

CYCLING SUMMIT

Toronto lags behind pack as a bike city

Cyclists in Vancouver, Montreal treated better

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Toronto has more bike lanes than Montreal and Vancouver, but is significantly behind them when the physical sizes of the three cities are taken into account, states a study to be released today at an international cycling conference.

The report, prepared by the Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation, also says Toronto lags behind London and New York when it comes to per capita spending on bike lanes.

"It's slow because it hasn't been a priority at city council," TCAT spokesperson Fred Sztabinski said yesterday. "We're not seeing a lot of leadership from the top."

He said Toronto's poor standing as a bicycle city should serve as a wake-up call to city council: "It's certainly a disappointment."

There are 214 kilometres of bike lanes in Toronto, compared with 180 in Montreal and 106 in Vancouver. But the ranking is reversed when land mass is taken into account.

The findings will be presented today at Bike Summit 2008, hosted by TCAT and the Clean Air Partnership at St. Lawrence Hall, which brings together cycling enthusiasts and urban planners from around the world.

The study, titled *Benchmarking Toronto's Bicycle Environment: Comparing Toronto to Other World Cities*, credits London with 551 kilometres of bike lanes and New York City with 476.

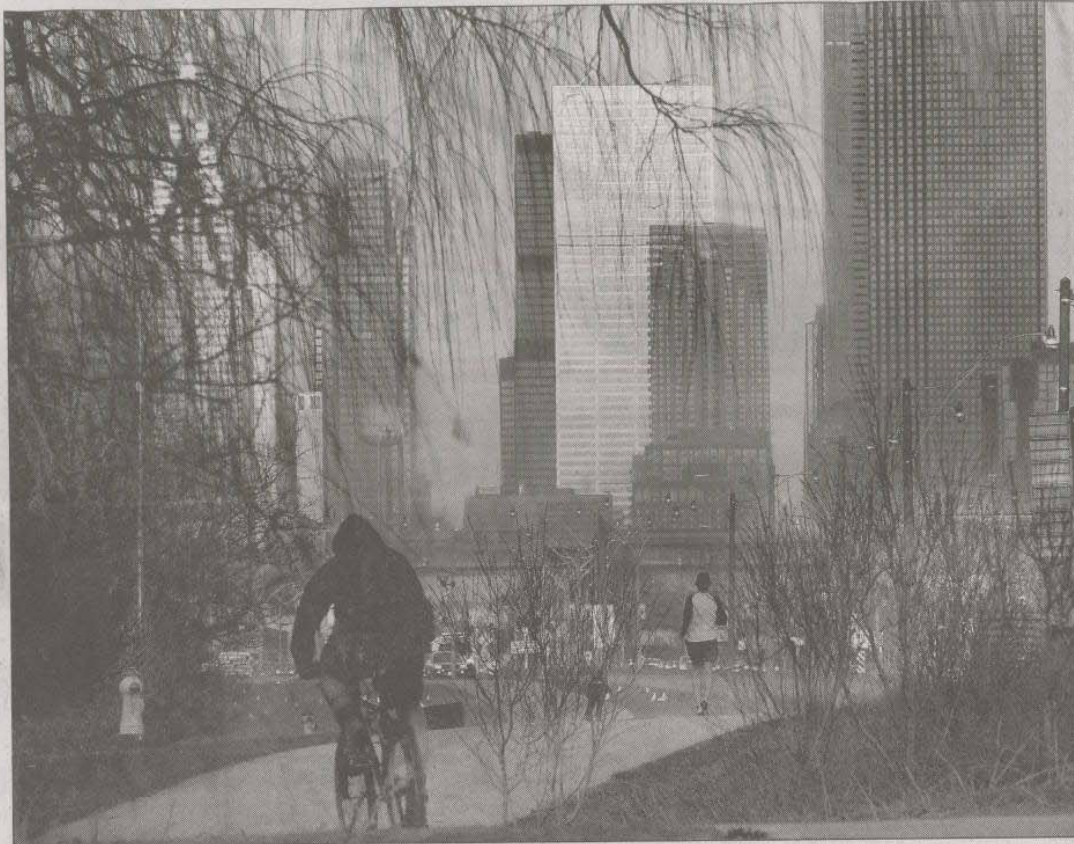
And while Toronto has almost doubled its budget for cycling in 2008, to just under \$6 million, that works out to just \$2.26 per person — a figure that pales against London's \$16.67 per person or even New York's \$4.09.

Councillor Adrian Heaps, chair of Toronto's Cycling Advisory Committee, wasn't fazed by the findings.

"I'm surprised we're that high," he said when told Toronto ranked seventh out of 11 cities in bike lane distance. "We all know we have a lot of retroactive work to do."

The city is struggling to meet its goal of having 1,000 kilometres of bikeways — including separate lanes, signed routes and park paths — by 2011.

"We're going to have to make ex-



RENÉ JOHNSTON/TORONTO STAR

Enthusiasm for biking is present in Toronto, but so far the dedicated trails aren't. A bottleneck in the approval process has been removed and more bike lanes are on the horizon, promises Councillor Adrian Heaps.

TALLY OF BIKE LANES ...
(in kilometres)

	in Toronto	in Montreal	in Vancouver	in London	in New York
	214	180	106	551	476

ponential progress over the next three or four years to meet the goal," Heaps said.

The city has fallen behind schedule at creating bike lanes because the issue has tended to get tied up in community councils.

While declining to name names, Heaps said certain city politicians have been resistant. "There are

some councillors who do not want bike lanes in their wards," he charged. "The biggest impediment has been the process of bike lane approval. I've changed that."

Now the community councils are being bypassed on bike lane requests in favour of council as a whole and staff aren't bogged down doing reports, Heaps said.

The city, trying to make up for lost time, plans to add 50 kilometres of on-street bike lanes this year, 75 next year and 90 the year after that.

The first permanent bike storage station will open at Union Station in July. And from now on, any TTC or city facility undergoing refurbishment will incorporate a permanent bike storage station.