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Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 12:47 PM
To: Brilliams, Henk <hbrilliams@cityofkingston.ca>
Cc: Semple, Ian <isemple@cityofkingston.ca>

Subject: KCAT submission comments: Williamsville Transportation Study, Williamsville Bikeways and Frontenac Green Streets Concept

Dear Ian and Henk,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the public review of these important streetscape projects. Please find attached a submission from the Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation (KCAT) with comments on the three streetscape proposals for Williamsville.

It is exciting to see the changes happening along the Williamsville Main Street. Increased housing and density along this important transportation spine, connecting downtown with the Kingston Centre and beyond, will bring a renewed sense of vibrancy to Williamsville.

KCAT is very supportive of the transit improvements, increased walkability measures, removal of on-street parking, reduced travel lane widths and green elements. However, we are concerned that bike lanes are not included in the proposed plans for Williamsville Main Street. We recommend that the existing bike lanes be retained and improved. Local connecting routes throughout Williamsville (Williamsville Bikeways) would be beneficial as well, but not to the exclusion of dedicated bike lanes on Williamsville Main Street.

“Alternative 5 - On-Street Cycle Lanes” is our preferred option with changes to lane widths and other adjustments that would allow a protected, buffered bike lane.

We envision a vibrant Williamsville Main Street corridor that includes bike lanes. Bike lanes are good for business, the environment, sense of community, and healthy, active living. Bike lanes are proven economic drivers that bring more customers to businesses along streets with bike lanes.

The Household Travel Survey shows Williamsville has the highest bicycle mode share in all of Kingston at 10%. And with more than 60,000 people living within a 15 minute bike ride of Williamsville Main Street it would be a **major missed opportunity** to not find ways to leverage the benefits cycling offers in this part of the central Kingston to meet and exceed the City of Kingston mode share and Climate Change goals.

KCAT is very much in favour of “green streets” redesigned to mitigate the effects of climate change while providing environmental benefits, beautification and fostering **safe** connected spaces for healthy, active living.

We look forward to ongoing participation in these important projects.

Sincerely,
Roger Healey, President
KCAT
Attachment



**KCAT's response to the Williamsville Transportation Study, Williamsville Bikeways and Frontenac Green Streets Concept
November 2023**

Proposals for the [Williamsville Transportation Study](#), [Williamsville Bikeways](#), and [Frontenac Green Streets Concepts](#) are being reviewed now by the City of Kingston and decisions about them will be made soon. This submission states our position on these projects.

KCAT is very supportive of the transit improvements, increased walkability measures, removal of parking, reduced travel lane widths, and green elements.

We are concerned that bike lanes are not included in plans for Williamsville Main Street, and ***we recommend that the existing bike lanes be retained here, on Princess Street between Bath/ Concession and Division.*** Local connecting routes throughout Williamsville ('Williamsville Bikeways') would be beneficial **as well** but **not to the exclusion of dedicated bike lanes on Williamsville's Main Street. The only acceptable plan for Princess Street is "Alternative 5 – On-Street Cycle Lanes" as presented at the Oct 26 Open House.**

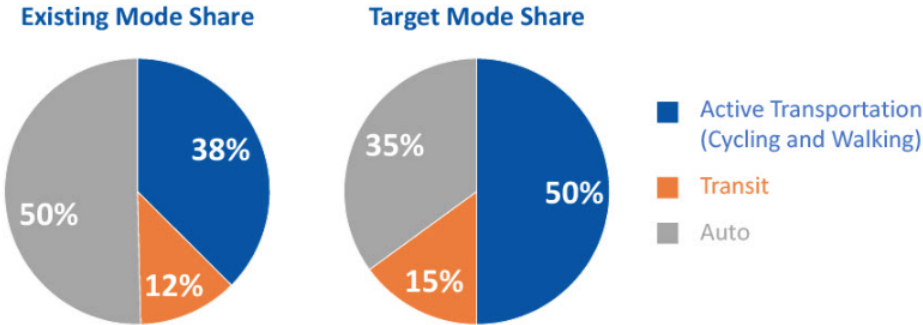
After reviewing all the poster boards presented at the October 26, 2023 Open House, the word "safety" was noticeable by its absence. One can assume that designs presented by the City will adhere to the required safety guidelines. However, phrases like "minimize impacts on traffic operations" and continued plans to install left turn lanes perpetuate planning and implementation of travel lane and intersection designs that prioritize convenience and space for cars over dedicated space and other safety measures for vulnerable road users putting them at increased risk of injury or death. The lack of regard for intersection improvements (e.g. advanced green for pedestrians and cyclists, bike boxes, islands at wide intersections e.g. Macdonnell, Alfred) and speed limit restrictions further confirms the car-centric bias to these designs. We encourage the use of designs as detailed in the Ontario Safety Council's *Protected Intersection Guide*.

City information (in plain text) is discussed below with KCAT's responses or rebuttals ***in bold italics.***

The City's project goals are to:

- Reconfigure the right-of-way to improve the pedestrian experience with wider sidewalks and amenities. ***Walkability is important. However, wide pedestrian spaces without adjacent dedicated cycling infrastructure are known to be associated with sidewalk cycling - a danger to pedestrians and others. Furthermore, other micro mobility devices (e.g. skateboards, scooters, one-wheels, etc.) can use the cycling lanes and avoid the pedestrian areas.***

- Prioritize transit travel times throughout the corridor. ***This can be done without “Queue Jump Lanes.” Buses already have the capability of changing traffic signal lights in their favour. REDUCING car traffic will improve congestion at peak times. Traffic signals can be phased to allow longer greens on E-W route (Transit routes) and short greens on N-S at peak times.***
- Minimize impacts on traffic operations associated with the proposed changes. ***This is double-speak for “Keep car traffic as high as possible.” This makes no sense.***
- Identify viable alternatives to support cyclists within the broader study area. ***This is more double-speak for “Keep cycle lanes off Princess to make room for more cars.”***
- Mode share targets:



The above pie charts were presented without much explanation. How can the Auto Mode Share decrease from 50% to 35% if:

- ***a project goal is to ‘Minimize impacts of traffic operations’ (see above),***
- ***‘there will be at least one travel through-lane in each direction to maintain vehicular [...] movements through the area’ with the current roadway being ‘sufficient to carry future vehicular traffic’,***
- ***cycling along the Main Street will not be encouraged/supported, and***
- ***there is no mention of intentionally and strategically reducing automobile use, particularly single occupied vehicles (SOV).***

How can the Active Transportation (Cycling and Walking) Mode Share increase from 38% to 50% when cycling lanes are being removed and replaced with indirect, inefficient routes that do not allow convenient safe access to amenities and services on Princess?

- How this arterial roadway will look for drivers is very much uncertain. ***On the contrary. You plan for cars, you get cars.***

The transportation sector has the highest greenhouse gas emissions in Kingston at 35.9%. It is becoming increasingly important to address the climate emergency seriously with every decision that is made. Viable active and sustainable transportation options including cycling need to be prioritized now with effective strategies to surpass Target Mode Shares above.

- Removal of on-street parking was approved to enhance active transportation on Princess Street including greening the corridor. ***Walking and cycling are the two main modes of active transportation. Cycling (or wheeling) includes all other forms of micro mobility. Wheeling will be a MAJOR way of moving on Princess Street once 8,000 people live directly on Princess with very limited options to store cars at their residence. Cycling infrastructure will enhance safety for all users of the streetscape.***
- Active Transportation for Williamsville is being prioritized to minimize dependency on private vehicle travel. ***Under Option 1, AUTOMOBILES and transit are being prioritized for Williamsville Main Street. Walking is also being prioritized, however “walkable” distances are less than a 1.6 km walk (according to Kingston’s Household Travel Survey). We assert that cycling is a priority mode of travel along Princess St. Cyclists prefer direct routes that feel safe. “Alternative” bike routes increase distances from the most direct route along Princess. Walking and “alternative” bike routes are not going to “minimize dependency on private vehicle travel”. Transit may help to reduce private vehicle travel in combination with disincentives to use private vehicles.***
- Implement enhanced streetscape and pedestrian features on Princess Street to encourage a vibrant corridor. ***A vibrant corridor would include bike lanes. Bike lanes are good for business, the environment, sense of community, and healthy, active living. Streetscapes with safe cycling lanes have consistently proven, in cities across Canada, to be economic drivers bringing more customers to businesses along the streets with bike lanes. More than 60,000 residents live within a 15-minute bike ride of this section of Princess St. Bike lanes offer ways for more people to connect with the growing businesses and services fostering a diverse sustainable vibrant corridor.***
- Transit and Active Transportation modes are prioritized to meet the City of Kingston’s Mode Share and Climate Change goals. ***As stated earlier, without including cycling as an Active Transportation priority, Transit mode is the de facto sole priority to meet modal and Climate Change goals. Why are we not also leveraging the opportunities cycling offers especially since the Household Travel Survey shows Williamsville (Area K) has the highest bicycle mode share in all of Kingston at 10% [Table 33. p.97]. How does removing cycling infrastructure from Princess St make any sense?***
- Transit improvements aim to meet the City’s climate goals set out in the Climate Leadership Plan (2021) by reducing private vehicle trips. ***The goal to reduce private vehicle trips and GHGs will not happen by transit improvements alone. Safe, convenient, efficient, connected cycling infrastructure is essential. Disincentives for automobiles (e.g., expensive parking rates, high fines for not paying) will also help.***

- This section of Princess Street currently forms part of the City’s spine cycling network. And with space constraints along the right-of-way, it is not possible to improve or maintain the bike facilities along this corridor after incorporating pedestrian and transit improvements.

KCAT and other groups worked with City staff and consultants on the Active Transportation Master Plan that included Princess Street as part of the City’s spine cycling network. Strategic, informed decisions were made with input by all kinds of experts including experienced cycling commuters.

The right of way (ROW) along Princess Street in Williamsville is like that of many municipalities in Ontario. Roads with similar constraints in other cities have been transformed into ‘Complete Streets’ that welcome all road users including cyclists. See examples on KCAT’s Williamsville page [KCAT’s featured Williamsville news](#).

We are aware of the width of each block of Princess between Bath/Concession and Division and appreciate the increased space with no parking and reduced lane widths. Compromises may need to be made to accommodate the needs of all road users for a Complete Street, including current and future residents and businesses, shoppers, and commuters. If needed, conventional bike lanes may also be narrowed to 1.2 metres in constrained areas (OTM Book 18: page 77).

Cycling, with all its benefits, should not be sacrificed for development outcomes that compromised public space by permitting new buildings to be built at the sidewalk without setbacks. See <https://kcat.ca/williamsville/> March 2020. It’s too late to change what’s been done but there are solutions, as presented in this submission.

- Existing bike lanes without a buffer along this corridor do not provide the level of comfort that most riders would expect when riding along a high-volume roadway.

Please see above point. Also, bike lane safety features include not only lane width but signage, well-maintained lines, stencils, pavement free of debris, and predictability. Dedicated space parallel to travel lanes are more easily seen and expected by motorists and cyclists than those that weave in and out (as is the case now). In limited space, planters can effectively separate motorists from cyclists and beautify the corridor at the same time with environmental benefits.

The City proposes these alternatives to Williamsville Main Street:

1. Promoting the use of Brock and Johnson Streets as part of the spine cycling network, and provide connections along Palace Road or Sir John A, up to Bath Road.
2. Developing Concession Street as part of the spine cycling network alternative to connect into future bike facilities along Princess Street, west of Bath Road, and connect into existing and proposed bike facilities along Division Street. ***Concession’s road surface and traffic conditions are currently poor and unsafe for cyclists.***
3. Developing neighbourhood bikeways – these routes would be formalized with wayfinding and could potentially include traffic calming and other measures to promote

cycling along these areas. ***People already cycle on quieter streets in neighbourhoods. The proposed measures would be beneficial, in addition to dedicated cycling facilities on Williamsville Main Street. Neighbourhood bike routes tend to have several stop signs which deter use by slowing commute times.***

4. Confident cyclists can also continue to bike along Princess Street as part of traffic. ***Confident cyclists are a minority as illustrated in the Active Transportation Master Plan.***

'Alternatives' tend to be indirect, time-consuming, and less likely to be 'bikeable distances' (less than 4.6 km) according to the Household Travel Survey. They all deny cyclists and vendors the opportunity for cyclists to stop and shop along the way. It is unlikely that Kingston's cycling mode share would increase if the existing cycle lanes on Princess St. were to be replaced with neighbourhood bikeways.

A few notes on greenery, in addition to that mentioned above. Greenery is important.

- ***Trees do not need to be planted the length of the corridor; in fact, other plants may thrive better given lack of light from the 'canyon' effect of the tall buildings.***
- ***There will be opportunities with new developments along this stretch to include a variety of species/sizes of greenery.***
- ***Climate benefits from auto to bicycle mode switch are vastly greater than those from added greenery in the corridor.***

FRONTENAC GREEN STREET CONCEPTS

KCAT is very much in favour of 'green streets' and we hope that Frontenac Street will be the first of many streets redesigned to mitigate effects of climate change challenges while providing environmental benefits, beautification and fostering safe, connected spaces for healthy, active living. Our recommendations are to:

1. Connect the length of Frontenac Street from the Memorial Centre to Union Street.
2. Use bollards to prevent cars from turning onto Princess from Frontenac and create a pedestrian crosswalk there.
3. Provide way-finding signs including distances to the Memorial Centre, Downtown, Victoria Park, and Breakwater Park.
4. Plan, design and implement intersections to facilitate walking and cycling and discourage automobile use except for local, within-block traffic.
5. Implement measures and concepts to facilitate walkability and cyclability.
6. Foster tree canopy coverage for shade and beauty.
7. Include a variety of native trees, shrubs, and ground covers with relevant soil and lighting conditions for sustainability, water preservation, and low maintenance.
8. Involve local residents in all aspects of planning.