

2020 06 18 Williams Parkway proposed Widening letter to Councillors from BikeBrampton

From: Dayle Laing

Sent: June 18, 2020 3:55 PM

To: Michael Palleschi (michael.palleschi@brampton.ca) <michael.palleschi@brampton.ca>; 'Doug Whillans (doug.whillans@brampton.ca)' <doug.whillans@brampton.ca>

Cc: 'Santos, Rowena - Councillor' <Rowena.Santos@brampton.ca>; 'Vicente, Paul - Councillor' <Paul.Vicente@brampton.ca>;

Subject: Proposed Williams Parkway widening

Good afternoon Councillors Palleschi and Whillans,

I am very concerned that the Council workshop on the **proposed widening of Williams Parkway Option #1**, which was **not unanimously recommended by staff**, did not adequately take into consideration the following 5 main points:

1. Induced Demand Effect on Congestion

[Brilliant Satirical Australian short Video that demonstrates Induced Demand](#)

Induced Demand was presented in the landmark 2011 paper about the [Fundamental Law of Road Congestion by Duranton and Turner](#), both researchers formerly at U of T. It's a pretty technical dry read. (I like the short video link above for a clear explanation.) This concept was explained in the Nov 3, 2019 [article by Oliver Moore in the Globe and Mail](#). There is a one-to-one relationship between increased road capacity and increased road kilometres driven. It's called induced demand and **it means that building more traffic lanes won't alleviate congestion. A bigger road offers more supply and this makes driving more attractive, which encourages people to get behind the wheel. Traffic does not get better.** Moore states that current planning guidelines rarely include induced demand modelling. There is a famous Lewis Mumford quote that expanding roads to beat congestion is like loosening your belt to fight obesity!

The most **famous example of induced demand occurred on the Katy Freeway in Houston Texas.**

Between 2008 and 2011 they **expanded it to 26 lanes at a cost of \$2.8 billion**, in an effort to alleviate traffic congestion. **Yet after it was widened, traffic actually got worse.** Travel times increased by 30% during the morning commute and 55% during the evening commute between 2011 and 2014!

All the urban planners are aware of induced demand, with decades of world-wide examples, yet most are unwilling to act upon it because it seems counterintuitive. Transportation General Manager Janette Sadik-Khan did just that under Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The results are still famously successful. Therefore, choosing Option #1 is very likely a waste of money, even considering the 20% paid for by the tax base (with 80% DC)!

2. Trees & Green Spaces - Brampton's 2040 Vision

Vision 1 – "Brampton will be a mosaic of sustainable places, sitting in an **interconnected green park network**, with its people as environmental stewards – targeting 'one-planet' living." As they say, Bramptonians love our trees!

Option #1 is wall-to-wall asphalt and concrete; anything but a green "parkway". The appearance will be that of a thoroughfare highway.

Option #2 is more aligned with the 2040 Vision

Option #3 is most aligned, with the most trees and shrubs, since the 4 existing lanes will be narrowed, creating more green space. It will still feel like a "parkway".

3. Safe, Comfortable Active Transportation Infrastructure

2040 Vision 4 – “Brampton will be a mosaic of safe, integrated transportation choices and new modes, contributing to civic sustainability, and emphasizing walking, cycling, and transit”. Our **ATMP** also reflects this sentiment with the emphasis on **Complete Streets** and the need for an integrated AT network which includes good east-west and north-south routes.

Option #1 will not give either cyclists or pedestrians any feeling of comfort on their 3m strip of asphalt, as they are hemmed in by the sound barrier on one side and 6 lanes of traffic on the other. Having an HOV lane adjacent to the curb will mean the lane closest to the multiuse path will be faster than the rest of the traffic. This road is not scheduled for ZUM, which has Queen and Steeles targeted instead. Having bicycle cross-rides would help somewhat, but good luck to pedestrians trying to cross 6 lanes of traffic. Vision Zero is not sufficiently considered in this option!

Option #2 gives more of a buffer between the vehicles and the path, and Option #3 offers the best solution for encouraging AT with safety, comfort and protection for vulnerable cyclists and pedestrians. Narrowed lanes calms the traffic speeds.

4. Replace Development Charges with grants from other levels of government

The presentation asserts that DC funding is the only way that we can avoid a large direct cost to the taxpayer. With the federal government currently preparing AT infrastructure funding grants as part of a National Cycling Strategy, we have the opportunity to select the preferred option without relying solely on the benefit of the current DC funding structure.

5. Traffic Demand Change toward more Work-from-Home

While we can't know how permanent the drop in traffic will be due to COVID-19, we might not get the bounce back to the projected traffic demands. Some offices will simply not be reopening

The Williams Parkway project is our opportunity to get Brampton's urban planning right, in line with our excellent 2040 Vision and ATMP. **Option #3 is the best choice.** This is a watershed decision that will impact the other proposed expansions to 6 lanes, including Sandalwood Parkway. I can just only imagine how awful Sandalwood would look with 6 lanes of traffic and all those trees gone! I therefore urge you to vote for Option #3.

Many thanks for your consideration! Please let me know if you would like to discuss further, or need help with Ward 2 & 6 residents.

Best regards,

Dayle Laing

Committee Secretary, BikeBrampton

<http://bikebrampton.ca>

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