

Region of Waterloo
Engineering and Environmental Services
Design and Construction

To: Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Development Committee
Meeting Date: April 7, 2026
Report Title: G2G Pedestrian Bridge Over the Conestoga River, Wallenstein

1. Recommendation

- a) That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve the recommended design alternative—the two- span trestle bridge—for the proposed Guelph to Goderich (G2G) Pedestrian Bridge over the Conestoga River as outlined in report EES-DCS-26-001, as dated April 7, 2026.
- b) Direct staff to file the Notice of Completion for the Class Environmental Assessment (EA) with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, issue required public notices and file the Environmental Study Report on the public record for a 30- day review.
- c) Authorize staff to enter into funding agreements with two community members offering financial contributions to the project.
- d) Amend the capital budget for Project 07622 Guelph to Goderich Bridge 2 – Conestoga River Crossing as outlined in Appendix D.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To obtain Council approval for the recommended design alternative and file a Notice of Completion with the MECP for the Class B Environmental Assessment for the G2G Pedestrian Bridge Over the Conestoga River, and proceed with detailed design and construction, and execution of funding agreements with the contributing community members.

3. Strategic Plan:

The proposed report supports tourism related economic development and aligns with the Region’s strategic objectives under Homes for All.

4. Report Highlights:

- The Class EA has been completed, identifying a two-span trestle bridge as the preferred design.
- Staff applied for the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF) offered by the Province of Ontario for funding to support the design and construction of the proposed pedestrian bridge, however the region was not successful in securing the funding.
- The G2G Trail Committee Members have been involved in the project since the start of the EA. They have participated in the development and evaluation of all alternatives and are supportive of the recommended alternative.
- A public meeting held October 16, 2025, attracted approximately 100 attendees and indicated strong support for the project.
- In February 2026, a second community member approached the Region through a local charity group, offering a \$2,500,000 donation towards the project. This is in addition to a prior \$3,000,000 donation offer that had previously been identified to Region Council from a separate community member.
- The total estimated project cost, based on the 90% design and including appropriate contingency, is \$8,260,000. As set out in Appendix D, the remaining cost of \$8,117,000 to complete the project would be funded from the \$857,000 currently budgeted in the 2026 Transportation Capital Program funded from the Transportation Capital Reserve, \$5,500,000 offered through community member donations, and \$560,000 from the Township of Wellesley. Staff are recommending that the funding gap of \$1,200,000 be funded from the General Tax Supported Capital Reserve. This reserve has a balance of \$7 million at the end of 2025 and can absorb this project without issue to other projects. This reserve has been used selectively for capital contingency related to exceptional circumstances.
- Staff recommend using the General Tax Supported Capital Reserve as opposed to bumping existing projects from the Transportation Capital Reserve. Removing funding from the Transportation reserve would impact the Region's ability to maintain the road network's level of service and require staff to reprioritize the existing roads rehabilitation program to minimize the impact on the road network's level of service.
- Environmental approvals will be required from the Grand River Conservation Authority, Transport Canada, Ministry of Natural Resources, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. The ability to proceed to construction in 2026 and complete in-water works will be contingent on receipt of all necessary approvals by mid-summer.
- Once it is confirmed that bridge construction will proceed, Transportation staff is

committed to reviewing potential solutions for the G2G trail crossing location at Line 86, just east of the proposed bridge location, in consultation with the County of Wellington as part owner of the boundary road right-of-way.

- Construction timing is subject to receipt of all technical and financial approvals.

5. Background:

On November 20, 2024, through report EES-DCS-24-007, Regional Council granted authorization to advance the design and construction timing of the G2G – Conestoga River Bridge to 2025/2026, seek provincial grant funding through the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund and enter into funding agreements with the Township of Wellesley and a community member with direction to staff to return to Council for further direction on whether or not to proceed with the project in the event that the net share of Region costs is anticipated to exceed \$500,000. A Key Plan showing the proposed bridge location is included in Appendix A.

A Schedule 'B' Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process has been completed which included an evaluation of alternatives. A preferred alternative comprised of a two-span trestle bridge was presented at a public meeting held October 16, 2025, and is included as part of the recommendation of this report. Plans showing the recommended design alternative are included in Appendix B, with renderings included in Appendix C.

An application was submitted to the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF) offered by the Province of Ontario for funding to support the design and construction of the proposed pedestrian bridge. However, the Region was not successful in securing the requested funding.

As part of the funding application process, the Region obtained letters of support from the County of Wellington, as a co-lessee of the lands, indicating their support for the project and an interest in renewing the lease, and from Infrastructure Ontario, as owner of the lands, providing conditional approval of the bridge construction and a 5-year lease extension. An agreement will be required between the Region and the County to outline that the County will bear no responsibility associated with design, construction, maintenance or renewal of the structure as the bridge is within the Region of Waterloo jurisdiction. Landlord Consent will be required from Infrastructure Ontario prior to tender.

A funding agreement is in place with the Township of Wellesley for \$380,000 and a second agreement is being finalized for the remaining \$180,000 (secured through the federal tourism and growth fund) of the Township's commitment for the EA, detailed design and construction contract administration costs of the project.

A community member has offered to invest \$3,000,000 in the construction of this

project. Further, a second community member has come forward to offer \$2,500,000 for the construction of this project. A letter of intent has been signed by the first community member, and a letter of intent has been initiated with the second community member. Council direction will be required to enter into funding agreements with the community members as recommended in this report.

Staff recommend proceeding with filing the EA, completing the detailed design and proceeding with construction of the bridge once an agreement with the County is in place, Landlord Consent is confirmed, funding agreements have been signed by the Township and both community members, and necessary environmental permits are in place.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Township of Wellesley Staff have been involved in the project since the commencement as project team members. They have participated in the development and evaluation of all alternatives and are supportive of the recommended alternative.

Public:

Public/Stakeholder Engagement

The G2G Trail Committee Members have been involved in the project since the start of the EA. They have participated in the development and evaluation of all alternatives and are supportive of the recommended alternative.

Regular update meetings have been maintained with G2G Committee members, Township of Wellesley staff and the initially identified private donor.

A public meeting held October 16, 2025, attracted approximately 100 attendees and indicated strong support for the project, with some concerns raised regarding the trail crossing at Line 86.

Additional communications occurred through EngageWR, signage, and social media. An Engage Page public survey was also conducted.

7. Financial Implications:

	Current Year	Future Year(s)
Budget Impact?	No new impact	Ongoing Maintenance & Renewal \$5,000
Capital Plan Impact?	Increase of \$7.26M Gross \$1.20M Net	Reduction 2033-35 (\$0.41)M

There is insufficient budget available in the Region's approved 2026-2035 Transportation Capital Program to accommodate this project. As set out in Appendix D a budget amendment of \$7.26 million gross, \$1.2 million net is required. In the event that tender pricing results in the need for a budget increase, it would be at Council's discretion, through review of the tender report, whether the Region proceeds with contract award and an associated funding adjustment. If permits, funding commitments, or markets change materially beyond what we can reasonably anticipate, staff will report back to Council for direction, given the importance of this project.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Subject to Regional Council approval of the Recommended Design Alternative, staff will file a Notice of Study Completion for the EA on the public record for a 30-day review period, proceed with detailed design and construction of the bridge once a County agreement is in place, Landlord Consent is confirmed, funding agreements have been signed by the Township and both community members, and necessary environmental permits are in place.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: Key Plan

Appendix B: Recommended Design Alternative Plan

Appendix C: Renderings

Appendix D: Project Budget

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