

Subject – Concession 2 WGR Concerned Residents regarding Enbridge pipeline
Date: First delegation - Evening council meeting on February 16, 2021 at 6:05 p.m.

Context

On behalf of the residents of Concession 2 WGR, we would like to state that what has happened to our road with the installation of the Enbridge pipeline is unconscionable. We are so disappointed with the way our neighbourhood has been altered and are still in complete disbelief that Enbridge could get away with so much destruction and so little care in the rehabilitation. This project was presented to us with tea and cookies at the open house and left us feeling like our concerns and thoughts would be heard. The residents of Concession 2 WGR along with local businesses have been hugely affected by the construction and destruction.

It's very doubtful that you could begin to comprehend the level of frustration experienced by the residents throughout this project. To add insult to injury, the gas line has absolutely zero benefit to us in any way. There has been very minimal communication and support from the township. We all feel at a loss with little hope for substantial rehabilitation for our road.

Recently, we have reached out to every resident to request their input. Each resident's situation is unique, given where they live on the road and how they were impacted.

In this document, we have summarized the situation as well as provided recommendations on remediations we want to see:

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Concession 2 WGR was labeled on Grey county tourist maps as a beautiful scenic, picturesque drive. It is now scarred with thousands of mature trees cut, butchered, and left looking like they were ripped apart by a tornado. Sadly, these trees were destroyed unnecessarily as the majority of the digging was on the road and not deep into the roadside. Our beautiful country road has been mutilated by the destructive process of Enbridge. Many residents have lived on this road all their lives and find this incomprehensible. The road will not grow back to its grandeur during their lifetime.

Roadside grass strips that have long been maintained and manicured by residents alongside the road are torn up or gone and left in a state that can no longer be maintained without damage to mowers and equipment. In some cases, workers spray painted red markings on historic cedar posts, rails, and damaged the fencing by climbing over rather than walking around.

PRIVACY

Some residents have completely lost their privacy because of the cut trees. Many had no visibility to the road and are now left wondering how their magical piece of paradise can ever be restored.

Noise, Dust, Inconvenience and Safety

The crews started at 7:30 am and worked until 5 pm for months on end during our best summer months of the season. The noise was horrendous. Some residents made voice recordings of the noise to show they could not have conversations or enjoy peace and quiet in/out of their homes.

Coming and going from our homes was often restricted. Many times, residents had to wait for up to half an hour just to get out of their driveway to go to work. Many residents would drive south on the road to get to highway 4 only to find they had closed the Lantz bridge for the day, with no notice to the residents.

The dust was significant and constant throughout the summer because of the construction and truck traffic. It was non stop cleaning and dusting in our homes.

Residents who have been walking on the road for years were unable to do so. They were told by workers and flaggers that it was unsafe.

The pipeline sat on the roadside for, in some cases, months.

Many residents who live between Grey Rd 4 and Concession 15 were actually land locked some days as they would shut down Lantz's bridge and also be working on the road around the "Hydro Hill" that goes around Robson Rd.

For all residents living between the 15th Sideroad WGR and Hwy 4, they had a total loss of their paved road.

During the construction, the road surface was a constant safety hazard with narrow passages, dusty loose gravel, and potholes. It was pointless for many residents to wash their vehicles. The wear and tear was significantly increased. When it rained, the road turned to mud.

The pot holes and bad road conditions have increased the maintenance costs and depreciation of vehicles for all residents of Concession 2 WGR.

DITCHES:

Along much of the road, the ditches now have a sharp drop to them. There used to be a gradual, gentle slope that would allow you to get out of the ditch if you ended up going in (i.e., winter time). Now you would suffer major consequences if your car veered off the road into the ditch.

Business losses and property values

Some residents have expressed major concern about the loss of property value. Loss of privacy, the lost allure of the beautiful, mature treed road, and the potential for increased traffic with a change to the single lane Lantz bridge (please see the addendum to this letter below).

In some cases, licensed businesses along the road were majorly impacted. For example, one resident runs a private treehouse and cabin retreat getaway which could have legally operated as it met the Provincial and AirBnB requirements. The reason they did not operate in 2020 was because of the noise and construction of the pipeline, resulting in losses in the tens of thousands of dollars.

One resident who wants to sell their home (on the previously paved portion of the road) had a realtor evaluate their property. They were told the gravel road is definitely not a selling feature making the property worth less.

One resident experienced their internet line being cut not once, but twice – while they were both working from home and during a pandemic. Enbridge promised to pay for two months of internet, but they have yet to see compensation.

Working around waterways and streams

Many residents feel the extent of the project that Enbridge was permitted to conduct with the Saugeen river and the Rocky Saugeen river was over reach! Saugeen Valley Conservation puts such stringent restrictions on property owners with regards to changes to the shoreline. We can't understand how Enbridge got away with all this?

One resident nearby the Saugeen river has for years had turtles nesting on their property. They usually move from the wetland across the road to their property in the spring. This year there was a 4m trench on the east side of the road. They had no turtles nesting on their property this year. Even if they were able to nest on the east side of the road, the area was flooded in late summer close to hatching season. We have significant concerns around how this project has impacted wildlife.

Poor communication from the township and Enbridge:

One of the main concerns of residents is the poor communication and responsiveness from the municipality and Enbridge. Many residents wrote letters and made phone calls expressing their concerns of both the immediate and long term impact this construction was having and will have on the lives of the residents of Concession 2 WGR, north of Hwy 4.

Several people noted they were satisfied with the interactions but most were very displeased with the lack of follow through and communication from the township and Enbridge.

Trying to figure out who to contact at the township and who was responsible for things that were happening was extremely challenging for many residents, especially during Covid.

Enbridge assigned Kier Johnson as the community liaison early in the project. Some residents met with him more at least 6 times. He was polite and courteous but had few answers on how a restoration would be completed to restore the road besides mentioning Enbridge was planning to plant 2 saplings for each mature tree taken (and perhaps not even plant them on Concession 2 WGR). Saplings to replace 100 year old trees seems insufficient and a bit preposterous.

Overall, the lack of communication was and is still a major issue! Residents believe they deserve much more.

2. Restitution residents would like to see done as a result of the pipeline:

- Trim the trees neatly (properly) where they hacked/ripped the branches off
- Fix the ditches for safety and thorough drainage
- Replace topsoil on roadsides and reseed the grass on both sides of the road. For those affected, restore the shoulder of the road around their mailbox to the way it was
- Re-pave the road between Hwy 4 and Sideroad 15 WGR as it was originally paved (and not at the taxpayer's expense). With the Lantz bridge out, pave North from the bridge and South to Hwy 4. Residents are not looking forward to being inconvenienced again for the summer 2021. We would expect that the company resurfacing the road will follow the regulations and not land lock residents again. The lack of consideration that Enbridge showed us unfortunately will taint our patience with the resurfacing company. West Grey has to enforce safety and communication with this next phase of construction.
- For property owners who have lost privacy or large trees, replace a tree block of MATURE trees or berms to their satisfaction.
- For residents who have land they want planted in seedlings, allow them to plant as many acres of sapling trees they want in consultation with the conservation authority to the maximum allowable plantings per acre if desired. We believe the number is 800 saplings per acre and would like it confirmed.
- For all other residents, offer them up to 10 mature trees to be planted on their property or allow them to be used by the municipality for planting in other areas like parks and recreational areas if they want them reassigned. A lot of sugar maples and other deciduous trees were taken. An independent Tree specialist should be consulted and submit a report of what type of trees should be planted. The diversity that was there before should be returned.

- Residents would like to see trees replaced and the riverbank restored at the Saugeen river to its natural state at the Lantz bridge.
- Residents are strongly encouraging a moratorium on cutting back trees with heavy equipment along Concession 2 WGR and along other country roads in West Grey.
- Residents want a tax credit or tax reduction of 20% for three years as a form of compensation for residents along the affected area of Concession 2 WGR.
- Monthly communication from West Grey to residents with updates and plans for the road restoration and the Lantz bridge. Residents also want a single point of contact person for issues that they are having.
- Many residents wrote letter to the township and Enbridge. In the spirit of brevity, we have not included them here.

Thank you for your consideration on behalf of the residents of Concession 2 WGR.

An important addendum and concern of Concession 2 WGR residents

The Lantz single lane bridge

Residents that live very near the bridge or use it regularly are well aware that the bridge is in need of repair.

It is still not clear to us what kind of bridge is being planned. Residents have real concerns if weight limits are raised to allow heavy traffic. The S bend around Robson Hill would be a disaster waiting to happen. A resident jogger, cyclist or someone just out walking their dog may be at greater risk of injury. Many residents have witnessed countless times where large transport trucks ignore the weight restrictions and cross the Lantz bridge as is.

The thought of the increased convenience of the bridge being two lanes at first seems very alluring. The increased ease for the snow plow, no more polite waving to our neighbours of "no, you go first over the bridge", and for local farmers to be able to take the short route to fields that are rented.

On the other hand, residents fear increased traffic on the road as non residents and truck traffic will make it a by-pass for Durham. The curve that goes around the hill on Robson Road is a very tight curve. It already is dangerous without big trucks and increased traffic.

There is also the concern of increased traffic with a two lane bridge from farm traffic. Concession 2 WGR doesn't have many safe areas to pass a tractor with a wagon or heavy equipment.

Residents have so many questions. With other bridges in the municipality needing repairs should money be spent on such an expensive improvement? Is there going to be increased funds spent on maintaining Concession 2 due to the increased traffic? What are the future costs of maintaining a more expensive bridge? How will the municipality stop big trucks from using the road?

As tax payers and residents of Concession 2 WGR, it's fair to say the strong consensus is to leave the bridge as a single lane and not invest in a double lane bridge.

Additionally worth noting : The Lantz bridge traditionally was a spot for people to park and launch boats. With the area being more cleared, residents can envision more visitors using that area for water access. If it is going to be used as a public area to enjoy the Saugeen River, there needs to be measures taken as the bend in the road at the bridge does reduce visibility of the Lantz bridge.