

Status Update: Improving Safety for Bicycle Commuters

Date:	May 21, 2014
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2014\ClusterB\TRA\TIM\pw14018.docx

SUMMARY

This report provides a status update, as requested by Public Works and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on April 9, 2014, on work currently underway on several cycling safety policies and initiatives in response to the report titled "Improving Safety for Bicycle Commuters in Toronto" (HL23.7), which was adopted by Council at its meeting on October 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2013. These cycling safety initiatives include:

- the Province's proposed 1-metre passing rule;
- policy/guideline for ensuring protection of cyclists in construction areas;
- the "Watch for Bikes" program;
- side guards on large trucks;
- treatment of bikeways at intersections; and
- winter maintenance in bicycle lanes.

Financial Impact

This status report is for information only. Receipt of this report will have no financial impact on the 2014 Transportation Services Capital Budget and 2015-2023 Capital Plan.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting on October 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2013 adopted, as amended, the report from the Medical Officer of Health on "Improving Safety for Bicycle Commuters in Toronto" (HL23.7). In adopting the report, Council directed the General Manager of Transportation Services, in collaboration with the Medical Officer of Health, to:

- Send a letter to the Ontario Minister of Transportation expressing support for a Province-wide 1-metre passing rule;
- Review current policies and practices and to develop a new comprehensive policy/guideline for ensuring protection of cyclists in construction areas;
- Explore amending Municipal Code Chapter 886 to ensure cycling infrastructure is not to be used as a storage space by a private or public agency;
- Review the “Watch for Bikes” bylaw and program with a view to assessing effectiveness and identifying potential improvements; and
- Advocate again to Transport Canada for the installation of side guards on large trucks.

In addition, Council directed the General Manager of Transportation Services to:

- Pay special attention to the treatment of bikeways at intersections and other points where street form changes, in order to mitigate potential visibility issues and turning conflicts; and
- Develop City-wide standards for snow removal in designated bike lanes, similar to those for collector roads.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL23.7>

On April 9, 2014 the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee referred a request to the General Manager, Transportation Services, for staff to provide an update to the June 18, 2014 Public Works and Infrastructure Committee meeting on the request made by City Council on bicycle commuter safety, specifically on the matter relating to cyclist safety around construction sites (PW30.12).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.PW30.12>

COMMENTS

Proposed One-Metre Passing Law

Bill 173, "Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act, 2014", which received first reading in the Ontario Legislature on March 17, 2014, included an amendment to the Ontario Highway Traffic Act to require motorists to leave a minimum of one metre when passing a cyclist. As directed by Council, a joint letter was sent to the Ontario Minister of Transportation from the General Manager of Transportation Services and the Medical Officer of Health expressing the City's support for this and other proposed amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that would increase cyclist safety and promote active transportation.

Bill 173 "Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act, 2014" has not been passed into law due to the Provincial election. Therefore, Section 148(4) of the Highway Traffic Act, which defines the rules for passing a cyclist, remains in effect. Section 148(4) requires that

"every person in charge of a vehicle on a highway meeting a person travelling on a bicycle shall allow the cyclist sufficient room on the roadway to pass." On May 28, 2014 the Board of Health will consider a report from the Medical Officer of Health, entitled "Advancing Active Transportation in Toronto: Findings from Four Demonstration Projects, " which includes a recommendation to "encourage the provincial government-elect to reintroduce Bill 173... once the new government is formed and the Ontario legislature resumes" (HL31.2).

Ensuring Cyclist Safety in Construction Areas

The Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 7 is the provincial guideline for establishing safe work zones on roadways. All City divisions and agencies, private contractors and utility companies performing work on Toronto streets are required to comply with Book 7. A staff working group has been established to review best practice among other North American cities to identify additional requirements that the City could adopt to supplement Book 7 with respect to ensuring cyclist safety in construction areas. The working group will also address the storage of construction and other materials in bicycle lanes. This work will be completed by the end of 2014.

"Watch for Bikes" Program

The City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 545, Licensing, requires three "Watch for Bikes" stickers in every taxi, one affixed to the driver's side mirror, one affixed to the right rear side window and one affixed to the left side rear window. The stickers are to be affixed in a manner that will not obstruct the driver's view. Transportation Services is in the process of redesigning the rear side window sticker to be larger and more visible to taxi passengers. The driver's side mirror sticker and the proposed new rear side window sticker are illustrated in Appendix 1. Taxis are inspected twice each year by Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS). Once the new sticker design has been approved by MLS the existing stickers will be replaced by the new stickers when taxis are brought in for their bi-annual inspection.

Transportation Services has worked in partnership with the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) for the past decade to produce and distribute the driver's side mirror "Watch for Bikes" stickers to drivers. Transportation Services will continue to work with the CAA to distribute these stickers. Transportation Services is also working with Toronto Public Health and LiveGreen Toronto to consider ways to promote this program more widely to drivers and cyclists, including investigating opportunities for car rental and car share companies to affix the "Watch for Bikes" sticker on their vehicle fleets.

Side Guards on Large Trucks

In 2012 the Chief Coroner for Ontario completed a "Cycling Death Review" and a "Pedestrian Death Review" and made a series of recommendations intended to prevent future cycling and pedestrian deaths. In both reviews, the Chief Coroner recommended to Transport Canada that side-guards should be made mandatory for heavy trucks in

Canada. Transport Canada reviewed the Chief Coroner's recommendations and responded on May 3, 2013 to the Cycling Death Review and on September 12, 2013 to the Cycling Death Review. In these responses, Transport Canada indicated that they continue to be of the opinion that side guards would not be an effective solution to improving pedestrian and cycling safety. Transport Canada has come to this position based on their analysis of collisions involving trucks in Canada, international research on the effectiveness of side guards and the potential impacts of regulations requiring side guards on trucks operating in Canada.

Transportation Services staff contacted Transport Canada in August 2013 and again in October 2013 with respect to truck side guards. Transport Canada has advised that their position has not changed; they do not support regulations mandating side guards for new trucks.

The purpose of truck side guards is to reduce the severity of injury to a pedestrian or cyclist in the event of a collision. Equally important are measures to prevent a collision from occurring in the first place. In 2013 Transportation Services and Fleet Services worked in partnership with the Share the Road Cycling Coalition and the CAA to develop a 30-second truck-bicycle safety public service announcement (PSA). The Share the Road Cycling Coalition was successful in securing air-time to broadcast the safety message. As part of the same campaign, a poster and safety stickers (to be affixed to the rear of trucks) were developed to raise awareness among cyclists about a truck driver's blind spot. Transportation and Fleet Services are working together to have the stickers affixed to the City's truck fleet. In addition, the truck-bicycle safety message is being delivered this year via transit shelter ads; the posters will be displayed in 141 transit shelters from May 19 to June 15, 2014. The poster and sticker are illustrated in Appendix 2: Truck - Bicycle Safety Sticker and Appendix 3: Truck - Bicycle Safety Campaign Bus Shelter Ad.

Bikeway Intersection Treatments

Over the past few years Transportation has implemented several intersection treatments to enhance cyclist safety, including:

- Bike boxes at College and Spadina, College and St. George, Harbord and College, Harbord-Hoskin and St. George
- Green bike lanes and sharrows through conflict zones at Wellesley St. and Sherbourne St. Cycle Tracks
- Skip lines and sharrows through intersections at Harbord Street, Shaw Street, plus the cycle tracks mentioned above
- Bicycle traffic signals at Shaw Street, Finch and Gatineau Hydro Corridor Trail crossings of major arterials.

Transportation staff will be developing new bikeway design guidelines this year to reflect North American best practice, including treatments to enhance cyclist safety at intersections.

Winter Maintenance Policy for Bicycle Lanes

On May 14, 2014, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee adopted, as amended, a report from the General Manager, Transportation Services, entitled "Confirmation of Levels of Service for Winter Maintenance of Bikeways, Windrow Opening, Sidewalks and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Compliance" (PW31.1). The report recommended that Council confirm enhanced levels of winter maintenance in cycling facilities beginning in the 2015/16 winter season, at a cost of approximately \$650,000 per season. The enhanced winter maintenance would be applied to a network of priority bicycle lanes. The Committee also recommended that contra-flow bicycle lanes be given priority status for winter snow clearing. The report and the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee's recommendations will be considered by Council at its meeting on June 10 and 11, 2014.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Watch for Bikes Stickers
Appendix 2: Truck - Bicycle Safety Sticker
Appendix 3: Truck - Bicycle Safety Campaign Bus Shelter Ad

Appendix 1: Watch for Bikes Stickers

Rear Side Window Stickers



Watch for Bikes sticker Placement



Driver's Side Mirror Sticker



Appendix 2: Truck - Bicycle Safety Sticker



Appendix 3: Truck - Bicycle Safety Campaign Bus Shelter Ad

**STAY
SAFE.
STAY
BACK.**

NO GO ZONE
Trucks **CANNOT** see you

SAFE ZONE
Trucks **CAN** see you

 **TORONTO** toronto.ca/cycling 