

Dissecting a Bad Idea

Many citizens expect that the Parkway Extension will greatly improve traffic in Peterborough. They will be disappointed. Many citizens assume that the Parkway will be a safe road. They too will be disappointed. The truth is that most people do not have a clear idea of where the Parkway will go, or what it will look like if it is built. Review the route, and see if you agree. The Parkway is just a bad idea.

1. A PARKWAY IN NAME ALONE:

As the map shows the Parkway is planned to wind in a northeasterly direction, with lots of bends and turns, from Clonsilla in the southwest to Cumberland in the northeast. Look at how many other roads this “Parkway” will intersect. Naturally these intersections will demand traffic lights. In other words, this “Parkway” will not be a fast highway through town, but just another winding road **with as many as fifteen traffic lights!** Whatever help this road might bring to North-South traffic will be squandered by adding new traffic lights (and therefore delays) to East-West traffic. A “Parkway” should be fast. This one won’t be. It will merely be one more road that winds through town, on which traffic has to stop, a lot. Studies of the route suggest that someone driving the length of the Parkway would only save about 1 kilometer, or roughly 72 seconds of driving time. At a cost of at least \$22 million – and likely a lot more – that’s no bargain.

If the Parkway is not a significantly faster route, drivers will not go very far out of their way in order to use it. Thus it will not divert

nearly as much traffic from other streets as people are led to believe

2. WHAT COUNTS AS “RESIDENTIAL”?

Parkway proponents have tried to make the case that it will divert traffic away from ‘residential’ neighborhoods. In fact, the Parkway route runs right through the **two most densely populated areas in town!** More people per square foot live in the high density Talwood Apts (A) near Goodfellow and Sherbrooke and the medium-density walkups around Parkhill/Monaghan (B) than just about anywhere else in the municipality. In other words, in the name of diverting traffic away from ‘residents’, Parkway proponents would bring the smog, noise and safety concerns of a major road to precisely the most densely populated areas of town. And it doesn’t end there. The Parkway then proceeds north through an incredibly narrow stretch between Weller and St. Peter’s, where it would run virtually through a long string of residential backyards. In the name of easing traffic on streets just a few blocks to the east or west, this Parkway runs right through residential neighborhoods all the way along.

Diverting traffic from residential areas is a noble goal. Unfortunately, this plan fails to do that. The Parkway will merely shift some of the traffic from one neighborhood to another. Moving traffic from one person’s front yard to someone else’s backyard is hardly the answer.

3. DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS

Planners have long known the dangers involved when roads do not intersect at right

angles. Sight lines are terrible; traffic flow is confusing. Accidents occur more frequently. The city has already witnessed **two deaths** at such an intersection (Parkway and Queensway) and had to spend over \$1 million to improve its safety. The Parkway Extension, which will only rarely run in a direct North/South route, will create a string of similar dangerous intersections throughout the city including major connections at Goodfellow, Hopkins, Fairbairn, Chemong and Hilliard. Making matters worse some of these are on hills, where visibility will be hampered even more. When this route was initially drawn – **in 1947(!)** – it never planned for these interchanges. But cities evolve. If we graft this route of yesterday on to our city today we will create a sequence of unsafe intersections throughout the heart of town, where we are sure to see many accidents.

4. SCHOOLS

The original planners also knew well enough that it was unsafe to run a major road right upon a school. But, again, cities change. The Parkway route is now home to three schools and a daycare center. In the North, the Parkway will run right upon **St. Paul’s School.** (C) Here busses will have to negotiate another hazardous interchange with a traffic light on a hill, where visibility will be terrible. It also runs right by the playground of **Highland Heights School** (D) Even worse is the plan to run the Parkway over the current driveway of **St. Peter’s High School.** (E) With no other viable entrance, the school will have to enter and exit directly onto the Parkway. Finally, the Parkway will run directly past the nearby **day care center.** (F) School officials and parents recently expressed

