



**Complete
Streets**

tcat toronto centre for
active transportation



June 18th, 2013

Dear Chairman Minnan-Wong and Members of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), a project of Clean Air Partnership. TCAT conducts research and education that supports a vision for cities that are safe, convenient, and enjoyable communities to walk and bike.

At your meeting on the 19th of June you will address a reasonable proposal to resume the Environmental Assessment study for the potential installation of bike lanes on Bloor Street West. I would like to express the support of TCAT for this motion for the following reasons:

1. There is currently no safe, continuous and direct east-west route to cross the city on bike.
2. Bloor Street/Danforth Avenue is a natural choice for an east-west bike lane, stretching almost 20 kilometres across the city.
3. As Bloor Street is served by a subway line, installation of bike lanes on Bloor would be much more straightforward than other east-west arterials with streetcar tracks.
4. The City of Toronto's Bicycle/Motor-Vehicle Collision Study (2003) found that bicycle-motor vehicle collisions were concentrated mainly on arterial roads, particularly the central east-west streets such as Bloor, Dundas, Queen and King.
5. The same report found that "dooring" (when a cyclist is struck by a car door) is downtown Toronto's most frequently reported bicycle/motor vehicle collision; that almost all cases of dooring occurred on arterial roads in central Toronto with high-turnover curb-side parking; and that dooring results in more serious injuries than other types of collisions.
6. A 1992 consultant's report to the City recommended Bloor Streets as an ideal route for bike lanes (Marshall Macklin Monaghan, 1992).
7. In 1998, the Regional Coroner for Toronto's report titled "A Report on Cycling Fatalities in Toronto: 1986-1996: Recommendations for Reducing Cycling Injuries and Death" identified that 87% of cyclist fatalities occurred on arterial roads and that a comprehensive network of on-street bicycle lanes was needed to enhance bicycle safety.
8. Studies of transportation mode choices, retail trends, and merchant and shopper opinions, have demonstrated strong support for an east-west cycling link along Bloor. In 2008, TCAT/Clean Air Partnership conducted a study with shoppers and business owners on Bloor Street in the Annex. The research found that the vast majority (90%) of people shopping on Bloor Street are walking, cycling or taking public transit. In other words only one in ten people shopping in the Annex are driving there. In 2009, TCAT repeated the study in Bloor West Village and found that only 20% are driving to shop in that location. Furthermore, in both locations, people arriving by foot, bicycle and transit visit more often and spend more money than those who drive and the majority of merchants believe that a bike lane would increase their business.

9. On April 16, 2010 TCAT released its new platform titled “Action 2014: Taking the Next Step” which identified active transportation priorities for this term of Toronto City Council. A bicycle lane on Bloor Street/Danforth Avenue was identified as one of the top three priorities to improve conditions for active transportation.

Bike lanes, particularly on a destination-dense corridor like Bloor, can provide significant benefits to local businesses by reinforcing the ability of local, loyal, and longstanding customers to more safely and easily access their businesses. Restarting the Environmental Assessment process, and even proceeding with a pilot project along a section of Bloor, is a sound way to support cycling while gaining data for future decisions in the area.

Supporting local businesses by improving the safety and accessibility for their most frequent customers is a straightforward way to grow the local economy, encourage active transportation, and improve our transportation infrastructure. I advise that the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee adopt this motion, helping Toronto to build on its long history of commitment to encouraging and facilitating cycling, and making streets that are welcoming to Torontonians of all ages and abilities.

Sincerely,



Nancy Smith Lea
Director
Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT)
Clean Air Partnership
75 Elizabeth Street
Toronto, ON M5G 1P4