

Re: Glanworth Drive, Colonel Talbot Road and the HWY 401 Interchange

I am writing this letter as I wish to speak at the upcoming Civic Works Committee meeting on May 5, 2015 in order to represent my farming operation along with several others in our local agricultural community who have been a critical part of the consultation process of the 401/Colonel Talbot Rd. underpass redesign project over the last several years. We, Mapleview Farms, are one of the many modern farming operations in the area that rely heavily on Glanworth Drive/Littlewood Drive to move our equipment, crop inputs and harvested crops around the city in a safe and reliable manner. Our base of operations is located approximately 2 km west of the site under consideration. We grow nine different crops, harvesting over twelve thousand metric tons annually. One must take into careful consideration the safety and logistical implications of doing so when working within tight windows with respect to variable weather conditions.

Throughout the consultation process we have made effort to document and illustrate some of the challenges we face on a day to day basis. In the pictures below you will get a sense of the size of modern farming equipment and how motorists respond to it. It must be noted that these are not irregular circumstances; they serve to provide a representative example of conditions caused by extreme differences in the vehicles which frequent these roadways.

Fig. 1 – In this instance, we watched as a small SUV quickly shifted from the far left lane and into the far right lane (401 off-ramp lane) to try to squeeze past our equipment which was making a left hand turn onto Tempo Road.



Fig. 2 – As the large equipment passes through the intersection one can observe the impatience and attitudes of following motorists by their proximity to the equipment and to each other.

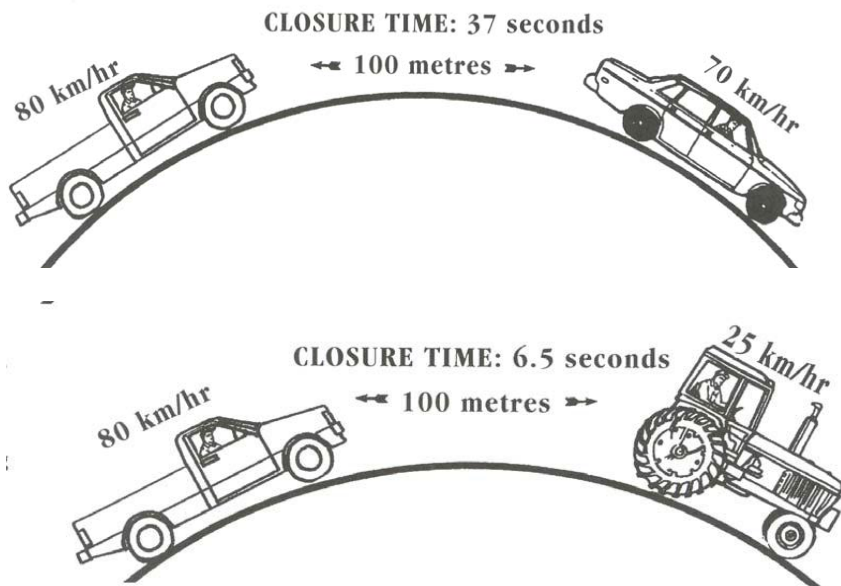


Fig. 3 – Here we watched as three commuter vehicles in unison cross a double yellow line into oncoming traffic to in order to overtake our equipment.



These are just a few snapshots of some of the challenges we face each and every time we head towards our various farms with machinery. Despite the fact that all of our equipment is properly marked and all operators are trained in road safety, we cannot compensate for how poorly other drivers respond when encountering our machinery in high traffic areas.

Fig. 4 – This explains why most motorists seem to have trouble responding to agricultural equipment.



In recent years there has been a profound increase in the size of modern farms. Due to this, farming operations require larger and larger machinery, utilize it far more often, and require greater transport time to reach their expanded land-bases of different farms and fields. Very frequently we move equipment to fields in convoys. This presents a considerable problem when trying to cross Colonel Talbot Road without the presence of traffic lights. Often times each piece of equipment must wait several minutes before it is clear to cross safely in both directions. This seems to frustrate nearly all of the trailing motorists, leading to aggressive driving and putting our farm operators, truck drivers and commuters at risk. Deferring all east/west ag-related traffic over top of the 401 presents a significant risk to all users of the overpass. Due to the grade of the overpass design and the heavy loads of our equipment it often takes a prolonged time to get up to speed and the 100 metre closure time in the previous image would most likely be closer to 3 seconds.

It is easy to see the logistical and economic repercussions associated with deferring all east/west bound Glanworth Drive/Littlewood Drive traffic over the 401 as in Alternative 1 design but it is safety for all those who use the local roads in question that is of our utmost concern. Myself, along with several other members in our local ag community who have been a part of the process, fully support Alternative 6 design while retaining traffic lights at the (new) intersection of Glanworth Drive and Colonel Talbot Road.

Sincerely,

Jeff Cook