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As a cycling enthusiast and sustainable living advocate, I am encouraged that the residents of Ward 32 and Toronto in general are highly supportive of the current efforts to continue expansion of our Toronto cycling network.

I was very pleased to read in the June 2011 report to the Public Works committee that our cycling network has expanded from 166 to 430 kilometres, and that efforts are underway to improve on both the breadth of the network and its effectiveness in terms of usable connections. I am supportive of expansion of the network both on city streets, where appropriate, and utility and park corridors where feasible.

While I believe we need to improve safety through the use of separated bike lanes and other measures, I am impressed by the report's consideration of cost and factors such as TTC access, snow removal, garbage collection, unidirectional vs. bi-directional lanes and more. We need to balance these in the plan.

Although we foresee it increasing in the future, it is important to recognize that about 6% of traffic in the downtown area is currently bicycle traffic. Toronto seems to be in favour of this increasing and in favour of car traffic decreasing, however a parallel challenge will be to provide better-performing transit; which will have the greatest impact on downtown car displacement; and should be our highest priority.

I am impressed with the report's consideration of the various types of bike lanes available as solutions in different circumstances. The photo below shows how a bit of extra paint was used for cycling lanes in Portland. A study indicated that this option reduced accidents by 38%. I encourage the Committee to consider this possibility carefully.



I believe the pilot test of physically separated cycling lanes for the Bloor viaduct to be well chosen and well-conceived; particularly the decision to try using removable posts that can be taken out during the snowiest months. I will be very interested in the impact on cycling and on cost.

In addition I hope you have contacted or will contact 32 Spokes one of the cycling groups in Ward 32 that have clearly identified some easy-to-implement recommendations for East Toronto. This group can be reached through my office.

For the record, these are my comments on the report. Congratulations on your excellent work.

Sincerely,

Mary-Margaret McMahon
City Councillor, Ward 32