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Advocating for Safe Cycling Throughout Durham Region

GHD Limited
65 Sunray Street
Whitby ON
L1N 8Y3
Attention: Blair Shoniker

Via E-Mail: blair.shoniker@ghd.com

January 27, 2021

RE: Reconstruction White's Bridge Filing of Addendum to Municipal Class E/A

Dear Blair,

On behalf of DRCC, thank you for responding to our recently submission received January 18, 2021 regarding the above noted project. Upon review, DRCC is pleased to provide additional feedback in support of our request to include safe cycling active transportation (AT) infrastructure within the proposed phase one White's Bridge rollout.

For clarity, it is our understanding the phase one recommended Option A bridge deck (attachment 1) will comprise of two traffic lanes with a clear zone on either side and one sidewalk. In addition to this, approximately 100 metres of new ramp access will be constructed on both approaches. (1)

First off, we note in your comments that a wider breadth of user's groups has not been considered being as a bridge deck MUP will not have a connecting MUP feature and does not serve the travelling public. Using this analysis, we would also conclude the proposed sidewalk would also not have a connecting feature which leads DRCC to question the comment of a non connecting MUP as justification to not add a bridge deck MUP.

In support of accommodating a wider breadth of user groups and serving the traveling public, DRCC notes the following surveys.

- CAA Auto Insurance has found in their 2020 Survey two of the top five issues encountered by cyclists are a lack of supporting Trails and Bike Lanes. (2)
- Nanos Research Provincial Cycling Survey commissioned in 2018 indicating a vast majority of Ontarian's showing levels of support for additional bike lane infrastructure improvements. (3)

Further to this, we note the following recent bridge projects within the Town of Whitby which have included a safe cycling AT component.

- Henry Street bridge completed in 2017 crossing over Highway 401 has both cycle lanes and a MUP.



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- Dryden Street bridge completed in 2020 - as referenced in our original submission - includes both cycle lanes and a MUP and is now recognized as a "best in class bridge" supporting AT.
- Presently under construction the Brock Street bridge crossing Highway 401 will include a MUP on the west side of the bridge deck upon completion summer 2021.
 - Note: Both the Henry and Brock MTO projects received supplemental funding from the Town of Whitby to add MUP's to the bridge decks in place of the sidewalks proposed by MTO.

We would also draw to your attention the following recently completed bridge projects within Whitby.

- Rossland Road bridge crossing over Highway 412 constructed approximately 2015 with a sidewalk on the southside. Today, we now see a MUP on Rossland Road completed in 2019 approaching this bridge with no safe cycling MUP bridge deck support.
- Ashburn Road bridge crossing Highway 407 also constructed approximately 2015 with no identified cycle lanes either on the bridge deck or the ramp approaches. We now have an identified rural paved shoulder Cycle Route on Ashburn with a non supporting *pinch point* bridge. We also note a post construction attempted to correct this situation involved applying asphalt to the approach ramp shoulders however the outcome was a rippled surface which is less than ideal for cyclists pushed tight to guardrails and a bridge deck parapet wall with no safety rails.

In both of these examples, safe cycling support could have been easily included into the bridge design with virtually no impact on the total cost. Both of these examples were totally preventable, however in the present world, the cost to retrofit these bridges in support of safe cycling will likely never happen.

Thankfully, thru the action of DRCC members and the Town of Whitby a similar situation was avoided on the Anderson Road bridge crossing Highway 407 constructed approximately 2015 where Cycle Route lanes were added to the bridge deck and approaches with the original plan being no cycle lane support by the 407EDG consortium. Drawing from this lesson - at the request of DRCC - a total of fourteen overpass bridges constructed in phase two of the 407 east expansion were reviewed by MTO with recommendations by MTO to include safe cycling support versus one overpass completed in 407 east phase one roll out. (4)

Looking to the future we are aware Columbus Road will eventually migrate to a four-lane planned corridor with a sidewalk and MUP in the 10+ year horizon. Although planned in theory, we see the mostly likely outcome being an upgraded two-lane Columbus roadway complete with cycle lanes, sidewalk and MUP for decades to follow leading to a non supporting safe cycling bridge deck as proposed in the option A configuration. In our view, this situation is totally preventable with the safe cycling component adding virtually no additional cost to the phase one project roll out.

Our question is why would safe cycling not be supported in phase one?

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In support of safe cycling, we conclude with the following comments:

1. The biggest concern we hear from our DRCC membership is the lack of connected safe cycling infrastructure which is similar to the public survey comments.
2. Safe cycling support with new bridge construction is fully endorsed by the Town of Whitby as referenced in three examples. Conversely, we also see the outcome when safe cycling is not supported at the time of construction in two examples and how changes are possible at the time of construction in support of safe cycling in the last example.
3. As a registered Whitby 2021 Active Transportation Plan stakeholder, we note a best practice safe cycling approach is now being adopted in Whitby.
 - a. *"The Draft Final Active Transportation Plan builds upon the Cycling and Leisure Trails Plan (2010) and considers the increase in cycling and active modes of travel, **best practices, new standards and guidelines**, and emerging technologies."* (5)
4. A Complete Streets – all users, all abilities - approach is now included in the recently adopted "Whitby Green Standard" and supports safe cycling. (6)
5. The added benefits of building for tomorrow today far out way the build later approach not knowing how the future will unfold as evident in the two 2015 bridge projects.

Lastly, as a community partner DRCC appreciates the opportunity to provide our fact-based feedback to the project team in support of the inclusion of cycle lanes and MUP in place of a sidewalk and clear zones within the phase one White's Bridge rollout.

On behalf of every-one at DRCC, thank you for taking time to review our concerns.

Respectfully,

Ron Lalonde
Corporate Secretary
Durham Region Cycling Coalition

C.C. Bruce MacDonald, Executive Director Durham Region Cycling Coalition
Josh Schembri, Town of Whitby
Matt Hunter, GHD
Alana Wittman, GHD

Source:

- (1) Town of Whitby - GHD Municipal Class E/A Addendum
- (2) Ontario Bike Summit, December 2020
- (3) Share the Road Cycling Coalition
- (4) MTO Letter May 11, 2016
- (5) Connect Whitby.CA, 60-day Active Transportation Plan Review.
- (6) Whitby.CA, Whitby Green Standard

Attachment 1

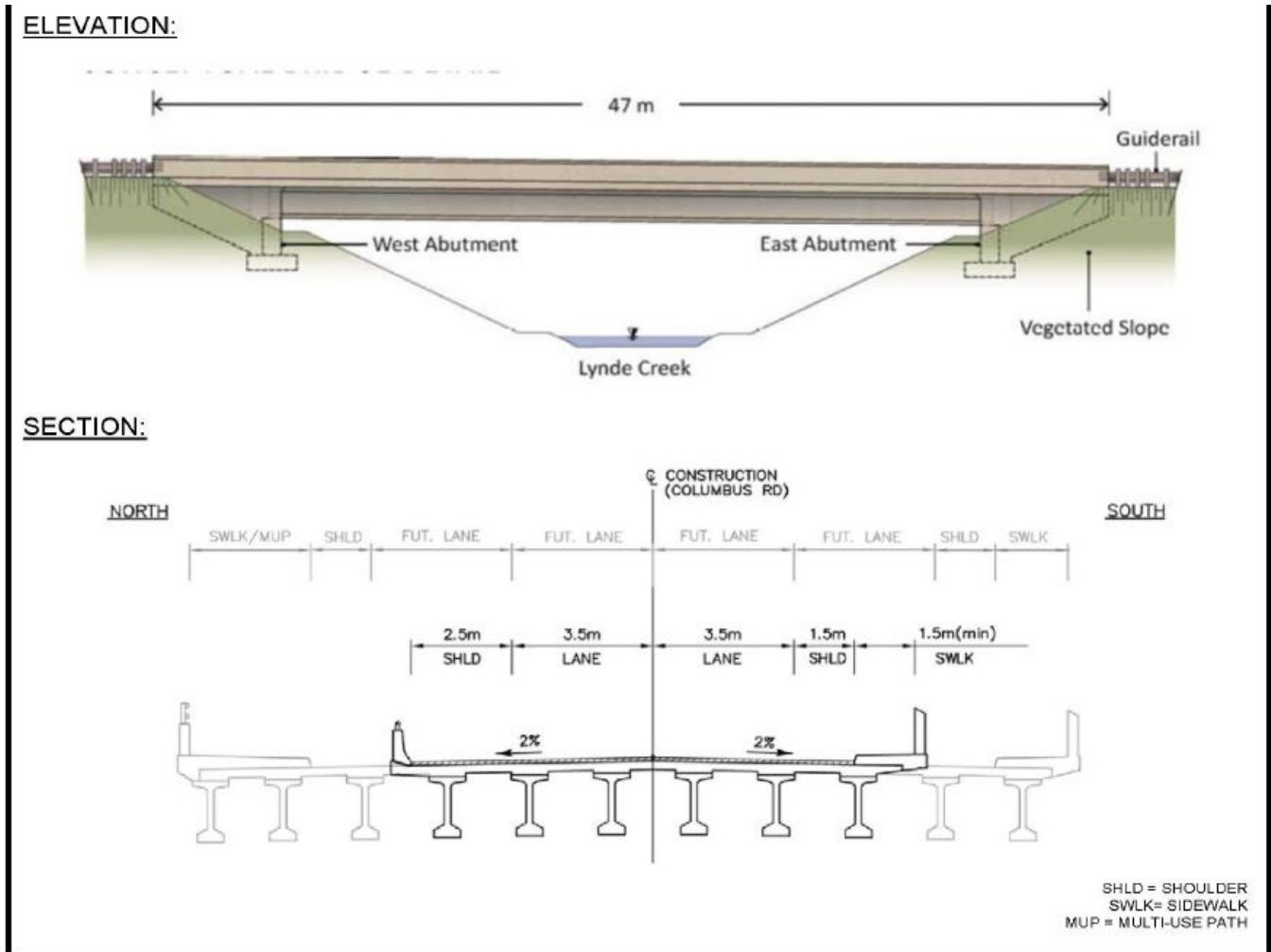


Figure 5 Proposed Bridge Plan View, Elevation and Deck Section