

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

From: Gideon Forman <gForman@davidsuzuki.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2016 3:23 PM
To: Councillor Jaye Robinson
Cc: Mayor Tory; Cycle Toronto; Public Works and Infrastructure Committee; Councillor Lee; Councillor Moeser; Councillor Holyday; Councillor Perruzza
Subject: Please support 10 year bike plan with \$25 M annually (PW 13.11)

May 11, 2016

Councillor Jaye Robinson, Chair
Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
City of Toronto City Hall 100 Queen St. West, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: Please support Ten Year Cycling Network Plan at \$25 million a year

Dear Councillor Robinson,

On behalf of the David Suzuki Foundation, I am writing to urge you to allocate \$25 million annually for the Ten Year Cycling Network Plan.

Let me begin by offering our warmest thanks for your support on the Bloor bike lane pilot. It is clear that council would not have shown near-unanimous support for this great project had it not been for your direct involvement. Your leadership was decisive and you can be justifiably proud of the vital contribution you made to cycling in our city.

Now we are calling on you for leadership once again.

If we are to create a flourishing, climate-protective metropolis, we need to give Torontonians practical alternatives to the automobile. That is precisely what the Ten Year Plan will do. Creating over 500 kilometres of safe cycling infrastructure will help residents leave the car at home and commute to work, school, leisure activities or shopping in a healthy and environmentally friendly manner.

As we made clear in our submission supporting the Bloor pilot, cycling lanes and trails are beneficial for three main reasons.

First, they help the city meet its climate change goals. Even a small shift from car to bicycle can have a very significant impact. A study done by Transportation Alternatives found that if just five per cent of New Yorkers who currently commute to work by car or taxi switched to cycling, it would save 150 million pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

Second, cycling infrastructure boosts safety and public health. It promotes physical fitness and improves air quality — which is not a small thing, especially for families struggling with asthma and other respiratory ailments.

Third, increased bike use can be a boon to local businesses. Researchers at Portland State University discovered that customers who travel by bicycle spend 24 per cent more per month than those who are car-based.

So we strongly endorse the Cycling Network Plan and urge the completion of its projects in their entirety at the earliest possible date. Because we believe the importance of cycling infrastructure cannot be overstated, we support the funding level — \$25 million annually — that will bring the plan to fruition in the shortest possible time.

We understand this investment could see the Plan completed within six to seven years rather than the 10 years contemplated under other scenarios. That is all to the good. Every year shaved off construction time is a year during which public health, environmental protection and business growth are enhanced.

Toronto's capital budget for 2016 is over \$2 billion. Surely it is reasonable to spend just \$25 million of that on a plan that benefits thousands of residents across the city: young and old, cyclists and car-drivers, those living uptown and those dwelling in the core.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and consider its recommendations.

Yours,

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CC Mayor John Tory, PWIC Members