

January 10, 2017

RE: Cycle Toronto's submission to the City of Toronto's 2017 Budget process

Dear Chair Crawford and members of the Budget Committee,

I am writing to provide Cycle Toronto's input into the City of Toronto's 2017 Budget. Cycle Toronto is a diverse member-supported organization that advocates for a healthy, safe, cycling-friendly city for all with more than 2,600 members across Toronto.

Our members deeply appreciate the funding this Budget dedicates to cycling infrastructure and safer streets for vulnerable road users. The City of Toronto has made good progress in the last couple of years towards the development of a bikeway network. We hope to see this momentum continue in 2017 and look forward to working with the City on identifying and implementing priority projects. As you will see below, we have identified a number of areas where the Budget could provide targeted support for infrastructure projects that would move us forward to becoming a truly healthy, vibrant, and safe city for all.

Summary of recommendations

1. Ensure increased operational funding to the Cycling Infrastructure and Programs Unit to deliver on the City's ambitious capital investment dedicated to expanding the bikeway network in 2017 and 2018
2. Invest \$38 million per year in the Road Safety Plan to achieve Vision Zero in 2 years rather than 5
3. Eliminate the multi-year backlog of ring-and-post bike parking requests in 2017
4. Maintain winter maintenance levels for bike lanes and sidewalks--or better yet, increase them in line with cycling and walking mode share growth

-
- 1. We support increased operational funding to the Cycling Infrastructure and Programs Unit to deliver on the City's ambitious capital investment dedicated to expanding the bikeway network in 2017 and 2018**

In 2016, Cycle Toronto was pleased to see City Council approve a Ten-Year Cycling Infrastructure Plan that has been costed at \$153.5 million. The current Ten-Year Capital Plan in the 2017 draft Budget indicates funding for cycling projects at \$9.2 million for 2017 and \$8.3 million annually from 2018 to 2026 for a total of \$83.7 million with an additional \$78.3 million of unmet needs. We understand that the funded amount will be supplemented in 2017 and 2018 by approximately \$84 million (over two years) allocated to Toronto from the federal government's Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (PTIF).¹ We are pleased to note that this will result in almost \$50 million being invested in cycling infrastructure in each of 2017 and 2018.

From our perspective, this is a good news story and a testament to the advocacy work of our members in support of a minimum grid of cycling infrastructure in Toronto. As a result of this significant funding, we look

¹ ["Backgrounder: Public Transit Infrastructure Fund"](#). City of Toronto. 2016.



forward to seeing the cycling network expand rapidly in 2017 and 2018. **We hope the City will take all measures necessary to ensure the full allocated amount is spent in each of these years.** We know this has not historically always been the case - the carry forward amount from 2016 is \$11.5 million - due to multi-year timelines for projects, capital coordination delays and short-staffing in the Cycling Infrastructure and Programs Unit.

From our experience, we have found the cycling unit staff to be professional, but overwhelmed by the demand for infrastructure planning and implementation. Therefore, it is important that city staff receive the support they need to allow them to utilize the funds made available and invest in new infrastructure. We are encouraged that four new positions in 2017 and two more in 2018 are scheduled to be filled. This is a good start to ramping up the operational capacity of the Cycling Unit.

We also ask that the City ensure that the momentum is continued beyond 2018 after the PTIF funds have been spent. With a ten-year Cycling Plan, it will take dedicated resources beyond the \$8.3 million allocated in the primary Capital Budget to see the vision of a minimum grid realized across the city.

Bike Share Toronto: Again, Cycle Toronto was very pleased to see the expansion of Bike Share Toronto to new neighbourhoods in 2016. Bike Share is a critical component of transportation infrastructure as it helps solve the “last mile” problem; getting people from transit hubs to their destinations and back. We understand that part of the PTIF funding will be dedicated to Bike Share in 2017 and ask that the City earmark resources from this pot specifically to further expand the network to neighbourhoods east of the Don Valley and up to Midtown Toronto.

Transparent budgeting: As a final comment on the cycling infrastructure side, we would like to note that it is difficult for Toronto residents to know how much is spent by the City on cycling infrastructure, with funding for protected bike lanes, bike boulevards, bike parking, and other infrastructure lumped into a single sum. We encourage the City to adopt a more transparent budgeting approach that enables ordinary citizens to better understand how cost effective cycling infrastructure is. By transparent, we mean clearly identifying performance metrics (e.g. # of km of new bike lanes, new Bike Share stations, new bicycle racks, etc.) and comparing what was actually installed to last year’s budget. We also recommend listing each project identified for installation in the upcoming year.

2. We request accelerating and enhancing the Road Safety Plan to get us to Vision Zero: Zero deaths from road violence in Toronto by 2021

Cycle Toronto commends the City for adopting a Road Safety Plan that commits us to reducing the number of fatalities on Toronto’s streets to zero by 2021. Adopting Vision Zero is the right thing to do because every death on our city streets is preventable and no death is acceptable in our families, our neighbourhoods, or our city.

We are concerned, however, that the level of funding attached to the Road Safety Plan will not prove sufficient to meet this goal. We ask the City to accelerate and enhance the Road Safety Plan in order to meet the Council commitment to eliminate road deaths in Toronto by 2021. Specifically we support the proposal put forward to accelerate the Road Safety Plan from five years to two. This would boost the 2017 Road Safety Plan budget from \$12.8 million to roughly \$38 million.



416 644 7188
info@cycleto.ca
www.cycleto.ca

Cycle Toronto
at Centre for Social Innovation
215 Spadina Avenue, Suite 149
Toronto, ON, M5T 2C7

3. We request the City dedicate sufficient funding to eliminate the multi-year backlog of ring-and-post bike parking requests.

Cycle Toronto members have pressed the City for several years to accelerate the installation of bike parking ring-and-posts. There are many parts of the city where bikes are locked to trees, fences, and other objects simply because there is inadequate bike parking available. A backlog of 1,000 parking requests was noted in the 2014 City Budget and we would be interested to know the extent to which this has been reduced since then.

The 2017 budget does not allocate funding specifically for bike parking (other than PTIF funding for parking at TTC stations). We note the operating budget does provide funding for the development of a bike parking strategy (although that was announced in the 2016 Budget and we have not yet seen this come to fruition). We suggest that the City's street furniture unit should be provided with adequate dedicated resources to eliminate the backlog of parking requests as a priority item, even as it develops a longer-term strategy for bike parking in the city.

4. We request the City increase, not reduce, the amount dedicated to winter maintenance of sidewalks and bike lanes to support safe, year-round active transportation.

Toronto residents in the urban core have enjoyed being able to bike year-round since Winter 2015-16 as a result of the development of a Priority Snow Clearance Network of Bike Lanes by the City. We have been pleased to see the protected bike lanes downtown, as well as the Martin Goodman and West Toronto Railpath trails, maintained to a fairly high standard. However, Cycle Toronto has received reports in the early days of Winter 2016-17 suggesting that painted bike lanes which were supposed to be part of the Priority Winter Clearance Network have not been adequately maintained.

We were very concerned to learn² that the draft 2017 Budget proposes to reduce the amount dedicated to winter maintenance of sidewalks and bike lanes by \$3 million. We urge the City to, at the very least, maintain the budget at its current level and to consider enhancing this budget amount in line with increasing bicycle mode share.

Conclusion

By investing in safe cycling infrastructure, the City has the opportunity to encourage 73% of Torontonians to use their bicycles more³ and leave their cars at home; thereby reducing congestion and pollution while enhancing the health and well-being of our residents. A recent study shows that there is actually no better way to support public health than investing in cycling infrastructure.⁴ There is also an increasing body of research demonstrating that investing in safe cycling infrastructure is good for local businesses and tourism.⁵ Cycling infrastructure is a cost-effective way to move people more efficiently around the city and

² ["What will the City of Toronto's 2017 Budget Cost Us?"](#) Toronto Star. Jan. 2, 2017.

³ ["2014 Survey Research Summary"](#) Share the Road Cycling Coalition. 2014.

⁴ ["Bike lanes may be the most cost effective way to improve public health"](#) Fast Co Exist. 2016.

⁵ *The business case has been confirmed by the Toronto Cycling Think and Do Tank, whose research indicated merchants often overestimate the proportion of customers who arrive by car, as well as higher spending by people arriving on foot and by bike.* ["Cycling Economies: Economic Impacts of Bike Lanes"](#) Toronto Cycling Think & Do Tank. 2013.



make better use of our scarce public space. In all, there are very few downsides to rapidly scaling up our cycling network and making the city more accessible for all.

Thank you for taking the time to review these recommendations. We urge your committee and all Councillors to adopt a budget that reflects these important changes for the good of our city.

Sincerely yours,



Jared Kolb
Executive Director
Cycle Toronto



416 644 7188
info@cycleto.ca
www.cycleto.ca

Cycle Toronto
at Centre for Social Innovation
215 Spadina Avenue, Suite 149
Toronto, ON, M5T 2C7