May 21, 2019
[updated with signatories to November 30, 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. (from Shaw to High Park), merchants, groups, and representatives, including signatories (indicated by *) along the subsequently announced High Park to Runnymede segment:

1. Activemed (2003) Ltd*
2. Anbu Tattoo Studio
3. Bloor Dufferin Dental
4. Bloor Dundas Chiropractic Clinic, Dr. Peter Munk
5. Bloor West Village Residents’ Association
6. Bloor West Tenants’ Association
7. Bloordale Community Improvement Association (BCIA)
8. Brock Sandwich
9. Build a Better Bloor Dufferin
10. Burdock Restaurant
11. Butter Chicken Roti
12. Children’s Storefront, The
13. Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre
15. Common Café, The
16. CMTTF (Canadian Music Therapy Trust Fund)
17. Culture Link
18. Cyclemania
19. Dead Dog Records
20. Dentists on Bloor
21. Dr. Catherine Benes, Office of …
22. Dupe Shop
23. Dzerowicz, Julie MP, Davenport
24. Earth Echoes
25. Ferreira & Koach Immigration Services
26. Field Trip Café
27. Filosophy Pastry & Espresso Bar
28. Flight Centre*
29. Foodbenders
30. Galaxy T&T Fresh Fruit and Vegetable
31. Game Mania*
32. Gigi’s House of Frills
33. Gino’s Pizza/Wing Machine
34. Green Iguana Glassworks, The
35. Greening Homes Ltd.
36. HF Skin Clinics*
37. Hard Feelings Mental Health
38. Haven Espresso
39. Hermit’s Lamp, The
40. High Park Nature Centre
41. High Park Residents’ Association
42. High Park Tenants’ Association
43. Home Baking Co.
44. Hurricanes Roadhouse
45. iTech Masters
46. Just Us Hair Studio*
47. Kink Toronto
48. Lansdowne Cone
49. Lucky 13 Tattoo
50. Lunch Box, The
51. La Bella Managua
52. Little Sito Restaurant
53. Maker Bean Café, The
54. Mana Pool, Board Game Bistro*
55. Midwives Collective of Toronto
56. Muddy George
57. Nova Era Bakery
58. Nuthouse
59. Outpost Coffee Roasters Ltd.
60. Pam’s Roti
61. Paradise Grapevine
62. Paradise Theatre
63. Popa Wheelie*
64. Qrint
65. Queen’s Shop Fine Hairdressing
66. Racer Sportif*
67. Ransack the Universe
68. Really Really Free Market Toronto West End
69. Rebecca Gallery
70. Romero House
71. St. Anthony’s Catholic Church
72. Saponetti Inc.
73. Saving Gigi
74. Smiles Dentistry
75. Station Bar & Kitchen
76. Stiles, Marit, MPP, Davenport
77. Sun Dry Cleaners
78. Anarres Apothecary
79. Aztec’s Mine*
80. Another Story Bookshop
81. B-Side Barbers
82. Bar Neon
83. Bengal Travel Service
84. Bike Depot Toronto
85. Bloomers
86. Sweet Petes Bicycle Shop
87. Sword & Board, The
88. System Fitness*
89. That Dog Next Door Ltd
90. Three Speed Bar and Pub
91. Toronto Bike Repair
92. TOWN
93. Union Yoga + Wellness
94. Virani, Arif MP, Parkdale-High Park
95. Wally’s Optical
96. West Side Hair Studio*
97. Wise Bar
98. West Bend Community Association
99. Zoinks Music & Books

Other Bloor St. W. and area businesses, groups, and representatives

100. Basecamp Climbing
101. Bell, Jessica, MPP, University-Rosedale
102. Block Party Supply (BPS)
103. Curbside Cycle
104. Donaldson, Stephanie, TDSB Trustee, Davenport
105. Doulas on Bikes
106. Friends of Sorauren Park
107. Friends of West Toronto Railpath
108. Green 13
109. Green Parkdale and Roncesvalles
110. Green Wave West (formerly Green Wave Garrison Grove)
111. Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema
112. Junction Triangle Rail Committee
113. Karpoche, Bhutila MPP, Parkdale-High Park
114. Morning Glory Cycling Club
115. PARC (Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre)
116. Pilkey, Robin, TDSB Chair
117. Reading Line, The
118. Secrets from Your Sister
119. Sorauren Farmers Market
120. Superfriends of Christie Pits
121. Three Cent Copy
122. Toronto Consort, The
123. Trinity-St. Paul Centre for Faith, Justice and Arts, Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo
124. Velo Vegan

Civic, provincial, national groups and local representatives

125. 8-80 Cities
126. Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists (ARC)
127. Beck Taxi
128. Bells on Bloor
129. Bike Pirates
130. Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)
131. ClimateFast
132. Climate Pledge Collective
133. Cycle Toronto
134. David Suzuki Foundation
135. Doctors for Safe Cycling
136. Friends and Families for Safe Streets (FFSS)
137. Fridays for Future Toronto
138. Greenest City
139. Progress Toronto
140. Ryerson University City Building Institute
141. Stop Gap Foundation
142. Toronto350.org
143. Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)
144. TTC Riders
145. Walk Toronto

Additional letters of support

146. Annex Residents’ Association
147. Harbord Village Residents’ Association
148. Longboat Roadrunners Running Club
149. Palmerston Area Residents’ Association
150.  Registered Nurses of Ontario (RNAO)