

To: Oshawa Active Transportation Advisory Committee
From: Projects Working Group 2023 11 01
Subject: Proposed 2024 Active Transportation Master Plan Update

1. Purpose:

To respond to recommendation one of report OATAC 23-23: “ That the O.A.T.A.C. be requested to provide a report at the next O.A.T.A.C. meeting regarding the 2024 update of the Oshawa Active Transportation Master Plan”.

2. Recommendation

That a copy of this report be provided to all consultants expressing an interest in updating the City’s Active Transportation Master Plan.

3. Comments

- 3.1 These are comments from the Oshawa Active Transportation Advisory Committee and are not requirements of the Request for Proposal.
- 3.2 The 2015 Oshawa Active Transportation Plan identified many opportunities for walking and cycling facilities in Oshawa but is now vastly out of date. A lot has evolved in active transportation planning since its approval. A few points are made below:
- 3.3 Intersections are one of the most dangerous places for travel. In the 2015 Plan, there is no provision for continuing cycle facilities through intersections even on streets with cycle facilities, four or more auto lanes were retained and cyclists must take a chance with unmarked shared auto lanes. The 2024 update of the Active Transportation Plan needs to address this issue and make recommendations to be included in the City’s Engineering Design Criteria Manual. It is suggested that, at least, right turn lanes be eliminated as they are dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists and that cycle facilities be provided in their space. A listing of these intersections should be created with a phasing for their conversion. Left turn lanes should be eliminated on collector and Type “C” arterial roads where feasible to provide continuous cycle lanes rather than a shared auto lane it would also help to identify the uniqueness of Type “C” arterial road.
- It is also suggested that consideration be given for providing continuous sidewalks and bike paths as a city adopted standard as the Transportation Association of Canada recently highlighted in their Emerging Practice Briefing at least at all residential, commercial and industrial driveways and for new local residential streets.
- 3.4 All traffic roundabouts in Oshawa are designed according to Book 18 Figure 6.80, auto priority. All the roundabouts should be re-designed to Book 18 Figure 6.81, pedestrian priority. A list should be created of these intersections and the cost of converting all the intersections determined. See Report OATAC 23-06.
- 3.5 The City is changing posted street speeds from 50km/hr to 40km/hr. a community at a time. These speed changes include all local roads and those designated collector and Type “C” arterial road if under their jurisdiction. As a separate program, the City has also reduced the posted speed on a number of collector roads where they have painted cycle lanes to 40 km/hr. Local roads are to have a sidewalk for safe walking and in Oshawa are generally safe for

cycling in mixed traffic. Collector roads and Type “C” arterial roads offer a fantastic opportunity, if properly signed and painted, to provide on street safe cycling for most trips to school, shopping, transit, work or transit to work and the City’s network of valley multi-use paths. This opportunity should be fully exploited. The first step should be to reduce the speed on all collector and most Type “C” arterial roads to 40 km. per hour on those roads not already signed 40km/hr. The next step would be to prohibit parking on streets with cycle lanes. The City has completed this on most collector roads and to our knowledge all Type “C” arterial roads. The listing of what roads need to be reduced in speed and parking prohibited should be part of this Master Plan update. It is noted that multi-use paths are being built on one side and a sidewalk on the other side of Type “A” and “B” arterial roads to accommodate active transportation.

- 3.6 Region of Durham update of their Regional Cycling Plan in 2021. They consulted the improved safety guidelines in the new Book 18 and made revisions to when cycle facilities would be implemented. The 2012 Regional Cycling Plan had scheduled cycling facilities, painted cycle lanes likely, within 10 years on the Type “C” arterial roads, Olive Avenue and Adelaide Avenue, if memory serves us, which would have meant they would have been installed by now. A section of Olive Avenue near Townline Road had cycle lanes added within the last few years. It is assumed that with the 50 km/hr. posted speed, it was not considered safe for cyclists, particularly beginning cyclists to use a road with painted cycle lanes only. It is agreed that beginning cyclist should not be on such a road, but these Type “C” arterial roads have sidewalks and cycling on sidewalks is permitted in Oshawa. Anyone not comfortable using the cycle lanes could use the sidewalk. These roads, to fulfill their intended function, of relating to the abutting community should have measures taken so they discourage faster moving through traffic. The roads should be posted at 40 km./hr. All right turn lanes should be made part of the cycling network. Several left turn lanes should be removed so cycle lanes are retained through the intersection and traffic speed and capacity is reduced to reflect the intended community support function of the road. If they were under City jurisdiction, this conversion would be easier; however, the Region should reflect the intended function of the roads and this issue should be raised in the update of the City’s Active Transportation Master Plan.
- 3.7 Oshawa’s Central Area is growing rapidly and there is to be a new GO Rail Station in the CPR corridor west of Ritson Road. Simcoe Street is planned to be transit corridor. There is a need for careful consideration of what facilities are needed for active transportation in this central area. The OATAC provided comments in this regard in report OATAC-23-11.
- 3.8 The City pays 100% of the cost of active transportation facilities on streets under City jurisdiction. The Region pays a portion of the cost of active transportation facilities on streets under the Region’s jurisdiction. The Region updated the Region’s Active Transportation Plan in 2021. The consultants draft reports contained many issues that they recommended be discussed such as who should pay for active transportation facilities on roads under Regional jurisdiction. Both Oshawa and Durham have Official Plan policies promoting provision for multi-modal travel, however the area municipalities are responsible for paying most of the cost. The impacts of not providing for multi-modal travel will fall on the Region as much as the City. If it is unsuccessful to encourage modes of travel other than auto driver, most roads under Regional jurisdiction will require widening to satisfy public complaint. A number of these roads are designated as Type “C” arterial that should not be widened or lengthened. It is understandable that the Region may not wish to raise this issue where they pay more. However, the update of the City’s Active Transportation Plan should include a review of the consultant’s draft reports and pertinent issues discussed in the update of the Region’s Cycling Plan.

3.9 The City approved a policy about seventy years ago that developers would provide a sidewalk on one side of local streets and two sides of collector and arterial roads. They also approved a policy about the same time that the developer would pay for a tree to be planted in the boulevard of every house, where feasible. The City also replaces these trees as they reach their end of life. On the streets developed more than seventy years ago the provision of sidewalks is primarily on some collector and arterial roads. Following the adoption of the City's 2015 Active Transportation Master Plan which identified missing sidewalks a recommendation was made to construct a sidewalk on a collector road to serve a school on that portion of the road. The citizens became organized and made the implementation of the sidewalk politically difficult as it would reduce the number of cars they could park on their driveways. Never the less, the documentation of missing sidewalks should be updated and a list of the top twenty or so missing sidewalks put in priority order.

Knowing the difficulty of constructing sidewalks in old built up areas, other means of making the street more suitable for walking and cycling should be considered. The planting of trees in the boulevard not only may reduce auto speed but would vastly improve the climate for walking and cycling. With the assistance of the City, the streets built more than seventy years ago without the tree planning policy should be identified and a boulevard tree planning program recommended as part of the Active Transportation Plan update.

Although it is the policy of the City to build sidewalks on both sides of all collector and arterial roads, it is the recent practice of the City to building a sidewalk on one side and a multi-use path on the other side. There are no guidelines on which side of the road the sidewalk should be on. As part of the update of the plan, guidelines should be developed on which side of the road the sidewalks should be located.

The City spends over a million dollars a year on sidewalk maintenance. In some cases over half the block is replace at one time on a collector or arterial road. The City is moving to providing a sidewalk on one side of all collector and arterial roads. If the side of the road were identified where the multi-use path is to be located, some of the dollars spent on sidewalk repair could be part of the program of replacing the sidewalk with multi-use paths. In addition on some road projects such as the Region's Wentworth Street rebuilding, there are several intersecting streets that will be rebuilt for a significant distance. These sections of road could also be constructed to the new standard with a sidewalk on one side and a multi-use path on the other side, instead of going back in a few years to rip up a good sidewalk to replace it with a multi-use path. If the consultant provided guidance on which side the multi-use path should be located, the OATAC would provide a map identifying the location for multi-use paths for the consultants review and adoption by the City.

3.10 The City and Region have defined the function of their major roads differently than most municipalities and it is not well understood by some traffic engineers or even some transportation planners. The Region still gives priority to auto drivers to the extent that inhibits other forms of travel on all arterial roads. Even on Type "C" arterial roads, that by Official Plan policy are to relate more to the abutting land uses and are to support the abutting community more than to provide for through movement of traffic. The Region proposes widening and lengthening a number of these Type "C" arterial roads. Taking a Type "C" arterial road from two to four lanes and extending it from less than 4.5 km. to more than 10 km will drastically alter the characteristics of the travel on the road, raising its function beyond the Official Plan definition and making it far less compatible with active transportation modes of travel. That is what they are planning to do with the Type "C" arterial road Olive Avenue. They are also planning to more than double the length of the Type "C" arterial road Adelaide Avenue. These

roads are essential for active transportation and are identified for implementation in the Provincial Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit Project. The update of the City's active transportation network should address the issue of encouraging more auto driving verses providing a safe environment for walking and cycling.

- 3.11 Although likely beyond the scope of the update of the Active Transportation Master Plan, consideration could be given to explaining the difference between forecasting traffic volumes by trend or modeling verses undertaking a Transportation Planning Study which look at all modes of travel and the community to be served and based on what is desirable for the community define the transportation services to be provided. Forecasting by cordon counts or modeling will almost always forecast higher demand than needed. Of course if you build it, it will be used by people moving to auto modes and driving further. If you do not provide increased capacity people will find ways other than as an auto driver, will drive less distances and the forecasted demand will evaporate over time if other modes of travel and an appropriate mix of land uses are provided.