

Date: 2020-10-21

Subject: Recommendation report – Williams Parkway review (McLaughlin Road to North Park Drive): People-moving capacity and public realm design - Ward 1, 5 & 7 (eSCRIBE Item number 2020-336, Capital Works File Nos. 08-3211-211)

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Report Number: Public Works & Engineering-2020-336

Recommendations:

1. That the report titled **Recommendation report – Williams Parkway review (McLaughlin Road to North Park Drive): People-moving capacity and public realm design – Ward 1, 5 & 7 (eSCRIBE Item number 2020-336, Capital Works File Nos. 08-3302-211)**, to the Committee of Council Meeting of November 18, 2020, be received; and,
2. That Council direct staff as to one of the options identified in this report for the City to carry forward for the design of Williams Parkway, based on the information presented in this report;

Overview:

- **On October 23, 2019 Council passed a motion directing staff to review the recommendations to widen sections of Williams Parkway from 4 to 6 lanes, and report back to Council;**
- **The motion also directed staff to convene a Council Workshop to solicit comments on options and opportunities for:**
 - **managing traffic congestion due to growth and for increasing and maximizing people-moving capacity through travel demand management opportunities**
 - **improvements to active transportation (walking, cycling) and transit infrastructure and services**
 - **operational interventions and improvements, in particular at intersections**

- **Staff conducted a Council Workshop on June 15, 2020 to present four road cross-section options for Williams Parkway:**
 - **Option 1 - Widen to six lanes keeping four lane general purpose lanes, add two high occupancy vehicle lanes, and multi-use path in boulevard on both sides;**
 - **Option 2 - Keep four general purpose lanes in their current location, with multi-use path and enhanced streetscaping in boulevards on both sides;**
 - **Option 3 - Keep four general purpose lanes, with reduced median and widened boulevards, with multi-use path and enhanced streetscaping in boulevard on both sides;**
 - **Option 4 - Keep four general purpose lanes, with resurfacing of existing road only (no multi-use path or enhanced streetscaping in boulevards)**
- **Between June 16, 2020 and August 15, 2020, an online survey was issued to solicit public comments on the four road cross-section options presented at the Council Workshop;**
- **The survey solicited over 1300 responses with results split between widening to six lanes at 39% (Option 1) and remaining at four lanes at 59% (Options 2, 3, 4);**
- **Staff is seeking Council's direction on a preferred option. While most of the options will improve the people-moving capacity of the corridor, there will be trade-offs relating both to levels of service of different modes of transportation, as well as implications for place making and design considerations.**

Background:

The City completed its 60% detailed design for widening Williams Parkway to six lanes between McLaughlin Road and North Park Drive in fall 2019. The widening was based on the recommendation of a 2011 Class Environmental Assessment (EA), and on high level capacity needs identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The EA and detailed design work took into account major projects planned for the corridor by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Region of Peel (i.e., improvements to the bridge over Highway 410 and watermain replacement, respectively).

As the importance of community design and active transportation considerations in planning and construction have gained prominence in City policy and thinking, and responding to concerns over the impact of widening city roads to six lanes, staff

undertook a reassessment of the Williams Parkway EA at the beginning of 2018. This was completed in August of 2018. The recommendation ensuing from the reassessment was to widen Williams Parkway to six lanes, but to make the two new lanes exclusive to high occupancy vehicle (HOV) use.

On Oct. 23, 2019, Council approved the following motion directing that:

1. Staff review the recommendations to widen sections of Williams Parkway from 4 to 6 lanes, and report back to Council in Q2 2020
2. Staff review include a council workshop to solicit comments on options and opportunities for managing traffic congestion due to growth and for increasing and maximizing people-moving capacity in the Williams Parkway corridor, through travel demand management opportunities, improvements to active transportation (walking, cycling) and transit infrastructure and services, and operational interventions and improvements, in particular at intersections. The review should consider:
 - Impacts on the use of Development Charge funding
 - Consideration of current strategic documents (Growth Plan, Official Plan, TMP, impact on existing EA...)
 - Impacts on surrounding local streets for traffic
 - Impact on the Regional road network and goods movement
 - Green House Gas considerations
 - Work that is done in partnership with the Region, utilities...
 - A review of current six (6) lane road widening projects that are underway and “meantime” strategies (current EA’s, land protection, utility relocation, design progression
 - Strategy for a robust communication plan

The detailed design work for Williams Parkway that was underway at the time when Council passed this motion was paused to allow staff to review the improvement alternatives in light of the direction provided.

Current Situation:

Options under consideration

Staff developed four options following the Council motion in consultation with internal stakeholders as well as the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Region of Peel, and utility companies. (See Figure 1 and pages 32-46 in Appendix ‘A’ for more information on the options.)

Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six lane widening (4 general purpose lanes and 2 high occupancy vehicle lanes (HOV) • Multiuse path on both sides
Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four general purpose lanes with existing cross-section

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiuse path on both sides • landscape/streetscape improvements
Option 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four general purpose lanes with reduced center median • Multiuse path on both sides • Landscape/streetscape improvements
Option 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial depth pavement resurfacing of existing road • No new multiuse path would be constructed

In keeping with the transportation goals and priorities outlined in Vision 2040, Options 1 to 3 incorporate active transportation infrastructure, network optimization, and streetscaping elements, including:

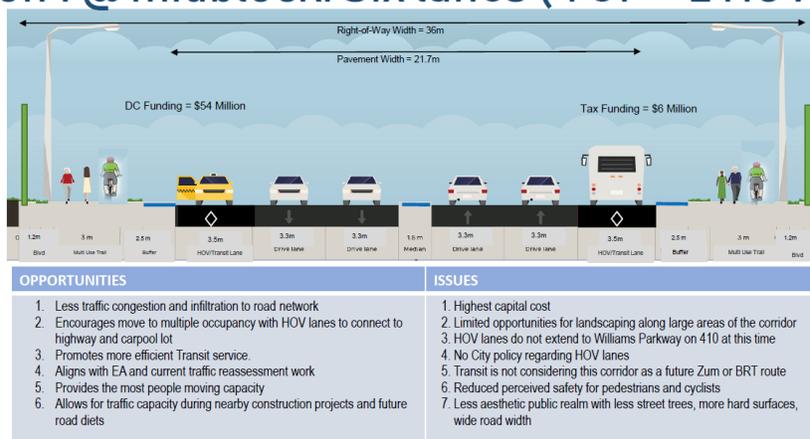
- Multiuse paths on both sides of the street
- Cross-rides (cycle crossing infrastructure) at intersections
- Signal optimization
- Reduced lane widths
- Enhanced streetscaping

Option 4 includes signal optimization. None of the options provides additional capacity for single occupant vehicles.

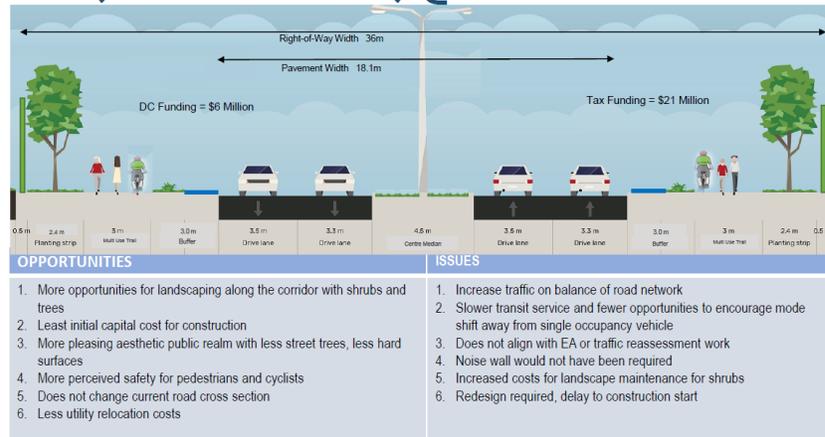
Staff presented the options to Council at a workshop held on June 15, 2020. As noted at the workshop, and summarized in Figure 1, each option has its pros and cons – there is no “perfect” option. Due to the limited right-of-way, identifying a preferred option will require trade-offs between accommodating additional vehicular traffic, adding infrastructure to support active transportation, and enhancing the streetscape.

Figure 1: Options presented to City Council;

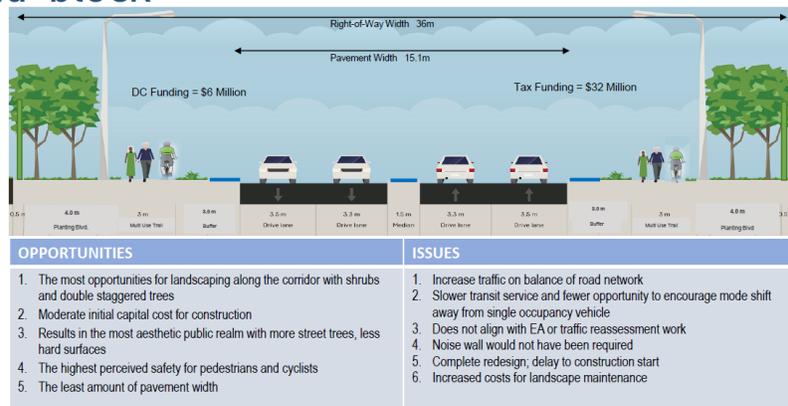
Option 1 @ midblock: Six lanes (4 GP + 2 HOV)



Option 2 (Four GP lanes) @ midblock:



Option 3 (Four GP Lanes & Reduced Centre Median) @ mid-block



Public Consultation

Following the Council Workshop, the options, accompanied by additional information and a survey, were posted online for public comment. The additional information provided included:

- Answers to questions that Council posed at the workshop.
- Intersection and midblock cross-section renderings for all the options
- A condensed version of the workshop presentation for ease of reference.
- Frequently asked questions and responses derived from the comments submitted in the survey.
- Questions asking residents to prioritize what was important to them for this corridor.

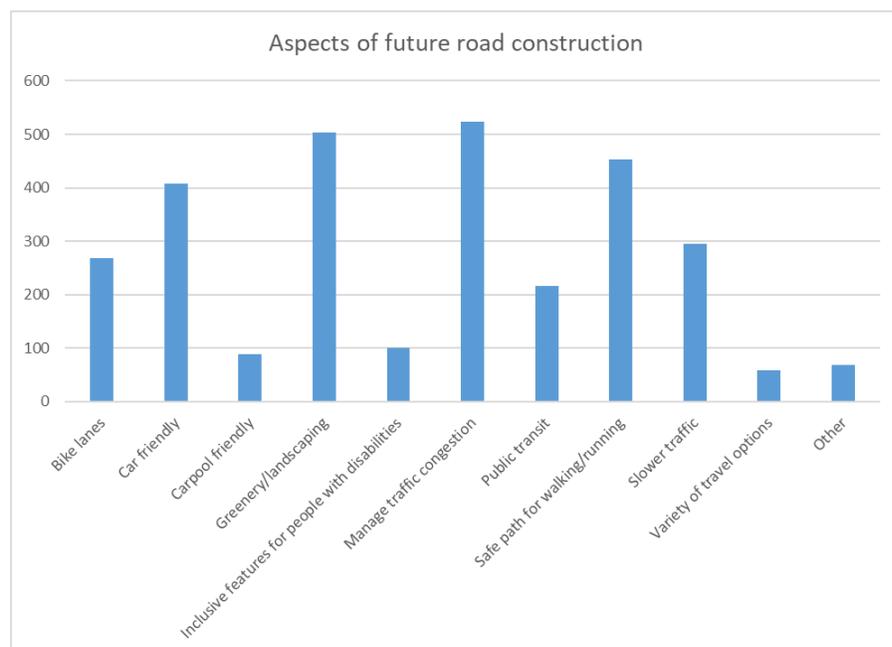
A robust communication plan was executed to inform the residents in the area of the online survey and workshop. This included the installation of signs along the Williams Parkway corridor, messaging through various social media channels and the delivery of

post cards to residents within 1 km of Williams Parkway between McLaughlin Road and North Park Drive.

The survey was posted on the City of Brampton web site and was open from June 16 to August 15. It elicited over 1,300 responses.

Before diving into questions about the four options, the survey asked respondents to identify the three items most important to them about this stretch of Williams Parkway. A summary of the results is provided in Table 1.

Table 1



The five most commonly identified items were:

- The need to manage traffic congestion
- A desire for enhanced greenery/landscaping
- The provision of safe paths for walking/cycling
- Car friendly
- A desire for slower traffic speeds

The results indicate a wide range of ‘asks’ from our residents in regards to use of the rights-of-way on Williams Parkway. While there was consistency in the requests to better manage traffic congestion, suggestion as to how to manage it varied significantly. There was also consistency in the request for streets that look and feel comfortable for all users, but there was no consensus on what would need to be sacrificed in order to accommodate preferred infrastructure elements.

The results for the question regarding each respondent’s preferred option are as follows:

Option 1 6 lane widening (4 lane GP + 2 lane HOV)	520 votes	39%
Option 2 – 4 lane GP	144 votes	11%
Option 3 – 4 lane GP with reduced median	384 votes	29%
Option 4 – Partial depth resurfacing existing road	253 votes	19%
No Options chosen	30 votes	0.02%
Total	1,331 votes	

It should be noted that while at first glance, the most popular option was Option 1, there were three options that did not contemplate any additional road surface widening. This, in effect, 'split the vote' for the non-widening options. When looking at widening vs. non widening options, the results are 39% and 59% respectively. Given all the choices presented, it would appear that most respondents would prefer the road not to be widened even if the widening was not to accommodate the single occupant car.

A review of the comments provided by respondents showed a wide range of opinions. All the comments have been included in Appendix C in their entirety, but some themes emerged for each of the options:

Option 1 – 6 lane widening (4 lane general purpose, 2 HOV)

- Promotes public transit
- Complaints of congestion, particularly for east/west routes
- Concerns of traffic on the side roads
- Concerns re: abuse of/enforcement of HOV lanes.

Option 2 – 4 lane general purpose

- Liked the current median configuration, keep it 'parkway'
- Pros and cons of dedicated on-street bike lanes
- Possible intersection improvements
- Request for bus laybys, so as not to hold up traffic

Option 3 – 4 lane with reduced median

- Positive comments regarding the additional boulevard landscaping
- Seen as safer for vulnerable users
- May be more palatable with the current pandemic effect on traffic

Option 4 – Resurfacing only

- Less costly option
- Controls speeding with more cars
- Request for bus laybys, so as not to hold up traffic

The survey results show evidence of a range of opinions about the redevelopment of the corridor. Nonetheless, they merit consideration in the decision as to which option will be advanced.

Comparison of Options

The review of the options by City staff and outside agencies indicates that all of the options are viable from a technical perspective. The challenge for staff has been to respond to current concerns about traffic congestion, which is likely to increase as Brampton grows, while also understanding the need to shift peoples' travel behaviour in favour of more sustainable modes of transportation. Simply widening the road to accommodate more cars will not lead to people-friendly streets and environmentally compatible places as endorsed by Council as part of the Vision 2040.

Option 1 was initially put forward as the preferred option by Public Works & Engineering staff at the Council workshop for the following reasons:

- Does not encourage use of the single occupant car.
- Provides the maximum people moving capacity
- Provides the most choice for mobility.
- While the most expensive in overall costs, allows for the most use of Development Charges, reducing the amount of tax dollars required to fund this project.

However, Option 1 also has shortcomings, the "severity" of which depends on the interpretation of Vision 2040 priorities:

- There is limited opportunity to enhance streetscaping elements that contribute to a more attractive public space and a pedestrian-friendly environment;
- The HOV lanes would be "stand alone" (i.e. not part of a citywide HOV network nor connecting to HOV lanes on Highway 410), which may limit their usefulness. (Staff have not yet studied the benefits of a city-wide HOV network nor is there an HOV strategy in place.);
- Williams Parkway has not been identified as a priority for enhanced service by Brampton Transit;
- While the design provides for minimum requirements to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, the space constraints as a result of adding a traffic lane in each direction results in an overall environment that does not provide an attractive facility that people of all ages and abilities would feel comfortable using;
- It does not completely align with the hierarchy of transportation priorities established in Vision 2040: "Priorities in the civic transportation agenda will be: first walking, then cycling, transit, goods movement, and then shared vehicles and private vehicles."

Williams Parkway, as is the case for all road design projects, has been subject to many influences along the way – the long time lines associated with a complicated road project like this means that the design has been impacted by changing legislation, different points of view, and changes in vision for our City. Brampton is at a pivotal

point in our development in that we understand we cannot keep doing things the same way, however there are strong contrasting views on how to increase people moving capacity while dealing with the ever increasing traffic congestion.

Other planned/proposed road improvements (widening)

Williams Parkway is one of 11 six lane road widening projects that are currently underway. (A detailed list of projects are identified in Appendix 'A', pages 49 and 50. Those projects are at various stages of completion, with:

- 5 projects where the Environmental Assessment (EA) is underway
- 3 projects where the EA is complete
- 3 projects undergoing detailed design.

The value of these projects is approximately \$508M and, based on the current Transportation Master Plan, there are seven projects with a budget of \$231M planned in the next few years. All these road widening projects were endorsed by this Council in the 2018-2028 Roads Capital Program report in July 2018 and are eligible for funding through Development Charges.

Transportation Planning staff are currently working on a report that will be seeking Council's endorsement of underlying principles (including Complete Streets) and goals that will inform the update of the City's Transportation Master Plan (TMP). With respect to six lane widenings, a fulsome investigation will be undertaken as part of the TMP Update. In the interim, Transportation Planning and Public Works staff will work together to develop a "meanwhile" strategy for addressing ongoing and imminent projects for roads identified in the current TMP as candidates for widening to six lanes.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Sufficient funding is available within the Public Works & Engineering approved Capital Budget for detailed design, property acquisitions and utility relocations. The construction funding will be requested through the budget process and will be dependent on the option that staff is directed to proceed with. Tax funded cost shares for option 2 & 3 are significantly higher compared to option 1 & 4 and, are currently estimated at \$21 million and \$32 million respectively. The estimated costs and funding sources for each of the options is summarized below in the table and detailed in the attached presentation in Appendix 'A'.

Options	[\$ Million]				End Of Life Cycle (Years)	Maintenance Life Cycle/ Estimated Current Cost (Tax)
	DC Funding	Tax	Total Cost	Recovery from Region		
Option 1– Six lanes (4 GP + 2 HOV/Transit)	\$ 54	\$ 6	\$ 60	\$ 1.5	30	Resurfacing every 15 years/ \$6 million
Option 2– Four GP lanes	\$ 6	\$ 21	\$ 27	\$ 1.5	30	Resurfacing every 15 years/ \$5 million
Option 3– Four GP lanes with reduced centre median	\$ 6	\$ 32	\$ 38	\$ 1.5	30	Resurfacing every 15 years/ \$5 million
Option 4– partial depth 90mm pavement reconstruction (resurfacing)	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ 5	\$ -	15	Full depth reconstruction end of life cycle/ \$15 million

Purchasing Implications:

Any required contract amendment will be approved in accordance with the Purchasing By-law.

Term of Council Priorities:

Options 1 to 4, as presented at the Council Workshop and outlined in this report, achieve the Term of Council Priority for a Healthy and Safe City by building well-planned infrastructure. The options also align, to varying degrees, with direction in the Transportation and Connectivity and Health sections of Vision 2040.

Conclusion:

In response to direction from Council, staff facilitated a workshop for Councillors on options for the improvement of Williams Parkway between McLaughlin Road and North Park Drive. This included a consideration of the pros and cons of each option in the context of current and forecasted traffic volumes and City policy direction. Staff subsequently undertook public consultation on the options. There is no “perfect” option – identifying a preferred option will require trade-offs between accommodating additional vehicular traffic, adding infrastructure to support active transportation, and enhancing the streetscape. Staff are, through this report, seeking Council direction as to which option to advance to detailed design and construction.

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Attachments: Appendix A – Council Workshop Presentation
 Appendix B – Key map
 Appendix C – Public comments
 Appendix D – Frequently asked questions and answers (FAQ)
 Appendix E – Email correspondence from residents