

To all members of Winnipeg city council,

Thanks for allowing me to share my concerns about the proposed expansion and design of route 90. It is clear to myself and other Winnipeggers and neighbours that I've talked to that the proposed route 90 expansion is not worth the cost.

I appreciate that mayor Gillingham made a number of campaign promises in the last election, and that together with council is moving diligently to implement them. I also recognize that the mayor and council has had the ability to shift at times when presented with new information. The most recent example would be the decision to open Portage & Main to an at grade crossing. I bring this up because we now have a benefit cost analysis on the proposed route 90 expansion. While the executive summary touts a net benefit of about \$20 million dollars, it factors in a temporary benefit which will only be felt for 2 construction summers. This also excludes the potential debt that will need to be serviced if no extra funding is found. Remove this temporary benefit and we are left losing money on every dollar invested in this expansion.

At its core this project is a loser for Winnipeggers, requiring a huge capital cost, with time savings for commuters averaging a small gain of 13 seconds down to 11 seconds of time savings.

The members of the Public Works committee made some comments about the economy and the economic benefits of road expansion. The problem is that the Benefit Cost analysis we have says it is not factoring that, and so we actually don't have the information here to know whether or not that is a good idea. All we know is that only 4% of traffic is commercial truck traffic and that the majority is passenger vehicles and this is projected to continue to be so.

I think there is lots in the data of the report to show why the expansion shouldn't proceed. Some examples would be the extremely high costs, increased car dependency, lack of good transit service on the route, difficulty for pedestrians to cross, lack of safety due to 'slip lanes', etc. But let's talk about a main concern to all members of Council, let's talk about the voters, your constituents, and all Winnipeggers.

We all know that nobody likes traffic. We also know that nobody really likes road construction. or potholes, or bad roads to drive on. We experience all of these issues every year in this city. Road work always needs to be done, but it is a frustration. Winnipeggers hear announcements about record spending on road repairs but every year the complaints come pouring in.

It certainly appears that we have more roads than we have the ability to keep up with maintaining them. Adding an extra lane *might* be good for a bit but if we couldn't maintain Kenaston Blvd / Route 90 before and have let it get to the mess it is in now, how will increasing its size make it any easier to maintain? Is this another case of "road-building for road building's sake"?

When it comes to traffic, the report itself shows that we will have even more cars on the route due to induced demand and the time savings beyond the construction season will be negligible. 11 to 13 seconds on average, up to a couple minutes at peak times.

We also are increasing the speed in some areas from 50 to 60, while also hoping to increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists in the area which the report itself acknowledges could make driving this stretch more dangerous to vulnerable road users.

Finally, there is a major cost for this project. From what I understand the federal government has already denied two applications for funding, and the province is investing its road money to take trucks and trade around the city via the perimeter highway to Centre Port.

As you are all aware, we are facing a cost-of-living crisis. People are concerned about the increasing costs. A continuing increase in property taxes doesn't just affect those who comfortably own large homes it also affects those with less valuable homes who may be feeling the pinch more significantly. Proceeding with a project that won't actually improve the commute on that route significantly for Winnipeggers, while adding a major cost both to service the debt and maintain an even bigger road is not an investment we should make. We are adding a huge liability that future generations of Winnipeggers will be left with.

I am concerned for Winnipeggers, both those in cars, who will continue to sit in traffic even after watching all this money be spent and work be done. I am concerned for Winnipeggers outside of cars who will be standing on bus islands scattered along Kenaston, next to whizzing cars going by. Or those crossing at intersections now almost 10 lanes wide! Or finally those on bikes who will have to ride on trails that may increase their incidents with cars (page 16).

I have talked about this project with neighbours and friends from varying political stripes, and none of them think we should be expanding a highway through our city... Especially one that will only have marginal traffic time savings.

To those councillors touting this as a reconciliation measure, you must not be aware of how many cities are removing highways that run through their cities in order to make them more liveable for the people who actually live there. Not just the people who drive through. We don't need a highway to better serve the future Naawi-Oodena development. We need a good road with transit and good access for pedestrians, so that the transit-oriented development proposed can become a reality. If people can only get to and from there by car we will be faced with huge parking requirements and increased congestion on both route 90 and the adjoining streets. Please repair Kenaston and make it safer for all road users, the current design has not done enough to consider the people who use the road who are not in a car or a truck.

Adding better transit infrastructure (one where buses don't also have to sit in traffic, and one where people don't have to stand on an island with cars whizzing by on all sides while they wait for the bus), and adding and improving cycling infrastructure in a way that would keep all our road users safe, would be helpful. A road renewal and sewer upgrade seem like reasonable things that need to happen. Many of the safety features proposed in a three-lane scenario likely could also be applied if the road were renewed and maintained at 2 lanes. The details of the benefit cost analysis show that this expansion project is really not worth the cost. We cannot afford it, traffic won't get that much better, and we already have shown our inability to maintain the lanes we have on Route 90.

Route 90 should be repaired, the sewer upgrades also likely need to happen, but the expansion doesn't need to happen because the benefits are not worth the cost to Winnipeggers. We cannot afford to invest in a negative asset. Please amend this proposal to remove the expansion portion of the project and save 36% of the cost.

Sincerely,

Nick Portengen