

To the Project Team,

Thank you for making the OPRE project PIC #1 available. Per the request during the session, I am providing my feedback on the project and ways the evaluation process could be improved. I apologize in advance if this is somewhat lengthy. My input covers three main topics:

1. Presentation of the OPRE alternatives
2. Suggestions for the evaluation criteria
3. General feedback on the PIC process

Slide 22 - Alternative Planning Solutions

In looking at the alternatives presented, I believe you are greatly overcomplicating the situation by presenting seven options. There seems to be nothing in Options 2 through 6 that are mutually exclusive. For instance, there is no reason we cannot improve transit AND improve intersections AND change the development plan for the Southwest. In other words, are alternatives 2 to 6 additive and taken together would lead to sufficient traffic improvement to obviate building the bridge? That is a more useful way of looking at this than to make each seem like separate options. Ultimately, there only needs to be just three alternatives:

- Do nothing
- Improve the existing transportation network through various improvements in infrastructure and planning
- Build the Oak Park Road Extension

Slide 23 - Evaluation Criteria

The list of criteria you present does a good job of capturing the many dimensions by which this project needs to be judged. However, there are at least two important evaluation criteria that are not listed, which the citizens of Brantford need to understand.

First, what is the risk of litigation and/or opposition to this project? It is entirely likely that various groups such as the current residents of the Oakhill neighbourhood, families with loved ones in the cemetery, First Nations peoples and/or environmental groups will challenge this project in court. This will almost certainly impact the timeline and cost of the project. Make no mistake, this project will face considerable and stubborn public opposition, which would not be the case with, for instance, improvements to our transit network. Brantford citizens would not lay down in front of bulldozers to stop improvements to the intersections around the Lorne Bridge, but they do already oppose the environmental impact involved in the OPRE.

You do quite rightly list First Nations and Indigenous communities in the list of criteria, which is excellent, but First Nations concerns should also be considered as part of the risk of litigation. We know from bitter experience with the BSAR that these are serious issues which can again increase costs and create delays. At worst, these issues could create civil disturbance and bad relations with our neighbours which no one in town wants. It is good the project team talks about consultation, but we need to know more specifics. Nothing I have seen on this project so far spells out in detail how this risk will be managed apart from blandishments about "consultations". There needs to be an outside expert analysis of the status of the Oakhill area with relation to the Haldimand Tract in order to set a baseline for discussion.

Second, cost has to be listed as an evaluation criteria. The most recent Transportation Master Plan lists \$300 million in transportation construction projects over the next 20 years (November 2020 update to TMP page 38) and the OPRE is shown as \$100 million of that! In other words, one third of all the money planned to be spent on transportation in Brantford for the next generation would be going into the OPRE to allow low density suburbs in the Southwest better access to the 403 and maybe save a few minutes getting across the Lorne Bridge.

It is imperative that the evaluation criteria include a dimension for cost - preferably cost over an extended time horizon of perhaps 20 years or so. For instance, perhaps doing all of alternatives 2 to 6 from slide 22 gets us to 80% of the traffic mitigation but only costs \$50 million (after all, many of the improvements already seem to be budgeted

in the Transportation Master Plan anyway) and it would also preserve the environmental features of the OPRE corridor. This seems like a no-brainer decision for taxpayers. On the other hand, the \$100 million for the OPRE construction doesn't cover operating costs, debt costs, maintenance, repairs, potential flood damage and so on. These estimates need to be part of the project evaluation matrix so ratepayers can clearly understand the alternatives and can have a debate about how else \$100 million could be spent in town.

PIC Process

As stated above, the OPRE project will be one of the biggest construction projects the city has ever undertaken - probably comparable to building the 403 in the 1960s. I've lived here 20 years and never seen anything on this scale being carried out. Posting a slide deck to YouTube on a Friday afternoon is wholly inadequate public consultation for a project of this enormous size and this degree of risk for the city. I understand the COVID-19 crisis puts us all into an unusual position, but there urgently needs to be a forum for real time interactivity with live questions and answers on the OPRE. Even better would be if these sessions include the city councilors and mayor who have to be accountable for this decision to the voters in 2022. Otherwise, we face the situation described at the beginning of the novel "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" where the main character finds out his house is about to be demolished but the city bureaucrats assure him the plan was publicly available for review "in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet stuck in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying 'Beware of the Leopard.'"

Thank you in advance for your time and please don't hesitate to contact me to discuss this further.

Regards,

Chris Armour