



Tuesday, December 13, 2022

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

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of City Council,

Re: 2023.MM2.14, Improving Safety on Bloor Street Bike Lanes during Construction

We support the motion by Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by IEC Chair Jennifer McKelvie, for a report back to the March 20, 2023 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee “on how the City can provide cyclists and users of motorized wheelchairs with safe ways to pass construction sites that impinge on the Bloor Street bike lanes, without requiring them to share a lane with cars and trucks, or to share sidewalks with pedestrians.” As well, we fully support the statement that the TransformTO goal of converting to active modes of transportation 75% of trips under 5 kilometres “cannot be achieved if cyclists and wheelchair users must put their lives at risk to get around our City.”

The [Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition](#) was formed in June 2020, initially to push for bikeways along busy transit routes for the benefit of essential workers. Today, a primary focus of our work is holding City Hall to account for its plans and policies, including the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, TransformTO, and the Bike Plan.

We have reviewed the Walk Toronto submission of today’s date and agree that Councillor Saxe’s motion could be helpfully amended by expanding the scope of the study “to include bike lanes in other areas subject to high levels of building activity.”

In fact, we recommend that the proposed report go beyond safety issues on Bloor Street to include bikeways (and sidewalks) across the city upon which construction projects impinge. We suggest that the elements of a broader approach, as we communicated to Transportation Services in a recent meeting, would involve at least the following:

1. Articulate a clear, measurable, enforceable set of obligations upon construction site managers/officials instead of the existing, unenforceable guidelines so as to better protect

persons with disabilities, pedestrians, and cyclists. Much of the current language of applicable guidelines includes weak words requiring only the "consideration" of safety measures. A new approach would be consistent with a recent staff report related to pedestrian safety which notes that: "Where space is limited, vulnerable road users have highest priority, starting with pedestrians and followed by cyclists." A new approach should also involve a shift in thinking for a municipal civil service that has long been devoted to moving motor traffic;

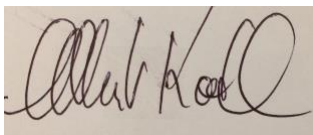
2. Once the obligations are articulated for the party responsible for a construction project, there must be a **clear, obvious process that the public can use to alert** the authorities about identified dangers; and

3. **Ensure sufficient, effective enforcement** that is focused on deterrence, *i.e.*, since it is very unlikely that all violations will be uncovered, the fines imposed where charges are laid must be meaningful in order to send an appropriate message to all potential violators. We also understand that the city maintains a list of contractors for city work, and this list can be used to punish repeat offenders. We have no way of knowing, however, how rigorous this policy is enforced in practice. Enforcement also becomes easier when obligations are clearly articulated (as in no. 1 above).

The TCBC, as well as Cycle Toronto and Walk Toronto, recently met with senior officials of Transportation Services with a follow up meeting planned for the new year on the issue of pedestrian and cyclist safety at construction projects. We believe that a future meeting would productively include community stakeholders --- including groups in the Toronto Road Safety Collaborative --- along with city staff from various departments and interested councillor staff.

There is currently a significant amount of community frustration about road safety at construction projects. We do not doubt that this frustration is shared by many officials within City Hall and on City Council. It is for these reasons that a strategic, city-wide approach to safety at construction projects is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature appears to be "Alan Katz" written in a cursive, flowing style.

Coordinator, [Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition](#)