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2 November 2020

Re: A27 Arundel Bypass – Reasons to Cancel

For the last century, transport planning has been automobile-oriented. Planners assumed that “transportation” refers to automobile travel, that “transport problem” refers to constraints on vehicle traffic speeds, and “transport improvement” refers to projects that increase traffic speeds. This favored automobile travel over slower but more affordable and resource-efficient modes, creating automobile-dependent communities where it is easy to travel by car but difficult to get around by other modes. Such a system is inefficient and unfair.

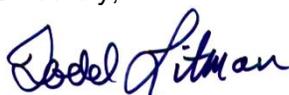
A new planning paradigm is changing the way we think about transport problems and evaluate potential solutions. The new paradigm is more comprehensive and multi-modal. It recognizes the harms caused by highway expansions, including direct environmental damages caused by expanded pavement, indirect costs caused by induced vehicle travel (the additional vehicle travel that would not otherwise occur), the additional delay and risk that expanded roadways and faster vehicle traffic cause to pedestrians and bicyclists (called the “barrier effect”), plus damage caused by the more sprawled development patterns.

The new paradigm recognizes that walking, bicycling and public transit play important roles in an efficient and equitable transport system, and that automobile-oriented improvements often conflict with these other modes. Money spent on highways is unavailable to improve other transport modes. This is unfair to people who cannot, should not, or prefer not to travel by automobile for all their trips.

Since Britain has a well-developed highway network, additional expansions provide small benefits. Such projects face a paradox: motorists demand road improvements, provided somebody else foots the bill, but if faced with a user fee to finance the incremental costs, motorists often choose other routes, modes or destinations. As a result, current transport planning practices often cause governments to spend £2 for roadway improvements that users only value at, on average, £1.

A basic principle of good planning is that individual, short-term decisions should support strategic, long-term goals. The A27 Arundel Bypass is an example of a costly project that contradicts virtually all other planning goals, including goals to encourage resource-efficient travel, preserve greenspace, and improve mobility options for non-drivers. I therefore recommend that it be canceled, and the resources be invested instead in more efficient and equitable travel options.

Sincerely,



Todd Litman

Todd Litman is founder and executive director of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, an independent research organization dedicated to developing innovative solutions to transport problems. His work helps expand the range of impacts and options considered in transportation decision-making, improve evaluation methods, and make specialized technical concepts accessible to a larger audience. His research is used worldwide in transport planning and policy analysis.

Related publications:

Todd Litman (2019), "Toward More Comprehensive Evaluation of Traffic Risks and Safety Strategies" *Research in Transportation Business & Management* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2019.01.003>).

Todd Litman (2019), *Are Vehicle Travel Reduction Targets Justified?* Victoria Transport Policy Institute (www.vtppi.org); at www.vtppi.org/vmt_red.pdf.

Todd Litman (2017), "Mobility and Innovation. The New Transportation Paradigm," S.M.A.R.T. Paths to Sustainability (<http://bit.ly/2mUs2iG>); at <http://bit.ly/2Dravbo>.

Todd Litman (2014), *Analysis of Public Policies That Unintentionally Encourage and Subsidize Urban Sprawl*, commissioned by LSE Cities (www.lsecities.net), for the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate (www.newclimateeconomy.net); at <https://bit.ly/2QqPhzc>.

Todd Litman (2014), *Economically Optimal Transport Prices and Markets: What Would Happen If Rational Policies Prevailed?*, paper 11, presented at the International Transportation Economic Development Conference (<https://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/ited2014>); at www.vtppi.org/ITED_optimal.pdf.

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