

# Mobility Master Plan – A Youth's perspective

Human Environments Analysis Laboratory – Youth Advisory Council

## Introduction

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) at the Human Environments Analysis Laboratory (HEAL) at Western University has prepared this submission to provide feedback on the City of London's Mobility Master Plan (MMP). The purpose of the HEALYAC is to integrate youth voices, perspectives, and expertise into research on young people's wellness and meaningfully engage in public processes, like the City of London's MMP public consultation period.

The 2024-2025 HEALYAC include students from eleven high schools from four different school boards who experience London's transportation system as drivers, transit users, cyclists, and pedestrians. The HEAL is involved with many projects focusing on improving the health and well-being of children and youth in Southwestern Ontario.

## Mobility Master Plan Feedback

The MMP displays a strong foundation considering environmental, social and economic aspects; recognizing how much London will change in the future as one of the fastest growing cities in Canada and aspiring to create favourable conditions to accommodate that change. There are aspirational goals established in the plan. As with every plan, there is always room for improvement. The following feedback and recommendations highlight potential improvements that could be made to better serve London's youth.

## General considerations

The five guiding principles provide a strong and holistic foundation to create an efficient, inclusive and sustainable transportation system. Careful consideration of how the high-level goals inform the entire MMP will ensure that the guiding principles are consistently reflected in future infrastructure projects.

For example, there is information about the current total amount of GHG emissions (**Environmentally Sustainable principle**) but we were not able to find information about

capital and operating infrastructure projected costs by type of project (**Financially Sustainable** principle). We also noted that different types of transportation infrastructure have other financial costs implications, but they were not included in the evaluation (e.g. provision of public utilities and services and public health impacts). We read that there will be considerations for equity denied groups, but we didn't find information about who they are, what are their specific needs and capabilities and how future infrastructure projects may impact them (**Equitable principle**). For the evaluation of three types of projects listed (road, public transit and cycling) we didn't find information if each type is evaluated separately or if all three are to be compared together (**Integrated and Connected principle**).

## Youth Participation

The overwhelming majority of HEALYAC members didn't know about the MMP. The fact that the group is composed of students from different backgrounds and schools that are highly engaged in their communities suggests that MMP public participation process has not reached youth broadly.

### **Our Suggestions:**

Youth-targeted campaigns to advertise MMP initiatives can increase awareness and participation. This could include:

- Engagement in youth spaces such as social media platforms, and at local recreational facilities that are more popular with youth.
- Information sessions at high schools during lunch hours and immediately before and after school.
- Use of language and messaging that resonates with youth.

## Road Safety

Safety featured heavily in HEALYAC conversations, both as rights and responsibilities on the road, primarily for vulnerable road users but also for drivers. We are not able to provide more detailed feedback since we didn't find information about the number of collisions resulting in physical injury or death. Information about where, why and how they happened was not found either. The evaluation framework mentions the Potential Safety Improvement (PSI) score, but we didn't find any additional information about that either.



HEALYAC members shared about car collisions with vulnerable road users that they saw in the news (e.g. seven year-old boy on Longwoods Road, 27 year-old immigrant on Hamilton Road, grade three student on Kilally Road) but couldn't identify if any changes were made to the roadway to prevent them from happening again or how the MMP will address those issues.

**Our Suggestions:**

It's important that the MMP identify and share relevant information regarding this principle in order to set a clear target. Along with individual evaluations for each infrastructure project, the MMP could include a coordinated strategy for compiling information, set goals on reducing road violence, track progress and disclose information about the measures being taken to improve road safety and effectively implement this principle.

## Environmental Impacts

Climate Change was identified as one of the main concerns for the HEALYAC and the group was very pleased to see the inclusion of tracking GHG emissions and having a net-zero target as well as evaluating the impact on natural heritage. We agree that the MMP should set ambitious goals for carbon emission reductions that will be sufficient to reach our desired targets while also considering other environmental impacts (e.g. urban heat islands, tree canopy, permeable surfaces, and road runoff pollution).

**Our Suggestions:**

It would be helpful to include estimations of GHG emissions based on population growth and different scenarios of mode share. The projections in the [2019 report](#) from the Cycling Advisory Committee are concerning and we didn't find updated information from the City of London.

## Public Transit

Some of the HEALYAC members and youth generally are regular public transit users and this was a very important topic in our discussion. The main issues raised were: mismatched bus schedules, language barriers, personal safety on the bus, challenges navigating the transit system (e.g. getting tickets, finding routes and stops).

We are very supportive of initiatives like Kingston's Transit Program for Youth. Opportunities to extend free transit options for youth paired with transit education to

promote long-term transit use habits are very welcome and programs such as the Secondary School Student Transit Pass Pilot Program – London Transit Commission are very encouraging.

**Our suggestions:**

Use the pilot program as an opportunity to understand barriers to transit use and to inform new transit infrastructure projects. Include a training component for students. Learn who does and doesn't start using transit and why. Consider expanding the transit pass program to the entire city as it has great potential to reduce car traffic as well as benefit equity-denied families that don't have access to a car.

## Cycling

Although some of us have expressed interest in using a bicycle more often, we generally don't feel safe (e.g. lack of infrastructure and parking) and even that we shouldn't be there at all (e.g. navigating the new roundabouts). The Active and Sustainable School Travel Charter in Hamilton is a great example of a city-wide strategy to encourage active transportation while at the same time collecting ongoing feedback for road improvement and new infrastructure projects.

**Our suggestions:**

Even though the focus of the MMP is on infrastructure projects, we believe that programs like *Ride To Thrive* are an important component of a long-term strategy. A city-wide adoption of such a program needs to be considered in the MMP. Not only, the program can be instrumental in supporting safe behaviour and encouraging active transportation, it can help inform future infrastructure projects (see Youth Participation above).

## Closing Remarks

Learning about the MMP was very insightful and HEALYAC members were encouraged about the opportunities they have to inform improvements to urban mobility in London.

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We hope our feedback can be used to improve the MMP and we would love to hear back from the City of London and discuss future opportunities for meaningful engagement with young Londoners.

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