

Conlins Road Bike Lane Upgrade

Public Consultation Report

June 2019

Prepared by:

Maogosha Pyjor
Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
Public Consultation Unit, City of Toronto



Contents

- 1. Introduction 3
 - Overview of Consultation Activity and Communications..... 3
 - Event Format..... 4
 - Participation and Feedback 4
- 3. Overall Feedback..... 5
 - Feedback Form Main Questions..... 5
- 4. Questions and Answers 7
- 5. Next Steps..... 9
- Appendix..... 10

1. Introduction

The City of Toronto is proposing to upgrade the existing bike lanes on Conlins Road between Ellesmere Road to Sheppard Avenue East to cycle tracks (bike lanes that are physically separated from traffic). This work would be done as part of already scheduled road resurfacing that is planned to take place on Conlins Road later this year.

The new cycle tracks would provide a safer and more comfortable connection for cyclists and improve connections to the Gatineau Hydro Corridor Trail and Sheppard Avenue bike lanes as well as future cycling routes planned in the area. The upgrade to cycle tracks would also result in changes to on-street parking in varying degrees.

The options for consideration included:

- **Conlins Road (Good Road to Sheppard Avenue East):**
An increase of space would be provided to allow for a separated bike facility with bollards (i.e., posts) or precast concrete curbs
- **Conlins Road (Ellesmere Road to Good Road):**
An increase of space would be provided to allow for a separated bike facility with bollards or precast concrete curbs in both options:
 - **Option 1:** Provide bike lanes and buffers at preferred widths (1 m), Removes all existing parking.
 - **Option 2:** Provide bike lanes and buffers with less width (0.5-0.7 m), Maintains approximately 18 parking spaces.

This report summarizes the feedback received leading up to, during and after the event held on April 9, 2019 at Morrish Public School.

Overview of Consultation Activity and Communications

Public consultation for this project utilized the following activities to involve community members including:

- Highland Creek Community Association meeting (March 6, 2019)
- 3,300 flyers for public event delivered by Canada Post (March 22)
- Public drop-in event (April 9, 2019)
- Communications:
 - Website (www.toronto.ca/cycling/conlins)
 - Online feedback form closed April 23, 2019.
- 13 emails and one phone call received
- Information materials presented at the event (i.e. display panels, rollout maps, feedback form) are also available on the project website
- Information sharing with local Councillor, Ward 25 Scarborough-Rouge Park

Event Format

The event was a drop-in style/open house format. Attendees were greeted upon arrival, requested to sign-in, provided a feedback form, and invited to review project materials setup in the room. Project materials included information boards (e.g. illustrating the cross-sections) and roll out maps of options. The following topics were covered:

- Overview of existing and planned cycling projects near Conlins Rd.
- Existing conditions: parking, speed survey
- Proposed bike lane improvements and upgrade options (Ellesmere Rd. to Good Rd. and Good Rd. to Sheppard Ave. E.)
- Next steps

Given the requests of some of the attendees, a large group discussion was facilitated by City staff. People had the opportunity to ask questions and provide their feedback which was recorded.

Attendees were encouraged to also provide input by completing either online or printed feedback forms regarding their preference on the options presented:

- Level of support for proposed cycling upgrade on Conlins Road (Good Rd to Sheppard Ave. E) to a cycle track (separated bike lanes)
- Level of support for proposed cycling upgrade on Conlins Road (Ellesmere Rd. to Good Rd.) which consisted of Option 1 (removing all existing parking) and Option 2 (maintain 18 parking spaces) in order to provide required space for buffer area and physical separation between cyclists and motor vehicle traffic

Feedback forms could be submitted at the venue, mailed directly to the City of Toronto, emailed to Maogosha.Pyjor@toronto.ca or via an online feedback form located on the project webpage. A summary of the comments received from email correspondence, at the event and from submitted feedback form follows.

Participation and Feedback

Approximately 19 people signed in at the public event. There were people who attended the event and chose not to sign in. A total of 21 feedback forms were completed (5 print copies, 16 online forms).

The perspective of people who filled out the feedback form was mainly comprised of people who live on Conlins Road or live in close proximity to the proposed bike lane upgrade.

On June 3, 2019, a Petition was also submitted to the local Councillor by residents of Conlins Road and neighbouring area who are strongly opposed to any changes to the current bike lanes. The petition was signed by 71 households.

3. Overall Feedback

Below is a summary of key comments received by members of the public through the various communications listed above which have been amalgamated, summarized, and organized by topic.

Overall

There is a high level of concern about the reduction of parking spaces required to upgrade the existing bike lanes to cycle tracks (separated bike lanes). Some residents question how the current low volume of cyclists warrants dedicating more space for a cycling facility and are concerned about where family visitors and guests will park (i.e. weekends).

While there is disagreement with the proposed options, staff have also heard from people who support improving the current bike lanes. This support is mainly attributed to providing a safer and physically protected bike lane, connecting to other area cycling facilities and encouraging more cyclists.

Feedback Form Main Questions

Level of support for proposed upgrade on Conlins Road (Good to Sheppard)

- Strong objection (eleven people) with some strong support (six people) submitted
- Observation that traffic is increasing for all modes (motor vehicle, cycling and pedestrian) and expectation that more students will be travelling by bike in the area with expansion of University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (UTSC)
- No impacts to residents in this section therefore positive proposal for some
- Sentiment that small amount of bicycle traffic on Conlins Road does not warrant upgrade or funds required while others maintain that while there are low cycling volumes, the motor vehicle speeds warrant separation
- Comments that physical separation will help keep cyclists safe and off sidewalks
- Important to consider that limited crossings of 401 with safe cycling facility requires attention especially given connection to UTSC and reducing our CO2 emissions for the climate crisis

Sample Comments:

- *Current unprotected bike lane is dangerous given that drivers regularly speed along this road*
- *Current bike lanes are more than sufficient*

Level of support for proposed upgrade on Conlins Road (Ellesmere to Good)

Option 1: Provide bike lanes and buffers at preferred widths (1 m).

Removes all existing parking.

- Strong objection (twelve people) with some strong support (six people) submitted
- Senior residents place high value in convenient parking for their visitors who may also be older and/or have mobility needs

- Sentiment that residential parking must be accommodated and people must have access to on-street parking for holiday and celebratory functions
- Opinion that more space for cycle tracks will improve site lines for home owners backing out their cars from driveways is a positive aspect

Sample Comment:

- *Option one affects parking for all residents, option two reduces the parking drastically and no other parking alternative provided to offset lost space*

Level of support for proposed upgrade on Conlins Road (Ellesmere to Good)

Option 2: Provide bike lanes and buffers with less width (0.5-0.7 m).

Maintains approximately 18 parking spaces.

- Strong objection (nine people), somewhat object (1 person), somewhat support (3 people), and strong support (four people) submitted
- Some maintain that no reduction of parking is acceptable
- Sentiment shared that this project is a waste of taxpayer dollars
- Comments that leaving some parking is more reasonable because maintain on-street parking supply

Sample Comments:

- *Every resident along this street has massive driveways. On-street parking isn't necessary. Although, if parking is maintained, it could provide an additional buffer between cyclists and moving traffic. But this would only work if people actually park in the parking spaces, which does not seem to currently happen.*
- *Money should be spent on housing, health care and education*

Popular Topics and Additional Comments

Bollards/Flexiposts

- Concern about how these will look and function on the street (i.e. snow removal, waste collection and emergency vehicles)

Sample Comment:

- *Cycling barriers is ludicrous and unwarranted. It is an eyesore and contributes to urban clutter. We are not downtown where cycling lanes are using by commuters I do not wish to look out my front window to see 2 layers of orange barricades!*

Driveway Operations

- Experience shared that currently difficult to exit and enter driveway during peak hours especially closer to Ellesmere Rd.
- Concern that positioning the bike lane beside curb will put cyclists in potential conflict with cars backing out

Parking

- Consider allowing more parking on public holidays to accommodate residents with visitors
- Some frustration with existing parking restrictions and desire for allowing parking again Monday-Friday during daytime hours

Suggested Design Considerations

- Consider bi-directional facility on the west side of Conlins Road and avoid parking impacts on east side
- Re-engineer road to make it narrower and relocate the cycle tracks adjacent to the sidewalk which solves the issue of: cyclists riding on sidewalk, feeling unsafe on road (regardless of bollards); issue of speeding; narrow roads make drivers feel unsafe reducing speed; and parking unaffected
- City staff should work closely with UTSC to identify needs and growth prediction of the area (note: currently no bike lanes on university campus)

Sample Comment:

- *Given that most car traffic speeds well above the speed limit, more VisionZero design features need to be implemented. The vehicle lanes should be made more narrow than 3.3M if possible. Also, no centre yellow line should be installed in the vehicle lanes. This would help discourage speeding by making it more clear to drivers that this is a residential street and not a highway.*

Road Safety

- Differing opinions shared at the event about level of safety and comfort people feel as cyclists on Conlins Road
- Comments that current vehicle lane and bike lane widths leave enough space for cyclists
- Instead of upgrade to bike lanes, reduce the speed on the road (it is a bypass to get to the 401), install speedbumps, or install a traffic light at Canmore St.
- Physical separation is the only way to ensure safety of cyclists and get cyclists off sidewalks
- More education and enforcement needed to deter cyclists from riding on the sidewalk

Sample Comment:

- *The street is only dangerous during rush hour*

Other or Out of Scope

- Concern about cyclists who ride on sidewalk instead of in the bike lane
- Request for traffic lights at Canmore Blvd. and Milner Ave.
- Request for bike lanes to Ellesmere Road
- Consider parking permit for residents
- All parking restrictions should be removed

4. Questions and Answers

The following is a summary of the key questions received either email or at the public event and the responses provided from the project team.

1. Why is this upgrade being proposed now?

Conlins Road is scheduled to be resurfaced later this year. The resurfacing project provides an opportunity to upgrade the existing bike lanes to current Canadian and

North American design guidelines by offering cyclists more protection from motor vehicles.

2. What other streets are being re-surfaced in addition to Conlins Road?

Conlins Road is included in a resurfacing contract including many streets in Wards 16 through 25. Some of the other streets in Ward 25 include portions of Lawrence Avenue East, Good Road, and Calverley Trail.

3. Will the cycle track block entrance and exit of our driveway?

No. There will be buffer breaks at every driveway and clearly marked (painted) pavement markings.

4. Will the cycle tracks be maintained in the winter? Where will the snow storage/piles go?

Yes. The City has specialized equipment (cycle track plows). Some snow can be stored in the buffer between the vehicle / parking lanes and cycle track, with the remainder of snow stored in the boulevard behind the curb.

5. Will Toronto Fire and EMS be able to pull over to curb?

Yes.

6. What is the current volume of cyclists using Conlins Road bike lane today?

Current bicycle volumes along Conlins Road are very low. Bicycle volumes are low in part because of incomplete infrastructure and lack of connections to major attractions in the area, such as the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (UTSC). Bicycle volumes are expected to increase as the network in the area grows, particularly the Meadoway west of Conlins Road and a potential future connection to UTSC along Ellesmere Road.

7. What is the current vehicle collision data show (e.g. how many cyclists/pedestrians have been hit by a vehicle)?

From 2014 to 2018, there were two collisions involving a cyclist and two collisions involving a pedestrian. These collisions were either at the intersection with Ellesmere Road or the intersection with Sheppard Avenue East. Given the low existing cycling volumes, it is expected that the number of collisions involving cyclists would be low.

8. Where will deliveries and contractors park their vehicles with no parking?

For deliveries that are pre-planned over an extended period of time (such as for moving trucks) a road occupancy permit can allow for temporary loading within the right of way. The permit application can be downloaded from the following

link: <https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Transportation%20Services/Construction%20Permits/Files/pdf/13-0029.pdf>

For further information with respect to this application, please call 416-392-6593 and Right of Way Management staff would be happy to assist. Alternatively you can e-mail the Street occupation Permit staff at soprey@toronto.ca. Please note that we require 3 to 5 days for the processing of these applications.

5. Next Steps

In response to the comments received during public consultation regarding summer weekend and holiday parking, staff conducted three parking surveys on the afternoon and evening of Easter Sunday (April 21), with between three and nine vehicles observed between Ellesmere Road and Good Road. Staff conducted two additional parking surveys on the Sunday afternoon of Victoria Day weekend (May 19), with one and three vehicles observed in the same segment. The maximum observed parking demand on both holidays is within the range of parking demand observed in October 2018.

The project team has considered both public feedback and technical considerations in developing a preferred option. In response to the feedback received, Option 2 was modified to include buffered bicycle lanes instead of cycle tracks from Ellesmere Road to Canmore Boulevard. This change would reduce the impact to on-street parking and the cost of municipal services. An upgrade to cycle tracks remains proposed from Canmore Boulevard to Sheppard Avenue East to provide a physically separated facility connecting the existing Gatineau Hydro Corridor Trail with the potential future Meadoway facility that may extend west from the Canmore Boulevard / Chartway Boulevard intersection. Approximately 5 of the 14 existing parking spaces between Canmore Boulevard and Good Road would be retained.

This revised proposal/concept (see appendix for illustration) will be reported on to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on June 27 followed by a report to City Council in July.

Thank you for being involved!

Appendix

Conlins Road – Ellesmere to Sheppard – Summary of Revised Concept

June 2019

