

Open letter to Sudbury Mayor and Council – Published in Sudbury Star – May 10th 2016

RE: Second Avenue Construction Delays

On behalf of my organization and, I believe, those other groups and individuals who have expressed concerns with respect to the reconstruction of Second Avenue, I can assure Council and citizens that the intent is not to stop the project from going forward. We all would like to see this roadway rebuilt but only if done right, for the benefit of all and taking into consideration the environmental issues we feel have not been adequately addressed by the City roads department and which we have brought to the attention of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change for their evaluation and determination.

Both the Mayor and ward councillor expressed concern with the initial plans for the project (which have not changed significantly) with no provision for treatment of storm water runoff to Lake Ramsey; little consideration of air and noise pollution or safety issues; and the social impact on the high density lower income community with a significant proportion of seniors and children.

We believe there is a better option than a five lane Kingsway type roadway into the area and a seven lane intersection to serve the cemetery and Scarlet Drive, that does not even meet official requirements for a traffic light.

We are suggesting that the City roads dept seriously evaluate with objective, expert opinion the option of a modern one lane roundabout which would eliminate the need for road widening, be safer and more efficient, plus be more attractive. The actual cost savings could be quite significant especially over time and the environmental impact far less than what is currently proposed.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with anyone or any group interested in learning more of what we are suggesting to make this area of our community more welcoming and liveable for the benefit of all. Additional details can be found on the website www.minnowlake.ca.

John Lindsay, President

Minnow Lake Restoration Group

[705-507-6037](tel:705-507-6037)

PS: There are dozens (hundreds, perhaps thousands worldwide) of examples of how modern roundabouts have solved traffic problems ... just one described below that could relate to the Second Avenue situation: Source: <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/roundabouts-tool-placemaking>

Rampant sprawl in Orange County, Florida, was creating rush hour back-ups half a mile long at the Town of Windermere's quaint Main Street. The conventional solution—widening Main Street to four-lanes—would have destroyed the town's character. Planner Brian Canin and transportation designer Jurgen Duncan instead proposed a pair of single-lane modern roundabouts with circulating speeds of 12-14 miles per hour. The Town approved construction and, to everyone's amazement, the traffic congestion disappeared. In the low-speed environment, motorists stop for pedestrians and wave them across the street.

Low-speed modern roundabouts define public spaces as places of shared use: safe, comfortable and interesting to pedestrians. Unlike polluting, hectic, and ugly signalized intersections, the possibilities for clean, calm, and attractive round intersections are endless.

With no idling engines stuck in red light or stop sign queues, noxious tailpipe fumes decline by as much as 80 percent and greenhouse gases by 56 percent.

Well-designed modern roundabouts are a gift to children, who need a forgiving, uncomplicated environment where approaching drivers are looking directly at them, and where a pedestrian refuge splitter island has room for them, their friends, bicycles, and skateboards. Low-speed modern roundabouts tame otherwise aggressive drivers, improve the typical traffic snarl, and empower children to walk or bike.

Modern roundabouts are a gift to seniors whose depth perception, ability to see moving objects, and neck flexibility are diminishing. In a roundabout's simple setting, events play out slowly, giving seniors time to perceive, think, and react—and giving others time to compensate for any missteps. Nobody pays for mistakes with their lives. The 10-14 foot crosswalk, from curb to splitter island, exposes slow-walking seniors to motor vehicles for less time than most conventional intersections.

Roundabouts are a valuable tool for melding the needs of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians and an answer to mindless, costly road widening

Note: City roads staff endorse roundabouts, but have discounted one for Second Avenue due to unsubstantiated concerns related to space requirements and citizen acceptance. Roundabouts can be designed for any circumstance and acceptance by the public once installed is overwhelmingly positive. Second Avenue provides a unique and exciting opportunity to create an example of urban road planning to serve as model for other new and reconstructed endeavors throughout the city. We are asking for expert objective evaluation of the current project to determine the viability of this option which would address many of our environmental concerns.