

WARD 20 CYCLING COMMITTEE – LIST OF PRIORITIES

This document, compiled by the Ward 20 Cycling Committee, presents suggestions for improvements to current cycling infrastructure and conditions in Ward 20. Its purpose is to provide feedback to Councillor Vaughan's office and City staff who can work in cooperation with the broader community to implement changes that reflect the needs of cyclists travelling in this section of the city.

Comprised of concerned citizens who are familiar with cycling in the ward, including representatives from the Toronto Cyclists Union, the Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation and BikeChain (part of the University of Toronto's Sustainability Office), the Ward 20 Cycling Committee has been meeting regularly since early spring of 2009 to discuss cycling issues and ways to improve the state of cycling in the city. The committee has a vision of a safer and more bike friendly environment in Toronto.

By making streets safer and more appealing for cyclists of all ages, it hopes to both reduce car usage and improve Toronto's pedestrian environment. The overall goal is to create a more sustainable and healthier city for future generations.

Installing cycling infrastructure, such as dedicated bike lanes, will make it easier and more appealing for people to choose their bike over their car when travelling within the city. Coordinating bike parking locations and improving signage and road markings at intersections will help reduce potential conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

It should be noted that this report is not meant to be exhaustive. As the Ward 20 Cycling Committee continues to met and grow, additional suggestions and ideas will no doubt be discussed, debated and brought forward. The Committee looks forward to working together with Councillor Vaughan's office, City staff and community stakeholders, including residents associations, to explore the priorities below, and others that may arise in the future, in greater detail.

DOOR ZONES



According to the City's Toronto Bicycle/Motor-Vehicle Collision Study (2003): "in the central area of the city, the most frequent type of collision [between bicycles and motor vehicles] involved a motorist opening their door and striking a cyclist."

The report goes on to state that "injuries sustained [from dooring accidents] were often more severe than average," making prevention of such incidents a grave concern for cyclists.

Bicycle-motor vehicle collisions are concentrated mainly on arterial roads particularly the central east-west routes. Almost all cases of dooring occur on arterial roads in central Toronto with high-turnover curb-side parking.

(Source: http://www.toronto.ca/transportation/publications/bicycle_motor-vehicle/index.htm)

The ideal solution is to install a Copenhagen-style fully-protected bicycle lane. If this is not possible, the “door zone” should be marked to warn cyclists: “DO NOT RIDE HERE” as in this example from Bedford England (below).



Simply painting stripes within already existing bike lanes to mark the “door zone” would go a long way to help keep cyclist out of potential harm’s way and to help educate and remind drivers to open their doors with caution.

Recommendation #1: Paint door zone indicators along the College Street bike lane and Harbord Street bike lane. Undertake a benchmark study before and after installation to confirm impact.

BIKE BOXES

Bike boxes are marked spaces at intersections that indicate dedicated areas where cyclists can wait when stopped at an intersection (for an example, see the illustration below). Bike boxes can serve a variety of purposes. They can facilitate left hand turns and improve the visibility of cyclists.



The example illustrated (left) would be suitable for implementation at intersections where right hand turns on red lights are prohibited. In this case, cyclists stopped at the intersection would be able to advance ahead of vehicles. Vehicles, meanwhile, would be required to stop further back from the intersection at a red light, thereby providing more space for cyclists who often feel squished and invisible at busy crossroads. Such bike boxes can also prevent cyclists travelling straight through an intersection from being hit by drivers turning right, a collision often described as a “right hook.”

Recommendation #2: Coordinate a pilot project for bike boxes in conjunction with the pilot project that restricts right turns on red lights for vehicles.

QUEENS QUAY AND LOWER SPADINA

The corner of Lower Spadina and Queen's Quay would be a good location for a bike box. The Queens Quay eastbound bike lane ends just before Queens Quay meets Lower Spadina. After crossing Lower Spadina, Queens Quay becomes quite narrow, making it dangerous for cyclists who must compete for space with cars. (It widens again shortly after the streetcar stop.) A bike box on Queens Quay eastbound at Lower Spadina would give cyclists an opportunity to push ahead and spread out before cars advance. This bike box might look something like the one from Portland pictured below.



On Queens Quay at Lower Spadina westbound, there is a right turn lane for vehicles turning north onto Lower Spadina and a through lane (to the left of the right turn lane) for those continuing west on Queens Quay. Again, the road narrows as it meets the intersection, and the bike lane doesn't begin again until about 50 feet past the intersection. As a result, it is a dangerous area for cyclists. Having a bike box here would have the same benefit as the bike box proposed for the eastbound side: cyclists would be able to advance before cars come through.

With the Queens Quay redevelopment taking place east of Lower Spadina in the next couple of years, this would be a great place to trial a bike box.

Recommendation #3: Install bike boxes on Queens Quay where it meets Lower Spadina.

INDIRECT LEFT TURNS

Bike boxes could also be used to facilitate “two-point left turns” or “indirect left turns” as in the example pictured below.

For those not familiar with indirect left turns commonly made by cyclists, here is an example. Say a cyclist is travelling east and would like to turn north at an intersection. Instead of making a proper left turn, many cyclists will simply cross the intersection on a green light and stop at the south-east corner on the other side. The cyclist will then wait for the other set of lights to turn green before proceeding north.

The “two-point left turn” is already widely used by novice and experienced cyclists alike who don't feel safe making a regular left turn through a busy intersection. Unfortunately, in these cases cyclists often cycle through crosswalks or stop at the corner of a sidewalk creating obstacles and hazards for those crossing the street on foot and for drivers wanting to make right-hand turns.

The bike box pictured safely legitimizes indirect left turns, by providing a space for cyclists to stop that will not interfere with pedestrians. Positioned in front of the crosswalk, this type of bike

box can also work to facilitate left turns for cyclists in intersections where left turns are prohibited for vehicles.

One intersection that is particularly problematic for cyclists is College Street and St. George/Beverley Streets. Many cyclists travel through this intersection as there are bike lanes on each of these streets. Left turns, however are prohibited from College onto St. George or Beverley.



Recommendation #4: Install a bike box similar to facilitate indirect left turns from College Street, north to St. George, and College Street, south to Beverley.

For more information: <http://www.bikexpert.com/bikepol/facil/stoplne.htm>

MARKINGS THROUGH INTERSECTIONS

Another way to give cyclist more visibility at busy crossroads is to paint sharrows between the bike lane that discontinues through the intersection as in the photo below.

Sharrows are markings that are usually painted on roads that are not quite wide enough for bike lanes. They indicate where cyclists should travel and remind car drivers to take caution and share the road with cyclists. Sharrows can help designate bike routes, but, perhaps more importantly, they can help increase the visibility of cyclists and create more space for them on the road.

Installing sharrows through intersections that serve roads that already accommodate bike lanes would help maintain the visibility of cyclists as they travel through intersections.



Recommendation #5: install sharrows on well used intersections to connect bikes lanes.

Projects in Ward 20 could include:

- College Street at St. George Street
- College Street at Spadina Avenue
- St. George Street/Beverley Street at College Street
- Harbord Street at Spadina Avenue

PROTECTED BIKE LANES

The quickest way to implement a separated bike lane may be to install inexpensive and removable plastic bollards similar to those in New York City (pictured below). These bollards are flexible enough that emergency vehicles could drive over them if need be. Damaged bollards can be easily replaced, and because such bollards are removable, they could be removed in the winter, if need be, to accommodate snow removal.

Installing such bollards where on street parking doesn't exist (such as along sections of College Street) would not only help cyclists feel safer, it would prevent vehicles from parking in bicycle lanes.



For more information: Rethinking Bollards: How Bollards Can Save Lives, Prevent Injuries and Relieve Traffic Congestion in New York City
(http://transportationalternatives.org/files/newsroom/reports/rethinking_bollards.pdf)

Recommendation #6: Install bollards to create separated bike lanes as a pilot project on street(s) where there is no on street parking.

NEW BIKE LANES

UNIVERSITY AVENUE

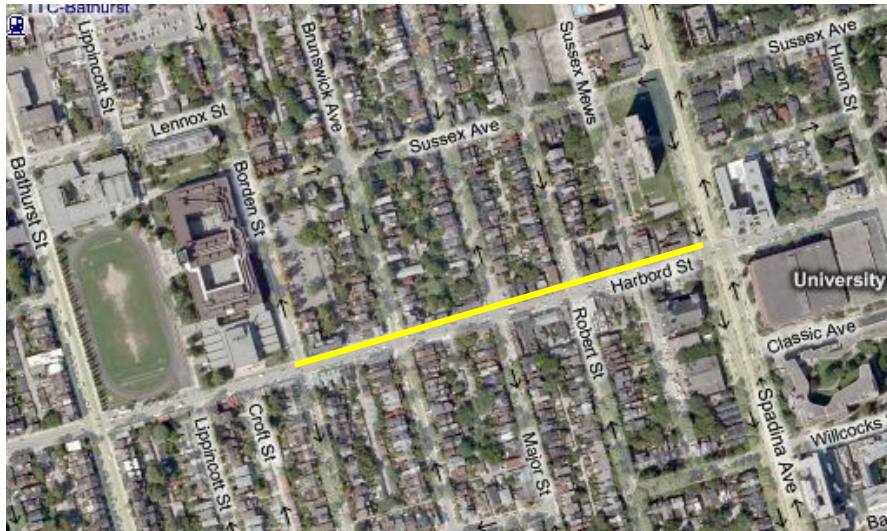
The Ward 20 Cycling Committee supports bike lanes on Queens Park, Queens Park Crescent East and West and University Avenue from Bloor Street to Front Street. A bike lane on these streets would provide a wonderful north-south route for cyclist that would have little impact on vehicular traffic.

Recommendation 7: Install protected bike lanes along as much of the route as possible.

HARBORD STREET BIKE LANE

Cyclists travelling on Harbord Street currently face a gap between Borden Street and Spadina Avenue. Given the number of cyclists who use this route, it is important that this bike lane be connected.

Recommendation #8: Fill the gap in the Harbord Street bike lane.



RICHMOND AND ADELAIDE

Bike lanes on Richmond and Adelaide would provide a much-needed west-east route. There are currently no west-east bike lanes downtown between College Street and Queens Quay.

Recommendation #9: Install protected bike lanes on Richmond or Adelaide as per the Toronto Bike Plan.

BLOOR STREET

The Ward 20 Cycling Committee supports bike lanes on Bloor Street. Installing a continuous bike lane on Bloor Street and Danforth Avenue between Royal York Road in the west and Victoria Park Avenue in the east has been the subject of much publicity and debate in recent years. Although myriad challenges exist in implementing this ambitious proposal, this initiative is important and should continue to be explored.

Recommendation #10: Install bike lanes on Bloor Street. Consult with local residents and businesses to determine how a bike lane along Bloor between Bathurst Street and Avenue Road could be implemented in a way that addresses the characteristic of the street and the various concerns of the neighbourhood.

Recommendation #11: Move forward in implementing bike lanes on sections of Bloor Street and Danforth Avenue where serious challenges in doing so do not exist.

OTHER BIKE LANES YET TO BE IMPLEMENTED AS PART OF THE BIKE PLAN

A number of bike lanes slated for Ward 20 in the City of Toronto's Bike Plan have yet to be implemented. These include:

- The completion of the **Simcoe Street** bike lane between Richmond Street and Queens Quay. This bike lane will provide an important connection to the waterfront. Link up to University.
- A bike lane that connects the gap in the Martin Goodman Trail between Spadina Avenue and Yonge Street along **Queens Quay**.
- A bike lane on **Rees Street**, connecting Queens Quay to Bremner Boulevard.
- A bike lane along **Bremner Boulevard** between York Street and Fort York Boulevard.
- A bike lane along **Spadina Avenue** between Queens Quay and Bloor Street.
- A bike lane along **Peter Street/Blue Jays Way** between Queen Street and Queens Quay. This bike lane would provide a connection to the well-used St. George bike lane to the north.

CONTRAFLOW BIKE LANES

The many one-way residential streets in ward 20 present a significant obstacle for cyclists wishing to follow the rules of the road. Getting from point A to point B often results in cyclists choosing to travel the wrong way down a one-way street, putting themselves in danger due to drivers who do not know to look out for any sort of on-coming traffic.

While some have argued that cyclists should be subject to the same rules of the road as cars, the creation of one-way streets was made with cars in mind, not bicycles. Many roads are one-way only because they are not wide enough to accommodate two-way traffic. Cars and bicycles, however, could easily share the road.

Other residential streets have been made one-way in order to reduce the motor vehicle traffic flow. Although bicycles can pose a threat to pedestrians, they do not pose the same hazards that cars do when it comes to collisions, pollution and noise. Bicycles take up less space and have less impact on existing infrastructure.

One-way streets impede the flow of bicycles and make the city as a whole less bicycle friendly. One way to address this problem is to install contraflow bike lanes such as the one pictured below on Logan Avenue.



BRUNSWICK AVENUE

Installing a contraflow lane on Brunswick Avenue would provide a much-needed north-south route between Dupont and College. Since much of Brunswick Avenue already has one-side only parking, implementing a contraflow lane on Brunswick may be easier relative to other north-south streets in the area, however, there are a few challenges that would need to be overcome. These challenges include:

- A sidewalk bulge at Brunswick and Bloor on the north-east corner of the intersection that discourages cars from turning north onto Brunswick would also present a challenge to cyclists travelling north on Brunswick from Bloor.
- The narrow entrance to Brunswick just south of Bloor, which may make it difficult to fit in a contraflow lane.
- The fact that just south of Bloor, cars parked on Brunswick are required to alternate sides every two weeks for street cleaning.

Recommendation #9: Install contraflow bike lanes on Brunswick between Lowther Avenue and College Street.



As a first step, City Staff should report on the steps that would be required to implement this contraflow lane. Should Brunswick Avenue not be deemed suitable for a contraflow lane, other residential streets in the vicinity should be considered.

BELLEVUE AVENUE

Cyclists travelling south of College (where Brunswick Street ends) are also faced with negotiating a number of one-way streets.

As with many neighbourhoods in Ward 20, Kensington Market is well-loved by cyclists, many of whom frequent the many bike-repair shops in this busy neighbourhood. Rather than navigate Augusta Avenue, where pedestrians and delivery vehicles abound, many cyclists opt to travel north against traffic on Bellevue in order to get to the College Street bike lane.

Recommendation #10: Install a contraflow lane on Bellevue Avenue, which runs between College and Wales Avenue.

DENISON AVENUE

Cyclists on Dundas or Queen Street wanting to travel north to College Street or Kensington Market often choose to travel north up Denison Avenue (the only street that connects Queen and Dundas between Bathurst and Spadina.) Unfortunately, Denison is also a one way street running south.

Recommendation #14: Install a contraflow lane on Denison Avenue, which runs between Wales Avenue and Queen Street.

STEPHANIE STREET

The Toronto Bike Plan also proposes that a contraflow lane be installed on Stephanie Street from McCaul Street to Beverly Street.

Recommendation #15: Install a contraflow lane on Stephanie Street as per the City of Toronto Bike Plan.

QUEENS PARK CRESCENT

Once a bike lane is installed on University Avenue and Queens Park Crescent, accommodations will have to be made to improve safety for cyclists accessing and exiting Queens Park Crescent.

QUEENS PARK CRESCENT WEST AT HOSKIN AVENUE

At present, cars turning right onto Hoskin Avenue from Queens Park Circle are given priority over pedestrians wishing to cross the street from the sidewalk island to the north corner of Hoskin Avenue and Queens Park.



Recommendation #16: change the signage at this intersection to give priority to pedestrians. The City can use the same signage that is used to give pedestrians the right-of-way when crossing the on-ramp from Bloor Street to the Don Valley Parkway northbound.

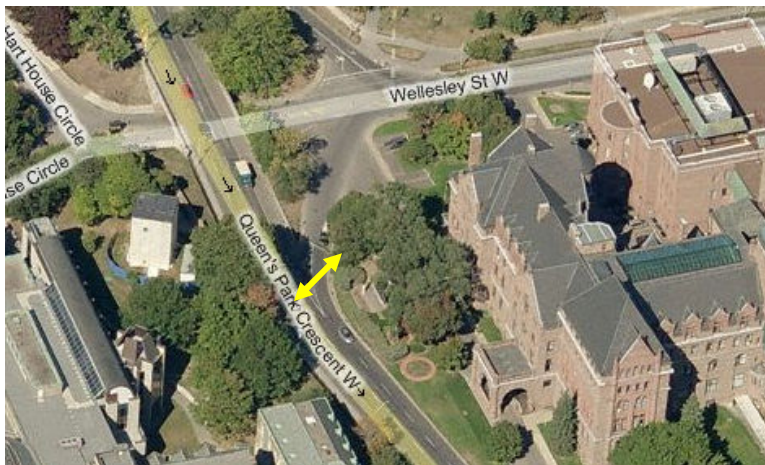
ACCESS TO WELLESLEY STREET

To access Wellesley Street from Queens Park Crescent to the north, cyclists must cross over three lanes of often busy, fast moving traffic to get into the lane furthest to the left. (Staying in the right lane would take cyclists over a bridge that crosses Wellesley and continues south to College.)

Recommendation #17: Install a bike box to the left of the sidewalk island on Hoskin Avenue at Queen's Park Crescent as well as a priority signal for cyclists that allows them to advance ahead of vehicles so that they can safely get over to the right lane and ultimately to Wellesley.

WELLESLEY WESTBOUND TO QUEENS PARK SOUTHBOUND

Cyclists turning left from the Wellesley bike lane to travel south on Queens Park Crescent West currently face an extremely hostile environment where they must merge across three lanes of traffic.



Recommendation #14: Investigate possibilities for signage, road paint, etc., that would allow cyclists safely cross the three lanes of traffic and continue south on Queen's Park.

BIKE PARKING

As the number of cyclists in Toronto has increased, the number of available and convenient places to park one's bike has decreased. Improving bike parking in Toronto, however, will take more than simply installing more posts and rings around the city. Challenges include figuring out how to ensure that bike parking is secure and doesn't present obstacles to pedestrians. Providing attractive bike parking spaces and the option for sheltered parking spots is also a concern.

Recommendation 20: The Ward 20 Cycling Committee would like to work with Councillor Vaughan's office, local BIAs and residents associations, as well as City staff to develop creative solutions to increasing bicycle parking in Ward 20.

Initiatives that we would like to see include:

- providing covered/sheltered bike parking as in New York City
 - re-purposing on-street parking spaces for cyclists
 - installing secure bike parking in Green P lots
 - working with residents associations and local BIAs to develop block-focused bike parking clusters, which would help reduce clutter along busy commercial streets, allow more space for pedestrians on sidewalks and provide cyclists who are visiting locations on residential streets with more parking options.
 - working with local BIAs and other organizations such as the University of Toronto to create artistic post & rings
 - partnering with the TTC to provide more attractive bike parking on TTC property both inside and outside subway stations
 - installing bike parking to serve residential areas so that visitors on bikes have places to park. (Offering incentives for private homeowners to provide secure bike parking on their property for their visitors and tenants may be one idea worth exploring.)
 - ensuring that there is adequate bike parking for visitors to large civic, commercial and institutional facilities, such as hospitals, educational institutions, performance venues (such as Harbourfront Centre), commercial towers, malls, and stadiums. In these cases, implementing a concentrated bike parking solution makes sense -- as part of the landscaping near the facility entrance, as part of the facility's vehicular parking spaces, as a separate and secure bike parking 'compound', and/or as part of an adjacent Green P.
 - improving the security of bike parking
 - ensuring that the regulations for bike parking in new condos are met and enforced.
-