



(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Road Reconstruction Along Bloor Street West Poses New Dangers to Thousands of Toronto Cyclists

Study shows lack of adequate safety measures to protect cyclists and pedestrians

Toronto, August 1, 2023—An analysis by [Community Bikeways](#) shows that thousands of city residents who cycle along the popular Bloor Street West bike lanes are facing a new and significant danger of injury each day due to City of Toronto road reconstruction. As well, pedestrians using this portion of Bloor, between Spadina Road and Avenue Road, must now contend with heightened safety risks as a result of the road work that started mid-July and is slated to continue for almost a year.

The road reconstruction is the final stage in the [City's work planned](#) along this segment of Bloor Street West. It entails reconstruction of the road base and replacement of the asphalt surface. The work has led to the elimination of protected, dedicated bike lanes while reallocating the remaining road space to a narrow single lane in each direction for all vehicular traffic, including bikes.

Community Bikeways conducted a 24-hour bike count on July 26, 2023. It showed that almost 5,400 people using bicycles or other micro-mobility devices (scooters, e-scooters, segways, mopeds, personal transporters, etc.) passed through the construction corridor. This represented up to 37% of all vehicular traffic at peak times during the survey period (consistent with previous counts on Bloor Street).

Of the 5,400 people counted (the large majority of whom were on bicycles), many had to navigate a sudden, poorly signed, and dangerous merge with automobile traffic on Bloor Street West at Spadina Road. Others opted to travel along the sidewalk east of Spadina Road in order to avoid the increased danger of competing for road space with – or breathing tailpipe fumes from – cars and heavy trucks. As a result, pedestrians along the sidewalk face greater dangers of collision. In fact, despite concerns about sidewalk cycling by some City Councillors, the current road construction has led to a substantial, and predictable, increase in sidewalk riding.

“We’re effectively returning to the dark days before the long, hard-fought battle that gave us bike lanes on Bloor,” said Albert Koehl of Community Bikeways. “As this reconstruction project gets underway, there appear to be few, if any, accommodations for cyclists. This undermines the City’s own goals, expressed in its [Vision Zero Road Safety Plan](#), that ‘human life should be prioritized over all other objectives within all aspects of the transportation system.’”

While Community Bikeways appreciates the need to do road work, in this case including improvements to the bike lanes and the St. George/Bloor intersection, such work should not be done by sacrificing the safety of vulnerable road users. Among the options to conduct the work, but also to minimize any danger to cyclists and pedestrians, is to re-route motor vehicle traffic if and as necessary. Another proposal is to close

one lane of motor vehicle traffic, and to dedicate the remaining lane to the substantial number of cyclists travelling along Bloor Street West.

"The situation on Bloor Street West is part of a broader concern," said Jessie Ye of the We Belong on Bloor group. "There is a pattern that we see in the city where the safety of pedestrians and cyclists is treated as an afterthought in road construction projects, becoming more important only after people are injured. We saw this recently with the roadwork along Adelaide Street. Those carrying out work for the City of Toronto need to respect City of Toronto plans and policies."

"It's also increasingly frustrating," said Koehl, an environmental lawyer, "that as we watch the catastrophic impacts of climate change in Canada and around the world, the City continues to prioritize the 'drive everywhere, anytime' approach, when we should be taking every opportunity to facilitate clean modes of transportation. Furthermore, at a purely local level, we know that cyclists and pedestrians are the [lifeblood of local businesses on Bloor](#) -- while the city appears intent on pushing them away."

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