

Guelph to Goderich (G2G) Rail Trail Proposed Pedestrian Bridge

Welcome to our public meeting! We're here to share details about a proposed pedestrian bridge over the Conestogo River that will complete a missing link on the G2G Rail Trail.

The G2G Rail Trail is 132 km multi-use trail spanning from Guelph to Goderich. The trail goes through the northern portion of the Region of Waterloo and is locally known as the Kissing Bridge Trailway.

This project is a collaboration between the Region of Waterloo, Township of Wellesley, County of Wellington, the Province of Ontario and the G2G Rail Trail Advisory Board. Funding is also being sought through the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF).

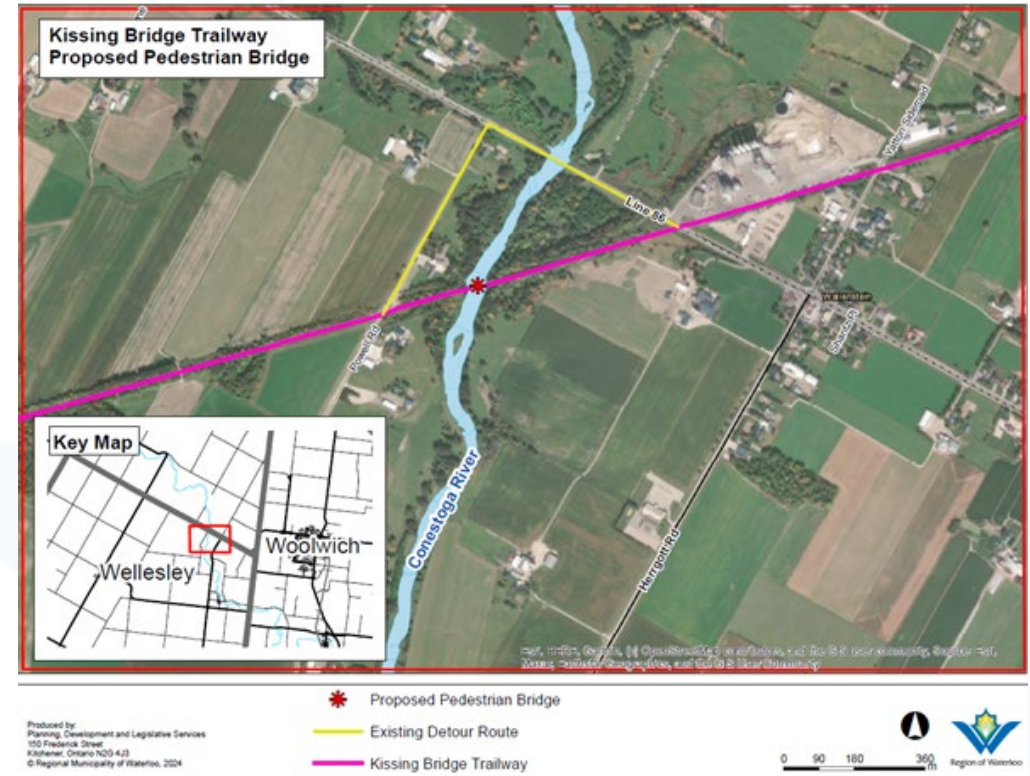


Project purpose: Connecting the trail

Currently, trail users must take a detour on Line 86 and Powell Road while travelling through Wallenstein. Both are busy rural roads.

The proposed bridge will:

- Safely reconnect the trail over the Conestoga River.
- Improve safety and accessibility for walkers, runners and cyclists.
- Encourage active transportation and healthy outdoor recreation.
- Support local businesses and tourism by attracting more visitors to the trail.



History of the G2G Rail Trail

- The G2G Rail Trail originated as the Guelph and Goderich Railway in 1907.
- The railway was decommissioned in 1988 by the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- The railway bridge was removed in 1990 leaving the piers and abutments in place.
- The Province of Ontario preserved the former rail corridor and created the 132-kilometer G2G Rail Trail in 2021.
- The Region of Waterloo and the County of Wellington jointly lease the eastern portion of the trail from Guelph to Millbank.
- The trail is maintained by the G2G Rail Trail non-profit group.
 - Visit www.g2grailtrail.com to learn more



Image: Turning first sod, Goderich and Guelph
Railway, September 12, 1904
Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol

Environmental assessment process

This project requires a **Schedule B Environmental Assessment** under Ontario's environmental planning process.

What is an Environmental Assessment?

A planning process used to:

- Identify potential impacts of a project — on the environment, the community, and the economy.
- Evaluate alternative solutions before making final decisions.
- Recommend ways to reduce or avoid negative impacts of the project.

Why it's important:

- Ensures the project is safe, sustainable, and responsible.
- Helps protect natural areas, wildlife, and cultural heritage.
- Supports cost-effective, long-term planning.
- Provides opportunities for public input and Indigenous engagement.

Planning and technical studies

To support the environmental assessment and proposed bridge design, the Region is completing these technical studies, assessments and discussions:

- **Heritage impact study:** Examines the history and cultural value of the existing rail structure.
- **Stage 1 archaeological assessment:** Looks for signs of historical or Indigenous artifacts in the area.
- **Geotechnical investigation:** Studies the soil and ground conditions to ensure the bridge will be stable and safe.
- **Environmental studies:** Assesses plants, animals, water, and ecosystems near the site.
- **Bridge condition assessment:** Inspects the existing piers and abutments to confirm they're safe to reuse
- **Indigenous engagement:** Discussions and consultation with Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation

These findings will be available in the final Environmental Assessment report.

Environmental studies findings

About the project area

- The project is located in the Conestogo River valley, regulated by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA).
- The river and surrounding areas support fish, birds, and other wildlife.
- Important wetlands are located near the river.
- Species at risk, including certain fish and mussels, have been identified in the river by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

What we've studied

- Ecological investigations have been conducted in the area since 2022.
- Surveys included aquatic habitat and fish studies, bird and bat surveys, and vegetation mapping.
- This information helped guide bridge design options and environmental protection measures.

Reducing environmental impacts

- No in-water work will take place from October to mid-July to protect cold-water habitat.
- Tree removals and pruning will be required for bridge construction and access.
 - Tree clearing will be timed to avoid sensitive periods for migratory birds (April–August) and bat maternity roosting (until mid-November).
- Construction areas will be set back from the river's edge and surrounded with sediment control fencing.
- Turbidity curtains will be used around in-stream work areas to prevent sediment from moving downstream.
- Temporary rock fill will be placed in the river to allow dry access to the work area from the east bank.
- Fish and mussels will be safely relocated (salvaged) before in-stream work begins as regulated by the Ministry of Environment.
- All plans for in-stream and near-stream work will be reviewed with environmental agencies.
- Environmental monitors will be on-site during construction to ensure protection measures are followed.

Our goal is to limit the impacts to the natural habitats as much as possible.

Exploring the options

To find the best solution for reconnecting the trail, the project team reviewed several design alternatives as part of the environmental assessment process.

Design alternatives considered:

1. Do nothing

Trail users continue to use the current detour — does not improve user connectivity and direct trail route.

2. Two-span bridge with new piers

Build a completely new structure and supports — highest cost and more environmental impact.

3. Three-span bridge using existing outer piers

Reuse both existing piers from the old rail bridge — higher cost, more construction near the riverbanks.

4. Two-span bridge using existing center pier

Reuse the original center pier — lowest environmental impact, cost-effective and supports a safe, direct trail route.

Preferred bridge design alternative: Two-span bridge using existing center pier

Why this design?

- Uses the existing center pier, reducing cost and environmental impact.
- Minimizes construction footprint near the river.
- Retains historical value of original rail structure.
- Suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, and non-motorized users.



Image: Rendering of proposed bridge design

Project timeline

Phase	Timeline
Environmental assessment	2025
Council approval	Early 2026
Detailed design	January to February 2026
Tender for construction	March 2026 (dependent on funding)
Construction	Spring to Fall 2026 (dependent on funding)

We value your feedback



Take the survey:

October 16 – November 6, 2025

Visit: www.engagewr.ca/G2G-trail-bridge



Questions? Contact:

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Stay informed by following the project page on EngageWR.



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