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October 16, 2017

To: Mayor and Members of Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
“Mayor John Tory” mayor_tory@toronto.ca
“PWIC” pwic@toronto.ca

Cc: info@cycleto.ca

Re: PWIC Item PW24.9

Dear Members of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee:

The University of Toronto Faculty Association would like to express our strong support for making the Bloor Street Bike Lane permanent. We also urge members of PWIC to extend the lanes east and west, to improve connectivity with other cycle routes.

The University of Toronto Faculty Association represents 3,600 active and retired faculty members and librarians. Many of our retired members continue to take part in academic activities. Among our members, there is a growing use of bicycles on campus and to travel to and from campus. This is good news for our health and for the environment, but we need our roads to reduce the risks of loss of life and serious injuries, and for cycling to be an attractive option.

Bloor Street is a major east-west cycle route that connects to schools, universities, shops, restaurants, and residential neighbourhoods. Bloor Street is continuous, there is no danger of streetcar tracks and it is supported by bicycle-sharing services and the subway system. Since the installation of the pilot Bloor bike lanes in August 2016, the volume of people using the lanes has increased by more than a third to around 5,000 per day. A majority (75%) of local residents support the lanes, and drivers feel more comfortable now that people on bicycles have a dedicated space. And 85% of cyclists on Bloor say they feel ‘safe’ or ‘very safe’ using the lanes, compared to just 3% prior to their installation.

Creating a permanent separated bike lane on Bloor will help achieve Toronto’s Vision Zero objective to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries. Studies have found that separated bike lanes reduce the risk of injury by 89%, and in New York City they reduced collisions 57% for cyclists and 29% for pedestrians. There is also a demonstrated “safety in numbers” effect created when larger numbers of people ride bikes. A city-wide network of protected bike lanes—like on Bloor Street—are key to achieving Vision Zero.

The new bike lanes on Bloor Street give drivers and cyclists their own separate, predictable space. This safety benefit is critical, because more than 1,000 people on bikes were hit by cars in 2016, and at least 33 cyclists have been killed in Toronto since 2005 – including 5-year old Xavier Morgan and 70-year old Gary Sim in 2017. The Bloor bike lanes have significantly reduced the risk of ‘dooring’ on the driver’s side, and of crashes involving parking cars. We applaud your commitment to taking an evidence-based approach to the Bloor Street pilot, and we urge you to follow through on the resounding success and popularity of the bike lanes by making them permanent, and extending them east and west.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Messenger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cynthia Messenger
President
University of Toronto Faculty Association
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