



Failing grade for more than half of Toronto's bike lanes

TORONTO, November 18, 2021: How is Toronto doing in giving residents safe, connected bikeways? A comprehensive report card released today, reveals that the city isn't doing "very good" -- or even "good." According to the report, issued on the 50th anniversary of the Bicycle Boom, well over half of the city's cycling facilities rated "poor" or "mediocre." There is much room for improvement, according to the report's author, the Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition (TCBC).

The group evaluated 215 km of bikeways --- cycle tracks, bike lanes, and sidewalk-level bike paths --- in 80 report cards with criteria weighing safety and quality on the one hand with utility and connectivity on the other. The project involved 25 volunteer, experienced urban cyclists over a seven-week period.

Among the worst bike lanes were Bay St., Davenport Rd., St Dennis Dr. (Flemingdon Park), Finch Ave W. (North York), Steeles Ave E (Scarborough), Royal York Rd. and Renforth Dr. (Etobicoke). These bikeways had various gaps, often ended abruptly before intersections, offered no level of protection from cars and trucks, put cyclists at risk of being doored, or didn't connect with other bikeways. Fifty-six percent of bikeways were assessed as mediocre or poor. Yonge St., Shuter St., and Crescent Town Rd., among others, received high marks for their continuous safety barriers, consistent pavement markings, and for connecting cyclists to TTC, shopping, libraries, schools, and work.

"Much of the city's cycling infrastructure is now 10, 20, 30 and even 40 years old, but while the city slowly brings outdated bike lanes up to modern standards, it continues to fall behind other cities in building a cycling network to attract new riders," said Mary Ann Neary of the TCBC.

"In the past, bike lanes were often token gestures to "cycling enthusiasts," with little attention to quality and utility," said Albert Koehl, an organizer of the project. "Many urban leaders now recognize the bicycle as a vital component of urban transportation and a key tool in the fight against climate change."

During the first year of the pandemic, the bicycle became a welcome travel option for many people for daily travel and to get a breath of fresh air. The city built 30 km of new bikeways in 2020 but this year is already reverting to its historically plodding pace (anticipated to be under 15km on the 5,600 km road system), far short of its leading peer cities. Montreal has twice as many bike lanes as Toronto in real numbers, while continuing to move forward assertively.

"The city knows how to build modern cycling infrastructure -- the new bike lane on Yonge Street is a good example. But the drain on resources to update old cycling facilities is putting us further behind other cities in creating a modern cycling network," added Koehl. The group says that new, dedicated funds and resources must be set aside to upgrade old cycling facilities.

The [final report](#) and the [individual evaluations with spreadsheet](#) are available for review.

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