



Monday, October 26, 2020

Mayor John Tory and City Councillors  
Transportation Services  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen St. West  
Toronto

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors,

***Re: Major bike lane projects for Toronto in 2021***

We congratulate you and City Council on the installation of almost 40 kilometres of permanent and temporary bikeways in 2020. These bikeways have already proven to be very popular and provided a safe, healthy, affordable way for residents to go about the city during the global pandemic. We believe this rate of installation cannot be an anomaly, but must become the annual pace of new installations, consistent with the cycling network envisioned in the 2016 Bike Plan and the commitment to *accelerating* implementation of the plan.

The [Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition](#), established in June 2020, includes a diverse group of community advocates with backgrounds in road safety, social justice, health care, business, law and the environment who believe that an enhanced role for the bicycle would help advance city policies relating to public health, equity, accessibility, and climate change. Our campaign takes its inspiration from the [120 community group signatories of a letter](#) to the mayor (and a related petition signed by 5,500 people) calling for the urgent installation of 100 km of bikeways along busy transit routes as part of the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic. Bikeways into the inner suburbs, including neighbourhood improvement areas suffering disproportionately from COVID-19, would provide alternatives to essential workers and transit-reliant residents.

**We have yet to see any plan for --- nor a process to determine --- bike lane installations for 2021, therefore share herein our list, and a rationale, for essential new bikeways.** We urge you to evaluate these routes based on city policies, including the failing *Vision Zero Road Safety Plan*, *TransformTO* (to replace short trips by car with clean modes) and the declaration of a climate emergency, while responding to priorities related to equity, neighbourhood improvement areas, and crowding on TTC buses. We presume that this assessment would

include existing data about key cycling routes, the goals of the 2016 Bike Plan, and expressed community support.

The Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR) recommends that the city: **“Accelerate the development of, and make permanent, safe active transportation infrastructure for cycling and walking throughout the city, including through the Cycling Network Plan, and include equitable access to transportation options in the criteria for choosing sites.”** The City of Montreal, for example, has installed 54 km of bike lanes this year, adding to a far more elaborate network of bike lanes already in place. **Toronto, by contrast, will remain 100 km short of the bike lanes envisioned to be in place by the end of 2020 under its 2016 Bike Plan.**

Finally, we note the vital importance of snow clearing and maintenance of bike lanes this winter to ensure that the temporary bikeways installed this year have the best chance of success. TORR makes the same recommendation.

### Central

**Yonge St. (Bloor St. to Avondale Rd.),** exclusive of ongoing studies for other portions of Yonge, namely *REimagining Yonge* in North York and *YongeTOMorrow* in downtown Toronto

**10.3km**

#### *Rationale*

To provide a north-south spine for a cycling network, aligned with the TTC’s Line 1, Toronto’s busiest subway and connecting with existing cycling infrastructure, including the waterfront trail, Bloor-Danforth bike lanes, Kay Gardner Belt Line Trail and the Finch Hydro Corridor trail. Fifty years after the so-called *Bicycle Boom*, Toronto does not have a single north-south commuter bikeway. Yonge St. today has high-density population concentrations where walking, cycling and transit dominate the travel mode share. These areas fit within the *15-minute city* model referenced in the TORR recommendations. The 2016 Bike Plan included a study of a cross-town Yonge St. bikeway. Bikeways along Yonge St. would also free space on the subway for commuters travelling from more distant points.

### Northwest

**Keele St.-Weston Rd. (from Weston Rd. at Cardell Ave. to Bloor St. W.)**

**9.1km**

#### *Rationale*

Portions of this route were identified in the 2018 [Moving Forward](#) road safety action plan by the local councillor. A Weston-Mount Dennis neighbourhood group is calling for a Keele-Weston bike lane. This route would serve local communities providing access to shopping and work destinations, including a connection to the Bloor-Danforth bike lane, while providing a safe route on the dangerous Keele-Weston roadway. This bike lane would also close a perilous gap in the Humber trail at St. Phillips Rd. where cyclists are forced onto Weston Rd. The 2016 Bike Plan already includes a study for Weston Rd. from Walsh Ave. to Finch Ave., thus, a bike

lane along Keele-Weston would enhance the value of the northbound bike lane under study. This bikeway would also provide an option to the long-promised, never delivered bike path along the rail corridor.

**Our Greenway proposal** (currently being assessed by city staff). The objective of this project is to create “the world’s first suburban roadside linear park – a 21-kilometer long network.” Our coalition counts itself among the many supporters of this project.

#### *Rationale*

Finch Ave. remains an inhospitable place for pedestrians and cyclists. In September this year a cyclist was killed near the access point to Highway 400, decades after Hwy 400 was identified by the city as a barrier to cyclists that needed to be addressed. The city’s northwest has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, and yet suffers significant road safety deficiencies for people on foot or on bikes, including people on their way to the local bus stop.

#### East

**Don Mills Rd.-Overlea Blvd.-Donlands Ave. (Eglinton Ave E. to Danforth Ave.)** **5.9km**

#### *Rationale:*

Bike lanes were added in 2018 to the internal roads of the Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park neighbourhoods and yet this investment is underutilized given the lack of connections along the adjacent, dangerous, arterial roads. The crossing of Overlea bridge is so dangerous that many cyclists are forced to use the narrow sidewalk. Segments of this proposed route are already “under consideration” by city cycling staff, although little progress has been made. This bikeway would connect local residents to the Bloor-Danforth bikeway, consistent with the Bike Plan motto: *Connect, Grow, Renew*.

**Victoria Park Ave. (Gerrard St. E. to Dawes Rd.)** **2.4km**

#### *Rationale*

This route was identified for study in the 2016 Bike Plan. A bike lane would connect existing cycling infrastructure including the Taylor Massey Creek Trail, bike lanes on Danforth Ave. (nearby), Crescent Town Rd. as well as the Victoria Park subway station, while providing a safe connection for residents of the Crescent Town neighbourhood.

**Danforth Ave. E. (Dawes Rd. to Thora Rd.)** **0.8km**

#### *Rationale:*

Extends the east-west Bloor-Danforth spine bikeway into Scarborough. This extension would reach a high-density neighbourhood, namely the residential towers around Victoria Park subway station, including Crescent Town as well as popular destinations such as Shoppers World Plaza, the Scarborough Cycles hub and Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services. This bikeway would also offer access (via the proposed Victoria Park Ave.

addition) to planned development including the Quarry lands (at Victoria Park and Gerrard) and the under-construction Macy Avenue modular affordable housing project.

**Kingston Rd. (Dundas St. E. to Brimley Rd.)**

**8.3km**

*Rationale*

A bike lane along this popular cycling route would leverage investments in existing cycling lanes on Dundas St. E., which connects Scarborough residents all the way to Yonge St via the newly separated Shuter St. bike lanes, while at the same time connecting city residents to parkland along the waterfront, including Bluffers Park, Woodbine Beach and Tommy Thompson Park. The route also offers an eastward cycling connection from the waterfront bike trail. As a road safety measure, a bike lane provides a visual cue to motorists to slow down on a road where speeding (and tragedy) is common. Motorists along much of this route have the option of taking the TTC streetcar. We also note that Kingston Rd. offers the most direct and efficient cycling route through the topography of East Toronto which is marked by intermittent ravine hollows running north-south as well as the Lake Iroquois shoreline escarpment, which slices across the route northwest to southeast.

West

**Bloor St. W. (Runnymede to western city boundary with Mississauga)**

**7.7km**

*Rationale*

Extends the east-west Bloor-Danforth bikeway spine west into Etobicoke from Runnymede Rd. while enhancing utility of existing infrastructure, including the bike lane recently added during the reconstruction of the Six Points interchange. This addition would help complete the Bloor-Danforth bike route as a cross-town facility, while connecting with cycling infrastructure in the City of Mississauga.

**Total:**

**44.5km**

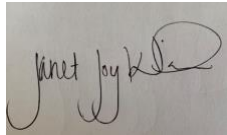
Our city cannot afford a return to the anaemic pace of cycling infrastructure improvements prior to the pandemic, nor should we simply hobble from this crisis to another, namely climate change. Indeed, we are troubled by reports from City Hall that road safety projects in 2021 will be curtailed due to staffing and resource shortages, when in fact cycling and walking (in combination with mass transit) are far less expensive, while offering a healthy travel option, consistent with the objective of building a resilient city.

Please visit [our website](#) for additional information, particularly the community support for each of these routes. We would be pleased to answer any questions and to meet with your planners to discuss next steps.

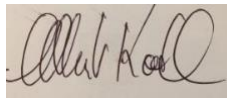
Sincerely,



Mary Ann Neary



Janet Joy Wilson



Albert Koehl

*on behalf of the coalition.*

Cc Barbara Gray, Manager, Transportation Services  
Becky Katz, Manager, Pedestrian and Cycling Projects  
Chris Murray, City Manager  
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health