

Burlington Cycling Advisory Committee

Memorandum to Council re: 2019 Capital and Operating Budget

Members of Council and staff, thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback on the 2019 Capital and Operating budgets. We would like to offer our comments on several budget items related to active transportation initiatives.

The Burlington Cycling Advisory Committee is a committee of citizen volunteers reporting to Council through the Committee of the Whole. Our role is to assist, advise, recommend, and support Council in matters pertaining to cycling in the City of Burlington. We envision a City where people of all ages and abilities can safely, comfortably, and conveniently travel anywhere in the City by cycling.

Elgin Street Promenade

Capital Budget Items:

- **Elgin Street Promenade (Phase 4)**
- **Brant Street at Elgin Right Turn Elimination**

The Burlington Cycling Advisory Committee strongly supports these projects which directly relate to safety and connectivity for people walking or cycling through downtown Burlington.

The Elgin Street Promenade was envisioned as a route connecting the western terminus of the Centennial Multi-Use Path through downtown Burlington to Brant Street. When complete, it will form part of a continuous path from Burloak Drive to Brant Street, connecting to City Hall, the Downtown Transit Terminal, and shops, services and parking facilities in the Downtown.

The Centennial Path and the Elgin Street Promenade are extremely popular facilities, well-utilized by people walking, cycling, rollerblading, and using other forms of active transportation. Currently, three of the four phases of the Elgin Street promenade have been constructed. We strongly recommend that council fund the fourth and final phase of this project, which will close a “missing gap” between Martha Street and Pearl Street.

At the opposite end of the Elgin Street Promenade, safety concerns have been identified at the corner of Brant Street and Elgin Street. In particular, the wide roadway and generous corner radius at this intersection allows vehicles travelling southbound on Brant Street to complete a right turn onto Elgin Street at relatively high speed. The proposed safety improvements are expected to slow turning vehicles and result in significant safety improvements for people walking or cycling through this intersection. This project also supports an improved pedestrian environment around Civic Square.

We support these proposed improvements at the intersection of Brant Street and Elgin Street. Many other cities in our region and beyond have adopted a “Vision Zero” policy, which is centred on a core principle that **no** loss of life or serious injury is acceptable on our roadways. Instead of expecting perfect human behavior to prevent serious injuries and deaths, engineering and design changes which reduce the likelihood of collisions and reduce the speed of impact in a collision are preferred solutions. Although Burlington has yet to adopt a Vision Zero policy, the solutions proposed by staff at this intersection are well-aligned with a Vision Zero approach to road safety.

Should council choose not to proceed with these projects, the benefits of increased safety and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and persons with disabilities through the downtown will not be realized until the projects are completed at a later date, which will require additional capital funding at that time. In addition, the impact of any reduction in this year's budget will be cumulative in future years. Further reductions in capital expenditures will be required going forward, or the taxation increase will need to be added back in future years.

We advise against the proposed reductions in funding detailed in Staff's response to Council direction (response to SD-27-18, January 15, 2019), which would have the impact of eliminating projects which are key to achieving the City's strategic objective of being a City that Moves.

Roadway Projects including Cycling Infrastructure

Capital Budget Items:

- **Waterdown Road North Rehabilitation & Capacity Improvements**
- **Harvester Road Reconstruction & Widening (Appleby Line to Century Drive)**
- **Others**

We note that there are a number of projects, both in the near-term as well as further out in the Capital budget forecast, which contemplate the addition of on-road bike lanes and paved shoulders on the city's rural roads.

While there are modest safety improvements associated with the provision of on-road bicycle lanes, it has been our consistent position that higher-order cycling facilities with increased separation from motor vehicle traffic are necessary on major roads. Research has shown that approximately 60% of the population can be described as "interested but concerned". This majority group will not be comfortable cycling on a busy road separated only by a line of paint from fast-moving traffic. In order to measurably impact the share of trips in the city that are taken by bicycle, we must build "all ages and abilities" cycling facilities.

One such project is the Waterdown Road reconstruction, which carries a total cost of \$25 million. This project is designed for a 3-lane cross-section, with on-road bicycle lanes and a multi-use path. While this is an improvement over the status quo, in reviewing the detailed design, we have identified some concerns with respect to the design of the cycling facilities. Considering this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a safe cycling connection between Waterdown and Aldershot, including a strong connection between cycling and transit at Aldershot GO, we would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with staff to identify potential design improvements.

More broadly, we welcome the opportunity to work with the City and partners (Region, neighbouring municipalities, MTO) in supporting the design of active transportation facilities that are safe, cost-effective and offer the protection and separation that will be necessary to attract a broad spectrum of residents to cycle in Burlington.

Bikesharing Pilot for Wards 1 and 2

Our committee has heard considerable positive feedback from residents about the potential to introduce a bikeshare service to the City. As an opportunity to increase tourism, encourage spontaneous bicycle travel, connect cycling with transit, support winter riding, and provide a link to popular destinations in Burlington and Hamilton (e.g. Beachway, Spencer Smith Park, Royal Botanical Gardens) to residents of both cities, we believe that the introduction of a bikeshare program that is integrated with neighbouring communities would be of substantial net benefit to Burlington residents and visitors. The dockless model employed by SoBi in Hamilton comes with lower startup costs than fixed location systems such as Toronto Bike Share. The bicycles are sturdy and utilitarian, offering baskets for storage, integrated lights for safety and easy step-through designs.

Through the newsletter of the Councillor for Ward 2, we were advised that the member of Council would be asking for funds and exploring funding opportunities for this pilot project. While at this time we do not have details of the proposed scope and cost of the pilot, bikesharing could be a game-changer for the City, and we believe it is an opportunity worthy of consideration for the 2019 budget.

Sincerely,

**Chris Ariens & James Schofield
Burlington Cycling Advisory Committee**