

April 3, 2015

Dela Ting
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee (PWIC),

RE: PW3.12 (Request for Cycle Track Review and Design Improvements)

On behalf of the Cycle Toronto Ward 14 Advocacy Group, I would like to thank Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam for bringing this issue forward. As someone who regularly uses cycle tracks such as Wellesley, Sherbourne and Richmond-Adelaide, I feel this review is long overdue to ensure future cycle tracks are properly designed.

1. Why proper separation is needed

The issue of motor vehicles blocking cycle tracks is one that has occurred too often. While these incidents have been reduced with the introduction of flexi-posts, they still occur as per the picture on the left, which was taken at Richmond and Portland on March 7, 2015.



Two weekends ago, I attended Spring Bike Ottawa with two other Cycle Toronto advocates. Before the event, I checked out the cycle tracks on Ottawa's Laurier Street. Even though it is currently a pilot project, concrete barriers and flexi-posts at each end are used. (see picture at right) As per a conversation I had with Ottawa Councillor David Chernushenko, the Laurier cycle track is expected to be converted to a raised cycle track when the road is due for reconstruction; something I noticed in leading cycling cities such as Amsterdam and Bordeaux. While not raised except at transit stops, Toronto's recent high quality cycle tracks on Wellesley from Yonge to Queen's Park - including the bi-directional one around Queen's Park - can be used as a reference when cycle tracks are made permanent. My main recommendation is that concrete barriers should be used during the pilot project stage like they do in Ottawa.

2. Protected Intersections

To further improve cycle tracks, Toronto should consider using Dutch protected intersections where cycle tracks intersect. These consist of four traffic islands which guide cyclists around the intersection; allowing for indirect left turns and eye contact between cyclists and drivers to prevent right hooks. A video explaining the concept can be viewed at this [YouTube link](#).'

3. Stop Building Dooring Lanes

If there is one bike lane design which needs to be stopped, it is the dooring lane as seen on Harbord. Not only is the bike lane placed in the door zone; improper snow clearing during the winter can result in motor vehicles blocking the bike lane as per the below picture taken at Harbord east of Shaw on March 7, 2015. Instead, the bike lane should be moved to the curb and the buffer should be between the bike lane and parked cars to enable future separation.



4. Proposed 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy (PW3.3)

Since next week's PWIC meeting will also discuss proposed 30 km/h speed limits, I will briefly discuss the motion here. Given Councillor Jaye Robinson's interest in Vision Zero per her letter on February 23, 2015ⁱ, as well as my experience of being doored in November; I support this motion. However, 30 km/h speed limits on collector and local roads alone is not enough; given drivers tend to travel 10 - 20 km/h over the speed limit when road design permits. To ensure compliance, traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, bump outs, parked cars, and contraflow bike lanes (if applicable) should be required as such roads are due for reconstruction, though earlier installation should also be encouraged. On Ward 14 streets such as Springhurst and Sorauren, these traffic calming measures have been proven to be effective.

Conclusion

To ensure the highest safety for all road users, I urge that PWIC and council ensure proper cycle track separation including during the pilot project stage, pursue protected intersections, put an end to dooring lanes, and adopt 30 km/h speed limits on all collector and local roads. I thank you for reviewing these comments & feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss them further.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Zaichkowski, CPA, CMA
Co-Captain, Cycle Toronto Ward 14 Advocacy Group

CC: Councillor Gord Perks, Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, Cycle Toronto

ⁱ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIApbxLz6pA>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/pw/bgrd/backgroundfile-76793.pdf>