

CITY CENTRE COALITION

Re. Prince of Wales Drive Widening EA

c/o John Verbaas
CCC Chair
2-183 Wilbrod St
Ottawa, ON
jverbaas@rogers.com

Valerie Bouillant
Chair, Transportation Committee
Ottawa City Hall
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 1J1

Dear Ms. Bouillant

The City Centre Coalition, a group of 11 community organizations, has participated in the Environmental Assessment for the proposed widening of Prince of Wales Drive between Woodroffe and Fisher.

First we want to register our opposition to the proposed \$100 million project for the many reasons that we have already explained at the meetings of the Public Advisory Group during the EA process. Briefly, it makes little sense to widen Prince of Wales in the proposed section so that it can pour increased traffic onto Ottawa inner area streets passing through residential communities closer to the centre of the city, including Prince of Wales itself.

We feel that the EA has not considered sufficiently the downstream effects of this widening on:

- * Fisher Avenue
- * Holland Avenue
- * Parkdale Avenue
- * Prince of Wales north of Fisher and through the Farm
- * Preston Street

There is an unspoken assumption that the traffic just "vanishes" north of Fisher. The downstream effects of this widening of Prince of Wales would be substantial.

However, in the event that this ill-advised project would proceed we provide the following observations and suggestions we hope will provide useful input in improving the project particularly in relation to cyclists and pedestrians:

1. We are concerned with safety for bicyclists. The most problematic areas for cyclists in the proposed project would likely be the intersections especially at Fisher, Hunt Club, Merivale and Strandherd. The larger intersections would have double left turn lanes, two

lanes going straight, and a right turn lane in each direction, plus bike lanes. These intersections would be difficult to cross safely on a bicycle.

2. The worst intersection would be at Strandherd. It would have 7 lanes in one direction and 8 in the other, plus bike lanes.

3. The proposed construction schedule is 2016 to 2021+ in three stages, starting at the south end, with the area from Amberwood to Fisher done last. Staff said that realistically the city can only build 1.5 to 2km. per year, and the entire study area is more than 10km. However, the area around the Strandherd Drive intersection would start to be built this summer, in preparation for work on the Strandherd Bridge from 2011-2013. This means that the worst location for cycling would be built first. Staff are suggesting cyclists use Rocky Hill Drive (one block south) rather than braving this intersection. Staff were doing their best to present this intersection as a done deal -- no changes allowed -- because it was supposedly approved by the N-S LRT EA, even though there were no pedestrian refuges in the E-W direction on Strandherd, making it almost impossible to cross by mothers with children, for example. We cannot emphasize too strongly how hostile the intersection looks; it easily rivals Robertson & Eagleson.

4. There would be bike lanes for most of the project. In the Greenbelt section, they would be replaced by paved shoulders. Much of the bike lane / paved shoulder design looks properly done. Unfortunately, there would be many very long right turn tapers/right turn lanes at larger intersections, meaning cyclists would have to risk riding between lanes of traffic.

5. There would also be a 3m. two-way recreational pathway from Fisher to almost Woodroffe. In places, this will join with NCC pathways or local streets and veer away from the road, but mostly it would be along one side or the other of the road.

6. There would also be a (new) sidewalk along almost the entire length of the road, a welcome addition. Several people at the public consultation group indicated they would ride their bikes illegally on the sidewalk rather than cross the road to use the recreational path.

7. There are three possible problems with the pathway: a) in most places it is only separated from the road by a 1m. boulevard and a curb. This doesn't give a lot of space for getting off the path, and won't protect anyone from out of control vehicles. Cyclists might as well just ride in the bike lanes. b) in some locations, particularly at the Barrhaven end, there are relatively frequent intersections, which will cause conflicts with right-turning traffic. At the north end, a number of driveways have been replaced by local service roads; the entrances to those would also intersect the pathway at frequent intervals which again could cause conflicts. c) the boulevard would be used for snow storage in the winter, thus ensuring spillover of snow onto the path. It would be essential to ensure that the path be kept plowed.

8. From Fisher to Amberwood, the speed limit would be 60 km/h. South of that, it would be 80 km/h. The 20 km/h differential makes a huge difference in safety for pedestrians and cyclists. It also makes a noticeable difference in noise generation by traffic. Reducing the speed in the Barrhaven residential area to 60km/h could reduce the need for sound barriers behind the houses.

9. The draft road design for Prince of Wales is for a design speed of 10-20km/h HIGHER than the posted speed. This has been standard policy at the city, and the effect of this is to encourage speeding by motorists because it's safe to travel well over the speed limit. It turns an arterial road into a freeway. We encourage you to adopt a policy of designing roads for the posted speed limits. This would make a big difference in safety,

10. The new development in Barrhaven has completely changed the nature of Prince of Wales from a rural road to a suburban arterial. Therefore, we encourage you to reduce the speed limit from between Amberwood and Woodroffe to 60km/h. This would substantially increase safety for all road users and reduce the noise effect on residents.

11. The Rideau River in this area is a World Heritage Site. This widening is likely to create a significant barrier between residential areas to the west and the recreational and beauty areas along the river. Reducing the speed would again reduce this effect somewhat.

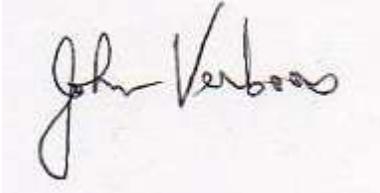
12. We recommend that you investigate using bike boxes (advanced stop lines markings allowing certain bicycles a head start when the traffic signal changes from red to green) at the larger intersections, to make it easier for cyclists to make left turns. This technique is used in Portland, Oregon.

13. The rail overpass south of Colonnade, which currently can accommodate two tracks, would be completely replaced. This is good, since it's about 100 years old. However, it would not be in exactly the same location, which may require trains to curve twice, thus increasing noise. Staff also indicated it may only be rebuilt for one track because CN/VIA indicated they didn't need anything larger. This would prevent the city from using one track for LRT without rewidening the overpass later. We strongly urge you to reconsider this narrowing of the rail bridge.

14. The lighting for the road would be in the centre median. This would provide less illumination for the bike lanes, recreational path, and sidewalk than light standards on the side of the road.

15. The pathway connection at Merivale Road, linking to the RCMP headquarters (a major destination) would be separated into three sections. We question whether this workable and safe. Using the bike lane is slightly simpler, but also would require signals to ensure a safe turn into the RCMP complex.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "John Verbaas".

John Verbaas
Chair, City Centre Coalition

MEMBERS of CITY CENTRE COALITION:

Action Sandy Hill
Centretown Citizens Community Association
Dalhousie Community Association
Hintonburg Community Association
Westboro Community Association
Old Ottawa East Community Association
Glebe Community Association
Dow's Lake Residents' Association
Old Ottawa South Community Association
Carleton University Students' Association
Citizens for Safe Cycling