



October 14, 2017

Dear City of Toronto Public Works and Infrastructure Committee,

I wish to express continued support for the Bloor Street Bike Lane. We have seen the project implemented over the last year. We would now like to see the Bloor St. bike lanes made permanent, and continue to be improved.

Even without Bloor St Bike lanes, there are thousands of cyclists riding on this street every day. As noted in the City's report, it is the second-highest bicycle facility by volume in the city. The Ten Year Cycling Network Plan (2016-2025) identified Bloor St. as a high priority area. Bloor St. bike lanes are also a fundamental part of the City of Toronto's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan 2017-2021. The City of Toronto's TOcore Proposed Downtown Plan (August 18, 2017) states: "The transportation system within Downtown should form a well-connected and integrated network that provides a range of safe and sustainable travel choices – walking, cycling and surface transit – to improve mobility and accessibility and reduce dependence on the private automobile," and continues to support this statement throughout the plan, including: "The City's Cycling Network consists of a mix of marked bike lanes, contra-flow bike lanes, physically separated bike lanes, multi-use trails within the boulevard, and off-street multi-use trails. To encourage growth of this sustainable mode, the network will be expanded and enhanced, to improve the safety, comfort and convenience of cycling." And the Capital Works on Bloor St, Bathurst to Avenue Road, planned for 2019 provide an opportunity to install better separation between cyclists and cars, prominent paint delineation, and other forward steps to improve the permanent bike lane.

The city has now increased the number of people cycling along Bloor St by 56% overall, and by 70% on dry days, in only one year – a great success! The City's Bloor Street West Bike Lane Pilot Project Evaluation (Oct. 3, 2017) also documents a reduction in collisions and conflicts on Bloor Street; that motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians all feel significantly safer; and that businesses along Bloor St report growth in the number of customers. It notes that visitors are coming more often to the Bloor Street area. This is good for our local businesses and culture destinations.

The Bloor St. Culture Corridor, Toronto's most diverse arts and culture district, is located along Bloor St West between Bathurst and Yonge Streets. It is a multi-organizational, multi-disciplinary, and multi-cultural consortium of 19 arts and culture organizations that attract more than 3 million people to our destinations per year, and that employ more than 5,500 culture workers. A significant percentage of our employees are cyclists as their primary mode of transportation, seasonally and year-round. Some of our organizations have also noted a marked increase in the number of people coming to our events by bicycle.

Here's what some of our employees are saying:

*"As a staff member of our Bloor Street Culture Corridor, at the Royal Conservatory of Music, 9 out of 12 months of the year, I commute by bicycle. ... I have been so thankful to use the Bloor Bike Lanes every day, and appreciate how easy it now is to pull over on my way home - to pick up groceries, buy cards and gifts, or visit the library. Cycling is integral to my navigating the city, making the most of Toronto, and to my health. ... I have been involved with the two most common accidents in Toronto: being hit by a car door, and getting stuck in the streetcar tracks. Despite the dangers, commuting by bicycle has opened up parts of the city I had never previously explored, and the more safe it becomes, the more I use my bicycle to get around." Also: "At the Royal Conservatory of Music, I have noticed that the public, visiting our building for special events, are now so likely to bike that sometimes it's difficult to find secure bicycle parking spots!" (Miriam Fine)*



*"...keep our Bloor St bike lanes, so we can continue the City of Toronto's Vision Zero initiatives. As a Torontonian who cycles year-round and who works in the area, I see these bike lanes as the safest modes of transportation for my everyday commute. The increase of bike lanes on major arteries in the city not only encourages safe cycling, it also shows visitors from other cities and countries that Toronto is a livable city, with vibrant walkways and roadways and a cycling infrastructure that encourages a healthy life style." (Kareen Lalicon)*

*"The difference in safety I feel biking along Bloor in the bike lanes versus without is incredible—enough that I transitioned to cycling being my primary source of transportation to and from work daily this year. I truly believe that taking away the bike lanes will be truly detrimental to the safety of both cyclists and drivers, and that the benefits—socially, economically, and environmentally—far outweigh any cons that the bike lanes may have." (Celia Zhang)*

*"... It is also very likely that more people would cycle more often if our roads were safer for cyclists, through infrastructure such as bike lanes. This pilot project along Bloor St. contains a very important cycling network connecting to the rest of the city and representing both an important thoroughfare across the city as well as a destination for residents, businesses, and significant cultural organizations in the area." (Chelsea Dab-Hilke)*

We know there are issues to address and improvements to be made that are affecting our culture destinations and others in the neighbourhood. For example, to ensure that young school children from throughout the GTA have safe access to museums and other downtown arts and culture organizations, we need better solutions for coach and school bus parking. There also needs to be better systems and regulations to ensure that taxis and delivery trucks deliver the people and goods they need to without pulling into bike lanes. And of course additional secure bike parking locations are required. Continued incremental improvements to a permanent bike lane on Bloor St. should address these and other issues.

The solution is to move forward with a permanent bike lanes on Bloor Street and continue with improvements, not to set the city back by removing bike lanes.

Permanent bike lanes on Bloor Street West, that continue to be improved, will continue to provide safer cycling transportation throughout our neighbourhood and to our cultural destinations and local businesses; make our organizations more easily accessible to people from all areas of the city and with varying income levels; and continue to develop a more active and livable city in Toronto.

The Bloor St. Culture Corridor is an important arts district in Toronto, providing the public with museum experiences, films, art exhibitions, music concerts, and opportunities to experience some of Toronto's cultural diversity, including Aboriginal, French, Jewish, Italian, Japanese, Estonian, African and Caribbean arts and culture. With 19 organizations working in partnership, more than three million members of the public going to Bloor St. Culture Corridor arts and culture destinations each year, together the Bloor St. Culture Corridor organizations generate more than \$629,500,000 in economic impact each year.



The Bloor St. Culture Corridor includes:

- Alliance Française de Toronto
- Bata Shoe Museum
- A Different Booklist Cultural Centre
- Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema
- Gardiner Museum
- Istituto Italiano di Cultura
- The Japan Foundation, Toronto
- Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre
- Museum of Estonians Abroad/VEMU
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- The Randolph Centre for the Arts
- Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)
- The Royal Conservatory of Music / Koerner Hall
- Soundstreams
- Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra & Chamber Choir
- The Toronto Consort
- Toronto Reference Library
- University of Toronto Faculty of Music
- 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media + Education

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heather Kelly", written over a light blue scribble.

Heather Kelly  
Founder/Director, Bloor St. Culture Corridor