

April 9, 2018

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

Re: PW28.13 Cycling Network Plan Implementation in Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park

Dear Chair Jaye Robinson and Members of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee,

I am the Director of the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), a project of the registered charity Clean Air Partnership. TCAT's mission is to advance knowledge and evidence to build support for safe and inclusive streets for walking and cycling.

On behalf of TCAT, I'm writing in reference to the report from the General Manager, Transportation Services, recommending the installation of bicycle lanes on Thorncliffe Park Drive, Grenoble Drive and Deauville Lane, and bicycle lanes and cycle tracks on Gateway Boulevard.

Specifically, we would like to offer our experience and expertise as a member of a federally funded national partnership called Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) that uses participatory design to help communities build green, active, and healthy neighbourhoods.

Between 2014 and 2016, TCAT's ANC team worked with local stakeholders in Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park through an extensive community engagement process to identify residents' concerns, desires, and transportation habits, and to develop potential transportation solutions with help from local professionals in planning, design, and community development. This work is summarized in TCAT's Neighbourhood Plan: Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park (2016).

In 2017, TCAT, in partnership with the Flemingdon Health Centre, assisted the City of Toronto to enhance resident engagement, capacity development, and outreach for the 2017 Bike Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park Study. TCAT was tasked with hiring, training, and coordinating a team of local Community Animators who engaged hundreds of local residents in conversations about cycling and bike facilities, and gathered feedback regarding planned bicycle routes in the area. Many of the participants had engaged with our outreach team at previous community events and were well-informed about the issues. A total of 747 local residents were engaged in the process. The vast majority (94%) expressed support for the proposed new bicycle facilities in Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park.

In addition to support for the proposed bike lanes, another high priority identified by residents was the need for improved access to the Don Valley Ravine multi-use trail from Thorncliffe Park Drive and Don Mills Road. Both access points are in serious disrepair, have insufficient signage, and low visibility. The proposed plan seems to address these issues and provide much-needed improved access to the trail system for these residents.



A Project of Clean Air Partnership

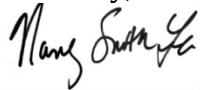
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A critical gap that is currently missing from the proposed plan is to provide safe access across the Overlea Boulevard Bridge. This is the only connection for these two very intertwined communities. Many children need to cross this bridge daily to get to and from school and must contend with fast-moving traffic, a very narrow pedestrian crossing, and no dedicated bicycle facility. Residents expressed (in both TCAT's consultations in 2014-2016, and again in 2017) a need for bike lanes and improved safety along Overlea Boulevard.

Overall, with the exception of not providing any safety improvements for Overlea, the proposed plan provides welcome and much-needed bicycle infrastructure in an area of the City that has long been underserved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Smith Lea". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" being the most prominent.

Nancy Smith Lea, Director
Toronto Centre for Active Transportation,
Clean Air Partnership