

**From:** [Rob Ackermann](#)  
**To:** [Infrastructure and Environment](#)  
**Subject:** My comments for 2022.IE31.11 on July 7, 2022 Infrastructure and Environment Committee  
**Date:** July 2, 2022 4:57:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the July 7, 2022 Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting on item 2022.IE31.11, 2022 Mid Humber Gap Municipal Class Environmental Assessment

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:



## The Weston Golf and Country Club, Limited

Established 1915

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May 17, 2022

Mayor John Tory  
Office of the Mayor  
Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON  
M5H  
2N2

### **Subject : Mid Humber Gap Project**

Dear Sir:

We are writing to express some serious concerns with respect to the preferred alternative route for the Humber River Gap being proposed by the City of Toronto and T.R.C.A.. We recognize that there is another public meeting scheduled for May 17, 2022, and while public meetings are very important and necessary, we believe that these concerns are better aired directly in a less public forum.

### **Background**

As you are aware, the Humber River Gap Project is to address a remaining 800 meter gap in the Humber River Trail, from Mallaby Park west of St. Phillip's road to Cardell Ave.. Weston Golf and Country Club Limited ("Weston"), as well as many of our members, are very supportive of this initiative and many of our members are active users of the Humber River Trail. This multi-use trail is a wonderful feature of life in the City of Toronto and provides a safe and enjoyable pathway for pedestrians, cyclists and for family enjoyment.

Three alternative solutions for closing this gap are currently under consideration: concept 1A – being an "in-valley" alignment along the west side of the Humber River; concept 2A – being a hybrid in-valley and road alignment utilizing the east side of the Humber River; concept 3A – being an on-road alignment. TRCA has identified concept 1A as their preferred and recommended choice, but we are writing to express serious concerns about that decision.

We note that an in-valley alignment along the east side of the Humber River valley has not been identified, although we are unclear as to the reasons. Presumably there could have been an alternative utilizing the same descent into the valley as proposed in concept 1A, but proceeding along the east side of the Humber River rather than the west side.

### **Implementation of Concept 1A**

Concept 1A requires a construction of a bridge across the river south of the Metrolinx rail bridge to the second hole of the golf course. There is then a taking of some golf course property to construct a pathway along the west bank of the Humber immediately adjacent to the existing second green and behind the existing third tee, and further up the river until a second bridge is built to cross back to the east side. This places the pathway on the lowest portion on the golf course property, immediately adjacent to active play. As a consequence, the pathway along the stretch would need to be a covered structure as any openings from above or the west side would inevitably lead to injuries and liability claims arising from errant golf balls.

### **Safety/Liability Issue**

This area is prone to frequent and sudden flooding. Over the past 20 years our super intendent believes he has witnessed at least four "100-year storm" rainfall events. The most severe of recent events took place on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Damage from this storm was exaggerated by a temporary construction bridge that constricted river flow between the rail bridge piers. The current preferred route proposal calls for the path to be cantilevered on the bank between two rail piers creating a potential similar river flow constriction. Frequently the whole basin of the second hole, being a low point of the area, has been flooded out, covered in standing water. Severe storm events can cause sudden flash flooding in that area of the Humber River. Climate changes promises to bring more violent and frequent storm events.

Because it would be necessary to enclose the pathway along a significant portion of this 800meter gap in the Humber River Trail, persons using or found on this portion of the trail during a flooding event could find themselves in a "DEATH TRAP" from which there is no escape. At some point, mass fatalities may be inevitable, and the city will have been aware of and will have created this situation.

### **Issues with Concept 1A**

We believe that concept 1A contains a number of serious issues which may not be the case

with the alternative proposals, and which have not been adequately considered. These would include:

- Safety concerns due to the close proximity to an active golf playing area creates the requirement for a covered path structure, with increased expense
- Safety concerns relating to vulnerable members playing either alone or in small groups in a remote area of the golf course, sometimes at dusk, require the area to be made inaccessible from the pathway
- Personal security concerns also exist for vulnerable public users of the path who may find themselves trapped in an enclosed area with individuals or groups they would ordinarily be able to avoid
- Safety concerns relating to access cannot be alleviated by exits on the opposite side of the pathway as this is directly into the river
- Once the pathway is enclosed there is a significant risk of a mass fatality rising from flash flooding capturing people within the confined area of a covered pathway
- There is significant additional cost for the construction of 2 bridges at either end of the gap
- Potential damage to bridge and path infrastructure from flooding is a concern. This past winter, a similar bridge was damaged and carried down river by flood waters at another local golf club. Disruption damages and on-going repair costs would be significant
- Access for ongoing maintenance and repair can also create safety issues on this actively used adjacent golf course property
- The taking of the golf course lands creates cost not only for the taking, but also for changes on the golf course property to accommodate the nearby pathway, whereas the opposite side of the river consists of land which is not actively used.
- The West side would result in a less aesthetically pleasing visual aspect. To deal with privacy concerns, the golf course would inevitably construct visual barriers, whether by way of fencing, shrubbery or the like, in order to provide some sort of privacy to golfers in that remote area of the course. This will of course obstruct the views of persons using the path. The alternative, being a path on the east side of the river would not require any visual barriers from the golf course, because the path would be at a reasonable distance, with the result that the users of the path would have a much more aesthetically view across the river and onto the golf course.

### **Alternatives**

We believe that concepts 2A and 3A are much safer alternatives. Concept 3A is the cheapest and the safest but is not the most aesthetically pleasing option. Concept 2A (or a revision of 2A with the entry into the valley earlier as Concept 1A shows) would contain the following advantages:

- Being no risk of golf balls there would be no need to cover the bridge, which would

make it more attractive, and less expensive to build

- If the bridge is not covered there can be easy egress on the east bank side, and thus a way to escape from flash flooding, and it would be possible to construct the path higher, thus removed from rising water
- The river between the pathway and the golf course property contains a natural aesthetically pleasing barrier providing safety for vulnerable golfers in an isolated area of the valley
- While 2A involves a taking of trust lands there would be no taking of golf course lands
- This portion of the trust lands is completely unused, whereas the golf course lands have been and are actively used as a golf course for over 100 years: this not only affects an area of historical significance but also causes significant additional expense to deal with the impact of the taking and the path on actively used property
- There would be no need to create visual impairments as the path would be sufficiently removed from the golf course to the privacy there and would have a steep hill on the other side of the ravine. This would leave a much more desirable view for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Concept 2A eliminates 2 expensive bridges, thereby reducing cost, more than compensating for the cost of dealing with slightly more challenging soil conditions that may exist on the east bank although this has not been studied and is uncertain
- The elimination of 2 bridges creates less environmental interference in the river itself
- Damage and associated reconstruction costs to path and bridge infrastructure cause by flood waters would be eliminated

We thank you for taking the time to review these concerns. We are happy to meet with T.R.C.A and City of Toronto Representatives at any time to discuss these concerns further with the hope that a safe and pleasant alternative can be found for the closing of the Humber River Gap. Thank you for your attention in this regard

Robert Ackermann  
Golf Course Superintendent and General Manager  
Weston Golf and Country Club Limited

CC: Councillor Frances Nunziata  
Councillor Michael Ford  
Councillor Anthony Perruzza  
Corey Wells, Senior Project Manager TRCA