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## Mayor Supports Call For More Bike Lanes, As New Bike Parking Facility Unveiled At Union Station

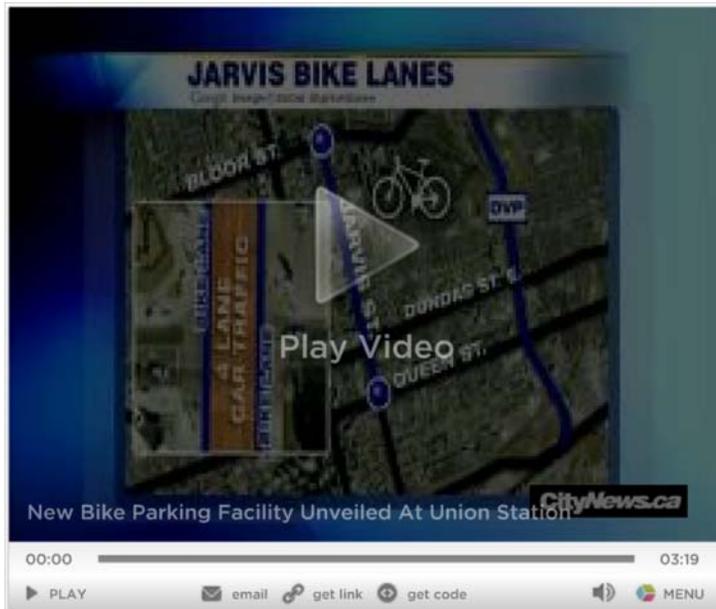
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CityNews.ca Staff

The City continues to make plans for more bike lanes in Toronto.

Mayor David Miller fully supports the vote in favour of bike lanes made on Monday for an additional four kilometres of bike lanes along Jarvis Street, maintaining that he doesn't see it as a future problem for drivers.

"The benefits are clear. Improvements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure means improvements to the overall health of our community. It helps our economic health as well because less congestion on roads will lead to improvements in our economic well-being," Miller notes, adding that Torontonians want a greener way of travelling around.

More improvements are being made for GTA cyclists. An additional 100km of bike lanes will be added to the city by the end of the year and another 400km will be completed over the next five years.



Nancy Smith Lea of the [Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation](#) maintains there's no war between cyclists and drivers. This is simply about giving cyclists more options on the road, she says.

"What we're talking about is re-allocating public space and people really need options," she says.

But drivers aren't thrilled with the idea of more room for two wheels and less room for four.

"I hate driving around cyclists," one woman behind the wheel admits.

"A good percentage of 'em are very cocky and aggressive," complains another.

Like cats and dogs and oil and water, it sometimes seems the two simply don't mix. "They can kill me, I know that," agrees one uneasy rider.

But there's more than just riding or driving.

There's also the issue of parking at stake. The new plan for Jarvis will remove 104 spaces from the street, a concern for local businesses in the area.

"I know it's going to affect my business severely with customers," acknowledges one merchant. "Because they're not going to be able to park and stop in and get groceries. And they're going to just find somewhere else to go. It's going to be a devastation to all the small businesses on Jarvis St."

Officials say they try to make up for lost spaces in other ways, but drivers say parking spots are already at a premium - and they can't afford to lose any more.

Space is also a common problem for cyclists but in a different way - they have no safe place to leave their wheels. That issue was addressed on Tuesday morning when Mayor Miller announced the opening of a new bike parking facility at Union Station.

Cyclists will be able to head to the southwest side of the transit hub, south of Front Street, and park their bike there for \$2 a day. There's also the option of a one-month plan or a four-month plan. You'll have to register your bike but you can find the forms [here](#).

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If the province gives the OK, the face of Jarvis St. will forever be changed with the installation of new bike lanes. Some say it's long overdue, making the route a safer option for cyclists. Others see it as a gridlock-producing disaster that will only make things worse in an already busy area.

**By now you know what City Council decided. Here are the plans they looked at:**

**1. Do Nothing**

Leave the street with five lanes, including the one alternating right-of-way that exists during the rush hours.

**2. Beautification modifications to the street with no other changes**

They wouldn't have changed the width of the road, but would have planted trees and put up street furniture, taking away some of the sidewalk.

**3. Median Option**

This one would involve taking away the reversible lane and the installation of a landscaped median. The street and the sidewalks would need to be widened.

**4. Improvements & Widening**

In this scenario, the centre lane is completely taken out and the boulevards and the sidewalks are made wider.

**5. Combining all of the above.**

Some areas are widened, some left alone and others get a median in the middle.

**6. Narrow the street, add bike lanes.**

Officials say public input required them to consider the change, which is one of the plans they ultimately chose.

While those behind the study admit there will be traffic delays, they insist it will only add about two minutes of extra commuter time and that it's worth the addition because the entire street will benefit. Many motorists, especially those stuck in Jarvis St. traffic during the afternoon and morning rush hours, beg to differ.

**Why Couldn't They Test It First?**

Opponents say a few-months-long test would have solved the question of how bad things would become. But those behind the plan say that wouldn't have been possible, because a temporary closure would have required the need for things like construction barrels and concrete barriers to prevent left turns to and from Jarvis. That, they argued, would result in unsafe conditions that couldn't be tolerated and would increase the risk to drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

"Since mid-block left turns are allowed now, and would be allowed with the permanent removal of the reversible lane, measurement of resultant delays and travel time on Jarvis St. during a temporary closure will not reflect the conditions that would result with a permanent closure," a report concludes. "Consequently, any surveys and observations of the temporary condition would be misleading or inconclusive."