



Deputation: Toronto Public Works Committee
Submitted by: Kim Perrotta, Executive Director, CAPE
Date: October 17, 2017
Re: Bloor Bike Lanes

I am the Executive Director for CAPE - the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. CAPE is a non-profit organization that has been promoting policies which improve human health and the environment for more than two decades. Directed by a Board that includes 10 medical doctors, CAPE views bike lanes as a public health priority. Here are a few of our reasons.

First of all, bike lanes reduce injuries and deaths on the road. Experience in other jurisdictions has demonstrated that safe, well designed cycling infrastructure reduces collisions between vehicles and bicycles, and consequently reduces injuries and deaths among cyclists.

Secondly, bike lanes reduce deaths from chronic diseases by increasing levels of physical activity. A recent long-term study conducted in the United Kingdom found that cyclists who commute to work are 41% less likely to die at an early age, 52% less likely to die from a cardiovascular disease, and a 40% less likely to die from cancer. **There is no drug in the world that can deliver that kind of health benefit.** As taxpayers, we should be thrilled to support cyclists because chronic diseases are responsible for about 2/3 of the health care budget in Canada and cost Canadians approximately \$200 billion dollars per year in lost-time and health care costs.

Thirdly, bike lanes hold the promise of reducing air pollution. The transportation sector is the most significant source of air pollution in Toronto and is responsible for approximately 440 early deaths and 1,700 hospital admissions each year. By shifting people from cars to bicycles, we can reduce emissions of air pollution and potentially improve air quality across the City.

Last of all, bike lanes have the potential to cut greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Toronto's transportation sector is responsible for 40% of the City's greenhouse gases. Several modelling studies have found that significant reductions in greenhouse gases can be realized by shifting short trips from vehicles to bicycles. For example, in San Francisco, it was found that greenhouse gases from vehicles could be reduced by 14% by increasing walking and cycling from 4.5 to 22 minutes per day.

Transitions are tough. Right now, some people feel that we are taking valuable space on crowded roads away from cars. But this is the wrong way to look at this issue. By creating safe, well connected cycling infrastructure across the City, we are providing people with more options, increasing the number of people cycling, and taking pressure off of crowded roads, streetcars, and subways.

We have to think about bike lanes differently. We have to think of them like sidewalks; essential infrastructure that protect people from vehicles while fostering healthy lifestyles. We have to think of them like soccer fields and hockey arenas; community assets that promote physical activity and social cohesion. We have to think of them like parks and greenspace; a land use that improves air quality, mitigates climate change, and promotes mental health.

We hope that this Committee will vote to maintain the Bloor Bike Lane; to help create a city that is safer, healthier, and more sustainable.