

2022 09 10 Brampton Guardian Letter to the Editor re Bike Lanes

Re: Gord Mimms letter, September 8, "Reader Calls for end to Temporary Bike Lanes"

If Mr. Mimms was told by a Councillor that bike lanes in Brampton were temporary, then he was misinformed. In 2019, City Council unanimously approved a 20-year active transportation master plan, (ATMP), calling for pathways, sidewalks and on-street bike lane installation, forming an active transportation network. The purpose of the ATMP is to provide viable, safe transportation options that are not car dependent. This will lead to more cycling. In a recent Nanos survey, 65% of Ontarians said having more and better cycling infrastructure in their communities would encourage them to bicycle more often. When COVID hit, transportation habits changed. People were driving less, walking and cycling more. Car traffic dropped by 30%. Roadways were underutilized while parks and pathways were overcrowded. COVID-19 was the catalyst that sped up the plan implementation through the "Streets for People" campaign championed by Mayor Brown and Council. The City has installed more bike lanes in the past three years than it did in the previous 20.

There are many reasons why more cycling is good for the City. Brampton has a sedentary lifestyle crisis, costing billions of dollars in unnecessary healthcare costs. Cycling provides low impact exercise improving mental and physical health outcomes. Brampton declared a climate emergency. Sixty percent of Brampton's carbon emissions come from transportation. Replacing the car with a bicycle for shorter-distance trips lowers the City's carbon footprint. Brampton has a major problem with speeding and reckless, distracted driving caused by over-engineered roads. Bicycles travelling adjacent to cars on protected infrastructure calm traffic, improving road efficiency, making roads safer for all.

Utilitarian cycling in Peel more than doubled in the past 5 years and will continue to increase as more, safer infrastructure is built. Better education will improve road rule compliance. More cycling in Brampton will improve quality of life for Bramptonians, cyclists or not.