

November 12th, 2007

Convincing councillors to fund bike infrastructure

Posted by [Matthew Blackett](#)

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Tomorrow at City Hall, Toronto's budget committee will meet to discuss and hear feedback on the proposed 2008 capital budget. For most residents, any discussion of about the city's budget is a snoozefest, but this is one of the few opportunities citizens can directly comment and influence how our tax dollars are spent.

On a personal note, I'll be interested to see how much money city council dedicates to cycling infrastructure and operational costs. The recently released report from Toronto's Medical Officer of Health that expresses a serious need to reduce vehicle emissions can be used as an effective tool to help convince city councillors on the need invest in bike transit. Cycling was also a component of the City's "Change Is In The Air" policy.

The City has an ambitious [10-year bike plan](#) that is far behind schedule. Mayor David Miller and Cycling Committee Chair Adrian Heaps have been actively trying to instill confidence in cycling and public space advocates that the City is about to get over the proverbial bump in the road and begin to implement the bike plan in a significant way. The mayor has stated that a portion of the \$60-million raised from the newly approved Personal Vehicle Registration Fee would be directed to "road repairs, public transit, cycling and pedestrian improvements." And in the [upcoming issue](#) of Spacing, Mayor Miller and David Suzuki cite the need to ride bikes as a small way to help fight climate change.

Luckily for those people who can't make it to City Hall in the middle of the

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day, Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation (TCAT), one of the city's best new(ish) advocates, will be at the budget committee with a [number of excellent recommendations](#) [PDF]. "The small amount of funding it would take to complete most of the Bike Plan in the immediate future would go a very long way to mitigate congestion, improve air quality and reduce health care costs from smog-related illnesses, as well as car-related injuries and deaths," says Fred Sztabinski, TCAT's project coordinator. "Overall, the funds in the 2008 capital budget and the 2009-2012 capital plan are simply insufficient to meet Council's goal of completing the Bikeway Network by 2012."

The groups suggests committing a minimum of \$6.2 million to the 2008 Transportation Services cycling infrastructure budget, commit an additional \$300,000 in the capital budget towards Transportation Services staffing to ensure implementation can occur, provide a minimum of \$4 million in the Parks, Forestry & Recreation budget for repairing and creating new multi-use pathways in Toronto's Parks, and establish a staff position in Parks, Forestry & Recreation that is dedicated to ensuring the integrity and connectivity of the pathway network.

photo by [Tanja-Tiziana Burdi](#)

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November 12, 2007 - 7:16 pm
[Matthew Blackett](#)

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Comments

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Nice post Matt.

Just want to mention that the money to complete the Bike Plan is budgeted - just not all before 2012 - about 50% is budgeted for the years 2013-2017.

[BikingToronto](#) post using info from [Martin Koob](#)

Comment by [bikingtoronto](#)

November 13, 2007 @ 10:11 am

While more money towards bike infrastructure would be helpful, we need quality, not quantity, and things must be where cyclists need them/will use them. To my mind this means Bloor St. over even the Rail Trail, and there are other huge gaps in bikeway infrastructure, and not just in the suburbs. And sometimes, there are things in other budgets that benefit bikes eg. Simcoe St. tunnel.

Comment by [hamish wilson](#)

November 13, 2007 @ 10:15 am

Make Bloor St. one big bike lane!!!!

Comment by [Colin](#)

November 13, 2007 @ 12:16 pm

The Bike Plan is dead. Has been for a long time. It was never so great to begin with and lacked political will & cash from the start. City Hall will continue to play politics with the safety of cyclists and brag about being 'World Class'.
2017? Oh, if I live to see it.

Sad. We could have had a great bike city.
They sold us out.

Unless we get safe passage for cyclists now:
East - West & North South for cyclists, it will all just window dressing without addressing the real needs for people on two wheels.

No guts, no glory.