



Wednesday, July 6, 2022

Infrastructure & Environment Committee
c/o Matthew Green
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Submitted by email to iec@toronto.ca

Councillor Jennifer McKelvie and Council Members of the Committee,

RE: IE31.12 - Cycling Network Plan Q2 2022 Project Update

We very much appreciate the careful and expert articulation of plans for new bikeways and road safety improvements laid out in the staff report for the Overlea Bridge, Eglinton Avenue, Gerrard Street, Martin Grove Road, and related initiatives.ⁱ

We wish, however, to bring two overarching concerns to your attention:

1. Although the city's declaration in 2019 of a climate emergency requires no explanation, we believe that it does require all city plans, actions, and spending to be consistent with addressing the crisis. Specifically, the *TransformTO* goal of converting 75% of all trips under 5km to travel on foot, bicycles, and transit by 2030 was an important element in achieving the city's climate goals by reducing the massive emissions of greenhouse gases from road transportation. We are concerned about the absence of any analysis in the staff report about how the current staff plan brings us closer to achieving this goal, despite the projected spending of \$14 million for these projects. The *TransformTO* plan is noted in the preface of the staff report, then not mentioned again.

Our concern is not only the absence of any *TransformTO* analysis but also that most of the projects appear to strive to leave motor traffic capacity in place, while doing little to tame hostile motor environments characterized by speed, noise, and pollution. When road environments remain dangerous, the full potential of walking, cycling and transit cannot be achieved.

In the case of the Overlea Bridge, not only are four motor lanes maintained but intersections remain large and intimidating. This is particularly problematic in an area with a large population concentration, including many children on their way to school or

adults on their way to shops or the transit stop. And while it is noted that 45% of local commuters travel by TTC, there is no suggestion that this will, or should, increase. The proposed cycle track itself does not even connect with the Leaside bridge bikeway that could otherwise provide a safe route downtown. As well, it appears that an additional three years will pass before the bridge improvements will be undertaken. For an 8-year-old, or their parent, three years is a long time to wait for safety, especially in the absence of temporary measures.

In the case of the Eglinton Crosstown, the Complete Streets approach being put in place is very welcome. On the other hand, one of the outcomes of the underground LRT may be to increase motor traffic capacity by taking hundreds of buses off the road and freeing up road space to motorists.ⁱⁱ We certainly expect to see more transit use, but any progress may well be cancelled out by more car trips. In view of the massive investment in the LRT, and related streetscape improvements outlined by staff, we would appreciate some assessment about how many polluting car trips will be replaced by cleaner modes on this route.

We do look forward to the extension of the Yonge bike lane to connect with the Eglinton cycle track in order to maximize the use of bicycles, including electric bicycles, in our city's transportation mix.

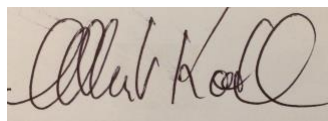
2. The city's Near-Term Implementation Plan, 2022-2024 articulated the completion of 100 kilometres of much-needed cycling infrastructure. We are now approaching mid-July 2022 and at the current pace, we may well not reach 15 km of new bike lanes by the end of the current year.ⁱⁱⁱ This concern has an obvious history. Since 2001, the city has never met an annual target set out in its bike plans^{iv}, so that although the targets articulated in city plans have been celebrated, the implementation of the plans has generally led to disappointment – and more importantly, continuing peril for vulnerable road users. We believe it is not too early to ask whether the Near-Term plan's objectives remain on course, especially in the context of other leading cities that are racing ahead of Toronto, and to determine whether there are impediments to completion that need to be addressed sooner rather than when it is too late to remedy any underlying issues.

We hope that these comments are helpful to your deliberations -- and will look forward to the IEC and council debate on this matter.

Sincerely,



Mary Ann Neary



Albert Koehl

cc Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services
Jacquelyn Hayward, Director, Transportation Project Design & Management
Councillors Jaye Robinson and Denzil Minnan-Wong

ⁱ The [Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition](#), established in 2020, includes among its priorities the tracking of implementation of key city policies related to climate, safety, health, and equity.

ⁱⁱ We have previously communicated our disappointment with the very poor quality of the Eglinton bike lanes adjacent to the LRT east of Don Mills Rd, especially at the DVP access points where cyclists are left with little protection. We appreciate that these bike lanes are a Metrolinx responsibility, though this offers little comfort to people on bikes, nor does it bode well for use of the Eglinton bike lanes as a cross-town route.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, *e.g.*, [the letter of Robert Zaichkowski, July 5, 2022](#) to your committee. Robert has been carefully documenting annual bike lane installations via his [Bike Lane Tracker](#).

^{iv} During the first year of the pandemic, a net 30km were installed, a number that, although commendable, actually fell short of the 34km of annual installations set out in the 2016 Bike Plan.