



# Building a Toronto that Moves



*Image courtesy of the City of Toronto*





## Setting Election Priorities for Walking, Cycling & Public Transit

Toronto is a fast-paced, dynamic city. It's a city that moves... except when it doesn't.

Too many people are packed into streetcars, subways and buses like sardines, cyclists have to take detours in order to find safe routes, and pedestrians are literally falling off over-crowded sidewalks into the street. In the last four years we've seen TTC fare increases and service cuts, bike lanes being removed, and pedestrians account for over 50% of traffic fatalities.

- » We need to build a city that moves.
- » We need to build streets that are safe for everyone to get from A to B regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel.
- » We need to make it safe and attractive for Torontonians to choose healthy, sustainable, and affordable modes of transportation so that more people more often don't mind leaving their cars at home.

People need good options for how to get around. While the car is the best option for some trips, there are lots more that could be made by public transit, walking or cycling if we improved these options.

On a typical weekday, approximately 40% of automobile trips in the Toronto area are less than 5 kilometres - an easy 20-minute bike ride, and 17% are less than 2 kilometres - about a half hour walk.

A recent Angus Reid poll on behalf of Move the GTHA, a collaborative of organizations working to support transportation investment, found that 86% of Torontonians support a tax increase in order to improve public transit and 63% would support an increase if it was spent on improvements for walking and cycling. The poll also determined that 60% of Torontonians are more likely to support a political leader who will support transportation improvements.

We know from experience that when Torontonians are provided with viable transportation options that they embrace them. Transit ridership is at an all-time high, our streets are exploding with people on bikes, and people continue to move downtown so they can walk to work. In recent years, new car-sharing and bike-sharing programs have been launched and are proving to be a popular alternative to owning a car.

We have a serious, yet solvable, transportation problem in Toronto. Once we improve transit service, and build safe, connected walking and cycling networks, thousands of residents will be more comfortable choosing to walk or bike for local trips and to connect to transit for longer trips.

On October 27, 2014 Toronto will be heading to the polls. We have identified 12 priority actions to get Toronto moving - four to improve walking, four to improve cycling, and four to improve public transit. We call on every candidate to endorse these priority actions and work towards implementing them over the next term of Council. Let's get Toronto moving!



## Building a Toronto that Moves...

## For Walking

Almost everyone can be a pedestrian. Walking is accessible and affordable to people of almost any age, state of health, and income. It takes up minimal space and resources. Getting more people walking will help build a city That moves. Walking requires a safe and attractive environment to flourish, and the City of Toronto can take simple steps to accomplish this, at a low cost compared to other transportation investments.

- 1 Create “slow zones” (with a maximum speed of 30 km/hr) on residential roads**  
New York, London and many other cities are making it easy for neighbourhoods to create “slow zones” where the maximum speed is 30 km/hr on residential roads using both signage and infrastructure changes (beyond speed bumps). Slow zones result in fewer pedestrian deaths and injuries, and encourage greater local social interaction.
- 2 Permanently widen sidewalks in downtown Toronto**  
Downtown Toronto’s sidewalks are increasingly overcrowded as the number of people walking for commuting, shopping and pleasure increases. Widened sidewalks on lower Yonge St. were tested in August, 2012, and resulted in more visitors, increased sales and safer sidewalks. Widening sidewalks like these permanently will perpetuate these benefits to businesses, pedestrians, and the city as a whole.
- 3 Harmonize residential sidewalk snow clearing across the City, at an estimated cost of \$10M per year**  
While the City of Toronto clears most residential sidewalks of snow, 1,100 km of residential sidewalks in older parts of the city, which are among the most heavily used sidewalks, are not currently cleared by the city. Many of these sidewalks become dangerous for pedestrians, creating an accessibility barrier for seniors and the disabled because snow clearing by property owners is inconsistent.
- 4 Work with the Toronto area school boards to develop and implement School Travel Plans that will improve the safety and integrity of school walking routes**  
Walking to school is an important way for children to make walking a life-long habit. It improves their health, their educational results, their independence, and their sense of connection to their neighbourhood. A recent Toronto Student Active Transportation Summit identified the urgent need to support School Travel Planning policies and actions.



## Building a Toronto that Moves...

## For Cycling

By the end of 2013, the City of Toronto's on-street bikeway network had barely grown from 2009 levels. Despite increased ridership, City Hall reduced safe on-street cycling infrastructure by removing bike lanes on Pharmacy Ave, Birchmount Rd and Jarvis St. City Hall also created Toronto's first protected bike lanes on Sherbourne St, retrofitted Wellesley St with paint and bollards and created a bicycle boulevard on Shaw St.

The 2001 Bike Plan called for 495 km of on-street bike lanes by 2011. How many did we build over that 10 year period? Roughly 112 km, or 23% of the plan. According to Share the Road Cycling Coalition, 73% of Torontonians want to ride more often, but the lack of safe cycling infrastructure is holding them back.

### **Create a Minimum Grid of 100 km of protected bike lanes on main streets and 100 km of bicycle boulevards on residential streets across Toronto by 2018.**

Investment in Toronto's on-street network of bike lanes has stalled. We need a specific commitment from City Hall for a network of protected bike lanes across Toronto, supported by a grid of bicycle boulevards. A city-wide 2 km x 2 km grid of bike lanes is crucial to provide all Torontonians with a safe cycling option (2001 Toronto Bike Plan, 2013 Bicycle Policy Framework). There are hundreds of kilometres we could add to Toronto streets. For the next term of council, we need to invest in the minimum required to add safe on-street connections not just in downtown Toronto, but across the entire city.

**Create 100 new on-street parking corrals across Toronto.** Bicycle corrals address pent up demand for bicycle parking and help move bicycles off of congested sidewalks. The average bike corral stores 8 bicycles in one car parking space. On-street bicycle parking eliminates competition for space on the sidewalk, creates larger pedestrian spaces and protects both pedestrians and cyclists.

**Connect major transit hubs in North York, Scarborough and Etobicoke with protected bike lanes and bicycle boulevards enabling Torontonians to bike to transit as a part of their commute.** Making cycling a viable alternative in Toronto means recognizing different travel patterns across the city. Enabling Torontonians to leave their car at home and bike to transit means connecting neighbourhoods and major transit hubs across North York, Scarborough and Etobicoke with protected bike lanes and bicycle boulevards.

**Implement a Complete Streets policy in the Official Plan.** A Complete Streets policy ensures that the entire network is consistently designed and operated for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. These policies are widespread in the United States, with over 600 jurisdictions now having a Complete Streets policy in place. Interest is growing interest across Canada, with policies now in Calgary (2009), Waterloo (2010), Edmonton (2013) and Ajax (2013). Toronto is currently in the process of developing Complete Streets guidelines and considering incorporating Complete Streets policy language into Toronto's new Official Plan as part of the ongoing Five Year Official Plan Review.





**Building a Toronto that Moves...**

***For Transit***

Everyone knows that a good public transit system is a vital ingredient for building a Toronto that moves. So, it makes little sense that TTC service is getting worse and costs more. We need a TTC that is fast, reliable and expanding to accommodate a growing population and those who choose to keep their cars at home. This can't be done by City Hall alone; the Provincial and Federal governments must come to the table with money to invest in existing service and transit expansion. But City Hall still needs to act. Most importantly, the next City Council must start improving TTC service and making it more affordable. We ask all candidates to support the following actions, if elected, in the next term of Council:

1

**Freeze transit fares for 4 years.** TTC riders pay a higher percentage of transit operating costs than any comparable transit user in other North American cities. Fares keep going up while service gets worse. It's time City Council stopped penalizing transit users with fare increases and started investing in fairer fares.

2

**Provide a fare reduction for those in financial need.** A 2013 city report notes low income earners in Toronto have one of the least affordable transit passes among Canadian cities. Many cities across Ontario have a discount fare pass for low income residents. City Council should reduce fares for those in financial need, including low-income people, seniors, and ODSB and Ontario Works recipients.

3

**Improve service levels beyond any increase in ridership.** The good news is more people are using the TTC today than 4 years ago. The bad news is the TTC doesn't have the money to improve services to meet the new demand. That's why service levels are worse today than they were 4 years ago. City Council must reverse this trend. Annually, City Council must increase service levels beyond any increase in ridership.

4

**Keep the TTC public.** The challenges facing the TTC are not ones that will be solved by letting the private sector run more and more of the TTC. Companies that are interested in public-private partnerships are in the business of making money, not solving the funding crisis the TTC faces. City Council must ensure TTC service as well as new and existing transit infrastructure are financed, operated, maintained and delivered publicly.