



Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mayor John Tory
City Councillors
100 Queen St. W
Toronto, ON

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Re: Cycling Network Plan Installations: Bloor West Bikeway Extension & ActiveTO Projects

We support the proposed temporary and permanent bike lane projects, encompassing both the extension of the Bloor bike lane from Shaw St. to Runnymede Rd., the closure of the gap between Sherbourne and Church Streets, and the new bikeways.

[Bells on Bloor](#) was founded in 2007 to advocate for cross-town bike lanes on Bloor St. Since then, we have engaged in wide-ranging advocacy initiatives at all levels of government and in the public, including the building of local community support. In fact, the pilot Bloor bike lane, installed in 2016, was supported by all local residents' associations and the BIA. Unfortunately, after the phenomenal success for the pilot bike lane it took another three years for the extension from Shaw to Runnymede to return to council for consideration. Last July, the city committed to undertaking design and consultation, and had anticipated, subject to approval by council, installation in the summer of 2020.

Toronto has fallen significantly [behind other cities, and its own plans](#), in creating bicycle-friendly infrastructure for its residents. The current ActiveTO plan helps the city to catch up ever so slightly on past promises, the community's needs, including among essential workers, have, however, increased even faster with the pandemic. The 2016 Bike Plan envisioned 34 km of new bike lanes each year for ten years. Unfortunately, from June 2016 to May 2020, only 25 km of new bike lanes (in total) were installed in the city. Montreal, by contrast, has progressed far more quickly with the result that it now has approximately 340 km of bike lanes to Toronto's 160. Montreal has nonetheless committed to an ambitious pandemic recovery plan, including 50 kilometres of new bikeways which are already being installed.

The success of *ActiveTO's* cycling infrastructure plan can only be assured if the 40km already announced, and to be debated at this council meeting, is treated as a first phase to be followed almost immediately by a second phase of urgent bikeway installations.

It is clear that there is strong support from across the city for better cycling infrastructure to meet the transportation needs of city residents. This support includes local merchants and other institutions located on Bloor between Shaw and Runnymede, as evidenced by [a letter to council](#) supporting the bike lane extension. Today, Bells on Bloor is one of 110 groups that have signed onto a [community letter](#) calling for 100 km of urgently needed cross-town bikeways along Yonge, Bloor-Danforth and the busiest surface TTC routes.

This issue is not about “cyclists” or “cycling” -- it is about transportation. We urge City Hall to choose efficient, green, healthy modes of transportation.

We are certain that you agree that a business-as-usual approach to transportation in the city will fail in these extraordinary times. Temporary and permanent bikeways offer a healthy, affordable, efficient transportation alternative to city residents, while aligning with goals to avert the worst of the looming climate crisis. We urge you to take action under the *ActiveTO* plan that reflects the needs of city residents in these extraordinary times with measures that begin with today’s proposals --- **while committing to an urgent phase II of additional bikeways to be installed over the next few months.**

Sincerely,

Albert Koehl
Co-founder and Chair
bellsonbloor.org