

2017 11 17 Comments on Heart Lake Road Corridor PIC of Nov 2nd

By Dayle and David Laing, Brampton residents

Background:

The RFP that resulted in the engagement of Stantec to consult on the “**Function and Design Review of the Heart Lake Road Corridor**” was conceived by City of Brampton [Council Minutes of April 22, 2015](#) to create the following **Heart Lake Road Mitigation Strategy**:

“3. That the Heart Lake Mitigation Strategy that identifies immediate, medium and long-term actions to conserve environmental and cultural heritage resources of Heart Lake Road while supporting employment, residential and institutional land uses, and addressing current / future transportation issues, be received; and,

4. That staff be directed to:

i. Continue to work with Ministry of Transportation to obtain approval of an intersection on Countryside Drive within the Highway 410 Permit Control Area east of Heart Lake Road, to facilitate future traffic from the new employment and residential plans of subdivision that abut Countryside Drive in order to protect the significant natural and cultural heritage resources of Heart Lake Road;

ii. Implement the proposed wildlife eco-passage culverts in partnership with (and funding support from) the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and local developers; and,

iii. Undertake a Heart Lake Road Study subject to 2015 budget approval, to examine: long-term requirements for road infrastructure and management improvements necessary for development, natural and cultural heritage conservation and active transportation purposes; listing Heart Lake Road as a Cultural Heritage Landscape; and designating Heart Lake Road through the 2006 Official Plan Review to maintain a rural road cross-section; and,

5. That staff implement pavement markings along Heart Lake Road between Countryside Drive and Sandalwood Parkway in combination with warning signage focused on reducing speed through the three “hotspot” areas; and,

6. That this report and the P&IS report dated March 11, 2015 and Council’s resolutions be forwarded to the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Natural Resources, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Etobicoke-Mimico Coalition and the Region of Peel.

Carried” – (Council Minutes, Apr 22, 2015)

This directive by Council was the culmination of years of TRCA’s Heart Lake Road Ecology Monitoring Projects, [2011](#), [2013](#) and more recently [2014](#), [2016](#), David Laing’s delegation of [Report for City of Brampton Heritage Board April 15, 2014](#) (including a petition signed by 361 residents requesting Heart Lake Road to be listed as a Cultural Heritage Landscape), and City of Brampton’s [staff report on Heart Lake Road Mitigation to Planning Infrastructure Services on April 13, 2015](#).

Consultant was hired to consider:

- Protection of the natural area adjacent to Heart Lake Road (Provincially Significant Wetlands, at risk/endangered wildlife, protection of water table)
- Conservation of the cultural heritage landscape (recommendation for official listing)
- Long range transportation planning (including vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians) now & until 2041
- Land use planning (including businesses (Heart Lake Conservation Area, Treetop Trekking, Lakeside Garden Gallery), Burnt Log residential community, and Emery commercial land)

All alternatives should address the above terms of reference, explaining how competing priorities will be considered and weighed. In our opinion, the options presented failed to address this adequately.

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General Comments:

- Public Information Centre was held at the same time as PIC for Sandalwood Parkway, giving rise to confusion amongst attending residents who thought they were only coming to see Sandalwood boards. Many did not know there were 2 events in the same room.
- Board maps and details were small and difficult to read and comprehend.
- Traffic Volume Study performed mid-summer Jul 27-Aug 1, 2016 does not reflect school bus, parents driving kids to school, nor usage outside typical vacation time
- 2% truck vehicle volume indicates trucks use road, despite current “no truck” signage – this low number is not consistent with our observation of much higher truck volume, where we have witnessed 4 trucks in a 5 minute time period
- June 7-13, 2014 traffic study conducted by TRCA:
 - Traffic counters: just S of Countryside; just N of 410 off-ramp N of Sandalwood
 - Av daily traffic weekdays: 5,435 vehicles
 - Av daily traffic weekends: 7,073 vehicles
 - 85% travelled est. av speed 78 km/hr, despite speed limit on Heart Lake Road: 60 km/hr
- Caledon residential and commercial development Mayfield to Old School Rd was not considered
- Traffic avoiding the #410 traffic jams was not considered
- Vehicles create run-off pollutants, vibration and noise pollution that endangers wildlife in the Provincially Significant Wetlands, as well as wildlife/vehicle collisions.
- **Heart Lake Road Wetland Complex is listed Provincially Significant Wetland #7 out of 2,260 wetlands**, according to the [Ontario Wetland Evaluation System](#) (OWES) by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.
- As a MNR Class 2 Wetland, the objective is “to ensure no loss of wetland area or function of provincially significant wetlands (MNR Classes 1 to 3) in accordance with the Wetlands Policy Statement”. (Heart Lake Master Plan, 2006)
- *“4.4.8.1 The City shall require an EIS, in accordance with the Wetlands Policy Statement, where development is proposed upon lands within 120 metres of a provincially significant wetland. Such study will be subject to the approval of the City, conservation authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources. Development may be permitted adjacent to such wetlands or within/adjacent to non-provincially significant wetlands subject to the outcome of an EIS. The requirements of the EIS would address concerns related to development within/adjacent to such areas.*
- *4.4.8.7 The City shall, in conjunction with secondary plans and related official plan amendments, require that subwatershed management studies consider all wetlands within the study area in the context of the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, their functions and how such wetlands will be accommodated within the development process”. – (Heart Lake Master Plan, 2006)*
- There is no consideration for studying the hydrology of the road wetland complex, which has been fluctuating recently in an unpredictable manner based on prior trends.

Alternative A – Do Nothing

- Option does not protect environmental features, prevent high vehicle-wildlife collisions, reduce speed of vehicles over the currently posted 60kph rate, address the unique cultural heritage, nor address the vehicle emission run-off that threaten the fragile ecosystem.

Alternatives B-D&F – Bike Route/Lanes/Multi-Use Trail

- These 4 options all require widening road allowance and filling in Provincially Significant Wetlands to achieve sufficient width for bike lanes/trails, which is not an acceptable option.

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- No mention of lowering the speed limit from 60 to 40kph, which is needed for safe comfortable cycling whether the buffer is a rumble strip, marker buffer or marked buffer plus bollards
- Only Alternatives D&F consider pedestrian use (consider Burnt Log community residents that are otherwise relegated to vehicle use); the separated facility would need a wider road allowance
- Alternative F does leverage existing recreational trails through Heart Lake Conservation Area, only with TRCA approval. This will not create an AT network route suitable to road cyclists & commuters.
- new route from Countryside Drive into HLCA would not only require TRCA approval, it would need to climb a high elevation to the esker or cause the esker to be cut to reduce the extreme grade
- lower portion of HLCA trail converted from existing mountain bike path to multiuse suitable for road bikes is problematic due to fragile ecosystem, steep terrain and seasonal flooding in low lying areas.
- None of the options address wildlife/vehicle collisions

Alternative E – Narrow Roadway incorporating Complete Streets design

- Complete streets are designed to be safe and comfortable for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and individuals of all ages and capabilities.
- Cyclists sharing a lane with vehicles (especially trucks) is neither safe nor comfortable at 60kph and this option addresses neither reducing speed limit to 40kph, nor enforcement
- It is unclear how roadway can be narrowed further from existing 11.2m. The 7m Pavement width is already at minimum for rural arterial road.

Roundabout

- Roundabout is an acceptable treatment of this intersection
- Footprint is only minimally larger; land acquired from NE corner would not affect wetlands, which are located on west and southeast sides.
- Unclear whether extra cost is applicable if long term maintenance of traffic signals are considered
- Unclear on what basis traffic signals are not warranted – not explained on board

Wildlife Conservation

- Options seem to focus on what has already been tried or considered and no new options are presented.
- Most mitigation measures listed as low success; those rated high have limited success, due to only the 3rd best hotspot being suitable for culvert and fencing. Hotspots #1 & #2 were found to have unstable roadbed soil. Unclear how these can now be considered and what has changed in the analysis. Extreme measures such as heavy equipment pounding the roadbed to stabilize would not be acceptable for wildlife protection reasons.
- Exclusionary fencing along entire stretch of roadway is a preferred option, although will not work on its own without reducing traffic speed and volume. It will still not stop all vehicle/wildlife collisions.
- speed bumps/rumble strips should have been considered as part of this analysis, not carried forward for future consideration
- Traffic deflection at Mayfield will not likely work when Emery lands are developed and used by large trucks
- Unclear why turn restrictions considered as low effectiveness – this option would be preferred

Alternative G

- will prevent through traffic with some 2-way and some 1-way.

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- Opportunity to create an amazing road with bioswales to clean run-off water, native plants, a more beautiful route to help sell the new Burnt Log community and benefit the garden centre.
- Speeding traffic makes exiting the garden centre difficult now.
- A bike route within the existing road allowance will connect our network to Countryside multiuse path, and make cycling safer along the road.

Conclusions

- Alternative G meets some the requirements as outlined in the study terms of reference.
- Heart Lake Rd speed limit should be reduced to 40kph with speed cushions (spring-fall) to reduce through traffic, also reducing some of the traffic at Sandalwood/Heart Lake where the collision rate is high.
- A roundabout at Countryside is efficient and also slows the traffic.
- Permanent fencing (not the temporary snow fencing) will help the turtles, frogs and swans.
- The road should be listed as a Cultural Heritage Landscape, as was requested in 2014.
- If protecting the 7th most important Provincially Significant Wetland in the province is not important, then one could reasonably ask what is important and why do we have such classifications.
- A proper balance of competing interests and weighing all the options will be good for our neighbourhood, the businesses and the wildlife, and protect the last of the natural cultural gems in Brampton
- Study should address how competing interest should be rated and ranked

Suggested Alignment Proposal:

