



City of Winnipeg Council

**Re: Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works Dated June 11, 2024
2. Preliminary Design Study Route 90 Improvements - Taylor to Ness Avenue**

June 26, 2024

Greetings,

I'm Mel Marginet, member of the Sustainable Transportation Team at Green Action Centre. Our vision is all Manitobans living green, and living well.

We've reviewed the latest reports from the Route 90 Improvement Study. It's abundantly clear that the proposed widening of Kenaston from Taylor to Ness, plus adding a third span to the St. James Bridge, is not sustainable from either a fiscal or environmental perspective. We therefore recommend that EPC:

1. Reject the proposed design to widen this corridor; and
2. Approve a motion supporting rehabilitating the existing infrastructure.

This will ensure that future generations of Winnipeggers are not burdened with more new infrastructure than we can afford to maintain. It will also ensure that this project does not undermine key principles of the *Climate Action Plan* and *Community Energy Investment Roadmap* adopted by the City of Winnipeg.

Michel Durand-Wood, on his blog Dear Winnipeg, does an excellent job [breaking down the financials on this project](#). We won't spend our time reiterating [the dismal business case](#) put forward for the expansion. We do want to highlight that, with administration and contingency costs, the cost of the proposed widening fails to exceed its costs.

Return On Investment

ROADS

\$1 = \$1.30 (Conference Board of Canada)

*This report gives Kenaston a worse rating of 1 : 1.7

TRANSIT

\$1 = \$3.37 (Canadian Urban Transit Association)

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

\$1 = \$11.70 (Alliance for Biking and Walking Report)

*this report also found that AT infra creates twice as many jobs as road infra (better for the economy at a fraction of the cost!)

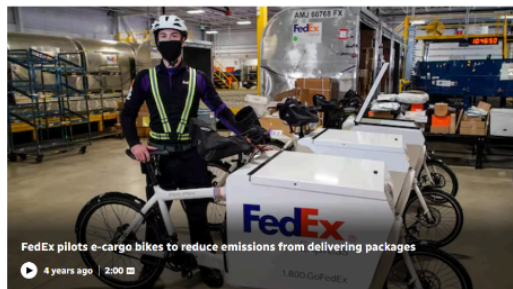
Even if we all wanted to believe that the project will deliver a positive 1:1.7 benefit-cost ratio with those costs excluded, that's a very low benefit when compared to the potential return on investment of other more beneficial projects.

It's been noted that groups like Green Action Centre don't talk about the economic benefits of expanding Kenaston. That is impossible to do given that the City has once again declined to commission an independent assessment of whether there is a convincing economic case for this road and bridge expansion. Those in favour of this project didn't touch upon the economic risk to Winnipeg taxpayers, nor how the city will cover the additional maintenance costs which will be a drain on our finances, or [how transportation is evolving in their industries](#).

Parcel delivery companies are trading trucks for bikes in some Canadian cities. Here's why

Road-clogging, polluting vehicles found to be less efficient than greener option

Emily Chung, Alice Hooton, Tashauna Reid - CBC News -
Posted: Nov 28, 2020 3:00 AM CST | Last Updated: November 28, 2020



A pilot project in downtown Toronto is testing e-cargo bikes for FedEx deliveries. The idea is to reduce carbon emissions from all those trucks on the road making deliveries for Canadians' online purchases during this pandemic, while also reducing companies' delivery costs.

f X e in 408 comments

The Black Friday, Cyber Monday, pre-Christmas pandemic online shopping frenzy calls for huge fleets of trucks and vans to deliver those gadgets and gifts. But those road-clogging, polluting vehicles are starting to give way to a greener, more efficient option in many Canadian cities: e-cargo bikes and trikes.

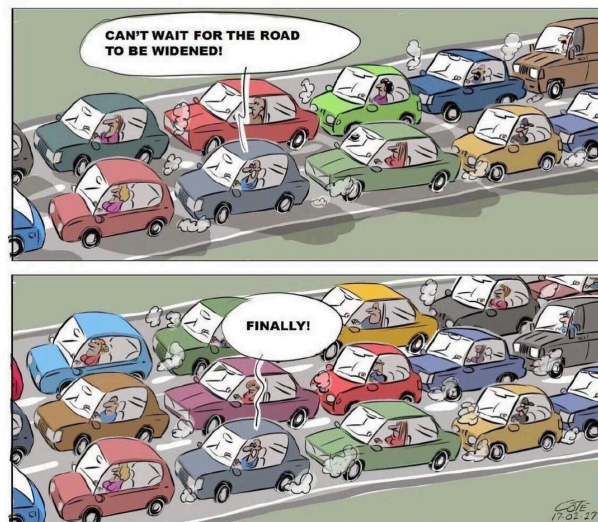
"Now that Project Colibri has been running for more than a full year in Montreal, Brard said an analysis shows that an e-bike is **30 to 40 per cent more efficient** than a truck in terms of deliveries per hour."

A sample project demonstrating how shipping companies are finding efficiencies in cities thanks to electric cargo bikes.

We must ensure current data is being used in evaluations as well. For example, data used to stress this as an important trade corridor was from 2011 before the opening of CentrePort Canada Way or the effects of the multi-billion dollars committed to the South Perimeter Highway. In fact, traffic studies show that the majority of the current traffic on Kenaston is actually single occupant personal vehicles with only 4% of traffic involving the movement of goods.

"Ongoing time savings are marginal: estimated reductions in average travel times for users once the improved facility is operational means minor time savings benefits which are generally the primary driver behind transportation improvements." (page 26)

On that note, we'll focus our time on the problem that we're trying to solve with roadway expansions: congestion. Congestion is an issue on Kenaston during peak periods but it also a problem on Broadway, on Osborne, on Provencher, on McPhillips, on Henderson. I could go on. And we want to relieve congestion so that people's lives are easier, be it getting to work, school, appointments. We all want our goods to move efficiently, and we want our emergency vehicles to move easily.



Experience in other jurisdictions repeatedly demonstrates that simply building more roads and ignoring other alternatives to improve mobility is an expensive, temporary solution. In the long run, more road capacity to accommodate single occupant vehicles make congestion worse.

This is due to 'induced demand'.

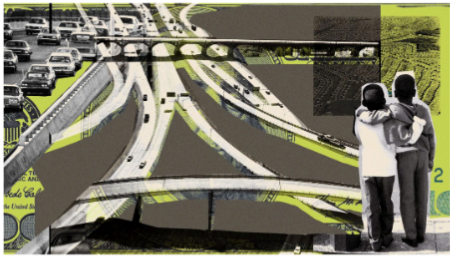
If all goes as planned with this project, the average user who interacts with this corridor can look forward to a long-term drive time savings of ... 11 seconds. This is poor value. As noted in

Durand-Wood's article, [The Kenaston Widening is Dead. Long Live the Kenaston Widening](#), we would be financially better off paying out people a nickel for this time directly.

Mar 6, 2023 · Economy

The \$1 billion push to remove highways dividing communities

Joann Muller



Details: Buffalo, New York, is getting the largest award: a \$55.6 million grant to build a cap and tunnel over a 1960s-era six-lane expressway, which segregated Black residents from the rest of the city.

- Some 600 homes were demolished to make way for the highway, which cut off residents' access to necessities like banks and grocery stores.
- It also led to high unemployment and increased health problems, per DOT.

Other notable projects:

- **Oak Park, Michigan**, a Detroit suburb, is receiving \$21.7 million to reconstruct a crumbling plaza over I-496, a trenched highway that bisects the city's Orthodox Jewish community.
- **Boston** is getting \$2 million to begin planning a park over the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) in Chinatown, considered the state's most polluted neighborhood.
- **St. Paul, Minnesota**, received a \$2 million grant to study the environmental and traffic impact of a [proposed five-block "land bridge"](#) to reconnect the city's majority Black Rondo neighborhood, as Axios' Torrey Van Ot reports.
- **Tampa** is getting a \$5.3 million grant to lower an interchange ramp to street level in order to eliminate the barrier between downtown and the city's riverfront and to make the streets safer for walking and biking.
- A full list of awarded projects can be found [here](#).

A sample of the projects in the US underway to remove interstates from cities.

The vision of this project is that “We are building a city for the future” (Mayor Gillingham, [CTV News](#).) I find this hard to believe, as much of the logic is entrenched in old-school thinking from the past.

HOW DO WE SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF CONGESTION?



Hydrology 101

The City of Winnipeg currently has an 80% driving mode share, primarily single occupancy vehicles. This is very high and a prime cause of congestion. Moving people in a growing city by single-occupant vehicle is very expensive and incredibly inefficient.

Unfortunately, new greenfield developments built over generations and still being approved today, are the root of the problem. This is where we need to focus our attention and resources.



Hydrology 101, but for vehicles.

Traffic is like water, and if we keep turning up the tap on the edges, we will always have floods towards the core. If we want to solve congestion, we need to stop the gush from the edges through zoning changes and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) practices. We already know that we have enough people who want to travel in another way, be it transit, biking or walking. ([Do we have to convince Winnipeggers to drive less?](#)) We just underfund these modes, making them inconvenient and uncomfortable to most. “I’d like to take the bus, but it takes twice as long to get there, I have no choice but to drive” for example.



The 2021 Former Kapyong Barracks Master Plan

We also must consider the Naawi Oodena development of the former Kapyong lands, and creating six lanes of congestion next to it will be a barrier. As noted in the 2021 *Former Kapyong Barracks Master Plan*, “Route 90 – both in its current form and proposed future configuration – poses some significant challenges from the perspective of site access, pedestrian and cycling

comfort and connectivity, and the creation of a strong urban character along its frontage.” (page 74). The master plan makes it very clear that this development does not want to attract personal vehicles, and it also notes the hope of being included for Rapid Transit service at the corner of Grant and Route 90.

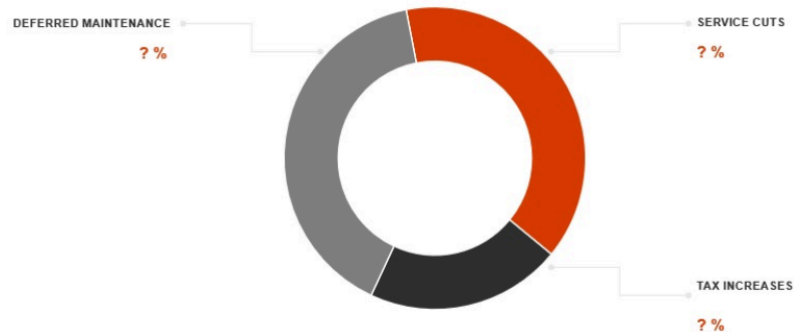
If we build an environment around Naawi-Oodena that is car-oriented, and therefore hostile to anyone outside of a personal vehicle, we will make Naawi-Oodena car-dependent as well. We will put many of their plans for a walkable, vibrant community into direct conflict with parking demands.



We have invested significant amounts in car-oriented infrastructure in the past decades. Has it paid off?

Again, we all want to reduce congestion. Building more roads while underfunding and ignoring alternatives makes the problem worse. It is the most expensive, least effective strategy and we need to stop. If having more roads per capita were the solution to our woes, Winnipeg would have won that lottery. We have doubled the physical size of our city in the past 50 years, while growing our population by less than 40%. Each Winnipegger has way more space than Winnipeggers of the past, and yet we have never been in a worse financial position as a city.

A “Balanced Budget”: How To



How will increased maintenance costs be covered for this project?

In a time where, with record road spending, we can only afford to repair roads every 70 years, and replace them every 250 years, the idea that we would need to continue to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on more regional road extensions and widenings to try to make the system work is ridiculous.

TDM : What are the tools?

- PARKING
 - Parking benefit districts, permits in neighbourhoods, demand-based pricing, remove parking minimums
- CONGESTION PRICING
 - User fee during peak periods
 - Considers time, distance
- ROBUST TRANSIT
 - Transit Master Plan is revolutionary for Winnipeg
 - Implementation is far too slow
- COMFORTABLE WALKING & BIKING
 - Complete communities, zoning reform
 - Pedestrian & cycling strategies (again, far too slow)

A sample of TDM tools for municipalities.

We need to fundamentally change our transportation system through Transportation Demand Management. This gives the City of Winnipeg more tools in the tool belt, so we can grow as a city without having to spend billions of dollars incentivizing personal vehicles.

At Green Action Centre, we do want to stress that we absolutely agree that the road needs to be fixed. We want to point out that, for a road that this report calls “an important transportation corridor” we haven’t increased its annual maintenance allowance for over 20 years, which has

seen the infrastructure crumble. If we haven't been able to increase the budget with inflation on such an important corridor, we have to ask ourselves why.

It's because we don't have the money. We don't have the money to properly maintain the corridor at its current size. If we haven't been able to increase the annual spending on maintenance for Route 90 at its current size in over 20 years, how are we going to maintain even more infrastructure on an even bigger Route 90 in the future? As noted last week at IRPW, the Transit department was given strict instructions that no new operating budget was available for the rerouting plan. The Transit department has provided a plan to provide transit improvements to thousands of Winnipeggers in all corners of our city, and they have done it with a plan that has no new operating costs. What would the Route 90 plan look like if the team was given similar instructions?

As noted by Councillor Lukes "We're over our heads with the roads we already have". This is exactly right. We cannot afford to add more. We need to focus on repairing the infrastructure we already have, and use it more efficiently to actually solve our congestion problems.

Finally, we do want to highlight our opposition to the findings under Environment and Road Safety headings. The idea that highway expansions "reduces idling" and therefore should be considered "good" for the environment has long been debunked as evidence of induced demand has been made clear (not to mention new technologies like vehicles that stop idling when stopped, EVs etc). Also, as noted, the report doesn't account for the physical emissions created from building the infrastructure. Cement is very emission heavy and this expansion will likely wipe out any perceived benefits long before it's even completed.

If we want to be serious about our environmental impact as a city we cannot move forward on this road expansion project.

We noted serious safety concerns at the open houses for the proposed design of a widened Route 90 about the higher speed limit (from 50 to 60 kph) and increase in slip lanes that people walking and biking would need to cross. Slip lanes create a turning radius where the driver can maintain their speed. Having people walking and biking across multi-lane slip lanes is dangerous. We noted at the open house that for someone going from Superstore and heading south on the bus, they would have to cross a dozen high-speed traffic and slip lanes.

Once again, we call upon the City Council to make a motion that removes the road widening elements from this project. A wider Kenaston plus extra span for the St. James Bridge will not build us a city of the future.

Instead, the project is tied to decades old visions of Winnipeg long past their expiry. The project is mired in old-school thinking, which will lead us to a future of more broken infrastructure, devastating financial outcomes and missed goals to reduce our adopted targets for greenhouse gas reductions.

Mel Marginet
Sustainable Transportation Team
Green Action Centre