

My name is Martin Collier. I've been working to achieve sustainable transportation in Ontario since 1992 – and full-time since 1999.

We are making a 50 to 100 year decision with respect to Speedvale Avenue. By far the best design economically, environmentally and socially is **Option 3: the 3-lane cross section with bike lanes.**<sup>1</sup> By choosing Option 4 as their preferred alternative in their June 2 report<sup>2</sup>, staff are ignoring several North American trends:

- Driving is decreasing
- There is a reduced interest in auto ownership (especially millennials who'd rather be chatting on their cell phones)
- Citizens want diversity in modal choice and will use sustainable modes when available
- There is a greater acceptance of mobile technology and mobility options (Uber is already in big cities and driverless vehicles will be here in the next 5-15 years – they will disrupt all the planning we're doing today).

Staff also seems to be ignoring several policies:

- **Bicycle-Friendly Guelph's** five-E approach to making cycling **more convenient** in the city. It uses encouragement, education, engineering, enforcement and evaluation, the 2009 plan seeks to triple the number of daily bike trips by 2018."<sup>3</sup> – 6 years down and three years to go yet we are still at 1% modal split. Option 4 sets a bad engineering precedent for other streets that will come up for reconstruction in the future – especially Speedvale West.
- **Cycle ON** – Policies from MTO, MOI, MMAH that support municipal cycling networks<sup>4</sup>
- **Provincial speed limits** - The Ontario government is taking steps to reduce speed limits since this could be the difference between life and death.<sup>5</sup>
- **Provincial climate change strategies**<sup>6</sup> that redesign and build strong carbon neutral economy, communities, infrastructure and energy. Insurance companies acknowledge that climate change is at least partly responsible for increasing extreme weather events. Maybe you noticed the weather this past winter? And the ups and downs of the last week?

**Fortunately, IDE Committee Members can add a more holistic view of the options that have been put forward.** You have a nice combination of history, engineering, environmental science, landscape architecture, insurance, community involvement and fiscal responsibility.

Everyone agrees that there should be more money left in the pocket of the taxpayer. The \$12.7 million listed for Option 4 (which includes \$1.2 million for an Emma-Earl Bridge) costs \$3.5 million more than Option 3 savings – a big chunk of the capital budget. A small portion of the

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://guelph.ca/living/construction-projects/speedvale-avenue-improvements-from-manhattan-court-to-woolwich-street/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/IDE\\_agenda\\_060215.pdf](http://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/IDE_agenda_060215.pdf) (p.36-46)

<sup>3</sup> <http://guelph.ca/2009/04/bicycle-friendly-guelph-official-launch-event/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/pdfs/ontario-cycle-action-plan-highlights.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/lower-residential-speed-limit-considered-by-ontario-government-1.2936050>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/climate-change-consultation>

savings should be put towards a comprehensive TDM program that manages demand in this corridor and across the city.

Would you want to live on Speedvale now or after Option 4 is built to make it a faster street? Nobody on this committee lives on a major arterial like Speedvale for obvious reasons and staff members working on this project have told me they wouldn't want to live on it either. If Speedvale was a nicer street, property values would increase and more people would want to linger in the area as opposed to speed through it.

### **Regarding public consultation:**

- In Public Information Centre #1 (Feb 2014), 62 people wanted bike lanes (considering Option 1 and 3). That beat the 60 who wanted Option 2 with no bike lanes. According to the report, there was no vote on Option 4. How do we know that this is what people want?
- When I ran for election in Ward 2<sup>7</sup>, 90% of the Speedvale residents I spoke to wanted a slower street.

### **Regarding Design**

Staff reference Transportation Association of Canada's (TAC) standards but these standards haven't been updated since 1999. Much has changed. Cities like London and Toronto want narrower roads. I quote from a recent City of Toronto document<sup>8</sup>:

“Roadway design engineers in Canada have historically relied on the TAC Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads (1999) as the basis for engineering roadway designs. However, most guidelines within this document were developed decades ago, have not been substantially revisited, and have not always fully considered all modes of travel. While TAC is attempting to provide separate guidance suitable for urban areas, it has been determined that the City of Toronto would benefit from more context sensitive and in-house engineering design, an approach taken by several other municipalities.” Shouldn't Guelph follow Toronto's lead?

### **Case Studies**

Nice to see the Mayor rollout a big Guelph welcome to Ton Akkerman, from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands last week.<sup>9</sup> Holland is home of the best nation-wide bike network in the world. Groningen is a case in point. 114,000 of the city's 200,000 population makes their daily journey by bike.<sup>10</sup> Why? The city makes it easier for cyclists/peds by making direct

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.martincollier.ca>

<sup>8</sup>

[http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20of%20Toronto/Engineering%20and%20Construction%20Services/Standards%20and%20Specifications/Files/pdf/Road%20Design%20Guidelines/Vehicle\\_Travel\\_Lane\\_Width\\_Guidelines\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20of%20Toronto/Engineering%20and%20Construction%20Services/Standards%20and%20Specifications/Files/pdf/Road%20Design%20Guidelines/Vehicle_Travel_Lane_Width_Guidelines_Jan2015.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://mayorguthrie.com/2015/05/27/guelph-meets-nlcanada/>

<sup>10</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groningen#Cycling\\_and\\_walking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groningen#Cycling_and_walking)

travel easier than going by car – not more difficult/further. They would make drivers go the extra 1 km down Stevenson or Marlborough to Emma – not cyclists and pedestrians.

Meanwhile our neighbours in Waterloo are narrowing King Street North from four lanes to two lanes<sup>11</sup>:

- To make it more accessible for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians
- To create a streetscape environment that offers a safe, lively, accessible and attractive place to work, live, shop, learn and play
- To co-ordinate streetscape design elements and improve the quality of business and economic life

We do have some precedents here in Guelph: Stevenson, Norfolk/Woolwich, Gordon (between Stone and Speed River)

Here's the question: Do we want to build a \$13 million road to accommodate and induce the maximum vehicle per hour (vph) on Speedvale so it grows from 1,000 vph to over 1,200 vph OR do we want to build a \$9 million road that encourages different modes of transportation to keep the max vph in the 1,000 range? This can be achieved using Option 3.

**Because Speedvale Avenue between Woolwich and Manhattan Court will not be reconstructed until 2017 earliest, the City of Guelph should conduct an Option 3 pilot study between July 2015 and December 2016 in order to:**

1. improve Speedvale residents' quality of life
2. promote equality of all road users of all ages (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists) by restriping road with 3 vehicle lanes, bike lanes and sidewalks
3. increase safety of all modes due to slower speeds, less weaving/passing and easier property ingress/egress
4. maintain overall traffic levels and potentially divert truck traffic despite increasing population
5. keep existing right of way and homeowners' property intact thereby eliminating need for expensive property expropriation and hydro re-location
6. save money for other sustainable transport needs (e.g. building/connecting trail under Speedvale bridge, Woodlawn Avenue, Niska, TDM)
7. prevent an increase in the City's road operations budget (e.g. snow plowing)
8. produce real travel and safety data to see if road diet design could work beyond December 2015
9. incent city engineers and planners to think differently about road design and work within a restricted budget
10. set a precedent for Speedvale Avenue west of Woolwich and similar streets when they come up for reconstruction

---

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.waterloo.ca/en/living/uptownstreetscapeimprovement.asp>

I understand why staff will be scared of the Speedvale road diet results: traffic will move well as some drivers will reroute, speeds will decrease, bikes/walkers will increase and crashes will go down. We'll be on our way to saving at least \$3.5 million.

Therefore, I recommend:

1. That the Speedvale staff report, dated June 2, **not** be received. Rather have them write a comprehensive road diet and TDM strategy for implementation this year.
2. That an exemption to the 2009 Bike policy and 2013 Cycling Master Plan **not** be granted.
3. That staff not be directed to commence an Emma-Earl Bridge EA until after results of the road diet study has been completed.

Thank you.

Martin Collier