

From: Marco Prado

Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 5:50 PM

To: ppmclerks <ppmclerks@london.ca>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Register to speak or provide written feedback ref: meeting SPPC to the and agenda item Strategic Plan PPM

I would like to register some pertinent written information for the meeting and agenda above. If possible I would like to have these included in the agenda.

My written submission is below:

Honourable Councillors

I am asking to be heard regarding the City plans for active transportation and Master Cycling Plan regarding cycling infrastructure. I will be happy to also provide a testimony via zoom as well.

I am a citizen of London, living in downtown since 2008, when I immigrated to Canada to take a job as a full professor at Western University. Although I was not a cyclist when I moved to London, we had decided to be a one car family. When in 2013 my family needed a second vehicle, I started cycling and I have not looked back. We are still a 1 car family, but I only use bicycles to move around the city, even during winter. I go to work, shop, visit restaurants, always using my bicycle. I do this for two reasons. 1. The health benefits of exercising. 2. Our current climate emergency and need to decrease emissions.

My decision to ride a bicycle in London is conscious, but does not come without a toll. I am a male, 6'6 tall and quite large even on a bike. That of course, sometimes, can provide respect from drivers. Despite that, many days I fear for my life or for my health. It is not unusual for drivers to make mistakes and I can see that is unintentional. But these mistakes can still kill me. However, in many occasions I have escaped from intentional attempts to harm, shame or even attack me.

This is an experience that most cyclists in the city can relate, so I will not bother to explain in detail. But this Council has the power to reshape how we move in our city. Because of my work, I have travelled all over the world. From China to South America to Europe and the US. It is clear to me that cities that offer infrastructure and are planned around healthy citizens thrive, whereas cities that show no interest in their community and how they move around do not contribute to the well-being of their citizens. Traffic, pollution and decreased in quality of life all contribute to decreasing happiness and life expectancy.

Therefore, I urge the Council to be bold. To set high standards for mobility in the city. Bicycle infrastructure is key for that. Only with some small advances in the last few years, I can see already an increase in the number of people using bicycles to move around the city. Indeed, for bicycle infrastructure "if you build they will come". We have a poorly connected bike lanes, most of them unprotected, that are far from the sort of infrastructure that kids can use. What better way for a kid to move in the city independently than with a bike. Indeed, a measure of how safe a city is for cycling is the number of kids and women cyclists as a proportion for the total number of cyclists. In all major Western European cities this infrastructure creates a way for independence and better living.

In addition to protected bicycle lanes, bylaws to deal with drivers parking on bike lanes, and guidance for the Police to protect the most vulnerable road users are important. Pedestrians, cyclists, Public transportation and then private vehicles should be the priority.

In summary, I would like to ask that you think it is your mom, father, brother, sister or friend that is cycling in the city. The loss of any life because of lack of infrastructure is unacceptable. But what if is your family member or friend? What if it is a child that could grow up to discover the cure of a disease? Unprotected bike lanes connecting nothing to nowhere, or protected bike lanes that suddenly finish for no reason (Colborne St North of Oxford for example) are dangerous and do not protect cyclists. Given the climate emergency, potential to decrease traffic and the health benefits for citizens, it is your responsibility to lead London to the future and find ways to significantly expand cycling infrastructure, so people like me do not have to fear for their lives.

Respectfully,

Marco Prado

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