

**Re: 10.1 Discussion Item re: Bicycle Lane Implementation – Retrofit of Existing Bicycle Lanes to Align with Current Guidelines**

Hi Council,

We have been residents of Bramalea since May 1980. Members of our household are in their late 60s and early 70s and to stay active and healthy, they cycle frequently in Bramalea with the starting point of MacKay Street South and North. Members of our household extensively use a *combination* of the Bramalea on-road and multi-use trail cycling network. We are also a two-car household and drive daily. We are also transit riders.



*The Drews of Bramalea are happy for the opportunity for physical activity. Note the existing condition in the image on the right and the “Retrofit Program” explanation in the briefing note by City staff.*

We have reviewed the information provided by City staff in the briefing note “Bicycle Lane Implementation – Retrofit of Existing Bicycle Lanes to align with Current Guidelines” and the map in the Supporting Materials (see excerpt in **Appendix A** below). The picture on the right above **specifically speaks to the matter** in the report.

We **agree** with the conclusion and recommendation by City staff:

“The design of new bicycle lane infrastructure included with the 2024 ATMP Implementation work plan presented to Council last month is based on the most recent guidance from the province. There would be no benefit in pausing or delaying these projects, while existing lanes are retrofitted. The retrofit can be undertaken in parallel with the 2024 program”<sup>1</sup> (page 6; **emphasis added**)

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<sup>1</sup> Via the revised agenda at this URL: <https://pub-brampton.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=0a469cf4-a088-47ac-965b-7ab20169019e&Agenda=Merged&lang=English>; Permanent link to the report by City staff: <https://bit.ly/BramptonBikeReportMay2024> ; and <https://bit.ly/SupportMaterialMay24>

As noted above, it is important to recognize that the Province wants to create a safe and healthy transportation environment **for all road users in Ontario**. This above-noted guidance from the Province is not specifically for just Brampton rather it is meant **for all** municipalities in Ontario. It is no different than the Province having standards and guidelines for roads and highways. **Why should cyclists in Brampton be treated differently from other parts of Ontario if car and truck drivers are not when it comes to Provincial safety guidelines?** That would not be fair.



*Seniors from Bramalea using cycling to stay active.*

Further, City staff have stated that **there is no benefit** to changing course at this time. Changing course at this time would result in less road safety, waste money already spent including the time of staff, and run counter to the messaging and communications from the City that it believes in safety for all road users.

The City staff report has outlined **several reasons** to support their recommendation to Council, including:

1. Enforcement of Bicycle Related Offenses
2. Transportation Equity
  - a. Access to Transportation
  - b. Safety and Social Inclusion
  - c. Economic Equity
  - d. Health Equity
  - e. Environmental Equity

- f. Community Development
- 3. Community Building
- 4. Health
- 5. Environment

We agree with all of the details listed in the topics above. As noted above, the **seniors** in our household cycle. **Robust on-road cycling infrastructure is critical to providing sufficient confidence for cycling.** The seniors in our household **are also car drivers** who *support on-road cycling infrastructure* as it provides separation when driving. Why would anyone want seniors to feel less safe when driving?

Over the years, in communities across Ontario, some have suggested that cyclists should just stick to the trails, cycling infrastructure should go somewhere else, and should not be in our 'backyard/front yard'. This is the equivalent of saying that car drivers should only use the 410 to get around Brampton. Not only does the 410 only run north-south, no sensible road network would be designed like this for an entire municipality. If car drivers have an entire road network, why should cyclists be treated differently? **The trails in Brampton do not go everywhere.**

We understand that there might be the perception by some that "no one uses the bike lanes in Brampton" and that bike lanes, specifically in Bramalea, are "always empty". This is a well-known **myth** that has been reviewed and documented. Here are a few examples:<sup>2</sup>

- "The Deceptively Empty Bike Lane"  
<https://humofthecity.com/2013/09/16/the-deceptively-empty-bike-lane/>
- "Ten common myths about bike lanes – and why they're wrong"  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2019/jul/03/ten-common-myths-about-bike-lanes-and-why-theyre-wrong>
- "Mythbusting"  
<https://beeactive.tfgm.com/myth-busting/>
- "MYTHBUSTING THE 'EMPTY' BIKE LANE"  
<https://bicyclensw.org.au/mythbusting-the-empty-bike-lane/>
- "Three biking myths debunked"  
<https://activetrans.org/blog/three-biking-myths-debunked>
- "Why Bike Lanes With Lots of Bike Traffic Can Still Appear 'Empty'"  
<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2016/04/01/why-bike-lanes-with-lots-of-bike-traffic-can-still-appear-empty>

Safe cycling infrastructure in Brampton and Bramalea is critical to **growing cycling ridership**. Your fellow Bramptonians, particularly those younger and older, will not cycle if they do not feel safe. It

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<sup>2</sup> We assume these links won't work when this letter is uploaded to the Council agenda page. Any of these articles can be found by Googling the titles.

would be extremely disappointing to pause or delay cycling projects in the City of Brampton as it tries to become a community that **diversifies** from its historic car-oriented, suburban, spread pattern of activity. Just because Bramalea was built with no vision for streets being used by anything other than a car, bus, or truck, **does not mean** it cannot diversify and provide more options to residents in 2024 and beyond.

We acknowledge that on-street cycling infrastructure was not part of Bramalea when it was originally built and when we moved here in 1980. **That does not mean it must stay that way for all of time.** We believe the Bramalea community has the capacity to handle and adapt to road user diversification and improved safety measures, including new Provincial guidelines. We ask our Bramalea neighbours to continue to think about the **safety** and well-being of their fellow neighbours, just as we've experienced our caring community do since 1980.



*Using the Bramalea cycling network*

As we know, Brampton has a significant healthcare crisis. Council has been briefed on this and you have attended many meetings where this has been documented. For seniors, cycling is excellent for health promotion. **Encouraging cycling is a way to reduce the demand on Brampton's healthcare system.**

The cycling infrastructure for Bramalea is part of a critical network for safe cycling in Bramalea and throughout the City. Since 1980, the City has grown, gaps in the road and highway network have been addressed, roads have been widened and new roads built. Cyclists are not asking for special treatment. **Cyclists in Bramalea are simply asking for the same treatment as other road users.**

In closing, encouraging cycling in Brampton is connected to conversations, meetings, plans,



projects, opportunities, and aspirations by City Council and the Provincial and Federal governments when it comes to **housing supply** and **transit expansion**. We encourage the City Council to consider the **bigger picture**, and your recently adopted **Official Plan**.

We **appreciate** that the topic of cycling can be one of the most passionate ones that any municipality can face in terms of feedback from residents, and as Councillors, you are on the front line of receiving feedback. **We simply ask you to consider all voices and acknowledge our existence as cyclists in Bramalea, where two members of our household are seniors.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission.

Sincerely,

The Drew family of Bramalea

Jack & Bev (seniors), Mark, and Chris Drew (who visits his family in Bramalea regularly through a combination of transit, car, and bicycle)



*We note that this is a very 'empty' road from cars...*

## Appendix A



BIKE LANES TO BE RETROFITTED

BRAMPTON IS A SAFE AND ACTIVE CITY

www.brampton.ca/ATP

IMPROVING OUR ROADS

BRAMPTON

End note:

Permanent link to the May 27, 2024 meeting page:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240526024143/https://pub-brampton.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=0a469cf4-a088-47ac-965b-7ab20169019e&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=32&Tab=attachments>