

## Rathburn/Ponytrail Integrated Project For Discussion: Meeting with City Staff

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### **Background**

The Ponytrail/Rathburn project has been a sore spot in our community since its inception. We gave feedback, held community meetings, gave more feedback, gave the City the opportunity to answer direct questions. We feel that many of our issues were not considered, **and worse, completely dismissed and disregarded as not relevant contributions**. Our last meeting in November 2024 did nothing to give our residents honest answers to their questions and concerns. Many commented that the representatives of the city blamed the contractors for last minute decisions, however, contractors do as they are instructed and **all decisions and change orders to designs and contracts are the full responsibility of the city**. Generally, we feel that we have been kept in the dark as no one wants to answer the tough questions **and participants were silenced by the moderator..** As a result, many of our residents have lost faith in our councilor, **city decision making, and the civic engagement process** and our association. This issue is not going away until we can assure our community that the city has followed all the rules and has done their due diligence in ensuring that the goal of providing roads that are safe, not only for cyclists and pedestrians, but also drivers.

We have provided questions that speak to process and compliance. It is important to our community that you acknowledge to our residents and our tax payers that you indeed followed expectations to ensure that this project was done in full compliance with MTO guidelines, and if that is not the case what remedy the City intends to put forth

### **Objectives for this Meeting**

Our objective is to understand how this project got from a scheduled resurfacing and maintenance of roads and curbs to become an integrated project (IP), and to ensure our community that in doing so, the city and planners followed the appropriate steps and guidelines required to ensure safety and the environment were embraced.

Feedback from the community would indicate that there are many safety and traffic issues that are a direct result of modifications. Traffic issues appear to be on the roads from Burnhamthorpe to Dixie, the major source of concern for the safety of both cyclists and vehicles is the eastern extension of Rathburn which dead ends at the Etobicoke Creek. We need clarification so that we can respond to the community.

Our meeting discussion focuses on the following areas:

- 1. Project Change in Scope – From a Maintenance Project to an Integrated Project**
- 2. Vision Zero and Safety Assessments**
- 3. Project Design, Community Engagement and Input**
- 4. Traffic Issues**
- 5. Safety Issues, Lane Reductions**
- 6. Rathburn/Ponytrail Project Process Review -- Questions**

In discussion, we must also assess the degree of community involvement and engagement throughout the project, the opportunities provided for their input, how that input was managed, and importantly, whether it was genuinely considered

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## **1. Project Change in Scope – From a Maintenance Project to an Integrated Project**

While sewer and watermain construction was completed in 2019, and major roadwork was required to repair roads, curbs and boulevards, Rockwood Village was promised that this maintenance was budgeted for 2021, and we fully expected it to be completed that year.

In December 2020, we received notice of the reconstruction of Rathburn Rd. A presentation was made in January, outlining the project and feedback was requested from the community. Residents were invited to visit an on-line public information session commencing Jan 22 to Feb 5, 2021 with comments to be sent to Rory O'Sullivan. Note address below, includes Environmental Assessment.

Our Residents' Association received numerous community comments, which were forwarded to the Councilor and to Mr. O'Sullivan. A RRA membership survey was also conducted, and the results sent to Mr. O'Sullivan. **The community clearly supported minimal changes to the eastern extension of Rathburn, focusing mainly on aesthetic improvements to the boulevard and measures to reduce speeding.** It was clear that the community supported little change to the eastern extension of Rathburn, save for aesthetic changes to the boulevard and making improvements to decrease the opportunity for speeding.

Reference: <http://www.rockwoodvillage.ca/summary---rathburnponytrail.html>

Reference: Public Notice and Pic 1 <https://www.mississauga.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/13105630/Rathburn-Road-and-Ponytrail-Drive-EA-Study-PIC-Postcard-Notice.pdf>.

### **Questions**

Q. Given the project scope change to an Integrated Project, there is no mention of an assessment study on the website for Rathburn or Ponytrail. Why is this?

Q. As an integrated project, certain standards including safety and environmental studies are required. When did the City approve this IP?

Q. What were the requirements for both safety and the environment that needed to be achieved?

Q. Where can the results of these studies be found and who approved them?

Q. **Response was sent to Mr. O'Sullivan.** How has our submission to Mr. O'Sullivan been quantified? Who reads it and what process is used to include resident concerns in the final plan. Is there even any consideration of the stakeholders' thoughts? Who are the stakeholders?

**Do we have records of the city's comment log recording community concerns and addressing them? Does a stakeholder plan exist and how was this prioritized (assuming they followed the appropriate requirements of an IPD model)? Is there any other evidence that comments were included and the changes and proposed options were clearly reviewed by all stakeholders and then actioned?**

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Q. Since this project would affect the residents in this neighbourhood, how much influence did they have on the decision to extend the bike lanes to the Etobicoke Creek?

Q. Were any studies done to ensure that there would be sufficient users of the cycle lanes to support the cost of installing them, particularly along the stretch of Rathburn to the Creek?

**Were any studies done to ensure that there would be sufficient users of the cycle lanes to support the cost of installing them, that they connected to other infrastructure in a relevant and safe manner, and that the appropriate style and configuration was used for the specific scenario? Specifically, this applies to the stretch of Rathburn to the Creek. Furthermore, how and why did the design change between each iteration of design submissions and PIC? Is there any evidence that comments were appropriately weighted? Current evidence shows comments were made by the community but they were not answered directly, closed off, addressed, or included in the manner that was desired.**

## **2. Vision Zero and Safety Assessments**

During this presentation, Vision Zero was introduced and explained as: creating a complete street that is safe for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists. As a community, we agree with this objective, however, to this point we were not aware that there were few if any issues that threatened our safety. We also realized that the City was moving forward with the Master Cycling Plan to be implemented on major roads, in order to ensure that cyclist could access the entirety of Mississauga.

According to a presentation on Integrated Road Programs by Jeffrey Reid, Manager, Transport Projects in Mississauga, in November 2022, the two most important activities in the 2021 Action Plan for Project Zero are:

- Evaluation – Tracking and monitoring incidents to improve future conditions
- Engineering - Prioritizing the safety of vulnerable users through road design.

Reference: Pic 2, June 2021

[https://municipalengineers.on.ca/files/MEA\\_Conference/2022/Slides/20\\_Nov%2016\\_City%20of%20Mississauga's%20Integrated%20Road%20Program\\_Jeffrey%20Reid\\_v2.pdf](https://municipalengineers.on.ca/files/MEA_Conference/2022/Slides/20_Nov%2016_City%20of%20Mississauga's%20Integrated%20Road%20Program_Jeffrey%20Reid_v2.pdf)

### **Questions:**

Q. How many traffic incidents were reported in this study area prior to the IP? **How did this influence the design and scope of the project?**

Q. Prior to our last meeting in November 2024, we asked for an update as to the reported accidents in this zone. None were supplied. Why not?

Q. We have requested information from Peel Police, who tell us this information cannot be shared. Assuming you have the authority, will you share this information with us?

Q. Is there any indication that the eastern extension of Rathburn Rd required the implementation of safety modifications?

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**Is there any evidence or basis for the eastern extension of Rathburn Rd requiring the implementation of the chosen and built safety modifications?**

Q. Was any study done as to the safety of cyclists, or pedestrians using the entrance to the Etobicoke Creek and the end of the Cul-du-Sac on Rathburn?

**The master plan indicates continuity and an overarching goal of ensuring throughfare. The extent of this road does not meet that need and has been poorly planned, with no indication of a future project to address this.**

Q. It was noted that the TRCA was consulted on this project. Did they agree that it was safe to guide cyclists to enter the Etobicoke Creek trail via the stairs at the dead end on Rathburn E?

**Who decided this was the best approach for cyclists to use? No one? It is an integrated project. There should be no area unaddressed.**

Q. What was the logic for including cycling lanes on the Rathburn extension, since there were other means of access to the creek trail, and this route is not considered a major access road?

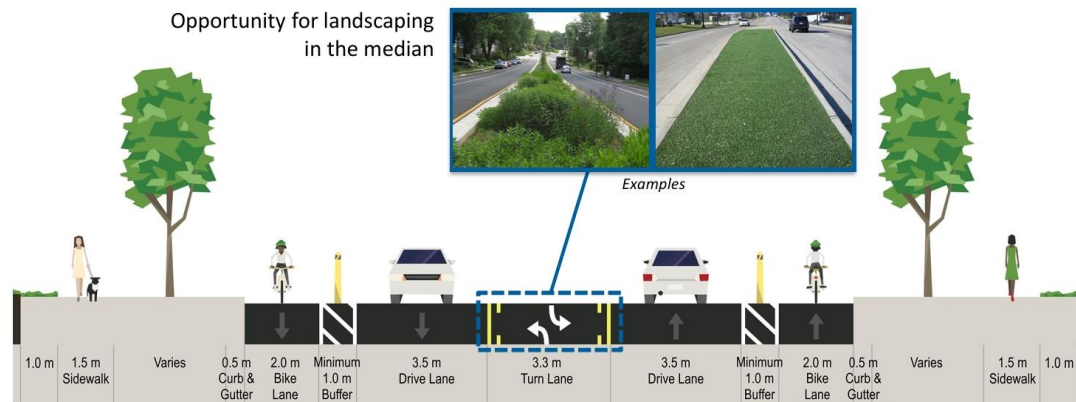
**This question is self evident with the master plan. The better question is how did they plan to connect residents to multi use trails (not just roads) how did they plan to meet all the requirements of the master cycling plan including throughfare and why was this configuration chosen despite widespread discontent by the primary stakeholder and users?**

### **3. Project Design, Community Engagement and Input**

The preferred design on the 1<sup>st</sup> IP presentation was also the choice of the community. A similar design was presented at Pic 2. We expected the final design or a reasonable facsimile. Note that this diagram indicates the widths of each section of the road. Inset, behind the turn lanes, is what we believed was going to be installed as a boulevard in the centre of the road. Prior to the construction, this stretch of Rathburn was a relatively straight road. The design indicated in these presentations, and those posted on the website, support that the twists and turns implemented were done so without notification to those who would be affected.

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### (ALTERNATIVE 3) - RATHBURN ROAD EAST (Ponytrail Drive to End of Cul-de-sac)



Note: Preliminary Preferred Design Concept will be subject to refinement based on input from members of the public, stakeholders and technical agencies.

Residents were advised that they should watch the website for changes, and information. While there are currently answers to many questions on the FAQ page there are no dates and it is unknown when they were posted. For many months, there were no updates, particularly about the changes to the design. The final design that is now a finished project, was never posted or if it was, it was not in a readable format.

The impression given the community in regards to the boulevard was false. While removing 2 lanes of the roadway, it was assumed that one lane would have become the bike path, which would be about 4 metres, in total.

**This statement is slightly inaccurate. In PIC 2, they completely changed the design. The analysis here is actually referencing a completely different option in the short list which was clearly shown in PIC 1 as being a lower desirability and not meeting criteria. This option was actually red. I think I sent an email to the rockwood email highlighting this and how it changed. Use that for this section.**

**There were many outstanding comments, concerns, and issues that were made by the primary stakeholder, but many were not. A reasonable alternative to the bike lane on Rathburn E was put forward. It was conspicuously absent from the FAQ's and no evidence that the comments were recorded, included, or considered in any way.**

Some issues in regards to crossings and lights, and right turn lanes, were addressed, but many were not. A reasonable alternative to the bike lane on Rathburn E was put forward. It was conspicuously absent from the FAQ's.

#### Questions:

Q. Why was this not considered, or at least addressed before destroying a 45-year-old tree canopy and putting the safety of cyclists at risk by leading them to a dangerous path to the Etobicoke Creek.

**The consultant's response was "beautification" but this is in contrast to the master cycling plan and a completely different goal. The responses here are not clear, have been ignored, or outright diminished in community engagement calls.**

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**Underscore and bold are Michael Suppa's comments/revisions/questions**

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Q. Considering the diagram above allowed 2 meters for the bollards, was this space added to the roadway? If not, where was it allocated?

**I think we can clearly say that the dimensions provided were inadequate for community review and when the concerns were brought forward they were dismissed. Maybe consider making a section related to transparency and design review.**

Q. The design allocated 4 meters for a bike lane, which is .5 meter larger than a traffic lane. The bollards were not used, therefore there should have been existing space for the equivalent of another lane which would have accommodated a much wider boulevard and/or larger lanes. How was this space used?

Q. The designs never showed any accommodation for drainage ditches, yet there is a large section of the road on the south side allocated for a swale. When was this added? Why was it not put underground?

**Why was this not included in the PIC or option analysis if it is clearly a major component of the design configuration of the road?**

Q. Please confirm the current width of the driving lanes and the left turn lane at Rathburn and Ponytrail.

**as well as the turning lane widths and radii. This was a specific concern made by the primary stakeholders when proposed and reviewed and was neglected and dismissed as inconsequential. However, we now have delivery trucks for the commercial plaza and large utility vehicles destroying the grass, hopping the curb, and damaging the infrastructure because of how tight it is.**

#### **4. Traffic Issues**

The original plans called for pedestrian crossings at Shaffer Trail and the Hydro field west of Kingsbury Plaza. Traffic lights were installed. In a short stretch of road, there are now 6 sets of lights between Burnhamthorpe and Dixie. Traffic lights coupled with no right turn lanes at Rathburn Rd E at Ponytrail, and a bus stop just west of this intersection, traffic is being stalled in this intersection causing significant traffic backups. To avoid the congestion at this intersection, motorists are using Tapestry Trail to access Rathburn from Ponytrail, and to access Ponytrail from Rathburn E even though it is posted for no left turn.

**I'm pretty sure these were supposed to be PXOs (pedestrian crossing signals and not full blown traffic signals). There would have definitely been a review on traffic calming and volumes to require justification for their use. They seem to keep saying that the traffic patterns for 2040 are low. Why was this not a factor in the choice of lights? Were there not other solutions for traffic calming for lower volumes that could have been used? IF this was an IPD model project, then remove and replace methods were not necessary.**

**It sounds like they cherry picked what they liked from each project delivery model and did whatever they felt like.**

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**Underscore and bold are Michael Suppa's comments/revisions/questions**

**The resulting traffic changed and there is significant congestion. patterns now**

**Questions:**

Q. Please provide information as to how the traffic studies procured did not foresee this congestion, as this is one of the key elements of an integrated project.

Q. While the traffic study quoted stated that there was no congestion at the time of the study and there should be none until at least 2040, the current reality is that the study was false. Is the City willing to review this traffic study?

Q. While the demise of the right turn lanes at Ponytrail and Rathburn have been explained, it is clearly not working, particular when a bus is stopped in front of the plaza. Is there any possibility of finding a reasonable resolution at this intersection?

Q. We were advised the traffic lights at Rockwood Road would be on demand. Few pedestrians care to cross here and it is frustrating, not to mention a delay to the flow of traffic. When will this be corrected?

**What are the current timings and programming and what will the future ones be if this remains?**

## **5. Safety Issues – Lane Reductions**

Most of the safety issues revolve around the lane reductions on Rathburn E of Ponytrail. These lanes are very narrow and leave little room for driver error. Trucks are having issues making right turns from Burnhamthorpe to Ponytrail, from Ponytrail to Rathburn E and exiting from Longo's onto Rathburn. There have been instances that the trucks have jumped the curbs as there is not sufficient road space to make the turn. We fear that between the issues with the traffic lights and no right turn lanes make are potential safety issues for pedestrians and vehicles.

We have heard reports that the garbage truck cannot make the left turn from Garnetwood Chase to westbound Rathburn. This is a particularly difficult turn to navigate for all vehicles as the boulevard juts out and causes the vehicles to carefully navigate this turn.

**Questions:**

Q. Do the current lanes conform with MOT standards?

Q. How were these weak spots not identified in the planning phase? They certainly were not identified on the designs we were provided, which showed a straight roadway, without twists and turns.

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Q. Will someone from the City, test drive this road and tell us that it should not be difficult for our generally older demographic, to navigate this road with ease? Or perhaps have a discussion with the Manager at Longo's to see if there are any complaints from truck drivers accessing the street?

Q. We are aware that there have been accidents in this area both during and after the construction. Is the city prepared to certify that this project meets the safety standards and that we will not see an increase in accidents as a result of the changes made to this area?

### 6. Rathburn/Ponytrail Project Process Review -- Questions

#### Project Complexity and Scope

- What criteria were initially used to classify the project's complexity, and how were these determined?
- Was the original assessment of the project's complexity accurate? Were there any misjudgments or differing interpretations at various levels of the project team regarding the scope or goals?
- Did the scope or nature of the project change after the initial planning phase? If so, how were these changes managed?
- Were there instances of scope creep or unanticipated expansions that contributed to increased complexity? Were these changes minor or major, and how did they impact the overall execution, cost and outcomes of the project?
- In hindsight, should the project have been reclassified as more complex earlier in the process? Should it have been categorized as a **Schedule B project** that would have required an environmental impact study, and possibly other requirements? If so, why was this decision not made at the appropriate time?

#### Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

- Did the project maintain a balance of stakeholder voices, ensuring that diverse and inclusive perspectives were considered (e.g., homeowners, businesses, transit users)?
- How and when were the community and other stakeholders kept informed about the project's progress, change in complexity, as well as any challenges or issues encountered?
- Were communication channels between all stakeholders—such as the city, contractors, and the community—clear and efficient? Were challenges or changes to the project's scope and complexity communicated effectively and in a timely manner?
- Were community stakeholder expectations properly managed, given the evolving complexity of the project? Did these stakeholders have realistic expectations regarding outcomes, timelines, and costs from the outset? Were the community stakeholders appropriately informed of changes and given the opportunity to provide input?
- What measures are currently being taken to address the concerns of affected individuals within the community?

#### Budget and Financial Management

- Was the initial budget estimate aligned with the complexity of the project as it evolved?



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- How did unexpected complexities or unforeseen challenges affect the budget? What were the key factors contributing to any budget overruns? How much did the project ultimately cost taxpayers

**Governance and Compliance**

- Who provided the final approval for the project – was the City required to formally approve the final plan and associated budget?
- Was the project subject to all relevant laws, regulations, environmental study, safety, etc. relative to its complexity?
- Has the project undergone an audit? If so, what were the findings? If not, will an audit be considered?