



GRADUATE STUDENTS' UNION

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LOCAL 19, CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

July 11, 2011

To: Mayor Ford and City Council
Re: PW5.1: Bikeway Network 2011 Update

Dear Mayor Ford and City Council,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the 14,000+ members of the Graduate Students' Union at the University of Toronto, to express concern over the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee's recommendation to remove the bike lanes on Jarvis Street, Dupont St, Bloor St West, Pharmacy Ave, Birchmount Rd, and Rogers Rd (agenda item PW5.1).

We, the Graduate Students' Union, believe that a bicycle-friendly environment is absolutely vital to a safe, clean, and enjoyable city with a strong sense of community.

City staff have released a report showing the increase in cycling traffic on Jarvis Street at upwards of 30%, while maintaining the levels of motorized vehicular traffic. This demonstrates the benefit of having these bike lanes present, as they increase the overall traffic capacity of Jarvis Street.

It has been reported by city staff that there has been negligible increase in automobile travel times southbound, and only a 4-minute increase in northbound travel times. Staff have attributed this delay to cars queuing in a left turn lane, which can be mitigated by an advanced-priority green light. Thus, removing the bike lanes appears to have little, if any at all, technical justifications.

Removing bike lanes means that fewer people will choose bicycles. Thus, more people will continue to choose private, single occupancy, motor vehicles. As a result, congestion will increase, which is already costing the GTA \$2.2 billion annually. This does not include the additional health costs of a car-dependent society, which includes both increased diseases caused by air pollution from emissions and increased diseases caused by sedentary lifestyles. Furthermore, this does not include the costs that will be incurred by the city in removing the bike lanes.

While other world-class cities are continuing to expand their Bikeway Networks (Montreal, Ottawa, Copenhagen, and Portland Oregon, just to name a few), Toronto seems to be going backwards in downsizing ours. In order to make Toronto a safe and enjoyable place to live, work and play, we must provide as many opportunities as possible for people to choose healthy, affordable, and environmentally sustainable modes of transportation. Furthermore, we ought to be providing safe and efficient infrastructure for all road-users, including cyclists.

Sincerely,

Michelle St-Amour
Civics and Environment Commissioner
Graduate Students' Union, University of Toronto