

Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation  
75 Elizabeth Street  
Toronto, ON M5G 1P4

December 10, 2007

Toronto Cycling Advisory Committee:

**Re: double rows of off-set bollards on the Martin-Goodman Trail**

The Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation (or TCAT), is a coalition of 43 local groups with more than 4,000 members.

TCAT is opposed to the installation of double rows of off-set bollards on the MGT. We believe that this treatment, which has been implemented on either side of the entrance to the Boulevard Club parking lot, is an inappropriate way to resolve the issues it is meant to resolve, specifically:

1. Reducing the risk of collisions between bicyclists on the Trail and motorists entering and exiting the parking lot; and
2. Reducing the risk of collisions between bicyclists and other Trail users.

**Car-Bike Collisions**

TCAT believes that the treatment actually *increases* the risk of collision between motorists and bicyclists at this location. We fear that bicyclists will pay such close attention to avoiding collision with the bollards, that they will not notice motor vehicles about to enter or exit the parking lot.

On this subject, Mighk Wilson, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for Metroplan Orlando (a regional planning agency in Florida), concurs. In an e-mail, he wrote:

Bollards ... interfere with cyclist scanning. A cyclist approaching an intersection has to check not only on potential conflicting motorists ... but also keep track of where [they are] in relation to the bollards. Take a look at the bollards at any trail and note how many scratches and gouges there are on them.<sup>1</sup>

We have all seen motorists on Lakeshore Drive “gunning it” when entering the parking lot because gaps in traffic on Lakeshore are few and they are generally very short in duration. In these circumstances, while focusing intently on on-coming traffic, motorists may not notice if there are bicyclists on the Trail crossing the Club driveway; and therein lays the potential for bike-car collisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Quote taken from an e-mail to the listserv of the Association for Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, sent on Thu March 3, 2007.

However, as noted in a letter to Councillor Perks on September 4, TCAT believes that there are better ways of reducing the risks of car-bike collisions than reducing the speed of bicyclists on the Trail.

First, TCAT asks that the City consider prohibiting left turns into and out of the Boulevard Club parking lot. To turn left into or out of the parking lot, motorists have to cross three lanes of fast-moving traffic on a high-volume road, a situation to which many respond at high speeds. This poses risks not only to users of the Trail, but to traffic on Lakeshore Drive, as well. With left turns prohibited, motor vehicles would still be able to enter and exit the Club parking lot via right turn, a manoeuvre that is much easier and safer for all involved.

Second, TCAT asks that the City consider increasing the length of the apron of the driveway leading to the Club's parking lot. If the apron were longer, cars entering or exiting the club could wait on the apron until the Trail is clear of traffic, thereby reducing the risk of conflicts with Trail users. With left turns prohibited, Lakeshore could be restriped so that what is now a left turn lane could be converted into an eastbound through lane, and what is now a curb lane eastbound could become an extension of the driveway apron. Alternatively, the City could divert the Trail south a metre or two to create a deeper apron for the driveway.

In the absence of continuous east-west bike lanes through the downtown core, the Martin-Goodman Trail functions like an arterial road for bicyclists, and bicyclists and other Trail users almost certainly outnumber motorists entering and exiting the Boulevard Club parking lot. At most intersections in most cities, the right-of-way with the higher volume of traffic is given priority. At this location, that right-of-way is the Martin-Goodman Trail.

TCAT believes that it is inequitable to force Trail users (the majority) to reduce their speed in order to avoid collisions with the motor vehicles entering and exiting the parking lot (the minority). TCAT believes that it is irresponsible to create conditions that encourage motorists to enter and exit that parking lot at high rates of speed.

### **Bike-Pedestrian Collisions**

The City has stated that the other reason for the placement of double rows of off-set bollards at this point on the Trail is the excessive speed of bicyclists in the area.

However, TCAT has seen no hard evidence from the City of a speeding problem on the Trail in this area. TCAT would like to know if the City completed a study of bicyclist speeds in the area before installing the bollards, as it would have before installing any similar device on any other City right-of-way? If yes, TCAT would like to see the results. If no, TCAT would ask that the second row of bollards be removed and a study of Trail speeds completed before any action, if warranted, is taken.

Ultimately, *if* it is found that there is a problem with Trail speeds near the Boulevard Club, TCAT would ask that the City consider a treatment other than double rows of off-set bollards to address it. This treatment is non-standard, increases the risk of injury to cyclists on the Trail, and may expose the City to liability.

The *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials does not recognize the use of bollards to control the speed of legitimate trail users. In this regard, the Washington State DOT *Design Manual* is even more explicit, reading as follows:

Install bollards at entrances to shared-use paths to prevent motor vehicles from entering. When locating such installations, ensure that barriers are well marked and visible to bicyclists, day or night. ***Do not use bollards to divert or slow path traffic<sup>2</sup>.***

*If* there is a speeding problem that needs to be addressed at this location, TCAT asks that the City consider alternative treatments. The texture or colour of the Trail could be altered to warn cyclists to slow down, for example. Or, if the circumstances truly are exceptional, rumble strips could be installed: unlike bollards, they would present no risk of cyclist collision and injury.

Thank you for allowing TCAT the opportunity to express its concerns.

Sincerely,

Mike Canzi  
Member, Steering Committee  
Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation

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<sup>2</sup> Washington State Department of Transportation, *Design Manual*, 2007. Accessed from <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Design/Policy/Chapters.htm>.