

Concerns with the Southwest Calgary Ring Road Crossings of the Elbow River and Fish Creek

Presented to Bow River Basin Council Quarterly Forum – September 10, 2014

Summary of concerns for both crossings

- Realignment of river, causing:
 - Loss of biodiversity
 - Loss of riparian forest
 - Loss of dynamic channel processes
 - Impediments to wildlife movement
- Channelization of river, causing:
 - Encroachment of invasive species
 - Loss of aquatic habitat
 - Loss of riparian functions
 - Loss of connection floodplain (what does that mean?)
- Cut & fill design (cutting away the existing river bank above the planned height of the crossing & filling in the river valley bottom adjacent to the bridge) → creating an earthen berm to contain the water flow, causing:
 - Loss of a wide wildlife corridor
 - Wildlife on the highway (fencing will also make the blocked area beyond the highway wider)
 - Potential interruptions to groundwater flow

Need to consider:

- Flooding beyond current estimates (i.e. previous design would not have withstood the 2013 flood)
- The 1000 m wide valley would be reduced to an opening of less than 100 m, so what would happen in times of flood? Will that be large enough to accommodate floating debris without becoming clogged?
- What are the costs associated with berm failure or causeway closure in times of extreme flooding?

Alternatives: build a longer bridge over a wider valley vs a shorter bridge over a narrow earthen berm channel for the river

What can you do?

- Contact your MLA and the Minister of Transportation of the Government of Alberta to re-open the public consultation process for the design
- Ask for the best design, not just the least expensive
- Ask for a design that minimizes environmental effects
- Ask for a design that considers the cumulative effects