

Monday June 8, 2009 11:56 AM ET

CityNews  **TORONTO'S NEWS.**

PROPOSED BIKE LANE
Google Images © 2008 DigitalGlobe

KIPLING AVE. — VICTORIA PARK AVE.
Bloor St W — Danforth Ave
Phase One — VICTORIA PARK AVE.
SHERBOURNE ST.
Image © 2008 First Base Solutions © 2008 Tele Atlas

Bloor And Danforth Bike Lane Proposal Sparks Controversy

Wednesday May 20, 2009
CityNews.ca Staff

The big wheels at City Hall are studying whether to make room for more small wheels on city streets. And it's already creating a controversy before anything is even past the paper stage.

Councillors are looking at a series of extensive and potentially city-changing bike lanes that would stretch along Bloor and Danforth from Kipling to Victoria Park. A works committee will study the proposal on June 3rd but it's not likely to be free wheeling when it comes to getting it passed without a fight.

Both sides are expected to come out armed with facts and figures about why the plan is - and isn't - feasible.

Cyclists have long argued that riding on city streets is a dangerous proposition, with drivers cutting them off, opening doors on them or just making it difficult for them to share the roads. They'd love a lane of their own that could get them across the city quickly and safely.

Drivers are upset at the idea of losing more lanes - in some cases, the plans call for some to be shrunk or completely eliminated.

And businesses are aghast at the idea of possibly losing or restricting parking, which they say could kill already fragile sales in difficult times.

Councillor Case Ootes admits there's an argument to be made for bike lanes in the city, but not at the expense of already gridlocked downtown routes. "The problem that I have with the bicycle lanes is that it doesn't take into account the impact on traffic generally," he explains. "That is commuters, commercial vehicles, buses and streetcars. And I think that's what is needed is a freeze on all these proposals because we have the Jarvis St. proposal coming up, as well taking away road capacity for other vehicles."

The Jarvis St. plan suggests getting rid of the middle lane that's currently open to one way traffic depending on the time of day and replacing it with boulevards, an idea critics say will further choke an already over clogged route during rush hours.

But Councillor Adrian Heaps contends something has to be done to provide alternate transportation.

"There's a general belief that traffic congestion is a huge problem in the city and how do we address it? How do we get people from "A" to "B" and everywhere in between? We have a number of east-west corridors, one in the south part of the city and one hopefully in the north end of the city. The Bloor St., Danforth, you know, avenue we'll call it for now, is a highly travelled route already by cyclists, pedestrians and by cars. Question is how do you make it safe for all three modes of transportation?"

Ootes believes the lanes can be built - but not on main routes.

What do cyclists think? They say they just want to share the road and be safe. "Cyclists need direct routes just like everybody else does," counters Nancy Smith Lea from the Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation. "I mean it's nice to be able to take the shorter routes when we can, but ... cyclists are busy just like everybody else and we need to get where we're going and don't like ... to take circuitous routes to get there."

If City Council accepts the plan, the first stretch, from Victoria Park to Sherbourne St., could be ready as early as this year.

[See a map of all of Toronto's current bike lanes](#)