



Monday, February 12, 2024

Parkside Drive Study Team
Councillor Gord Perks
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5G 1P5

Dear Parkside Drive Study Team and Councillor Gord Parks,

Re: Our full support for a safe Parkside Drive

We strongly support the city's proposed interim design measures, and a more fundamental design overhaul, for Parkside Drive -- a roadway that is dangerous and falls far short of the safety needs of local road users as well as visitors to the adjacent High Park. Given the existing dangers, we agree with the call by Safe Parkside for action by no later than 2025.

Community Bikeways attended the recent Phase 2 public consultation on February 1, completed the online survey, and are excited about proposed changes to Parkside Drive to create a friendlier streetscape that is consistent with city plans and policies including the Complete Streets Guidelines, the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, the Bike Plan, and the TransformTO climate plan that aims to convert to walk, cycle, and transit 75% of trips under five kilometres by 2030.

We congratulate the work of the Project Team, the support of local councillor Gord Perks, and the ongoing advocacy of local residents through groups such as Safe Parkside. Although this street is being used as an arterial, it is above all a residential one that includes on its west side one of the city's most iconic parks. The new design is also consistent with the vision of a car-free park. In a city (and a world) struggling with the frightening pace of climate change, the park and the surrounding area should provide a refuge as free as possible from motor traffic danger and related tailpipe emissions.

Among the project features that we find particularly appealing are:

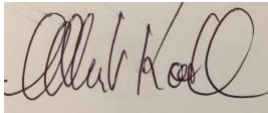
- a. The elimination of dangerous turning channels at Lakeshore Boulevard. These turning channels are of course no longer considered a good practice;

- b. The reduction from four to two driving lanes and the elimination of some parking spots, which helps achieve city plans and policies that depend on the reduction of motor traffic;
- c. The addition of a bi-directional bike lane on the west side of Parkside Drive, thereby providing a far gentler transition from the city to the park. In fact, we believe that the bi-directional bike lane provides a safety buffer that makes currently unappealing sections along the western edge of the park far more usable and appealing; and
- d. Improvements to pedestrian safety at the Bloor and Parkside intersection.

We have carefully reviewed the letter by Safe Parkside dated January 30, 2024 and find compelling its additional arguments respecting access to the waterfront, further improvements to the Bloor-Parkside intersection, and the northward extension of the bike lane along Keele Street and Weston Road. The latter bike lane could link city residents to the former towns of The Junction and Weston, each of which played an important historical role in the bicycle industry.

We look forward to seeing the implementation of interim measures on Parkside Drive as soon as possible, in anticipation of more permanent changes in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Albert Koehl, Coordinator



Mary Ann Neary, Coordinator

cc. Becky Katz, Pedestrian and Cycling Projects

Community Bikeways (est. May 2020) is a grassroots organization dedicated to holding City Hall to account for implementing its cycling network, Vision Zero Road Safety, and TransformTO climate plans. We also strive to amplify community voices, offer policy solutions, and host community events that highlight the joy, affordability, and convenience of cycling.