleasing.

Thank you thank you! Please build ASAP! Will be so useful. I cycle/run to Mount Trashmore (McClelland Park) weekly, and the roundabouts have made the trip more dangerous. It will be awesome to connect the two sides (Avalon and Chandler) I often would access it on a run from Meinzenger Park as well, Stirling Ave (Yager to Avalon) has no sidewalks, nor a bike lane. Consider improving this 200-300m stretch of road.

#33 – Location 1B – appears to serve more homes/residents, appears as a continuous flow for walking

Bridge Type 1 – Diagonal supports provide an architectural feature and break up the long boring row of 'pickets' as per steel box girder.

Bridge Type – to add variety and break up the harsh part of the design at the entrance/exit points rather than vertical supports, explore the option of the repetition of a diagonal. Also steel now comes in a variety of colours- perhaps the steel rather than white could incorporate the colour(s) of the municipality financing the bridge. European
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cities have bridges with coloured features.

#34 – The Kitchener Easy Rider Cycle Club would like to commend the Region considering a cycling and pedestrian bridge over Highway 7 and 8 to connect a stranded neighbourhood to transit and commercial infrastructure.

Our club consists of 240 members, all of whom are 55 years of age or more who like to cycle together. Our mission is to provide safe cycling opportunities for fun, fitness and fellowship. We have weekly rides in our local communities, and venture more widely once each month. This makes us regular users of the Region's transportation system.

First, let us state that the club supports this project and is indifferent towards any of the options presented, trusting that the detailed design will facilitate the ease of use of both pedestrians and cyclists.

Second, we urge Regional Council to include this project in the earliest time period appropriate. Not only does it provide the neighbourhood with transit and shopping access, but it also begins to address the dearth of strategic, bike-safe crossings of major highways – the “pinch point” issue that we have raised repeatedly.

We have reported earlier that it is our impression that road projects included within the Master Transportation Plan appear to be implemented whereas projects that support active transportation and transit usage get stalled, such that the targets for the later remain unachieved. Projects like the cycling and pedestrian bridge help to alleviate this treaty. I request that in future you provide direct notice of future meetings and the progress of this project to the undersigned. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

#35 – When I completed the comment sheet at the end of the public info package handed out at the Oct 26/17 Public Consultation Centre #1 about the above mentioned project, I forgot to preface my comments in it with the following:

I strongly oppose such a cycling + pedestrian bridge crossing, and any other type of crossing or connection between Chandler Drive + Avalon Place because I am very opposed to any method of making it easier for the high crime rate + violence and drug problems which currently exist in the neighbourhood south of Highway 7/8 along Chandler Dr. and its abutting streets to migrate north into the Avalon Place/ Southmoor Drive/ Stirling Ave South/ Forest Hill neighbourhood north of Hwy 7/8. Residents of Southmoor Drive can currently easily walk to the corner of Greenbrook Dr. and Stirling Ave S to a current bus transit stop, a 5 minute walk, while residents of Stirling Ave S. can do the same. Residents of Avalon Place can just as easily and within 5 minutes walk to Westmount Road along the current community trail which connects Avalon Place to Westmount Road. Its residents of Avalon Place and Southmoor Dr need even closer public transit stops than those currently available then surely extending a bus route from the corner of Greenbrook Dr and Stirling Ave S down Southmoor and along Avalon Place and/or adding a bus stop on Westmount Rd at the end of the current Community Trail would be much cheaper than building a bridge over Hwy 7/8 as proposed or a tunnel. The Avalon Place/Southmoor Dr. neighbourhood is NOT isolated from public transit. The restricted current public transit hours available to that neighbourhood are surely no worse than those available to residents of many other

more outlying subdivisions. However should my opposition to such a project be disregarded and a decision by Regional Council be made that such a connection is necessary, then and only then would I prefer Alternative 1B described in that Oct 26/17 public information package with Bridge Type #1.

#36 –

Introduction – Below are my comments, as requested as part of the public consultation relative to this project. I have attended the Open House and spoken with both Regional staff and the outside consultant. Even though I am opposed to proceeding further with this study, my comments should in no way be perceived as a negative reflection on the professionalism of the work that has already been expended on this project.

What's the Problem? – Construction of the Conestoga Parkway, though a very positive event, in many cases divided neighbourhoods and in some cases left isolated pockets of residential development. This is the case with the Avalon area which is bordered by two greenways and the Parkway. As a result, it is somewhat difficult to service this small area with municipal transit service.

Proposed Solution – A pedestrian/cycling bridge across the Conestoga Parkway between Avalon Pl. and Chandler Dr., estimated to cost \$7.6 million, so that pedestrians/cyclists can more easily access the south side for shopping and transit purposes. I am having some difficulty even typing this.....the proposal is so ludicrous from a financial point of view!

What's the Matter with this? – Cyclists are mentioned as part of the justification for the bridge. As it happens, the west end of Avalon has access to the community trail leading to the Westmount Rd. underpass with the opposite end of Avalon, with little effort, can be connected to the Homer Watson trailway and underpass. Cyclists should be dropped from the justification.

Sure, there may be a handful of potential transit riders who would benefit from this bridge BUT AT WHAT COST? No municipality can afford to provide regular transit service to every isolated pocket within the community. Furthermore, if residents need services such as transit, nearby schools and/or shopping and these are not available, move to where these services are available. My guess is that nearly all the residents in this area moved there after the Parkway was built so obviously these considerations were not important to them. Municipal services are not and cannot be of equal availability throughout the entire community and no reasonably minded resident would expect that.

I was assured that some cost/benefit analysis was done to justify the cost of the bridge.....an entirely new transit route over a 30 year horizon. All I can say is that the concept of an entirely new route to service this area is nearly as ludicrous as the estimated cost of the bridge. Perhaps a sharp mind in the Region's Finance Division

should have a look at this aspect of the study.

Note for the Region's Senior Staff - With all due respect, this project should NEVER have seen the light of day. The concept of a bridge over the Parkway, given the recent example of the pedestrian bridge over Hwy. 401 at Doon at a cost of approximately \$3 million, should have put an end to the project at the start. Unfortunately, these projects go forward, get a life of their own and sometimes get built when there is no justification for it whatsoever. Regional Council deserves sound advice and guidance from staff....this project is not a shining example of that.

It is about time to return to a policy of fiscal responsibility and maybe a bit of cost/benefit analysis coupled with common sense. As for the study being financed in part by other sources, at the end of the day, IT IS ALL TAXPAYER MONEY.

My Conclusion – As long as I can put my fist into the cracks between the pavement lanes at the intersection of Ottawa St. South and Fischer-Hallman, I don't think the Region should be considering any outlandish new projects until there is an acceptable level of maintenance of our existing infrastructure. Our urban Regional road system is in deplorable condition. Maybe someone should speak up for the motoring public who deserve much better.

I suggest that this project be halted at the earliest convenience.....with appreciation to the consultant and staff for the work that they have expended to date. To proceed any further will be a total waste of our tax dollars to say nothing of the unrealistic expectations that have been kindled in the minds of some of the affected residents.

At the same time, the GRT should be encouraged to continue to look at more innovative/cost effective ways for servicing isolated residential pockets within the community such as the Avalon area.

Appendix “G”

Project Team Responses to Comments Received from the October 26, 2017 Public Consultation Centre

A Public Consultation Centre was held at the Grand River Transit Maintenance Facility, 85 Chandler Drive in the City of Kitchener on Thursday October 26, 2017 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Plans showing the proposed design alternatives were on display with Project Team representatives present to answer questions and to receive feedback from members of the public. Forty-two (42) members of the public signed the attendance register. Nineteen (19) comment sheets were submitted during the hours of the PCC, followed by four (4) comment sheets and five (5) emails received in the two weeks following the PCC. The main themes presented in the written comments and the Project Team’s responses are summarized as follows:

Comment Theme No. 1 – Support for a Pedestrian Bridge and additional sidewalk/trail connections (11 Comments)

Project Team Response:

The proposed pedestrian bridge was generally well supported by the public, as demonstrated by the feedback received within the written comments and conversation during the Public Consultation Centre. Reasons cited by members of the public for support of this project included improved connectivity to transit and commercial amenities as well as improved opportunities for cycling, walking and other forms of active transportation.

Comment Theme No. 2 – Preference to maintain the isolated nature of the Avalon Place neighbourhood and concern that increased access could cause a rise in crime (9 Comments)

Project Team Response:

The Project Team has deemed it very difficult to predict the impact a new bridge would have on crime. Although the bridge will result in more public activity in the area, this activity could potentially discourage crime through an increase in the number of “eyes” on neighbourhood streets and sidewalks.

The bridge design will incorporate a number of elements to ensure that the bridge provides a sense of openness and security for all users. Examples of these design features include an open concept bridge structure with good visibility and providing ample sightlines and illumination along the bridge and ramps.

The Project Team contacted the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) for further feedback on the project. The WRPS does not have any metric in order to measure how the introduction of a bridge would affect crime occurrence rates in a given area. The

WRPS recommended implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, which will be reviewed further during detailed design of the bridge.

Comment Theme No. 3 – Need for New Sidewalk/Trail Connections (4 Comments)

Project Team Response:

As part of the Recommended Design Alternative, the Project Team is recommending new sidewalk along the south side of Avalon Place between the bridge ramp and Stirling Avenue. The City of Kitchener will also evaluate the provision of additional sidewalk linkages (including the area along Stirling Avenue) as part of their annual sidewalk infill program. Additionally, the Recommended Design Alternative includes new cycling facilities extending from the bridge ramp south along Strasburg Road to connect to Ottawa Street.

Comment Theme No. 4 – Concern the bridge will not be used enough to justify construction cost (4 Comments)

Project Team Response:

The proposed bridge will avoid the need for increased transit operating costs that would be necessary to adequately serve the Avalon neighbourhood. Based on lifecycle cost projections, it is less expensive to construct the bridge than to provide an additional transit route over a period of 30 years. The bridge will also provide additional opportunities for active transportation and improved access to commercial amenities south of Highway 7/8, thereby helping to achieve the objectives of the Region's Transportation Master Plan and Active Transportation Master Plan.

Funding for the proposed bridge has been included in Grand River Transit's 2018-2027 Capital Forecast for the year 2020. Staff will review eligibility of the project under Phase II of the federal government's Public Transit Infrastructure Fund, which may provide funding for a portion of the construction cost.

Comment Theme No. 5 – Proceed with construction of the bridge as soon as possible (4 Comments)

Project Team Response:

Funding for the proposed bridge has been included in Grand River Transit's approved 2018-2027 Capital Forecast for the year 2020. The timing of this project is subject to receipt of all technical and financial approvals, and final approval of Regional Council.

Comment Theme No. 6 - Concerns regarding privacy, shopping carts and litter (2 Comments)**Project Team Response:**

The addition of sidewalks along the south side of Avalon Place as part of this project may reduce pedestrian traffic in front of existing residences along the north side of Avalon Place. The City of Kitchener enacted a shopping cart by-law in March 2017 that allows the City to require shopping centers to provide appropriate controls to discourage patrons from removing shopping carts off-site. During detailed design, the bridge ramps will be designed in a way that discourages the buildup of garbage and debris under the bridge and ramp area.

Comment Theme No. 7 - New roundabouts have made crossing at Ottawa Street and Homer Watson Boulevard less friendly for cyclists and pedestrians, so the bridge would provide a welcome alternative (2 Comments)**Project Team Response:**

Noted.

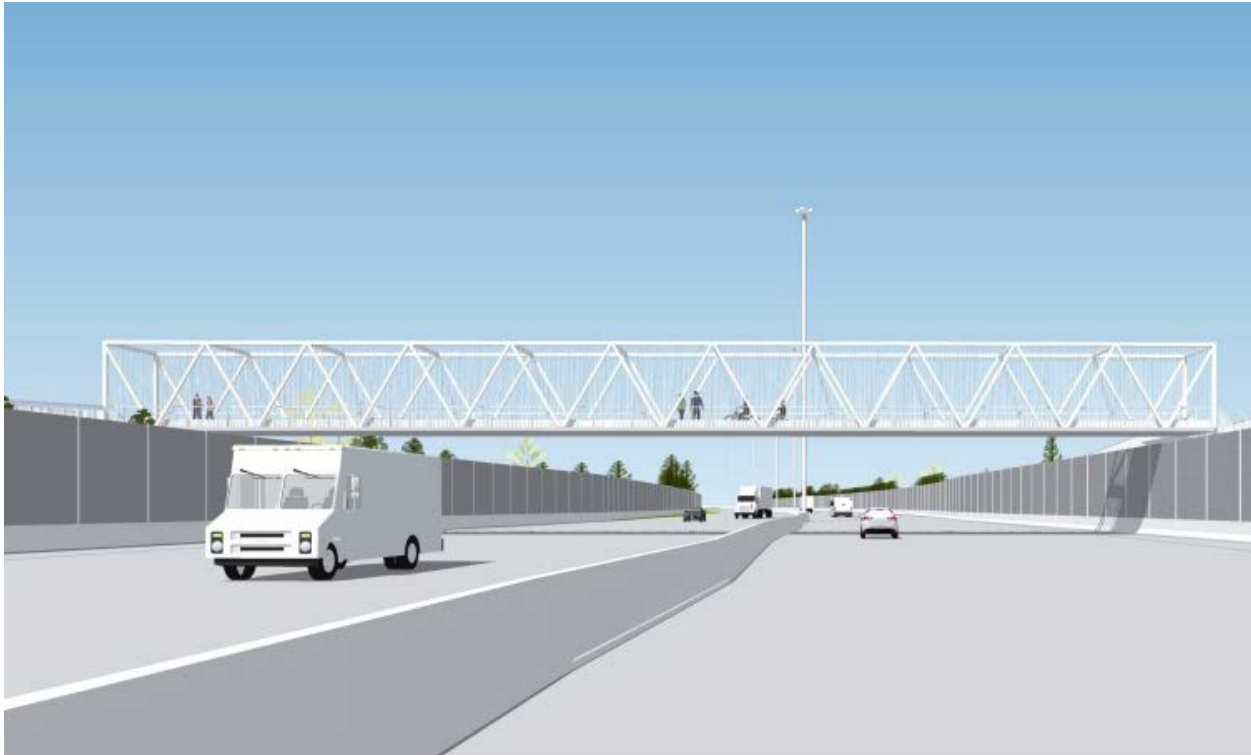
Comment Theme No. 8 - Suggestion to strongly consider doing nothing or improving transit services instead (2 Comments)**Project Team Response:**

Please refer to the Project Team's evaluation of the options considered as part of this Class EA Study.

Appendix "H"

Drawings of Recommended Design Alternative





BRIDGE TYPE 1
View westward from Highway 7/8



BRIDGE TYPE 1
View southward from bridge deck