

The Brampton Bicycle Advisory Committee respectfully submits the following input into the 2015 budget process for the City of Brampton.

## Benefits of Active Transportation to City of Brampton:

There is a strong **economic benefit** to make **active transportation** an immediate priority due to:

- Reduced congestion -- better flow of people, goods, services
- Reduced collisions -- eventual reduction in auto insurance rates
- Reduced road construction, maintenance and repair costs
- Easing of Parking congestion
- Enhancing and making the downtown core vibrant for residents, workers & retail
- Safety in school zones
- Improved productivity of City of Brampton staff who deal with safety & congestion issues daily
- Improved health of workers (air quality & fitness) – impact on employer benefit & public costs
- Attractiveness of Brampton as a place to work, live and play
- Attractiveness to Brampton's goal for research-based university location
- Cycle Tourism – benefit to Brampton retail businesses & employment

## Background:

Brampton's [Official Plan \(2006\)](#) opens with a vision that speaks to the city **reducing its reliance on the automobile**, with a "shorter commute coupled with **more modal choices**, [which] will contribute to a cleaner environment, better air quality and an overall sustainable lifestyle for Brampton residents".

City of Brampton's [Strategic Plan \(2013\)](#) describes a desire to **expand and promote opportunities for active transportation** as part of its "*Manage Traffic Congestion*" strategy. Success to be determined by the increased use of transit and **active transportation** as well as the level of **public satisfaction with cycling and walking paths** and the community lifestyle.

**Modern Transportation Systems** objective in the Strategic Plan (2013) states: "build a pathway system that is accessible to all including persons with disabilities through a series of walking, cycling and multi-use trails that **connects Brampton's major destinations and links with other trail systems outside Brampton**". The City's policy is to "**encourage the use of cycling** and walking and to develop a detailed pathway network in conjunction with the 'Pathways Master Plan', in order to **accommodate work, recreational and other trips**". Cycling policies in this Plan are concerned with "**increasing bicycle ridership for both recreational and journey-to-work, shopping and school purposes.**"

It is clear from both the Official (2006) and Strategic (2013) Plans that the City's intention is to **support active transportation** including cycling for both **recreational and utilitarian** purposes. Yet, since the date these plans were approved and adopted by City Council, there has been little sign of the city taking serious and concrete steps to fulfil the stated vision. Evidence indicates that the City did more to support active transportation strategy and built more active transportation infrastructure between 2000 and 2006, than it has done in the years since these plans were adopted.

[Brampton's PathWays Master Plan \(2002\)](#) was never officially approved by City Council and has not been significantly updated in 13 years! Implementation has been sporadic and focused primarily on **recreational** uses. While 277 km of multi-use pathways were built between 2002 and 2012, there is little evidence that the "Community Network" referred to in the plan as "the spine of the PathWays network to provide connections across Brampton and to neighbouring municipalities", has been added to in any significant way. Few on-road bicycle facilities have been built, and when they are, they are usually built as in response to local demand for **traffic calming** rather than part of an active transportation network.

It is understood that the **city faces fiscal challenges** and there is difficulty in getting sustained funding for AT infrastructure investments. Historically the implementation of AT projects was only considered if they could be "**cost neutral**", i.e. the costs could be offset by savings or revenue in other areas. Funding often came from **development charges** for new developments. Where it came from the tax base, it often was cobbled together from the left-overs of other budget categories.

**Other municipalities in and around the GTA are facing similar challenges**; several with a population, tax and development charge base that is lower than Brampton's. Yet many of these municipalities have found ways to provide stable and substantial funding for active transportation infrastructure development and most already have specific Active Transportation Master Plans, according to our discussions with many municipalities at **Metrolinx GTHA Hub meetings**. There is a clear recognition of the imperative to create a **substantial mode shift** over the next 10-15 years from single occupancy vehicle transport to a combination of active and public transportation choices, as shown in [Region of Peel's Long Range Transportation Plan \(2012\)](#) : "*loss of economic resources – resulting from lost time and money due to excessive congestion*". The report cites alternative transportation modes as playing a significant role to solving the issue of congestion in Peel, as the construction of new roads will provide only temporary relief, and will not be enough to support the movement of people and goods.

Brampton's most recent official **population** figure is 557,800 ([Brampton Annual Report 2013](#)). Now Canada's 9<sup>th</sup> largest city, Brampton is forecasted to grow to 843,000 by 2031 ([Brampton Strategic Plan 2013](#)). This kind of growth cannot be accommodated by carrying on **Business as Usual**.

Many municipalities, both in the United States and Canada are using active transportation as part of their **strategy to attract high-tech business opportunities, revitalize their central business districts and accommodate their growth**. (eg. Winnipeg, Calgary, Ottawa, Waterloo, Vancouver, Portland Oregon, Pittsburg Ohio, Madison Wisconsin, New York City, etc.)

Brampton risks falling further behind its municipal neighbours in being able to offer the kind of vibrant urban/suburban lifestyle that will retain and attract a **talented and creative workforce**. As a case in point, there is one Brampton based high-technology company with only a few of its workers choosing to **live** within the city boundaries. Most of this company's **senior management** team are avid cyclists, but they don't live in Brampton and they say they won't ride in Brampton because they perceive Brampton roads as **unsafe for cyclists**. This is a common perception expressed to members of BBAC by 'would-be' cyclists and parents of school-aged children.

The time will never be more right for Brampton Council to consider investments that show **economic leadership** by providing its citizens, workers and visitors with serious active transportation options. The Brampton Bicycle Advisory Committee has produced a list of projects and priorities that we believe are essential in getting the City on track.

## Active Transportation Funding Priorities:

### Funding for an Active Transportation Coordinator position:

The **Bicycle Friendly Communities** program, run in Canada by Share the Road Cycling Coalition and in the US by the League of American Bicyclists has monitored and measured the success rates of hundreds of municipalities implementing an active transportation strategy. They have determined that the first and foremost step on the journey for a municipality to become “bicycle friendly” is having **municipal staff focused on AT implementation**. Even with Brampton’s recent departmental reorganization, elements of active transportation are still being handled across multiple city departments. There is no AT focal point and this position is deemed essential if the city is to make significant progress. Council approved this position in [October 2013](#) for the 2014 budget, and since that time there have been [commitments](#) and many [discussions with staff](#). **Funding priorities for Active Transportation are integral to the focus and success measurement of this position.**

The role of an Active Transportation Coordinator needs to focus on 5 priorities, each of which requires its own **program funding**:

### The Five Active Transportation Funding Priorities:

1. Laying out a **roadmap for Brampton to become a ‘Bicycle Friendly Community’** (as managed by [Share the Road Cycling Coalition](#), starting at Bronze and then progressing through to Platinum status over a specified and realistic time period. This would represent ‘a state of mind’ that permeates the vision, strategy and implementation planning across many City departments.
2. **Implementation of #CycleON**  
As one of the fastest growing cities in the province, opportunities are being frequently presented for the city to set the tone and direction that would facilitate the growth of an active transportation network as part of an overall growth plan. Unlike other communities in southern Ontario such as the City of Waterloo and the City of Ottawa, Brampton has yet to formulate or pass a “**Complete Streets**” policy. Therefore AT is often either an afterthought as part of new development planning or one of the first planning features to be withdrawn to meet budget constraints. The City has an opportunity to work with provincial representatives to implement **#CycleON**, the recently updated cycling strategy document for Ontario. #CycleON contains a number of provisions to ensure that AT is included as part of development and land-use planning.
3. Laying out the **strategic direction** for AT in the City including the update of the **2002 Pathways Master Plan**, the integration of that plan into the updated **Official Plan** and the current **Strategic Plan** and the migration of its implementation strategy into the new **Transportation Master Plan** (anticipated May or June 2015). There is no need to spend the time and money required to redesign the 2002 Pathways Master Plan from the ground up. The plan, in its current revision, includes a comprehensive strategy to address utilitarian as well as recreational cycling needs but

will require a commitment to create and or upgrade **on-road** connection points to better and more safely accommodate cycling traffic. The plan update should include new and planned residential and commercial developments, technical advancements since 2002 and should include routes within school catchment areas to support AT for youth. The AT strategy will also require some AT traffic studies although recently acquired trip data available from Peel Region could be used for much of the required analysis.

4. Establishing a **list of short, medium and longer term infrastructure priorities**. The short and medium term priorities would be based on demand creation estimates and accompanied by specific projects along with budget estimates and possible funding options. Multi-use pathways are not going to be sufficient by themselves to meet the needs of utilitarian commuter cyclists. Therefore on-road infrastructure must provide a substantial portion of the service. That said, cyclists are the most vulnerable road users and therefore conscious thought should be given to how they are protected. The objective should be to create a network along with an education program that would allow the majority of existing and new cyclists, including children and those with mobility issues, to feel safe on the vast majority of the City's AT network.

**Examples of short-term infrastructure priorities already identified to the city:**

- a. Curb-cuts along multi-use pathways at mid-block intersections  
Brampton needs to revise its out-dated 1986 curb policy and bring it in-line with OTM Book 15, OTM Book 18 and OADA. New pathway development needs to employ the new standards. Existing pathways need to be retrofitted as soon as possible, based on a prioritized list:
    - i. along the Etobicoke Creek Trail
    - ii. along the Flowertown Trail
    - iii. at 384-398 Balmoral Drive and 30 Avondale Blvd
    - iv. Peel Village
    - v. Bovaird Drive – has high curbs at locations of new businesses along multiuse path
  - b. Installation of traffic calming at [Heart Lake Road and Countryside Drive](#)
  - c. Installation of bike lanes along Bramalea Road to the Bramalea GO station
  - d. Active transportation crossing of Queen St. at Scott St.
  - e. Repair of railway level crossing at James and John Streets
  - f. Additional signage along Etobicoke Creek Trail
  - g. [Extension of the Etobicoke Creek Trail](#) from west of West Creek Blvd. under Hwy 407 and 410 to connect with the existing trail just north of the Powerade Centre.
  - h. Implementation of bicycle facilities along Centre St. to connect to the [new Peel Wellness Centre](#)
  - i. Trueman Street Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement – add bicycle infrastructure to the design and bid to connect Peel Wellness Centre across CN tracks to Ardglen community and subsequent connection across Centre St to Etobicoke Creek Trail
  - j. Implementation of bicycle facilities along Glidden Road in support of the new 'Bikewrx' 'Pedalwise' Community Based Social Marketing project "Community Bike Centre" on Advance Boulevard
5. Establishing a **community engagement and communications outreach program**. Communication should be an integral part of the strategy documents, and it is so important to creating public acceptance that it should have its own stand-alone focus. The new Brampton Cycling Advisory Committee should play a key part in that community outreach strategy. This program would also include **promotion of events** such as [Bike the Creek](#), [Celebrampton BikeFest](#), [Bike to Work Day](#), Bike Friendly Business Program, [Brampton Bike Clinics](#), [Community](#)

[Picnics](#), Community Bike Rides, PIC sessions and door-to-door canvassing to explain AT infrastructure development projects, working with schools to promote [safe and active routes to school](#), and support for biking information websites such as [BikeBrampton.ca](#).

The **success of the AT coordinator job** should be largely tied to the effectiveness of the completion of these projects and to the success of creating a substantial AT mode shift as quickly as possible. The worst case scenario is a 1-2% share. A 'few' bicycle users on a given roadway is insufficient to reduce traffic congestion and only creates a bottleneck that confuses motorists and puts the small number of cyclists at greater risk. An **8-10% AT mode share** on the other hand would take sufficient cars off the road to make a noticeable difference in congestion and would make the roads safer for all road users.

### **Conclusions:**

Support for Active Transportation funding in the 2015 Budget is a fiscally responsible action for the City of Brampton, and demonstrates the appropriate level of both economic consideration and quality of life that we expect from the city.

Sincerely,

*David Laing, Chair & members of the Brampton Bicycle Advisory Committee*