

Ancaster Transportation Master Plan: Recommendations

Issue:

The City of Hamilton and Dillon Consulting Limited are preparing a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) for the community of Ancaster to guide transportation planning through to 2031. Interested stakeholders have the opportunity to comment on alternative solutions presented by the City as part of Phase 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment.

Aside from the omission of improvements to Highway 403, the recommended scenario is a balanced approach to transportation planning and is business friendly, both for local businesses and for business throughout the City of Hamilton.

Background:

On December 8, 2010, the City held a Public Information Centre (PIC) where a recommended scenario and alternatives were presented to the public. Recommendations made by City staff were coordinated with other planning documents, studies and transportation initiatives, such as the Hamilton Transportation Master Plan, Places to Grow Act, the Cycling Master Plan, B-L-A-S-T rapid transit, etc. As part of the planning process, the City made recommendations with a view to manage current and future transportation needs through to 2031. Recommendations specific to Ancaster have been made in order to ensure consistency throughout the City's transportation network, while taking community specific criteria into consideration.

Criteria used:

One major criteria used in developing recommendations was the socio-economic impact of any proposed plan, i.e. its impact on heritage features, community character, and on business, both locally and to the greater City of Hamilton. Socio-economic impacts are a major concern for local residents and businesses, as Ancaster is a historic community; much of its character is derived from its rich history and collection of heritage buildings. Other criteria included the level of transportation service, impact on the natural environment and financial cost of the proposed plan.

Current and future transportation challenges:

A number of current and future transportation challenges were identified in Ancaster. Current challenges include congestion, safety concerns, traffic infiltration, a lack of pedestrian and cycling facilities, and a need for direct access to Highway 403. Future concerns include planning for long-term growth anticipated in Ancaster and the City of Hamilton. Jurisdictional challenges between the City of Hamilton and the Province of Ontario represent a serious constraint when resolving issues related to Highway 403, particularly capacity and access issues in and around Ancaster. Improvements to Highway 403 would help to resolve a number of Ancaster's transportation challenges, like the traffic infiltration issue; however, the 403 issue cannot be resolved by the City alone and requires cooperation from the Provincial Government.

Specific recommendations:

Improvements to the local road network were the focus of recommendations made on December 8, 2010 and include: two lanes plus a two-way left turn lane on Wilson, Rousseaux, Mohawk and McNiven, and improvements to the Wilson/Rousseaux intersection and the Wilson/Jerseyville intersection; a double lane roundabout was recommended at Wilson/Rousseaux and a single lane roundabout was recommended at the Wilson/Jerseyville intersection. These specific improvements will have a limited impact on Ancaster's heritage features. Improvements to Highway 403 were not included in Scenario 12 and represent a major limitation of the proposed plan.

Overall impressions:

Recommendations made by City staff have taken previous transportation and land use planning decisions into consideration and ensure consistency throughout the City's transportation network. For example, a reduction in vehicle traffic is anticipated with planned improvements to transit service, increased use of active transportation, and other Transportation Demand Management measures.

Despite jurisdictional challenges related to improving Highway 403 access, the City of Hamilton must demonstrate leadership on this issue. Inclusion of Highway 403 improvements in the Ancaster TMP will ensure that the City continues to be a champion for this issue.

A combination of Scenario 12 and recommendations made in Scenarios 2 and 3 concerning improved Highway 403 access represents a balanced approach to managing transportation issues in Ancaster through to 2031. This plan will promote business, private sector jobs, and economic growth in and around Hamilton. (For further details on Highway 403 issues, please reference the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce document "Recommendations to Councillor Murray Ferguson", dated February 8, 2006.)

Recommendations:

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce urges the City of Hamilton to adopt the following recommendations to the proposed Ancaster Transportation Master Plan:

1. That the City adopts Scenario 12 with the addition of the recommendations made in Scenarios 2 (Ramp from Mohawk Road EB to Highway 403 WB) and 3 (Ramp from Golf Links Road to and from Highway 403 WB) concerning improved Highway 403 access. Scenario 12 alone does not address capacity and access constraints on Highway 403, which is a serious omission.
2. The City continue to consult with local businesses and residents on urban design features of the plan to ensure that the character of Ancaster is further preserved, i.e. location of cross walks, type of street lights used, design of an attractive and functional gateway into Ancaster, etc.