May 21, 2019

Mayor John Tory and City Councillors
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors,

Re: It’s (finally) time to make Bloor St. safe for Toronto

Toronto has fallen behind other major cities in making its roads safe for residents and visitors who ride bicycles, or who would ride if they felt safe. Forty years after the installation of the city’s first bike lane, Toronto still lacks a coherent network of bike lanes. It’s time for City Hall to remedy this shortcoming, and to catch up with other major North American cities. A good place to start is the extension of the Bloor bike lane westward from Shaw St. to High Park.

Bike lanes on Bloor have been comprehensively studied many times, including in 1978, 1992, 2008, and 2017. Each of these studies confirmed the popularity of Bloor as a cycling route and the potential for significant growth in ridership. Each study likewise highlighted the value of Bloor as a key connecting route for a cycling network. The 2017 study of the Bloor bike lane pilot from Avenue Rd. to Shaw was, according to the city’s transportation manager, one of the most comprehensively studied road projects in recent North American history.

The failure to move forward on bike lanes on Bloor, despite the obvious need, is part of a larger failure to implement Toronto’s 2016 Bike Plan. A mere 27 km of bike lanes have been installed in the last three years — leaving the city far off track from the 335 km of lanes and roadside paths envisioned over the plan’s ten-year timeframe. By comparison, Montreal, despite its far smaller size and colder winters, installed 90 km of bike lanes during the same time frame, while New York City installed 124 km in 2017 alone.

The 2.4 km pilot bike lane on Bloor (made permanent by City Council in 2017) resulted in a surge in the number of trips by bicycle and a substantial reduction in the number of conflicts (near misses) between road users. Revenues for local merchants also increased. In fact, city staff noted in its study that if a bike lane can be so successfully installed on “one of the busiest and most constrained sections of Bloor,” it should be considered for the full length of Bloor/Danforth. And yet, even a Bloor corridor study described as ‘currently underway’ in 2016 for Bloor bike lanes remains stalled.

The potential contribution of the bicycle to urgent problems of climate change, traffic congestion, and affordability continue to be undermined by the grim road casualty toll. Last year five cyclists were killed on public roads and many others injured, while the city installed a mere eight km of new bike lanes. The demonstrated peril for pedestrians is no less disturbing, despite Toronto’s Vision Zero road safety plan.
Our city has changed. Today it is transit, walking and cycling that are increasing in importance as the main mode of transportation for residents. Municipal infrastructure investments are urgently needed to bring our transportation system back into balance by providing for the safety of all road users, including residents who get around by bicycle.

It’s finally time to move from study to action for bike lanes on Bloor. The next step must be a design and implementation plan, informed by community consultation, to determine ‘how’ not ‘whether’ to install bike lanes on Bloor and to ensure that issues such as the location of business loading zones, safe motor vehicle turns, and access for the disabled are addressed.

We urge City Council to move forward now on extending the Bloor bike lane west to High Park — a road safety measure that is long overdue.

Sincerely,

Bloor St. W. (Shaw to High Park) merchants, groups, and representatives (Updated to July 15, 2019)

1. Anarres Apothecary
2. B-Side Barbers
3. Bar Neon
4. Bike Depot Toronto
5. Bloor Dufferin Dental
6. Bloor Dundas Chiropractic Clinic, Dr. Peter Munk
7. Bloordale Community Improvement Association (BCIA)
8. Build a Better Bloor Dufferin
9. Burdock Restaurant
10. Butter Chicken Roti
11. Children’s Storefront, The
12. Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre
13. Culture Link
14. Cyclemania
15. Dentists on Bloor
16. Dr. Catherine Benes, Office of …
17. Dzerowicz, Julie MP, Davenport
18. Earth Echoes
19. Ferreira & Koach Immigration Services
20. Field Trip Café
21. Galaxy T&T Fresh Fruit and Vegetable
22. Gigi’s House of Frills
23. Green Iguana Glassworks, The
24. Greening Homes Ltd.
25. Hard Feelings Mental Health
26. Hermit’s Lamp, The
27. Home Baking Co.
28. Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema
29. Hurricanes Roadhouse
30. iTech Masters
31. Lansdowne Cone
32. Kink Toronto
33. La Bella Managua
34. Little Sito Restaurant
35. Maker Bean Café, The
36. Midwives Collective of Toronto
37. Muddy George
38. Nova Era Bakery
39. Nuthouse
40. Outpost Coffee Roasters Ltd.
41. Pam’s Roti
42. Paradise Grapevine
43. Paradise Theatre
44. Queen’s Shop Fine Hairdressing
45. Ransack the Universe
46. Really Really Free Market Toronto West End
47. Rebecca Gallery
48. Romero House
49. St. Anthony’s Catholic Church
50. Saponetti Inc.
51. Saving Gigi
52. Smiles Dentistry
53. Station Bar & Kitchen
54. Stiles, Marit, MPP, Davenport
55. Sun Dry Cleaners
56. Sweet Petes Bicycle Shop
57. Sword & Board, The
58. That Dog Next Door Ltd
59. Three Speed Bar and Pub
60. Toronto Bike Repair
61. TOWN
62. Union Yoga + Wellness
63. Virani, Arif MP, Parkdale-High Park
64. Wally’s Optical
65. Wise Bar
66. West Bend Community Association
67. Zoinks Music & Books
Other Bloor St. W. and area businesses, groups, and representatives

68. Basecamp Climbing
69. Bell, Jessica, MPP, University-Rosedale
70. Block Party Supply (BPS)
71. Curbside Cycle
72. Donaldson, Stephanie, TDSB Trustee, Davenport
73. Friends of Sorauren Park
74. Friends of West Toronto Railpath
75. Green 13
76. Green Parkdale and Roncesvalles
77. Green Wave West (formerly Green Wave Garrison Grove)
78. High Park Nature Centre
79. Karpoche, Bhutila MPP, Parkdale-High Park
80. Morning Glory Cycling Club
81. PARC (Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre)
82. Pilkey, Robin, TDSB Chair
83. Reading Line, The
84. Secrets from Your Sister
85. Sorauren Farmers Market
86. Superfriends of Christie Pits
87. Three Cent Copy
88. Toronto Consort, The
89. Trinity-St. Paul Centre for Faith, Justice and Arts, Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo
90. Velo Vegan

Civic, provincial, national groups and local representatives

91. 8-80 Cities
92. Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists (ARC)
93. Bells on Bloor
94. Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)
95. ClimateFast
96. Climate Pledge Collective
97. Cycle Toronto
98. David Suzuki Foundation
99. Doctors for Safe Cycling
100. Friends and Families for Safe Streets (FFSS)
101. Greenest City
102. Progress Toronto
103. Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)
104. TTC Riders
105. Walk Toronto
Additional letters of support

106. Annex Residents’ Association
107. Harbord Village Residents’ Association
108. Longboat Roadrunners Running Club
109. Palmerston Area Residents’ Association
110. Registered Nurses of Ontario (RNAO)