



June 26, 2015

Re. HL5.6 Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety in Toronto

Dear Chair Joe Mihevc and Members of the Board of Health Committee,

We are writing to provide a strong endorsement of all of the recommendations made by the Medial Officer of Health in response to Toronto Public Health's June 2015 report titled *Pedestrian and Cycling Safety in Toronto*. These recommendations include: 1) Identifying effective ways to reduce speeds and improve safety on arterial roads, 2) Amendments to the Highway Traffic Act to permit municipalities to adopt lower default speed limits, and 3) Increased road safety education for public safety transit operators.

### Who We Are

- The Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT) is 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.
- Cycle Toronto is a diverse member-supported organization that advocates for a healthy, safe, cycling-friendly city for all. Cycle Toronto has more than 3,000 members.
- Walk Toronto is a grassroots pedestrian advocacy group that works with Toronto citizens and with the City government to improve walking conditions and safety in Toronto.

### Our Feedback and Additional Recommendations

1. Much of the cyclist collision analysis in the *Pedestrian and Cycling Safety in Toronto* report suggests that the development of a "minimum grid" of protected bikeways would be a highly effective way of reducing cyclist collisions. Based on the following considerations, **we recommend that the Board of Health express its support to Toronto City Council to commit an annual capital budget of at least \$20 million to implement a "minimum grid" of cycling infrastructure by 2018:**
  - providing a comprehensive network of cycling facilities that appeal to a broad range of potential cyclists is essential to substantially increase bicycle usage benefit from the "safety in numbers" effect discussed on p. 6 of the report
  - 85% of major injuries and fatalities occur on arterial roads (p. 19), and a minimum grid of dedicated bicycle facilities would provide greater protection along arterial roads and / or viable alternatives to arterial roads
  - the provision of dedicated cycling facilities can reduce sidewalk cycling thereby improving safety both for cyclists and reducing conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists
  - protected bicycle facilities are particularly beneficial for more vulnerable cyclists such as children / youth and seniors, who are identified as having the highest risk of collision (p. 18).



2. **We request that the Board of Health recommend that the Medical Officer of Health work with Transportation Services and its Road Safety Advisory Group to adopt a strong Vision Zero policy of zero road fatalities in Toronto.**
3. **We request that the Board of Health recommend that the Medical Officer of Health work with Transportation Services and its Road Safety Advisory Group to identify pedestrian and cyclist collision hotspots and implement pilot projects at 10 of these hotspots to improve the design or operation of intersections.** Pilot projects could involve leading pedestrian signal intervals, various pavement marking improvements, modifications to turning radii, near miss video analysis, etc. Pilot projects should be analyzed and successful modifications should be broadly implemented.
4. **We recommend that the Board of Health express its support to the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board to expand pedestrian and cycling safety initiatives in schools.**
5. **We recommend that the Board of Health express its support to the Ministry of Education to increase the extent of pedestrian and cycling safety learning within the provincial curriculum.**
6. **We recommend that the Board of Health express its support to the Ministry of Transportation to develop a Vulnerable Road User law.** This new law would include changes to the Highway Traffic Act to increase the penalties for motor vehicle drivers who are involved in a collision with a pedestrian, cyclist or mobility device user.

### **In Conclusion**

The *Pedestrian and Cycling Safety in Toronto* report published by Toronto Public Health clearly indicates that the majority of collisions involving our most vulnerable road users occur when they are being attentive and are obeying the rules of the road. Toronto has a long history of building roads that are simply not as safe as they should be for protecting our citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable. We can and must do better.

We applaud Toronto Public Health for its leadership on this very important issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



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

Jared Kolb  
Executive Director, Cycle Toronto

Dylan Reid  
Co-Founder, Walk Toronto