

January 11, 2010

Proposed On-Road Bike Lanes - Colborne Street (Huron Street to Oxford Street)

Approximately 6 weeks ago city staff mailed out notices to affected Colborne residents that it intended to add on-road bike lanes to our street and that it was considering either widening the road to accommodate the lanes + parking together or it would instead widen the street just a little and eliminate all on-street parking. As of today, to the best of my knowledge, no final decision has been made.

I'm here today to ask the city to completely abandon any plans of any widening and to additionally abandon plans to instead eliminating all parking until at least the various concerns brought forward have been resolved. Over the last 3 days, of only 43 households asked, 40 families, or more than 93%, are opposed to the city's proposal to widen the road as evidenced by their signatures which I attach. I'm asking the city to stop and further reflect on a number of issues and options before doing something that potentially can't be reversed.

I'd like to be clear that no one is suggesting cyclists be banned from Colborne Street. Our neighbourhood has been designated by signs as primary route for years without any issues.

The letter received from the city indicates their plans for bike lanes stem from the Master Bike Plan. I'd like to point to the fact that the Master Bike Plan is not a static document but instead is principles based guideline that requires the city follow a series of first principles and best practices when it chooses its routes. These standards specifically suggest and recommend on-road bike lanes for routes with high traffic of generally more than 20,000 vehicles per day; with minimal delays; where cyclists are at risk. Our section of street has only between 3000 and 6500 cars per day, starts at a t-intersection and has 3 stop signs, 2 stop lights, 2 school crossings and a fire station – all over the course of only 6 blocks. Our neighbourhood meets none of these standards.

There are certain portions of Huron, Cheapside and Colborne that are marked with a red line on the Master Bike Plan's draft map suggesting these streets need on-road bike lanes which is curious to me since they don't meet the standards for route selection. Every other road on that map identified for on-road bike lanes is an arterial street – roads like Sunningdale, Fanshawe, Wonderland, Oxford, Sarnia Road, King Street. At this point Richmond, and Adelaide, the two main arterial routes connecting with Old North, are also intended to eventually have bike lanes but the city is at least 7 to 10 years from widening only certain portions of these roads and there are no plans to 2024 to widen any of them all the way to our neighbourhood. For at least the next 15 years, there will be no primary route connection to this proposed small section of on-road bike lanes on our relatively low travelled, safe and quiet residential street.

I'll also point out that bike plan's draft map has our neighbourhood streets as the only ones in the entire city of London marked with a red line. No other residential

neighbourhood will ever need to have on-road bike lanes through them according to this map. Either neighbourhoods don't need them or the city doesn't want them there. If the city today looks to this map as an absolute, when it is clearly indicated to be a draft, then the city will be ignoring the underlying theme and purpose of the bike plan which is to direct planners to be fluid and responsive, based on guidelines and best practices, to meet the actual current and future changing needs of its residents.

Introducing bike lanes, at a cost of widening the road and losing decades old trees, while providing no answers to questions as of today, where none of the first principles of the Bike plan are met and where the city has no data or evidence to support these lanes will actually be used, makes no sense to me at this point.

The city and this committee devoted more than 2 years to find a solution that maintained parking for residents on Waterloo Street -- because it was acknowledged there was a need.

The traffic calming study spent 18 months looking at the issues on less than a handful of secondary cross roads in our neighbourhood -- because studies were done to show there was a need.

Colborne Street's residents have been given 21 days, less than 6 months before construction is scheduled to begin, and one person has been granted 5 minutes to speak - all for a proposal of bike lanes where there is no current empirical evidence to support they will actually be used as intended.

I'm imploring the city to completely abandon any plans to widen our street in order to introduce bike lanes and to also abandon any immediate plans to eliminate parking without addressing the practical realities of what this means to residents. Before the city does what has never been done in a family oriented neighbourhood, and what is not yet planned in any other family neighbourhood anywhere else in the city, and before it does what can't be undone, at least at a minimum, I ask that it more carefully study all of the issues. The ability to paint white lines down the edges of our residential street, to finish connecting the smallest piece of a great big network, can still be done at some point in the future if and when it becomes required.

I appreciate your time spent listening and welcome your questions and comments.