



WHY THE PARKWAY IS NO SOLUTION FOR PETERBOROUGH
A Peterborough Greenspace Coalition Submission to Peterborough City Council
November 6, 2013

The Peterborough Greenspace Coalition is an alliance of groups and individuals in Peterborough that supports greenspace and traffic solutions. We are opposed to construction of the Parkway road and the Jackson Park bridge, as is proposed in the Class EA. We ask that City Council carefully consider the information and arguments contained here before voting at upcoming meetings on November 13 and 20.

Here's what the Parkway Corridor Class EA currently proposes:

- a four lane road from Clonsilla to Chemong, and two lanes beyond this to Water Street at the Zoo
- a 35m high bridge through Jackson Park and the Nicholls Trust lands, donated to the city in 1961
- a cost of at least \$66.4 million to build the road and bridge, and \$236,000/year to maintain them
- 2 double-lane plus 2 single-lane roundabouts, 1 new traffic light (Chemong), 4 redesigned traffic lights, and 3 new sets of pedestrian signals – this would not be a fast route anywhere!
- sterile, sidewalk-type tracks and 2.5 km of noise walls adjacent to the road, replacing treed trails
- closing Jackson Park and corridor trails for at least two years for road and bridge construction
- blockage of Goodfellow Road to north-south traffic and closure of Highland Road
- relocation of 4 creeks in 4 different city sub-watersheds, plus new stormwater ponds.

We think the Parkway and bridge are NOT good solutions for our city. Building them would:

- be financially irresponsible by increasing property taxes and debt, consuming half the road budget for years, delaying other priorities and plans, and increasing health costs
- do little to solve traffic concerns identified in the EA -- it would not: relieve congestion, reduce collisions, minimize cut-through traffic, nor improve connections to the south end
- link just one fifth of planned north residential areas to only one of two main employment areas
- by-pass downtown, eroding its vitality and creating an imbalance among commercial areas
- create new traffic problems by adding confusing roundabouts, slowing traffic on cross streets, decreasing access to the Tallwood area, and adding more traffic into current congestion areas
- increase safety concerns and create higher risk of accidents for five adjacent school areas, at new intersections, in the two-lane roundabouts, and along tracks between the road and sound walls
- violate the Nicholls Trust gift of Jackson Park by building a bridge in the city's natural jewel
- degrade quality of life for adults and children by removing highly valued recreational greenspace and opportunities to experience nature near at hand along the whole corridor
- lead to a less healthy and happy population by reducing opportunities for active, stress-relieving, and health-enhancing recreation, and doubling disruption (building two lanes, then four lanes)
- worsen social equity issues by spending large amounts of money on a project that will benefit the better off (car owners) and reduce nearby greenspace for those who have limited vehicle mobility
- decrease city pride, reputation and tourism by replacing treasured greenspace with noisy and ugly sound walls, road, and bridge, and creating accessibility challenges and community conflict

- degrade public trust by ignoring the values and priorities of a majority of residents, violating the Nicholls trust, and acting contrary to a variety of approved City plans that had wide public input.

There are more effective, affordable and sustainable solutions to city traffic concerns. We suggest:

- redesign Fairbairn/Parkhill, widen the Parkhill Bridge, and improve other north-south arterials
- widen Fairbairn to 3 lanes (E or W), expand Third Line, with various options to connect to Water
- eliminate the south Parkway extension, since the 2012 Transportation Plan does not recommend it
- invest first in other road improvements, e.g. potholes and intersections that cause most congestion
- deter cut-through traffic with limited turning options, speed bumps and stop signs
- shift when people drive to better use existing roads and eliminate a possible 2031 rush hour peak
- recognize that our population is aging, with more retirees who can choose when and how to travel
- recognize that natural corridors and trails have high economic value, increase assessment, and provide financial benefits to the city, including helping to reduce and replace vehicle traffic.

We also have concerns about the decision-making process surrounding the upcoming EA approval:

- key comparison and technical documents and comments have not yet been provided to the public
- Council (as Committee of the Whole) will hear one view and make a preliminary decision before having key documents and hearing input directly from the public
- the EA should -- but does not -- consider approved City plans, including the Official Plan
- the 2012 Transportation Plan's priority improvements have not yet been funded or implemented
- the Parkway has already been defeated in a referendum, and whenever people have had their say.

We ask that City Council give this issue careful consideration and do the right thing:

- support good process, public engagement and informed decisions, regardless of EA positions
- invite PGC to present to Committee of the Whole on Nov. 13 to ensure balance in perspectives
- promptly provide the updated evaluations, technical documents, and agency comments online
- direct staff to analyze how the EA meshes with approved plans, the Official Plan and its review
- defer Council's EA decision until these reports are available, with enough time to review them
- complete the Official Plan review first to establish future directions, then finish the EA, assess priority transportation improvement effects, and implement any road options after the next transportation review- there is no urgency for this project, with congestion MAYBE in 2031!
- direct staff to remove the bridge through the Park and the whole road, and pursue other options
- respect the 2003 referendum and listen to the thousands of voices opposing the Parkway.

Peterborough – it's a natural choice:

Parks and Progress

reasonable, phased traffic solutions
affordable measures matching priorities
healthy people, parks and wildlife
win-win: both get most of what is wanted
a proud, sustainable legacy for our city

or Parkway and Problems

unsolved and new traffic problems, disruption, conflict
massive debt, higher taxes, cancelled plans and projects
major losses of natural spaces, green corridors and trails
win-loss: a win for a new road but also big losses and costs
an ugly \$66 million walled street and a withered downtown

Please reflect on Peterborough's values and future, listen to citizens, and choose good process. Then direct staff to remove the Parkway and Jackson Park bridge in a revised EA report. Thank you.