

2020 11 18 Williams Pkwy Video Council Delegation by BCAC

Re: Williams Parkway Review Item 10.2.1

Committee of Council Meeting – November 18, 2020

Mayor Brown and Councillors,

It is the mandate of the Brampton Cycling Advisory Committee, a committee of citizens, to advise the council on all things cycling in Brampton.

We in Brampton have already begun to shift our gaze away from ever-increasing traffic, to alternative modes of transportation. Permanent bike lanes on Vodden and Howden Streets, Central Park Drive, Main Street South, and others, show great recent progress. Bike lanes allow people the option to get out of cars, reduce pollution, get exercise and improve their health while going about daily business. In doing that, they also reduce traffic for those who are unable to ride. It's a win-win-win situation, for vehicular drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, and those of us who like to breathe.

The Cycling Advisory Committee would like to point out some issues surrounding the study of Williams Parkway and its development.

There are four options on the table for the treatment of Williams Parkway, between McLaughlin Road and North Park Drive. Initially, the plan was to expand this section of the road from four lanes to six lanes. Trees were removed and sound walls were erected, before the project was paused, in order to study options.

Of the four options presented to the public, three of them have four lanes, and one has six. In the survey, 39% of the 1300 participants chose the six-lane option, and 59% chose one of the other options. However, those three options have in common the preference to keep only four lanes, with differing added features, such as bike lanes and trees.

There are many reasons that option one is not desirable. The first, general reason is that it is a stated Term of Council priority for the City of Brampton that “Brampton is a Green City”. This is a quote taken from today's agenda, in the staff report on the naming of Swingbridge Park. In the same report, another stated priority is that Brampton has strong communities, and encourages the protection of our natural heritage.

In order for these words to have meaning, they must apply generally, to all areas of Brampton and in all projects. The widening of Williams Parkway does not enhance community. It divides it. It does not improve our natural heritage or make Brampton green. It enables more air and noise pollution, while it decreases walkability, as well as other forms of active transportation.

The council has very likely heard about induced demand. Various studies have shown that increasing the number of lanes on a road only briefly decreases congestion, eventually increasing it back to its previous level, only on more lanes. The result is more air pollution and noise, and less walkability.

The number of seniors is growing in Ontario, and seniors cannot sprint across six to eight lanes at an intersection. People with mobility issues are definitely discriminated against when the roads that they want to cross are too wide. Vision Zero, our plan to reduce/eliminate road fatalities, is made less

attainable by expanding our lanes of vehicular traffic. Are we building Brampton for people, or for vehicles? It is time to refocus on living comfortably in Brampton.

It's time to examine the word 'improvement' in the term 'road improvement'. How will we improve the lives of people living along the Williams Parkway corridor? Will widening increase or reduce mobility? Will adding cars improve or worsen air quality? How about noise? (One of the positive features of the early COVID lockdown was the lack of traffic noise.) It has been shown that in spite of people's apparent acclimation to increased noise levels, they suffer from stress and health issues, without realizing it.

Brampton Cycling Advisory Committee advises the Council to vote to make sure that Brampton is a Green City. Vote to enhance the mental and physical health of Bramptonians. Vote for Vision Zero, and the Brampton 2040 Vision. Vote for Option Three, the most progressive and healthy option.

Sincerely,

Pauline Thornham,  
Co-Chair, BCAC