



September 15, 2022

Barbara Gray  
General Manager, Transportation Services  
Toronto City Hall, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor E  
100 Queen St. West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

*Sent electronically, with photo attachments*

Dear Ms. Gray,

***Re: interruption of downtown cycling “network” at Queen’s Park***

The closure of the cycle track on Queen’s Park, between Bloor and the top of Queen’s Park Circle, is a significant disappointment, not only because the University Avenue bike lanes were among the most-celebrated cycling installations during the first year of the pandemic, but also because there is now a gap of almost two kilometres, between Sherbourne and St. George Streets, in north-south bike lanes between Bloor Street and the downtown.

This closure of the bike lane (indicated by very large “Cycle Track Closed on Queen’s Park” signs (photo #1) is ostensibly the result of the construction work on the Museum Subway Station, even though the actual length of the construction along the roadway is a mere 50 metres. The new lane markings leave two narrow southbound road lanes and one northbound lane, with no provision for commuters on bikes. The closure is as real to cyclists as it is symbolic. Despite laudable city policies and proclamations, including Vision Zero, which prioritizes “human life ... over all other objectives within all aspects of the transportation system,” the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, and the Declaration of a Climate Emergency, when the rubber hits the road in transportation planning, it is still the rubber of car tires that prevails over other values.

It is also noteworthy that immediately north of this location (at Avenue Road and Bloor), a young man riding his bicycle was killed in August 2021 when hit by a cement truck.

The detour devised by the city for cyclists on Queen’s Park does not offer a practical alternative. Indeed, city and construction officials likely know that few people will take the detour (at least not more than once) and that most will take the risk of “sharing” the road with motorists on very narrow lanes. The detour, which has little real value (except for southbound cyclists who start

their trips west of St George), is perhaps designed to absolve the city of its legal liability to road users on bikes.

Consider, for example, that a southbound cyclist at Bloor and Queen's Park is directed to detour to St. George Street (where a left turn has to be made), then to proceed south to Hoskin Avenue (requiring another left turn) then arrive back at Queen's Park Circle – a total distance of 1.7km, in order to skirt a construction project that is a mere 50 metres long!

A more serious option would have been to install bike lanes on Bay Street between Bloor and Wellesley, even if only as a temporary measure. A better option would have been to maintain two motor lanes on Queen's Park (instead of three), one northbound and one southbound, along with bike lanes.

The options for cyclists northbound along Queen's Park Circle are poor and dangerous. For example, a northbound cyclist is directed by the detour to access Hoskin Avenue via the cut-off along the top of the park (see photo #2). In order to go west toward Hoskin, the cyclist has to either cut across two motor lanes to get into the westbound lane, or (and the signage is not clear) stop at the pedestrian light, get off their bike, and then get back into the westbound lane after crossing. The detour to get back to Avenue Road is of course the same 1.7 km as for southbound cyclists. Most cyclists will simply take their chances to continue north in the single, narrow northbound lane.

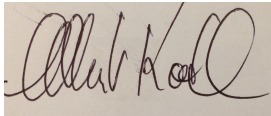
The detour signs themselves are confusing, even incomprehensible. In our observation on September 12 (see photo #3), the signage for eastbound cyclists arriving at the top of Queen's Park was to either go north (sign 1) or south (sign 2).

We know that the city is more than capable of creating safe options for people on bikes and on foot -- and we have seen such good examples across the city. The underlying problem appears to be that the city still lacks a uniform, consistent process to provide safe alternatives for cyclists or pedestrians at road construction projects. City residents should not have to monitor every construction project to ensure their safety has been considered.

We are sure you agree that providing safe cycling infrastructure across the city has been a challenge, but we are surprised that when the significant effort and resources are expended to install a bike lane/cycle track, that investment is not vigilantly guarded against interruptions or closures.

We appreciate the attentive ear you have given during your tenure to the concerns of city residents who travel by active modes, and trust that you will give the same careful attention to this issue. We would be happy to discuss this matter further with you or your staff, and to answer any of your questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light brown rectangular background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Albert Koehl'.

Albert Koehl, Co-ordinator

*Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition*

cc. Councillor Mike Layton

Jacquelyn Hayward, Director, Project Design & Management

Craig Cripps, Manager, Work Zone Coordination





LEFT LANE FOR  
SOUTHBOUND AND  
HOSKIN AVE. ONLY

CYCLE TRACK  
CLOSED ON  
QUEEN'S PARK  
FOLLOW D-1





STOP  
HERE  
ON  
RED  
SIGNAL

DETOUR

TO NB  
AVENUE RD



