

Thursday, May 14, 2020

Mayor John Tory
City Councillors
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors,

Re: ActiveTO and temporary bikeways to address community transportation needs

We support the mayor's recent announcement about temporary bikeways to serve as a "default" for the city's transit system given the social distancing imperative of COVID-19. Many cities around the world have already provided alternatives to transit by installing temporary bikeways, ranging from dozens to hundreds of kilometres, to allow essential workers to reach workplaces, and other residents to obtain daily necessities. We urge Toronto to do the same.

Our key recommendations:

- **immediate installation of cross-town Bloor-Danforth and Yonge St. 'spine' bikeways -- approx 40 km;**
- **installation of 60 km of additional bikeways on urgent basis (after expedited engagement of neighbourhood leaders) to mirror the busiest TTC surface routes;**
- **Implementation of lower speed limits on roads with new bikeways, especially to protect vulnerable and novice riders.**

A vital starting point for the *ActiveTO* plan is the installation of bikeway 'spines' for a cycling network to provide an alternative to subway lines. These spine routes on Bloor-Danforth (from Etobicoke to Scarborough) and Yonge St. (from Steeles to the waterfront), would entail about 40 km of *new* bikeways. A cross-town Bloor-Danforth bikeway, for instance, would connect to existing north-south bike lanes, including on Woodbine, Greenwood, Jones, Sherbourne, St. George, Shaw, Royal York, and Renforth, as well as bike trails along the Humber and Don Rivers. Cycling facilities on these two routes have been the subject of a number of city studies.

In addition, the city's existing bike infrastructure can be quickly augmented by extending heavily used bike lanes, including, for example, a westerly extension of the College bike lane and extensions in both directions along Queen St. for the Richmond-Adelaide bike lanes.

We propose, as an equally important first step, the immediate engagement of community leaders in the city's dense population clusters, especially Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, for input about the most effective location for 60 km of new bikeways in serving the

transportation needs of essential workers and other residents. In many neighbourhoods, residents rely overwhelmingly on the TTC, especially in commuting to downtown destinations.

The installation of the second phase of bikeways will be guided by local input and a timeline measured in weeks to address the pressing need. We expect that these bikeways will be aligned with the busiest and most crowded bus routes, including Jane, Weston, Dufferin, Bayview, Victoria Park, Don Mills/Overlea and Finch. (Ongoing LRT construction on Eglinton Ave. provides a particular challenge to be solved by considering parallel arterial roads.) Careful monitoring of the new bikeways, supported by the feedback and observations of local residents, will inform necessary adjustments.

In a city with a 5,600 km road network, 100 km of temporary bikeways to complement the city's existing facilities can be considered a reasonable start. In fact, 100 km is consistent with new infrastructure the city planned to have in place by this year pursuant to its comprehensive 2016 Bike Plan. We anticipate that the new bikeways will complement a system of high-volume walking routes in the city's densely populated downtown.

To optimize the value of new bikeways will generally require installation on arterial roads, consistent with the findings of city cycling studies that people commuting by bike typically use the same arterial roads as motorists because such roads provide the most direct routes to common destinations. This is especially important for bicyclists who rely on the physical exertion of pedalling. The new bikeways must be geared for transportation.

Temporary bikeways provide an inexpensive means of testing which routes (and design features) offer the greatest benefit for the longer-term pandemic recovery. We note that the 'major corridor studies' for Bloor-Danforth and Yonge, that were to be undertaken under the 2016 Bike Plan, can now be economically piloted as temporary lanes. An expanded system of bikeways will simultaneously allow the city to advance goals and policies relating to the health benefits of active transportation, Complete Streets, and urgent reductions to carbon emissions -- along with objectives for greater transportation affordability and equity.

New bikeways, if properly implemented, will be used by many residents who may have little cycling experience on city roads. For this reason, we suggest that the city consider offering instruction programs in cycling skills at convenient times and locations, as well as online. Affordable bicycle repair services and new bicycle parking facilities should also be made available at a variety of popular destinations.

Roads adjacent to bikeways must have reduced speed limits, consistent with the city's Vision Zero 2.0 road safety plan, the presence of newer riders, and the increase in illegal activity such as stunt driving. The reduced speeds will be especially important at intersections, which are particularly dangerous points of interaction. The bikeways may themselves have a limited speed to protect new or vulnerable riders. Properly designed bikeways will also provide an option for residents who rely on mobility devices, such as power-assisted wheelchairs, electric-assist bicycles, and cargo bikes.

We look forward to your response. We would be pleased to 'meet' with your staff as soon as possible to discuss next steps.

Sincerely,

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

Annex Residents' Assoc. (ARA)

ARC (Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists)

Avenue Road Safety Coalition (ARSC)

Bells on Bloor

Bells on Danforth

Bike Law Canada

Bike Minds

Bloordale Community Improvement Assoc.

Bloor West Village Residents' Assoc.

Brain Injury Society of Toronto

Build a Better Bloor Dufferin

Centre for Social Innovation (CSI)

Charlie's Freewheels

Citizens' Climate Lobby Toronto

ClimateFast

CommunityAIR

Corktown Residents' and Business Assoc.

Creating Healthy & Sustainable Environments (CHASE)

CultureLink Settlement and Community Services

Cycle Don Valley Midtown

Cycle Toronto Midtown

Cycle Toronto

David Suzuki Foundation

Doctors for Safe Cycling

Drawdown Toronto

Dr. Beth Savan, Toronto Cycling Think and Do Tank

East Toronto Food Coalition

Eglinton Park Residents' Assoc. (EPRA)

Etobicoke South Cycling Committee

Extinction Rebellion Toronto

Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA)

Fix our Schools

Friends and Families for Safe Streets

Friends of Berczy Park

Friends of Kensington Market

Friends of St James Park

Friends of the West Toronto Railpath
Garment District Neighbourhood Association (GDNA)
Gil Penalosa & Associates
Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Assoc. (GWNA)
Grange Community Assoc. (GCA)
Green 11 and Green 13
Green Neighbours 21 and 24
Greenspiration
Green Wave West
Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consultants
Harbord Village Residents' Assoc. (HVRA)
High Park Tenants' Assoc. (HPTA)
HOOFF&CYCLE
Jamii Esplanade
Junction Triangle Rail Committee
Lakeview Avenue Neighbourhood Assoc. (LANA)
Lytton Park Residents' Organization
Naturopathic Doctors for Environmental and Social Trust
Ossington Community Association
Palmerston Area Residents' Assoc. (PARA)
Parkdale High Park Bikes
Parkdale High Park 4 Climate Action
Parkdale Residents' Assoc.
Regal Heights Residents' Assoc. (RHRA)
Regenesis
Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo CM (Trinity-St. Paul's United Church)
Roncy Reduces
SLNA Waste Reduction Group
Social Environmental Action Committee of Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation
South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Assoc. (SERRA)
South Riverdale Community Health Centre
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Assoc.
St. Lawrence Reduces
TTC Riders
Team Atomica
The Big Ask for Real Zero
The Reading Line
32 Spokes
Toronto Bike Brigade
Toronto Centre Cyclists
Toronto Centre of Learning & Development
Toronto East Cyclists
Toronto East End Climate Collective
Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)

Toronto Island Community Assoc. (TICA)
Toronto Public Space Committee
Toronto Youth Cabinet
Vélo Canada Bikes
Walk Toronto
Waterfront for All
West Bend Community Assoc.
West Don Lands Committee
*Winona Gallop, Harbor Bikeway Group**
Women's Cycling Network
Ward 14 Bikes
York Quay Neighbourhood Assoc. (YQNA)

cc. Dr. Eileen de Villa, Toronto Medical Officer of Health
Chris Murray, City Manager
Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services
Saad Rafi and Dr. David Mowat, Office of Recovery and Rebuild
Jacquelyn Hayward, Transportation Infrastructure Management
Becky Katz, Manager, Cycling and Pedestrian Projects Unit

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Mary Ann Neary: maryanneary@outlook.com
Janet Joy Wilson: janetjoywilsonca@gmail.com
Albert Koehl: 416-533-1231 or albert@koehl.ca