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## Feedback on Public Information Centre #2 for the Oak Park Road Extension

1 message

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Sat, Apr 3, 2021 at 6:02 PM

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Cc: John Sless <johnsless@brantford.ca>, John Utley <johnutley@brantford.ca>, Officeofthemayor@brantford.ca

To the Project Team,

Thank you very much for the Second Public Information Session on the Oak Park Road Extension project you organized March 31st, 2021. I believe we had a productive discussion, and it was good to see Councillors Sless and Utley and Mayor Davis present. However, it was very disappointing that discussion was truncated and there were issues with the YouTube comments. It may be worth re-running the session in order to have more representation present from Council and more time for Q&A.

I wanted to expand on the couple of issues I raised and then add a few questions I did not get a chance to ask in the session. Apologies in advance for the length of this email.

### **Geology of the area**

I have attached the 2012 testimony from Daryl W. Cowell in the matter of Sifton Properties and Grandview Ravines Inc. on Hardy Road. As Mary-Lou Knetchel commented, Mr. Cowell is a knowledgeable individual and had a good look at the geology of the region. Here is his LinkedIn profile:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/daryl-cowell-m-sc-p-geo-91526237/>

I have no idea of his availability or cost, but given the risks identified, I would strongly recommend engaging an outside expert with his level of expertise. I appreciated that Mr. Paranosic acknowledged this is a risk area for the project.

### **Cost/Benefit Analysis**

With regards my comment on the relative cost/benefit of the different options, I have a good example I can point you to – the work being done by Gagan Batra and Jack Turner on the Brantford Three Rivers Crossing project. In their [PIC#2 held April 1st](#), their slides presented a much cleaner ranking of the options that included estimated costs as part of the opportunity ranking. I encourage the OPRE project team to check out their presentation.

Just to reiterate my point, if doing some combination of Options 2 to 6 and not building the OPRE achieves 70% of the traffic benefit, but only costs \$50 million (for example) that seems like an obvious win-win for the environment and taxpayers. Also, many of the traffic flow improvements identified are already in the Transportation Master Plan, so the concern would be with the net extra spending on flow improvements to meet the traffic goals identified for the OPRE. Improvements in traffic flow that are already identified and budgeted should not be considered since these will presumably be done anyway.

Put it another way: the best solution would clearly be personal, free monorail connections to every single residence in Brantford, but that would obviously fail any reasonable cost evaluation. A Cadillac traffic solution that sucks up funding for other priorities (such as affordable housing) for the next twenty years and permanently scars the western end of the city is not a real solution.

### **Traffic and population estimates**

As I stated in the meeting, I understand the basis for the 2041 gridlock predictions as flowing out of provincial guidelines to increase the population of the city to 165,000 residents. (Nevermind that [Places to Grow Schedule 3](#) actually states Brantford would be 165,000 by **2051**.) This would require the city to grow at almost three times the rate of growth achieved over the last 20 years (2.7% growth per year for 2021 – 2041 versus 0.85% from 2001 to 2021). It would be great if this were possible, but it seems like some aggressively wishful thinking. Can traffic simulations be presented at populations levels of 120,000 citizens (which would be our current growth rate) and an intermediate number such as 140,000 residents? Presumably, these are just variables plugged into simulation software so this

should be easy enough to produce. We have heard predictions of "traffic apocalypse" before in Brantford and it has never quite managed to happen.

**Further questions:**

Here are my additional questions I did not get a chance to ask:

1. Three-part question concerning Parsons itself:
  - a. After the Environmental Assessment is done and assuming Council authorized proceeding with the project, will Parsons (or any subsidiaries or associated firms) be bidding on any further roles in the construction of the Oak Park Road Extension roadway? In other words, will Parsons potentially be prime contractor for the roadway or a sub contractor for work associated with the road in any way after the EA is complete?
  - b. Has Parsons done any other work for the City of Brantford or any associated agencies or city run organizations in the last 36 months (apart from the Feasibility Study)? If so, what was the nature of this work and the value?
  - c. Has Parsons donated to any local charities, agencies or city run organizations? If so, when and to what value?
2. Will compensation be offered to homeowners in the Oakhill neighbourhood or to families who have interred loved ones in the Oakhill Cemetery? If so, how much has been set aside and how will the distribution be calculated?
3. How much more property will the city need to purchase to complete the project? City staff had requested \$1 million in the 2021 budget, but this was turned down by Council on January 13th. Would this \$1million cover **all** the property that would need to be purchased? Will delaying the project increase the cost of this property significantly?
4. The project team has stated that three consultation sessions had been held with Six Nations and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. When were these held, who attended and what were the outcomes? Are there any minutes from these meetings? Did they involve just the elected band councils or representatives of other First Nations stakeholders such as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Clan Mothers or the Mohawk First Nation? This PIC once again failed to produce any evidence the city is doing anything to proactively manage potential conflict over land claims in the OPRE corridor.

I have now carefully examined the information in both Partner Information Centres and I have to say that I still strongly do not believe this project is appropriate for the city of Brantford. The extremely high cost of the project combined with the irreversible damage to the environment simply do not add up to an acceptable level of risk for citizens of this city. I encourage our Council and Mayor to consider another path - if not outright cancellation, at least a delay into the 2031 timeframe to validate if the hoped-for population growth in the city is in fact happening.

Best wishes to everyone for Easter!

Regards,

Chris Armour



**Brantford Witness Statement\_Cowell\_June 7 Tufa .pdf**

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