

2024 11 13 Committee of Council Delegation v3

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Two days after Remembrance Day I am still thinking about my father, father-in-law and three uncles who served in the Canadian Armed Forces during WWII. My Dad and one Uncle returned safely, as did my father-in-law, although not before he spent 7 months as a prisoner of war. Sadly, my other two Uncles didn't survive. These and thousands of other brave men and woman volunteered to put their lives on the line to uphold Canadian values of fairness, honesty, equality, and rule of law.

It's thinking about the willingness for individual sacrifice for the betterment of all that has me so frustrated in relation to this debate about cycling and specifically bike lanes.

A transportation system that prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists over cars is a philosophy baked into Provincial Policy statements and all the City's planning documents. Is that just rhetoric? Are we serious about making roads accessible and safe for all? Or are these just words to make us feel better about ourselves?

When we make policy decisions in response to ill-informed populist opinion rather than on facts and what is in the best interests of the community it sets up a vicious cycle where active transportation investments are chronically underfunded, delayed and deprioritized, travel by car remains the only safe, convenient option for the majority, active transportation mode share continues in the low single digits, and vulnerable road users, who often have no choice as to how they travel, continue to experience unnecessary death or life altering injury.

After reading the Active Transportation Master Plan staff report one can only conclude that implementation of Brampton bike lanes has been a resounding success.

Bike lanes reduce average road speed, reducing deaths and serious injuries for all. They reduce travel time and increase capacity through more efficient use of road space. They provide safe space for all micro-mobility users, encouraging mode shift away from cars. They contribute therefore to healthier

lifestyles, reducing pressure on the healthcare system. They bring increased economic benefit through local shopping. They help lower carbon footprint from transportation. These are all things we want.

Are we willing to give up those benefits because some people don't like bike lanes? Because they fear loss of parking directly in front of their homes? Or they think their commute times will be slower? Or they just don't want to share road space?

No jurisdiction has implemented bike lanes without complaint. But complaints die down while the benefits continue. How many complaints are there about bike lanes on Rutherford now?

We should be celebrating the success of existing bike lanes in improving traffic efficiency and making the road safer for all. As appropriate we should be building more of them as quickly as possible to complete the network. We should be encouraging more people to get out and use them, for their personal health and well-being, for the benefit of our community, and for the betterment of our planet.

Why is it that dedicating a small portion of space, on often over-engineered roads, to build bike lanes that can accommodate hundreds of travellers per hour is deemed unacceptable? Yet handing over that same space for the convenience of individual homeowners to temporarily park private vehicles for free on public property is perfectly Ok.

It would be wonderful if the cycling network could be completely off-road. That is a pipe dream that will take decades and unacceptable levels of public money to build.

Transportation cyclists and micromobility users travel at 15-25 kph. They need high quality pavement, lane markings, safe signalized intersections and clear sightlines absent of floods, debris, man-spreading pedestrians, flexi leashes, encroaching branches, ice, snow and glass. Most of our current pathways and trails are too narrow and built to lesser quality and maintenance standards than is safe, comfortable or convenient.

Existing paths and trails would need to be upgraded and many more built. Building substandard in-boulevard options will not pull people out of their cars. Neither will the use of urban shoulders.

I don't want to live in a city where road design allocates comfort and safety by class. Right now, I feel like a second-tier citizen in my own city. It takes a decade of advocacy and public engagement for bike lanes to be planned and implemented, yet only months for them to be removed because of a few citizen complaints. A walk-on motion and the AT plan is suspended in 4 of the 10 wards. And 37km of low cost/quick turnaround bike lanes disappear without regard for the people who might use them.

Not everyone will ride a bike for transportation, but those who can't, or won't, should be thanking, supporting, and encouraging those of us who do, not complaining or standing in our way. Yes, the ATMP needs a refresh. But we don't need more delay in implementation while we wait for improvements. Vulnerable road users have waited long enough already.