

2022 03 09 CofC BikeBrampton delegation in support of the ATMP Annual Report by David Laing

I'm here today on behalf of BikeBrampton members to thank Council for supporting the implementation work on the Active Transportation Master plan in 2021 and to ask for this Committee's continued support for 2022 and beyond. Thanks to staff also who did a great job under difficult circumstances.

BikeBrampton members are pleased about the active transportation infrastructure that has been built to date and about what is planned this year. It means to us is that utilitarian cyclists are safer and more welcome in this city and that the bicycle is being recognized as a legitimate transportation mode. Reaffirming Council's commitment to the Active Transportation Master Plan at this point, however, represents a lot more for the city than making a few cyclists happy. It delivers powerful messages about our civic leaders' commitment to the 2040 Vision, the actions required by the Climate Emergency, and the future that Council wants for Brampton.

Despite taking 18 months to produce and involving feedback from more than 10,000 residents, Brampton's Vision 2040, a picture, 20 years in the future, of a city that is safe, healthy, accepting of all, and one that is green and environmentally sustainable is easy to support from a political perspective. It's far more difficult, however, to make that Vision a reality. It takes courage, patience, wisdom, and copious quantities of determination in the grind of day-to-day decisions and in the face of dissenters who may be misinformed or who, frankly, put their own short-term self-interests ahead of what's best for the community.

Council's response to those voices of dissent says a lot. In supporting the ATMP, it says that our city leaders are serious about creating the infrastructure necessary to grow Brampton as a network of interconnected communities that are not wholly reliant on the automobile to get around. It sends a message of support to our public transportation organizations, Metrolinx, and Brampton Transit, that they are an important part of our transportation strategy.

It demonstrates commitment to building a city that is safe and comfortable for people, not just for cars. In combination with education and things like automated speed enforcement systems, it says that speeders and those who wantonly put the public at risk will not be tolerated in this city. It facilitates those who wish to sustain an active lifestyle. It says we want our children to walk or ride to school in safety and with confidence. It encourages those who wish to use micro-mobility devices and it supports the businesses that provide those devices.

It says we are accepting of those who cannot afford both adequate housing and a car. Example, the young innovative folks who come to school here, who may end up staying here to raise families and create well-paying professional jobs. Or the often-undervalued front-line workers, those with accessibility issues, and the elderly. Rising gas prices means there are more of them each day. All these people deserve to have a safe city that provides them with less expensive, less polluting, and healthier transportation choices.

They say that Rome wasn't built in a day. In the same vein, changing the transportation culture in Brampton won't occur because of the installation of a few bike lanes and pedestrian crossings. But, in continuing to support our active transportation master plan, we are saying yes to a city that is safe, affordable, and environmentally friendly.

Members of Committee, we ask for your to continued support to implement this active transportation master plan.