

Wellington Advertiser Letters - April 7, 2021

Dear Editor:

As an avid cyclist, living in Elora is a true blessing; there are so many beautiful back roads to enjoy all around us in Wellington County and Waterloo Region.

Over the years I have discovered many routes that take me and my riding buddies and families off the beaten path and away from most automobile traffic. The routes we ride are often frequented by hikers, dog-walkers, fishermen, farmers and Mennonites in their buggies.

These routes are always chosen to have plenty of gravel back roads and many of them with barely used or even closed bridges to cross the many streams and rivers in the area ... this makes for a wonderful and safe way to enjoy cycling in our area.

I understand that the cost to maintain this rural infrastructure (bridges) can be high and unsustainable, especially when the traffic volume using it is quite low, so I understand the tendency for the township to close old bridges to motorized vehicles, but my concern is that I see the township not just closing these bridges, but then proceeding to remove them altogether, leaving no river crossing alternative in place.

For example, the bridge across the Grand River at Twp. Rd. 60 (Weisenberg Road) which is frequently used by the recreational public is now posted to be completely removed. The same for the bridge on Peel Street across the Grand River just west of Winterbourne, and I am sure there are many that I am not even aware of yet. This will simply force the recreational and farming community to use much busier and dangerous roads and increase the possibility of tragic events with the motoring public.

Is it not possible for the municipal government to simply barricade these bridges properly to prevent motor vehicles from using them and keep the structures in place (assuming they can at least support the light-weight pedestrian traffic) to promote healthy outdoor activities in our communities, which is more important now than ever?!

Just as our network of rail-trails in Ontario is a thoughtful and positive way to re-purpose old unused infrastructure for healthy and safe recreational use, the continued use of these bridges should be considered in the same way.

I am asking our council and municipal management to re-think these closures and instead envision a healthy, active, sustainable use for the community!

M ■ Walker,
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