

June 27, 2019

Infrastructure and Environment Committee

**Re: Item 2019.IE6.8, Vision Zero 2.0 – Road Safety Plan Update**

Dear Chair Pasternak and Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee:

I am the Director of The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), a project of the registered charity Clean Air Partnership. TCAT's mission is to advance knowledge and evidence to build support for safe and inclusive streets for walking and cycling.

TCAT has been a strong supporter of Toronto's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan since it was adopted in 2016 and is a member of the City's Vision Zero working group. We are grateful for the dedication of City staff and Council alike who are committed to work toward the goal of eliminating serious injury and fatalities on Toronto's roads. I would like to thank City staff for their excellent work in the production of the Vision Zero 2.0 Road Safety Plan Update.

Yet none of us should be satisfied with the pace that we are moving to stop the carnage on our streets. Just yesterday a woman walking across a Toronto street lost her life, taking the death toll to 25 people killed by cars on Toronto's streets so far this year, the majority of which are people walking or cycling. Also yesterday an 11-year-old boy riding his bike was struck and taken to the hospital with life-threatening injuries. Each and every day on the streets of Toronto there are violent and preventable injuries and deaths as a result of traffic collisions. We know how to build streets that save lives and prevent serious injuries. We need to get on with doing what we know we need to do.

Every four years, since 2006, TCAT, in partnership with dozens of other road safety partners, develops a survey of council and mayoral candidates prior to Toronto's municipal elections. In 2018, TCAT's election survey, called #BuildTheVisionTO, was focused on accelerating Toronto's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan. We asked candidates to commit to 15 priorities for building streets where people of all ages and abilities can get around actively, sustainably and safely.

Over half of the candidates who were subsequently elected completed our survey and demonstrated overwhelming support for the priorities we identified, many of which are reflected in the updated Vision Zero 2.0 Plan Update, including lowering speed limits, improving road design, building a connected grid of bike lanes in every ward, building

sidewalks on every street, installing controlled crossings at all TTC stops, streamlining the traffic calming process, and increasing the use of automated traffic enforcement safety cameras.

While we support all of the recommendations put forward by the General Manager, Transportation Services, and the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, we would like to highlight the following:

1. The proposed speed management strategy is multi-faceted, which is important and the overall approach makes good sense. While we recognize the rationale behind only reducing speed limits in certain areas to start, we strongly encourage the City to consider this as a phased approach and to move toward widespread adoption of a default speed for arterials of 40 km/hr and 30 km/hr for local roads. As the staff report indicates, the impact of speed on collision outcome is dramatic. At 50 km/hr a person hit by a car has an 85% likelihood of being killed, compared to a 30% chance if the driver is operating their car at 40 km/hr or 10% at 30 km/hr.
2. Road design improvements are one of the most effective ways to reduce speed. While we acknowledge that permanent road design changes can't happen overnight, this plan update proposes a program for implementing interim geometric modifications in advance of planned permanent modifications through the use of paint, bollards and other temporary features. This is an extremely important strategy that should be prioritized for improving the safety of people walking and cycling. Cost-effective and easy to install, these temporary features will not only save lives sooner but they provide a fantastic way to try out a design before it's made permanent as in the very successful pilot bike lane projects on Bloor, Richmond and Adelaide.
3. We fully support delegating authority to staff to install missing sidewalks during reconstruction. This is an important step to expedite this basic infrastructure required to keep pedestrians safe. Sidewalks are an essential piece of the City's transportation infrastructure that save lives.
4. The installation of pedestrian and bicycle head-start signals (aka leading pedestrian and bicycle intervals) are a welcome and important improvement. We note in the jurisdictional review of Vision Zero cities that Toronto is in the minority for not already implementing this important safety measure for bikes.
5. The introduction of safety features added to large vehicles in the City's fleet, such as side guards and sensors, is most welcome and long overdue. These life-saving solutions have existed for many years and have been implemented successfully in other jurisdictions. Collisions involving heavy trucks lead to many fatalities and serious injuries of pedestrians and cyclists. From 2007 to 2017 there were 243 serious collisions involving trucks in Toronto, leaving 61 dead, the majority pedestrians and cyclists. In the UK cycling fatalities resulting from collisions with the side of trucks were reduced by 61% after the introduction of side guards.
6. We support focusing on solutions to reduce collisions when pedestrians are crossing the street mid-block. However, we do not support the elimination of TTC stops. We support the recommendation put forward by Walk Toronto that the number of TTC stops should not be reduced and that TTC stops should have a controlled crossing in the immediate vicinity. In January 2018, a 21-year-old student was killed trying to cross from a TTC bus stop on Steels Ave. E., 300 metres away from the closest signalized intersection, with no sidewalk. Inaccessible bus stops far from crossings and with no adjacent sidewalks are not uncommon in several parts of the city, including near schools. Every TTC stop needs a safe way for people to cross the street.

Overall, we believe the City's Vision Zero 2.0 Plan Update and its set of more extensive, more proactive and more targeted initiatives is on the right track and will result in safer streets. We hope the Committee will adopt the recommendations within the Plan Update, and that City Council will do everything it can to move forward more quickly and boldly in order to achieve no loss of life as a result of traffic collisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nancy Smith Lea". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Nancy Smith Lea  
Director, The Centre for Active Transportation  
Clean Air Partnership