

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

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

Re: Item PW12.1 - Bloor Street Design Feasibility Study and Bike Lane Pilot Project

I am writing on behalf of Ward 30 bikes in support of the Pilot Project to install bike lanes on Bloor Street. We believe this project should be supported for the following reasons:

1. Bike lanes on Bloor Street will provide safe infrastructure for the cyclists who already travel on Bloor Street, reducing car-bike accidents.
2. Bike lanes will encourage more cyclists, especially if these lanes are incorporated in a Minimum Grid that will provide bike lanes to support travel throughout Toronto.
3. Bike lanes support the city's plan to reduce green house gas emissions and to reduce traffic congestion.
4. Bike lanes support local businesses and their customers.

The 2012 Ontario Coroner's Report on Cycling Deaths in Ontario recommended:

- Creation of cycling networks (incorporating strategies such as connected cycling lanes, separated bike lanes, bike paths and other models appropriate to the community.)

This recommendation was based on a comprehensive study that found car-cyclist interactions are dangerous for cyclists because of the huge disparity in size and power between the two vehicles. The establishment of bike lanes gives each road user their own space to travel, resulting in an increase in safety for all road users.

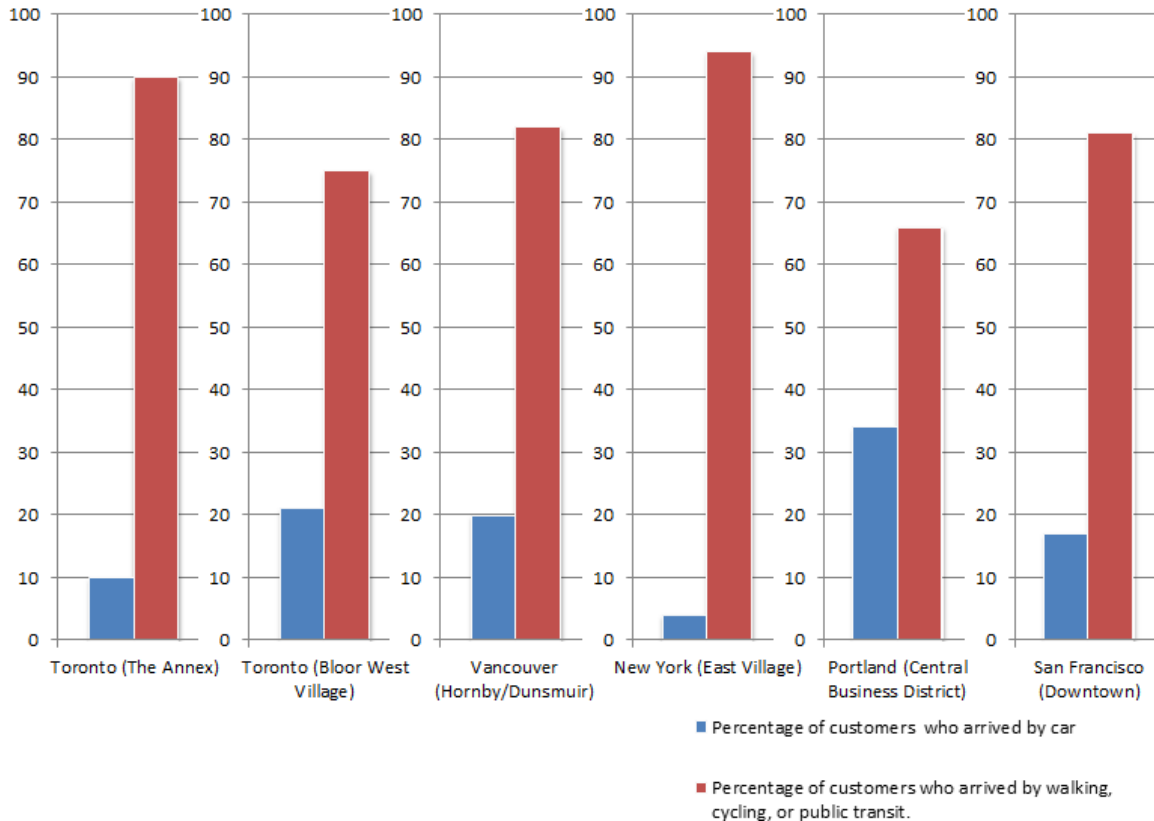
In our city, the Toronto Police & Transportation Services most recent collision statistics for car-bike collisions date from September 2013. There were 1,042 accidents in the first nine months of that year, compared to 1,475 for all of 2012. Toronto's streets see 52 collisions per 100,000 people. Anecdotal evidence would indicate that these numbers have been maintained, if not increased over the last 3 years. Those statistics no doubt play a role in the findings of a recent Share the Road Cycling coalition survey from 2014 that revealed 73% of respondents would, by all means, love to bike to work...but they choose not to. Not because they are lazy, but because they are concerned about street safety.

Since Bloor Street is a major arterial road in Toronto; it is certainly well used by both autos and cyclists now, but that use is not ideal for either group. As a cyclist, I can personally say that there are portions of the roadway that are simply not wide enough to safely contain vehicular traffic, cyclists and parked vehicles. Of particular concern are doors opening from parked vehicles; there is simply not enough room to avoid them so it requires looking ahead constantly to assess potential dangers and, sometimes, an emergency stop to avoid a collision. It is not only cyclists who must deal with this problem, as drivers are also faced with negotiating a narrow roadway with many other road users in the same space.

The number of cyclists already using Bloor Street is simply an indication that it is a major east-west corridor in the centre of the city. Since it runs uninterrupted across the centre of the city, and it has no streetcar tracks, many experienced cyclists will trade off the dangers that it currently presents for its convenience as a route. However, if the city wants to encourage more cyclists, a safer and more complete treatment of the street is required. We submit that this pilot project is the perfect way to study how a bike lane along Bloor Street will work for everyone - individual drivers, delivery companies, cyclists, business owners, their customers and residents.

In regard to the effect on business owners and their customers, it's worth looking at a graph prepared by the Toronto Cycling Think & Do Tank that shows that in both the Annex and Bloor West village, between 10 - 20 % of business

customers arrived by car (see below). These numbers were gathered in a study done in 2009 by the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT). This leaves the vast majority of customers coming some other way, and the establishment of a pilot project will allow the city to gather data to establish the effect of these bike lanes on the Bloor Street business owners.



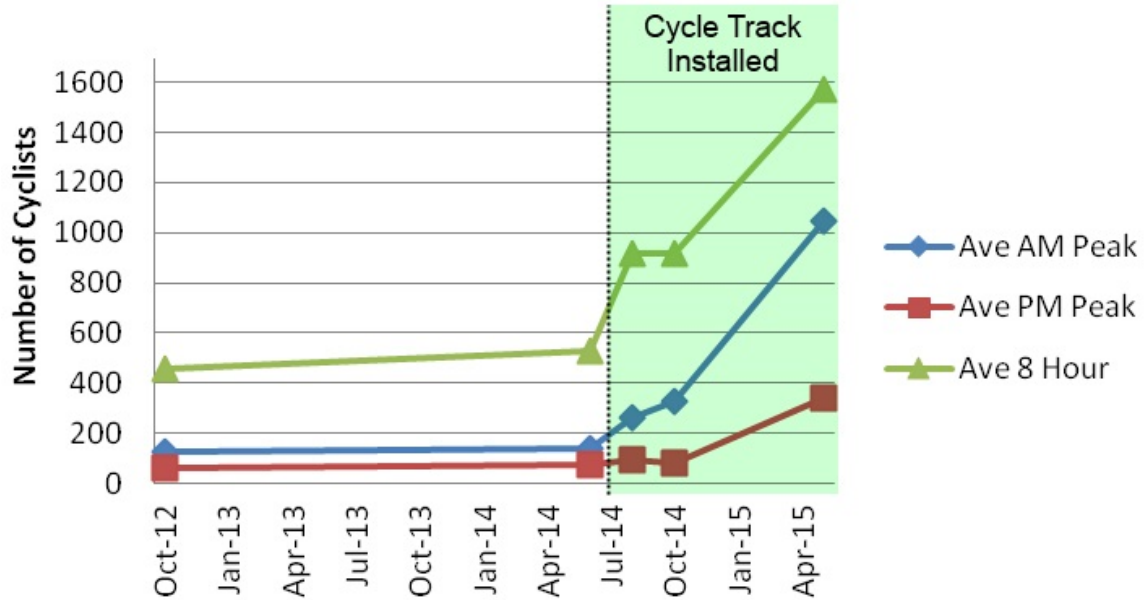
The city of Toronto committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions in the Climate Change Action Plan of 2007, by 80% of 1990 levels by the year 2050. As noted in the January 2016 report of the Toronto Atmospheric Fund:

"Transportation is the one area in which Toronto has failed to make progress in absolute terms."

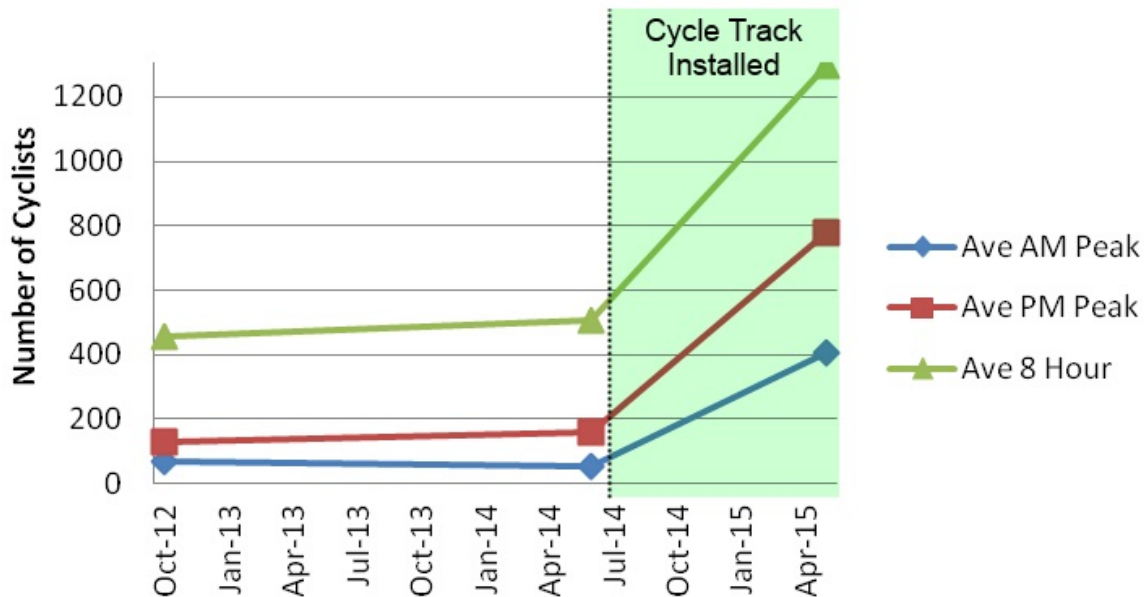
There are many reasons for this, but we all know how slowly transit improvements can be made, and in order for more people to get out of their cars, we must provide safe, convenient and reliable options. This committee can look to the results of the Richmond and Adelaide Street pilot bike lanes:

- Cycling volumes tripled

Eastbound Cyclists on Adelaide Street



Westbound Cyclists on Richmond St.



- Traffic vehicle times remain steady
- 43% of users said the bike lanes were the reason they were cycling
- "How safe and comfortable do you feel biking on these streets" went from a score of 3.6/10 to 8.3/10 after the cycle tracks were fully installed

Clearly, the success of these pilot bike lanes would suggest that the city should proceed along Bloor Street as well. Since the character of Bloor Street is different from Richmond and Adelaide Street, this project will give the city new data on how bike lanes affect cycling use, vehicular traffic and business owners; this information will help to set the city's transportation priorities in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Gerry Brown
 On behalf of Ward 30 Bikes
ward_30@cycleto.ca