

Deputation to City of Vaughan – Committee of the Whole – January 22, 2019 – 7PM – Item 4

My name is Fred Winegust. I live at 10 Tangreen Circle in Thornhill. I have lived in Thornhill since 1986.

The Promenade Mall redevelopment proposal has significant public input and community support.

The proposal will revitalize a traditional 32-year-old shopping mall by adding more office, retail and residential space. It will also add a significant number of people to the Thornhill City Centre precinct.

Traffic and traffic congestion remains a major concern.

A May 2017 survey of over 1,300 neighbourhood residents, conducted by the Centre Bathurst Committee, established that as many people commute North to the 407 and beyond than commute south of Steeles and beyond, with Bathurst Street their route of preference.

In early 2020, we expect the construction of the Yonge Subway Extension to commence.

Car commuters frustrated with construction will find their way to Bathurst Street as a potential north-south replacement for Yonge Street.

They will be joining commuters from Vaughan, Richmond Hill, King, Aurora and Newmarket, who already use Bathurst Street as their primary route home, or enter/exit the 407.

York Region Transportation staff have confirmed the following to me in writing today.

"Viva has travelled along Bathurst and Centre Streets since 2005 due to its growing importance as a destination.

The population and employment opportunities will continue to increase in the area, so having fast, convenient transit in place is even more important" .. to support "the shift away from a car-dependent culture towards a more urban, transit-supportive way of living."...

"During the Environmental Assessment process, vivaNext staff consulted the public on all aspects of the project, including vivastation locations.

A number of important variables were considered, including population and prospective employment forecasts to 2021, such as the significant high-density residential development near the vivastation at New Westminster/Atkinson.

As a result, the vivastations will continue to be constructed in the determined locations."

We are 2 years from 2021, and even with public transit, you must agree that significant development along the Bathurst Corridor, in Vaughan, Richmond Hill, King, Aurora and Newmarket has taken place since the Promenade Mall opened on August 4, 1986.

Even with the addition of the Busway, now under construction, we will have the same 2 car lanes on Bathurst from Centre to Westmount Avenue after construction as we did in 1986.

Let me be clear, I am a transit advocate, but there needs to be the right balance between cars and public transit on Bathurst Street between Steeles and the 407, not a Bathurst Bottleneck at Atkinson / New Westminster.

(As stated by earlier speakers, Promenade Circle needs to be improved with city owned sidewalks, crosswalks and speed control, to ensure safe pedestrian access, to the mall, as well as amenities around the Circle which include the YRT Promenade Bus Terminal, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Park, St. Elizabeth Catholic High School and the Bathurst Clark Resource Library.

Promenade Circle also needs to be improved to deal with the condominium buildings that connect directly to the ring road at 88, 100, 110 and 120 Promenade Circle.

The focus of this deputation is on how Bathurst Street brings traffic to and takes traffic away from the Promenade Mall.)

Bathurst Street needs to be ready for increasing car commuter traffic that all proposals in the Thornhill City Centre / Promenade Mall precinct are expected to bring.

Having the same 2 car lanes in 2019 as we did in 1986 is already not cutting it.

The 2-lane Bathurst Bottleneck at Atkinson and Bathurst, becomes even narrower after significant snow falls,

This narrow 2-lane Northbound Bathurst Bottleneck further reduces the ability for safe simultaneous turns from New Westminster and Atkinson, both City owned streets to Bathurst Northbound, a Regional Road.

Construction is already beginning on the second 2-lane Bathurst Bottleneck at New Westminster and Bathurst.

I would ask that our City Council direct Vaughan Staff to raise these concerns and the following recommendations to York Region Transportation staff, and to York Region Council.

Whereas, the revitalization of the Thornhill City Centre / Promenade Mall precinct to include retail, office and residential space, will bring additional shopper, visitor and residential traffic to Bathurst Street;

And Whereas, the projected construction of the Yonge Subway Extension to the Richmond Hill Centre, will see car commuters divert from Yonge Street to Bathurst Street, as they make their way to Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham, King, Aurora and Newmarket;

And Whereas, the Viva Orange Bus route will be the exclusive user of the Bathurst New Westminster/Atkinson VivaStations;

And Whereas, the 88-Bathurst and 23-Thornhill Woods are expected to service existing YRT Bus stops on Bathurst, from Worth/Flamingo down to Centre Street without benefit of the York Region standard HOV lane structure or use of the exclusive Busway;

And Whereas, these 2 bus routes will potentially block 1 lane allocated to vehicular traffic when collecting or discharging passengers;

And Whereas, the 2 vehicular lanes at Atkinson and Bathurst, are increasingly narrowed by snow taking some of the road space, and is currently causing safety problems for allowed simultaneous turns from Atkinson and New Westminster to Bathurst Northbound;

And Whereas, the construction of the Atkinson Bathurst Southbound VivaStation will create a permanent 2-lane bottleneck for Bathurst Southbound vehicular traffic, with similar narrower lane snow issues;

And Whereas, Bathurst has already been widened to the EA approved limit allowing for a minimum of 6 lanes of traffic between Highway 7/407 to Centre Street;

And Whereas, the York Region Transportation Plan calls for the widening to six lanes, including HOV lanes for Bathurst Street north of the 407 to Teston Road, starting in 2022

The following recommendations are being made;

Short Term

- Update the Bathurst Street economic impact study from 2021 to 2041,
- Account for proposed Thornhill City Centre/Promenade Mall redevelopment and the expected 2020 start of the Yonge Subway Extension in the revised economic impact study
- Dismantle the Bathurst/Atkinson Northbound VivaStation and relocate salvaged material to another VivaStation
- Remove the Bathurst/Atkinson Northbound VivaStation concrete bus platform and separation lane
- Stop construction of the Bathurst/New Westminster VivaStation
- Repave Bathurst Street to the EA approved width
- Repaint the lines on the street to accommodate HOV lanes from Highway 7 to Centre Street
- Ensure that buses have enough space to pull out of traffic for YRT stops from Highway 7 to Centre Street
- Complete the sidewalk, separated bike lanes and associated landscaping,

Long Term

- Extend the HOV lanes south on Bathurst to Steeles
- Lobby Toronto to;
 - Put HOV lanes on Steeles from Bathurst to Pioneer Village
 - Widen Steeles Ave West from Hilda to Bathurst, which would then allow HOV from Bathurst to Yonge, and a connection to either Steeles Station / existing Yonge Street HOV

These Regional Road considerations should be in place before significant construction begins for the redevelopment of the Thornhill Town Centre / Promenade Mall Precinct.