

**Remarks for Brian Rosborough, Executive Director, AMO
Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural
Policy, November 18, 2024**

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Brian Rosborough, and I am the Executive Director of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

I am joined today by my colleague Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy. Thank you for the invitation to be with you today.

I will be speaking today mainly about Bill 212's proposed bike lane framework.

Based on local knowledge and community input, municipalities develop transportation plans that balance traffic flow with other priorities such as active transportation, multimodal transportation

and environmental and health protection. Bike lanes play a critical role in urban planning.

We have all acknowledged that congestion is a problem in large cities.

While much of it stems from a historical lack of comprehensive transit options and investments, primarily due to changing provincial and federal focus.

What matters is that we all agree today that congestion can impact local economic development and people's quality of life – and it should be addressed.

However, the notion that removing bike lanes will result in improvements to congestion is a narrow argument.

That theory assumes that more roads will improve congestion and that bike lanes create congestion.

In fact, studies have shown that more roads can result in congestion as it increases demand of their use.

Conversely – there's significant data that shows that creating bike lanes helps increase cyclists , removing cars from the road and helping reduce congestion – along with improving road safety and reducing carbon emissions.

The province's proposal to remove and block bike lanes in specific locations is misguided and ineffective.

No single road improvement or isolated project can effectively address congestion.

Transportation planning is built on understanding the connections of the ENTIRE network for all users – for example many may rely on bikes to connect to transit or run local errands and they should be able to rely on a safe way to do so.

Developing a balanced diverse transportation network that considers the evolving needs of the community is a crucial planning exercise that includes a mix of roads, cycling paths, sidewalks, trails, and public transit options.

Moreover, it is an exercise best left to municipalities who base it on their long-standing understanding of local infrastructure they manage and build, along with how it fits in with their long-term growth plans.

Setting aside the fact that these changes will create extra costs for tax-payers – both to remove existing infrastructure and to add another player of bureaucracy for marginal benefit.

Does anyone believe that removing the identified bike lanes will significantly address the complex congestion that occurs in Toronto?

Or that adding another layer of review from the provincial government whose expertise is best suited for large scale projects - such as expanding the GO service, significant capital transit initiatives, and overseeing Ontario's highways will help congestion in cities?

Probably not.

That leaves a choice for policy makers - do you approve a framework that will *ineffectively* target one small aspect of transportation planning, or do you engage in a constructive discussion about how we tackle congestion together.

AMO is very open to this discussion with the province.

In fact, AMO is calling on the province to sit down with municipalities to explore how best the services that Ontarians rely on most, can be delivered:

- more effectively,
- more affordably and
- more sustainably.

That includes an opportunity to better understand how, as partners, we can make the necessary investment in infrastructure to:

- support growth,
- maintain about a half a trillion dollars-worth of existing infrastructure owned by municipalities, and
- ensure that the impacts of climate change are factored into protecting Ontario's economic, social and environmental infrastructure.

AMO estimates that Ontario's municipalities are planning to invest more than \$250 billion in essential infrastructure over the next 10 years, -- and more than \$100 billion of that is to support growth.

This includes making modifications to or building new roads, bridges, sidewalks and bike lanes that offer choice for Ontarians and work together with world-class transit as a network that connects people to work, home and recreation.

We can't do it alone – the province has an important role to play.

We certainly can't do it with policies designed to reduce our capacity for local transportation planning and infrastructure.

Success at tackling problems like congestion is dependent on a partnership with all orders of government.

AMO is confident that the Government of Ontario will answer our call for a Social and Economic Prosperity review to ensure that communities in every part of Ontario have access to:

- a productive and sustainable future, and
- a quality of life that can be the envy of North America.

Thank you.