

City of Toronto
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
Item IE11.5 – Rouge Park Bridges Transportation Master Plan Class Environmental Assessment

Re: Opposition to Increasing Traffic Lanes on Rural Road Bridges in Rouge Park

Dear City of Toronto,

City of Toronto staff propose to replace existing one-lane bridges with new two-lane bridges across the Rouge River at Old Finch Road (**Bailey Bridge**) and Twyn Rivers Drive (**Stotts Bridge**); and the Little Rouge River on Meadowvale Road (**Hillside Bridge**).

FRW supports City efforts to rehabilitate or rebuild bridges in Rouge Park to provide safe crossings for cars, pedestrians and cyclists; and safe passage for fish and wildlife. FRW supports plans to improve pedestrian and cycling safety by building dedicated pedestrian and cycling bridges adjacent to, or adjoining, the rehabilitated or rebuilt bridges.

However, we ask Toronto Council to **save lives and money by retaining the existing one-lane design of the Bailey, Hillside and Stott Bridges** and including a separated safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists; and enhanced provisions for safe water, fish and wildlife movement.

Therefore, FRW requests that the City Motion be amended to specify that:

- the Bailey, Hillside and Stott bridges be re-built to retain their existing one-lane design for road traffic, and include a separated safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists; and enhanced provisions for safe water, fish and wildlife movement.
- a traffic demand strategy be created for RNUP before the new bridges are built.
- a strategy be created for safe movement of people and wildlife under and or above City roads in RNUP, before the new bridges are built.

Reasons to Amend:

If the City accepts the expensive staff recommendation to replace one-traffic-lane bridges with two-traffic-lane bridges, it will double:

- bridge building and maintenance costs (doubled tax burden).
- disturbance to vegetation, soils and wildlife (contrary to *RNUP Act*).
- danger to park wildlife and visitors from increased traffic numbers and speed.
- accidents due to increased traffic and speed on steep, twisty, narrow rural roads.
- liabilities from building infrastructure in designated floodplains and hazard lands.
- adverse impacts to the adjacent Morningside Heights Community and its three schools.

FRW Patrons

Lois James, "Save the Rouge" founding member and Order of Canada Recipient

Joyce Trimmer, former Mayor of Scarborough, posthumous

Hon. Raymond Cho, MPP Scarborough North

Hon. Gerry Phillips, former MPP Scarborough Agincourt

Hon. Alvin Curling, former MPP Scarborough Rouge River

Hon. David Peterson, former Ontario Premier

Derek Lee, former MP Scarborough Rouge River

Rathika Sitsabaiesan, former MP Scarborough Rouge River

Paul Harpley, "Save the Rouge" founding member

Bobbi Hunter, founding member of Greenpeace Executive

Although I live in central Scarborough, I have a detailed knowledge of the traffic conditions and bridges in Rouge Park. I have visited the "Rouge" hundreds of times every year for 40+ years for hiking, volunteering and FRW work. I also have environmental legislation, policy and planning expertise as a former Vice Chair with Ontario's Environmental Assessment Board, and an adjudicator of appeals under various environmental and planning legislation.

Toronto's Rouge Bridges are located in Rouge National Urban Park and the Protected Countryside and Natural System designations of the 2017 Ontario Greenbelt Plan. They are also within the floodway of the Rouge River System. During Hurricane Hazel (1954), most of the Rouge Bridges were washed out or destroyed. With Climate Change the risk of losing costly bridges in infrastructure is increasing.

Contrary to the ecological integrity mandate of the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* and the infrastructure policies in Ontario's Greenbelt Plan section 4.2.1.2, the proposed doubling of the traffic lanes on the Hillside Bridge, Stott Bridge and Bailey Bridge would:

- Expand disturbance to key natural heritage and hydrologic features - Not Minimize.
- Damage the natural & rural character of this parkland/Greenbelt setting - Not Protect.
- Increase adverse impacts from traffic speed, noise, light and road salt - Not Minimize.
- Increase the existing Bridge Infrastructure Capacity - Not Optimize.

The city Report repeatedly notes that "cost was not considered to be a primary driver" for Bridge evaluation. Public safety and ecological integrity were also "not primary drivers".

With our long term knowledge of this area, we know that widening these bridges will be extremely costly and it will increase traffic numbers and speed on narrow, twisty and steep rural roads within a national park meant for people and wildlife.

We look forward to your positive response to this letter and request.

Sincerely



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for Friends of the Rouge Watershed

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Friends of the Rouge Watershed

Friends of the Rouge Watershed volunteers helped create Rouge Park in 1990. For three decades we have worked with citizens, environmental coalitions, and all levels of government, to protect and improve watershed, ecosystem and human health by:

- Creating, defending and implementing Rouge Park, Watershed and Greenbelt Plans.
- Educating and motivating 71,000+ youth and community volunteers.
- Planting and maintaining 784,000+ native trees, shrubs and flowers.
- Restoring 360 hectares of native forest, wetland and pollinator habitat to support biodiversity, clean water and air, climatic stability, flood control, and human health

In 2016, FRW received the J.R. Dymond Award from Ontario Nature for exceptional public service and environmental achievement. The award noted FRW's:

"tireless and inspirational role in the creation of Rouge National Park" and "exceptional work on the ground with stewardship and restoration projects."