



Tuesday, December 20, 2022

Phil Verster
President & Chief Executive Officer
Metrolinx
20 Bay St., Suite 600
Toronto, ON M5J 2W3

Sent by regular mail, and as an email attachment

Dear Mr. Verster,

Re: dangerous conditions on Eglinton Avenue bike lanes

We are troubled by the dangerous conditions on the Metrolinx-installed Eglinton Avenue bike lanes, between Don Mills and Kennedy Roads, adjacent to the Crosstown LRT.

The Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition (TCBC), established in 2020 to advocate for temporary bikeways for the benefit of essential workers, today focuses on issues of government accountability, including road safety, climate change, and cycling infrastructure.

The peril faced by city residents that use the Eglinton bike lanes is largely the result of poor separation from typically heavy, high-speed motor traffic. (Our observation is that most cyclists actually seek refuge on the sidewalks, instead of riding in the bike lanes, albeit with increased risks at intersections.) In this letter we highlight the particularly dangerous conditions at the access and egress points to the Don Valley Parkway. In these locations, cars and heavy trucks cross the bike lanes at high speeds.

In August 2022, a young man suffered "life threatening" injuries [at the DVP southbound on-ramp when hit by a car](#). Fortunately, the young man survived, although we do not know about his long-term health. This tragedy was [compounded by the very obvious dangers](#) along this stretch of road upon which a number of groups, including our members, commented on social media ("tagging" Metrolinx) many months before the crash.¹

Of course, there was no need for any group or individual to point out the danger, which would have been apparent to almost everyone, let alone an agency with transportation expertise. Equally tragic is the fact that months after this crash, and many months after the initial bike lane installation, almost nothing has been done to address the obvious safety deficiencies. (We

acknowledge that the danger for pedestrians is no less acute, the result of crossings that are poorly indicated and with little effort to induce lower speeds by approaching motorists. We presume that when the Eglinton Crosstown is in service, a pleasant, safe pedestrian environment will be key to promoting ridership.)

While we appreciate that bike lane standards have changed over time, we are confident that no road safety expert would have approved this design at the time of installation. Metrolinx certainly had enough time to plan these lanes during the long construction period, and to seek any needed advice.

We understand that the City of Toronto will eventually improve the safety of these bike lanes, which is in itself an acknowledgment of their current shortcomings. In the meantime, cyclists who are invited to use the bike lanes --- indeed they are marked on the Toronto Bike Map --- face obvious peril. The City celebrated installation figures in its 2019-21 Near Term Bike Plan that included the six-kilometre length of the Eglinton bike lanes between Don Mills and Kennedy Roads.

In your transit projects, we presume you would never announce to patrons on a particular service, or a particular track, that they will be safe at some point in the future.

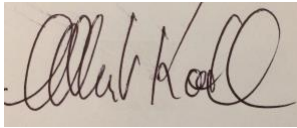
We provide for your review two videos taken on westbound Eglinton Ave. on Thursday, December 15, 2022. [The first one shows the access for motorists to the northbound DVP](#). In terms of road signs, there are few that might alert motorists to watch out for cyclists. [The signs that do exist are so small](#) (and far from clear) as to be virtually useless at the speeds travelled by most motorists. Although the bike lane is painted green (but absent any protection beyond the paint), we presume you will agree that no one would want to see a loved one riding in between heavy trucks (or even cars) and trusting the driver to notice the very vulnerable bicycle rider. The conditions for pedestrians at crossing points are arguably even worse. The smooth new pavement and clean lines of the rebuilt Eglinton Ave. may well promote speeds that are higher than in the past.

The [second video shows the access for motorists to the southbound DVP](#) from Eglinton Ave. where the young man suffered catastrophic injuries. This DVP access ramp is perhaps more dangerous than the first, given that it begins just after the underpass and is not painted. In this photo the sign directing motorists to watch out for pedestrians is partially obscured by a pole. The pedestrian crossing itself, beyond the start of the bend in the road, can only be described as frightening.

We also copy Ontario Transportation Minister Caroline Mulroney on this letter, given that it was the government's decision in 2018 to diminish Metrolinx involvement in cycling and walking matters, directing it instead to focus on transit.ⁱⁱ We doubt, however, that these changes authorized Metrolinx to install dangerous cycling and walking infrastructure. Indeed, we presume that the success of a properly planned transit project will include safety measures that allow pedestrians and cyclists to safely access the service.

We look forward to your response and would be happy to arrange a virtual meeting. In the meantime, we are happy to answer any questions or to provide clarification.

Sincerely,

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

Albert Koehl

Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition

cc. Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, Chair, Infrastructure and Environment Committee, Toronto
Barbara Gray, Manager, City of Toronto, Transportation Services
The Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation, Ontario

ⁱ The photo is of a truck crossing the bike lane onto eastbound Eglinton Ave.

ⁱⁱ An omnibus bill passed in 2018 (Bill 57, Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, 2018) amended the responsibilities of Metrolinx, tightening its focus to transit, and removing a reference to active transportation that had been previously in place. See Schedule 25: <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-57> “The objects of Metrolinx are altered as follows: 1. The object of providing leadership in respect of an integrated, multi-modal transportation network is replaced with an object of providing leadership in respect of an integrated transit network.” For an analysis, see, e.g., <https://medium.com/share-the-road-cycling-coalition/what-does-bill-57-mean-for-metrolinx-multi-modal-transportation-54900d2c9cdc>