To: **Members of the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee**
From: **Walk Toronto (Steering Committee)**
Date: **April 8, 2015**
Re: **Comments for 2015.PW3.12**

We understand that our comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that our name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, we understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

The designs of cycle tracks on Sherbourne St. and Wellesley St. were originally touted as being fully separated. However, in their actual implementation proper separation has not been achieved, and this negatively affects pedestrians in several ways. We believe that it is crucial that Transportation Services staff improve the basic cycle track design, in order that the same flaws are not needlessly replicated in the future.

Illegal parking in the cycle track

Problem

In reference to the problem (a) "locations of frequent parking in bike lanes and separation conditions (bollards and their spacing or curb type)", we note the when cyclists encounter a motor vehicle that is parked illegally on a cycle track, riders do not always steer into automotive traffic . Some cyclists will avoid the parked vehicle by diverting to the sidewalk, creating unsafe conflicts with pedestrians using the sidewalk. In short**, drivers' illegal parking practices endanger pedestrians as well as cyclists**.

Solution

Sherbourne uses rolled or semi-mountable barriers in order to allow emergency vehicles to access cycle tracks, or to allow regular vehicles to park so that emergency vehicles can easily pass. However, this also allows ordinary vehicles to park on the cycle track for unsanctioned purposes.

- The best solution to the problem is to create non-mountable barriers that effectively separate cycle tracks (or bike lanes) from motor vehicle traffic.
- Sheer concrete strip barriers are most effective, and are used extensively in Montreal.

- Also, concrete barriers can be supplemented by bollards to mark where the strip begins and ends (e.g., near intersections). However, the use of bollards without concrete separators is not sufficient to deter vehicular incursions, as they can be knocked over easily, and smaller vehicles can sometimes squeeze though..

Transit shelter waiting areas

Problem

In reference to problem (e) "solutions and recommendations to remedy the conflicts to ensure safer street conditions for all bike lane and road users", we call attention to surface transit waiting areas as the most significant cause of conflicts.

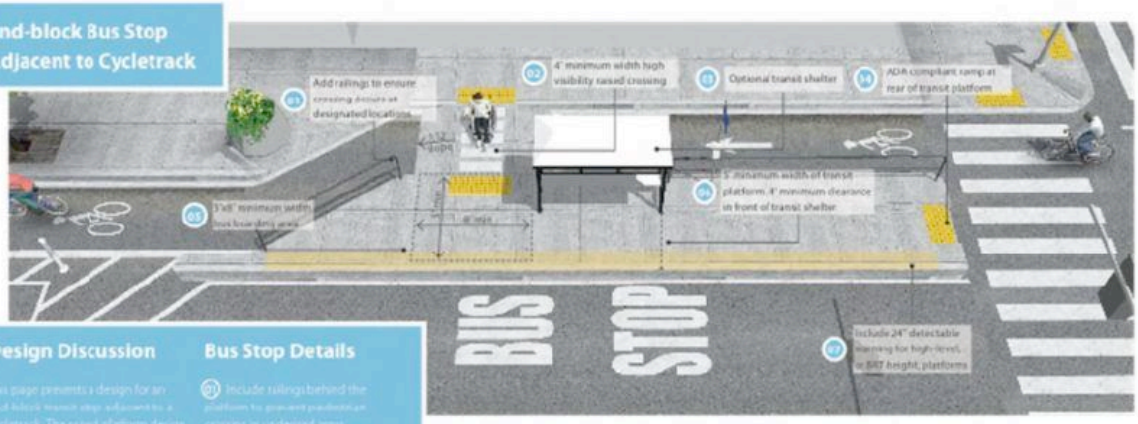
Creating a truly protected bicycle facility should involve not only separating cyclists from motor vehicle traffic – it should also separate bikes from pedestrians. This is not the case on Sherbourne Street, where the grade of the cycle track is raised to sidewalk level. There presently is no effective physical separation between cyclists and pedestrians in transit waiting areas. The laying down of coloured tactile plates ("rumble strips") is not sufficient to separate people waiting at the bus stop from cyclists travelling on the cycle track. Each user group tends to assume that it has priority, resulting in potentially dangerous conflicts. The perils are magnified when the advertising panels at the end of transit shelters obscure the view of approaching cyclists, who may not notice a pedestrian waiting behind the shelter panel.

Ironically, the painted bike lanes that used to exist on Sherbourne and Wellesley Streets achieved better separation between pedestrians and cyclists, who would wait behind a bus when it pulled into a stop.

Solution

- At the very least, the end advertising panels of bus shelters should be drastically reduced in height, or eliminated entirely.
- With future projects, advertising should be shifted to the middle wall of shelters.
- Also, more effective warning signage should be posted – directed at both cyclists and transit riders.
- Furthermore, better lighting of transit waiting areas would improve visibility at night.
- With new projects, it is better to look at best practices in other cities, particularly Europe. The optimal solution is to route the cycle track away from the road, and build a transit waiting strip at raised grade that is located between the motor vehicle lanes and the cycle track. The regular sidewalk would run parallel to the cycle track. This maintains full separation between pedestrians, waiting transit riders, cyclists and motorists. It does require more space than the present design on Sherbourne. Below is a diagram by Alta Planning & Design. Note that in The Netherlands, dimensions are narrowed somewhat on roads that present space constraints.

End-block Bus Stop Adjacent to Cycletrack



Design Discussion

This page presents a design for an end-block transit stop adjacent to a cycletrack. The raised platform design options shown above provides the following advantages: it prevents bicyclists and bus loading conflicts and it slows bicyclists where crossing conflict areas exist. The ramp in the cycletrack is preferred since it allows for better access and flow for the transit stop. An at-grade crossing is an option, but it requires curb ramps on both sidewalk and platform, which may impose challenges. Additionally, the raised crossing conveys clearly that pedestrians have the right-of-way in the cycle track. Where feasible, the transit stop should be designed wide enough to accommodate a transit shelter and pedestrian circulation. Available space within the existing right-of-way may present localized design challenges; regardless, the concepts presented here should be included if possible. Designs shown here comply with FHWAG and ADA guidance.

Bus Stop Details

01 Include railings behind the platform to prevent pedestrian crossing in undesired areas.

02 4' minimum width raised pedestrian crossing (wider for higher pedestrian volumes) with high-visibility crosswalk markings. Supplemental signage may be used.

03 Include transit shelters and other transit appurtenances as feasible.

04 Include a wheelchair ramp with detectable warning at the end of the platform that unloads into the crosswalk.

05 The bus boarding and alighting area should be 8'x8' minimum.

06 Transit stop should maintain a 5' minimum clear travel path and 4' minimum in front of the transit shelter.

07 Include 24" detectable warning for high-level (9" and greater) platforms.

End-block Transit Stop bird's eye view

5 16

APBP & People for Bikes Accessibility and Protected Lanes | 07-02-2014 16