

From: Seth Floyd

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Subject: Public Works 9.2 - May 4 Safari Road wetland complex

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Dear Public Work Committee Councilors,

I am writing today in opposition of the recommendation for "option #3 - to raise and widen 2.5km of Safari Road".

Instead, I would support a vote for the adoption of "alternative #2 - permanent closure of the road".

Two words: biodiversity and taxes. Not often do these two things align, but pursuing option 3 is bad for taxpayers and bad for biodiversity and the environment.

It is my understanding that this road has been closed to general traffic for about five years, and is only used as truck route. Therefore, seeing as alternative routes exist with minimal impact to the truck route network, it does not make sense to spend 8.1 to 9.3M\$ on a road that the entire community is already used to not using, and likely seldom used prior to the closure. Not to mention that this wasteful spending is significantly greater than other spends which were fussed about during the budget meetings the past few months. This would be further insulting considering the dire need for road repairs around the city with much greater use and significance (again, note the massive infrastructure deficit).

For the residents that may read this: any councilor who votes in favour of the road widening does not care about your taxes as this would fit every definition of a wasteful spend.

I appreciate that the argument from the perspective of "tax and cost" is what most relates to the average resident. However, I think the biodiversity aspect here is of much greater importance in this case. This area, which floods regularly (hence the issue being addressed), includes critical woodland and wetland habitats, including a provincially significant wetland (i.e., one which is significant in supporting several specialized bird and reptile species). It contains an important fish habitat and breeding wetlands for several "species at risk" (SAR) birds and reptiles, including at least 3 federally and provincially recognized species (or at least recognized by the province, for now).

The city has previously committed to "prioritize wildlife corridors" (particularly those impacted by roads) and to "consider the biodiversity action plan when initiating projects". Therefore, the city has a responsibility to uphold this commitment; otherwise, this becomes a potential "promises made, promises broken" moment.

In addition, as I noted above, some of the recognized species are being proposed to lose their protections by the Provincial government's amendments to the Endangered Species Act. This is an opportunity to do the right thing. Be better for the residents than the Premier has been. Multiple councillors among you often point the finger at the Provincial government, casting blame on them for shortcomings and downloading issues to cities. And in most cases, you are right. I would agree. **However: prove you actually believe that.** Put your "vote" where your mouth is on this particular issue. Otherwise, this indicates that the claim of the fault being on the shoulders of the Provincial Government is just a convenient talking point for your personal benefit.

In summary: this road has been closed to most traffic for a long time. Spending at least 8M\$ to re-open it would be irresponsible, to put it lightly. Honour your commitments, keep it closed. Save taxpayers' money, save at risk species. Sometimes, it really is just that simple.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I would ask this to be added to the agenda by the clerk.

Best regards,

Seth

Hamilton, Ontario