

January 10, 2018

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BU41.1.106

Greetings Members of the Budget Committee,

RE: BU40.1 (2018 Capital and Operating Budgets)

Since Fall 2012, I have gotten around by bike in the City of Toronto and have been a long-time volunteer with Cycle Toronto. With my day job being an accountant, I developed a keen interest in the municipal budget from a cycling perspective and encouraged fellow Cycle Toronto advocates to call for increased cycling infrastructure funding, which was doubled to \$16 million per year when the Cycling Network Plan was approved in June 2016. For this election year, I would like to present some fresh insights on what the 2018 budget means for people riding bicycles.

MAJOR CORRIDOR STUDIES

When the bike plan was approved in June 2016, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee chair Jaye Robinson put the major corridor studies on hold except for those under way; those being Bloor-Dupont (Sherbourne to Keele), Yonge (Davenport to Front), and Yonge (401 to Steeles). One of those studies – Danforth – was to be revived based on the findings of the Bloor bike lanes, but no motion was made.

Currently, there is a Danforth Avenue Planning Study happening from Coxwell to Victoria Park Avenues and funding available from the provincial and federal governments. Given these factors, the Danforth major corridor study needs to be started as soon as possible and help establish Bloor-Danforth as a spine in Toronto's cycling network. The other corridor studies on Lake Shore Boulevard, Kingston Road, Kipling Avenue, Jane Street, and Midland Avenue also need to be started to expand safe cycling routes outside of downtown.

NEW STAFF

Even with the amount of funding available for cycling, there have been issues in the past with the budget not being fully spent and progress with the current bike plan has been frustratingly slow. There have also been City Council motions made to consider accelerating the Vision Zero plan to eliminate traffic fatalities, given 46 vulnerable road users were killed in 2017 (compared to 44 in 2016). To help address the slow bike plan progress and accelerate the road safety plan, I welcome the 2018 operating budget's inclusion of two new Cycling Unit staff positions – one engineer and one planner – as well as two staff focused on implementing Vision Zero at a cost of \$436,300.

WINTER CLEARING

The introduction of winter bike lane clearing in 2015-2016 marks the first step in encouraging more people to bike year-round. While this year's program has been expanded, Toronto should aim to have ALL bike lanes cleared of snow and improve intersection clearing. Not only because many people outside

of downtown ride bikes, but because poor winter maintenance is more likely to deter cargo bike users, women, children, and older people from riding. In bicycle friendly Copenhagen, proper maintenance encourages 80% of people who bike to continue doing so year-round.

We recommend that the City consider alternatives to salt such as brine and sweepers as they do in parts of Montréal, given salt tends to corrode bicycles easier than motor vehicles. Finally, data collection must be improved to refute claims about nobody biking in the winter.

BIKE PARKING

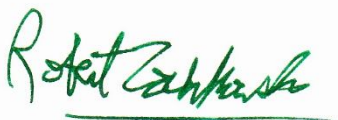
The cycling infrastructure budget item doesn't properly disclose how much will be spent on bike parking. Even with a connected network of bike lanes, getting people to bike requires providing them with places to lock their bikes. Given the City has a backlog of 1000 ring-and-posts to install, the City needs a plan to clear the backlog as soon as possible.

In places with heavy bike traffic, ring-and-posts are not enough. However, many of Toronto's bike corrals disappear during the winter and there are only two secure bicycle parking stations at Union and Victoria Park Stations. As part of the bike parking strategy process, Toronto needs to allow year-round use of corrals with proper winter maintenance AND install more secure bicycle parking; especially at transit stations.

TRACKING PROGRESS

To better determine future budget needs and guide council after October's election, the City needs to publish annual progress reports with respect to the Cycling Network Plan, the road safety plan, the ring-and-post backlog, and winter maintenance. Given the funding available from the federal and provincial governments for cycling projects, the issue is no longer a lack of funding, but rather ensuring full use of the funding on properly designed bike lanes, parking, and other infrastructure. Finally, I call on the City of Toronto to adopt a more aggressive cycling installation schedule for 2018 and future years to make up for the slow progress in 2016 and 2017.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Zaichkowski, CPA, CMA
Cycle Toronto Advocacy Committee

CC: Councillor Gord Perks