

Re: Transportation Advisory committee meeting July 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

<https://www.thebluemountains.ca/council-calendar.cfm?action=viewdetail&eventid=2497&viewtype=bydate&categoryid=2>

I listened with interest and some concern to the July 21st Transportation Advisory committee meeting video and would like to offer some comments for correction and clarification.

First some background information. I am an experienced cyclist on the road almost daily in the good weather for between 7 and 10 thousand kilometres annually. I have ridden in 8 countries on 4 continents and find we have here in South Georgian Bay some of the best riding terrain in the world. Our group, South Georgian Bay Cycling Coalition was involved in convincing Grey County to add paved shoulders on GR31, GR19, GR119, GR40 and then to add paved shoulders to all Grey County road construction or reconstruction projects. We also worked recently with Meaford to have paved shoulders added on the steeper hill section of their 2020 Frogs Hollow reconstruction project. Grey County (Gary Shaw as director) had the Share the Road signs added on popular cycling routes years ago at the start of the Centurion Cycling event series and later the Blue Mountains also added around 25 signs on popular cycling roads in our TBM jurisdiction.

The "Single File" tags on the Grey County Share the Road signs were taken off a few years ago because it is not illegal to ride double and these were sending a confusing message to everyone. Vehicle drivers must clear the cyclists by at least a metre, or slow down and wait till it is safe to pass with 1 metre clearance. Most often this means going into the oncoming lane. On our roads there is not safe and legal room to pass cyclists staying in the same lane whether there is one rider, 2 abreast or more! Which would you rather pass, a shorter tractor and one hay wagon or as I have seen a tractor pulling 3 hay wagons? A 2 abreast group is like the one hay wagon, is much quicker to pass, and the motor vehicle has to move into the other lane anyways!

Education is needed for all groups – cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians - and yes we know it is a challenge to reach all the out of town groups. Covid has interrupted our Cycling Safety group's (OPP, TBM, Grey County, Simcoe County, Share the Road, MTO, etc) activities to get consistent messaging out to the public. Both cyclists and drivers need to respect each other's rights and

responsibilities on the roads. I ride almost daily and find more and more drivers are being respectful and courteous. A small few drivers are still buzzing me too close (less than the legal 1 metre) but overall things are improving on the roads. Blanket comments like "cyclists have no idea of their responsibilities" and "the arrogance of cyclists is overwhelming" including all cyclists are not truthful, far from helpful, and drastically set back our attempts of educating all groups! I would appreciate assurance that these statements are not the position of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

Busy county roads are the first place cycling infrastructure should be added. Cyclists are traffic too! That being said we try to avoid and discourage the use of GR2 and GR 40 especially going uphill but sometimes sections of these roads are the only alternative. Most of the cycling event routes in the last number of years that I have been involved with also steered away from GR2 and GR40 uphill. A few alternatives to main roads are listed below.

- GR119 is a great east / west connection with paved shoulders in the middle of the Blue Mountains.
- SR33 / Frogs Hollow is a much better alternative east / west connection to GR40 in the north of our area. SR33 will need upgrading next refresh.
- GR13 and the 10<sup>th</sup> Line is a great parallel alternative to GR2 for a North / South spine. The 10<sup>th</sup> Line should be considered for upgrading also.

GR13 from GR40 north into the 10th Line is scheduled for reconstruction in 2021 or 2022 with paved shoulders which should make it much safer for everyone including our migrant workers to cycle to and from town. We will be encouraging a wider than usual paved shoulder on this popular and busy section of GR13.

Cycling has been here a long time. Cycling is here to stay. Bike shops are sold out of many models especially and including e-bikes and gravel bikes. We need to work hard together to find solutions for everyone to coexist respectfully and safely on the roads and get back home safe and sound whether they are recreational riders, or migrant workers going to town for library Wi-Fi, or families out exercising and enjoying the fresh air.

Respectfully

Bill Abbotts

South Georgian Bay Cycling Coalition