

Appendix C: Benton-Frederick Cycling Study Phase 1 - Public Engagement Summary

The public engagement plan was developed to present the project information and to solicit public feedback. It included a project webpage and an online survey through the EngageWR platform. The EngageWR page included the project background, the rationale for the project, the underlying supportive policy, and an on-line survey for the public to provide their input.

The online survey was open to the public from June 3rd to 21st for a period of three weeks. At the end of the three weeks, 287 people visited the project page and 127 participated in the survey. Majority of the participants live, walk, cycle, use transit, own a business in Kitchener downtown area or drive on Benton Street/Frederick Street.

Specifically, there were 105 people (85%) walking or cycling, 68 people (53%) lived locally, 38 people (30%) used transit, 27 people (21%) drove and 5 people (4%) who own a business near Benton Street/Frederick Street that participated in the survey and provided feedback.

The key inputs and concerns received are summarized in the following points:

- Reduction in travel lanes leads to slower traffic
- Connects to Downtown Cycling grid
- Promotes cycling culture and traffic calming
- Reduces Greenhouse gas emissions
- Noise reduction
- Safer routes would encourage kids to bike to school (Courtland, Suddaby, Stanley Park)
- Loss of free parking on Benton Street
- Slower speeds and delays to motorists
- Could cause inconvenience at driveways

Some of the other comments received and project team's responses are outlined below:

Comment: Population growth calls for more roads and parking.

Response: Future growth in travel cannot be accommodated without a significant increase in non-car travel modes because there is not enough roadway capacity at the network level for 50% more cars. Population growth necessitates the need for shift in

transportation modes from car trips to transit, cycling, and walking. Widening roads to accommodate all growth in travel demand by single occupancy vehicle trips is not a viable long-term solution. While free on-street parking is desirable to motorists, it is not the most effective use of public space and sometimes trade-offs are needed. In this particular case, the removal of on-street parking is required to provide a safer space for people travelling by bicycles. There is off-street parking available in the area.

Comment: Roads will get congested if bike lanes are added.

Response: Annual Average Daily Traffic volumes on Benton-Frederick corridor ranges between 6000 and 10,000 vehicles per day, which can be accommodated by a two-lane cross-section.

Comment: Narrow vehicle lanes will lead to collisions.

Response: Studies show that narrower vehicle lanes lead to fewer collisions on urban streets. Wider lanes lead to higher speeds, sometimes above the speed limit, as drivers tend to be more comfortable with the extra space available between adjacent vehicles. Narrow lanes require drivers to be more cautious and travel at lower speeds, closer to the posted speed limit.

Comment: Protected cycling facilities are required. Painted cycling lanes need some sort of physical separation.

Response: Cycling lanes will be separated from vehicle travel lanes by a painted buffer of 1meter. This provides a lateral separation between cyclists and vehicles.

Comment: Bicycles are not the main mode of transportation in the City. One needs to drive to Downtown if they live in the suburbs.

Response: The long-term objective is to create an environment where short trips are safe and comfortable by walking and cycling, medium and longer trips are efficient by cycling and transit. Car travel will continue to have an important role in the transportation system for all those users/trips that cannot benefit from the other modes. Car access to downtown will remain.

Comment: How will the two lanes handle the increased traffic when the new developments are built on Benton.

Response: Intensification in Downtown Kitchener can be successful only with increased walking and cycling for shorter trips, and increased transit use for longer trips. Close proximity to Downtown and its retail businesses, restaurants and other attractions can encourage walking and cycling if safe and convenient active transportation facilities are provided. Fewer car trips will reduce air and noise pollution to residents living along

Benton-Frederick corridor as well as help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the area.

Comment: Cycling lanes should be connected to a network to get around Downtown Kitchener.

Response: Long-term plan of this project is to develop a physically separated cycling facility along the entire corridor of Benton-Frederick which will connect to and expand the City of Kitchener's Downtown Cycling network.

Comment: Extend the cycling lanes to the rest of Frederick Street.

Response: The long-term plan is to extend the separated cycling facility to the entire Benton-Frederick corridor (from Courtland Avenue to Bruce Street). This will connect to City of Kitchener's cycling network through their neighbourhood bikeways and separated cycling facilities.

Comment: Cycling lanes elsewhere are not used.

Response: It takes time to build a high quality (safe and attractive) connected cycling network. The increase of people who chose to cycle is also gradual. There is plenty of evidence that the "build it and they will come" approach is valid.