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Infrastructure & Environment Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: IE31.12 Cycling Network Plan - 2022 Cycling Infrastructure Installation - Second Quarter Project Updates

Dear Chair and Members,

As we continue to expand active transportation and cycling infrastructure across the city, we must be looking holistically at that infrastructure and amenities to support residents who choose cycling. In suburban wards, we have a dearth of safe bike locking infrastructure. Recently, a resident of the Pleasant View community compiled a report that outlines this issue on a hyper-local level. I have included this report as an attachment to this letter. In response, I am requesting that the General Manager, Transportation Services, include in her next quarterly update a status update and plan for the expansion of safe bike locking infrastructure to complement the work underway in the Cycling Network Plan.

I hope I can count on your support for this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Direct the General Manger, Transportation Services, report through the next update of the Cycling Network Plan on the status and planned expansion for safe bike locking infrastructure in suburban wards.

Sincerely,

Councillor Shelley Carroll
Ward 17 - Don Valley North

State of Bicycle Parking in Pleasant View

Report by Brad Fonseca, as of 2022-05-12

Purpose and Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview of the state of bicycle parking available in the Pleasant View neighbourhood of Ward 17 Don Valley North of the City of Toronto. It is not meant to be exhaustive but represents the observations of one bicycling resident of this neighbourhood. To summarize, where bicycle parking exists, it is either substandard and/or very sparse. The following will outline what is available at each of the major shopping plazas, as well as what we have at our local library branch and community centre.

Ideal Bicycle Parking

As a point of comparison, this report uses the “Guidelines for the Design and Management of Bicycle Parking Facilities (DRAFT - MAY 2008)” reference document (referred to as the “reference document” in this report), as provided by Shelley Carroll’s office (Ward 17 Don Valley North). Specifically, this report references **Section 2.3. Short-Term Bicycle Parking** with respect to good bicycle rack design and other beneficial features. The ideal bicycle parking facility will provide:

- racks that allow two or more points of contact between the bicycle and the rack,
- adequate space between bicycles to facilitate parking and locking,
- more than one parking facility in a larger plaza so one does not have to walk the length of the plaza to reach it,
- some sort of covering or shelter to partially or completely protect the bicycles from inclement weather.

Victoria Van Horne Plaza (2792 Victoria Park Avenue)

This represents the “best” example of bicycle parking at a shopping plaza in our neighbourhood. It is covered by the building overhang and the rack is tall enough to properly lock up both adult and youth bicycles (both the frame and the wheel).

However, the bicycle rack appears to be made of an untreated metal that rusts, as seen where the paint has flaked away. At minimum, it would benefit from a new paint job. The other issue is this bicycle rack represents the entirety of the available bicycle parking in this plaza. There is a capacity for four or five bicycles, at most. It is also located on one end of this large plaza, in front of the Value Village. If you have errands to run at the other end of the plaza you will have to walk from the opposite end as this is the only bicycle parking available.



Figure 1: Victoria Van Horne Plaza Bicycle Parking (in front of Value Village). Note the visible rusting on the rack.



Figure 2: Victoria Van Horne Plaza Bicycle Parking (in front of Value Village – reverse angle)

Victoria Park Square (2450 Sheppard Avenue East)

This example suffers from some of the same issues noted above. The one rack is still located towards one end of the plaza, in front of the Bank of Montreal, requiring the cyclist to walk all the way back to visit the Winners (for example). It is also what the reference document refers to as a “wheel bender” rack. If one wants to properly lock up their bike, then they will need to bring multiple locks to at least lock the frame to the front wheel. However, it is only possible to lock the wheel to the rack, leaving the bicycle vulnerable to theft by simply removing the wheel from the frame and stealing most of the bicycle. The bicycle is also more vulnerable to vandalism (the “wheel bending”).



Figure 3: The “Wheel Bender” bicycle rack in Victoria Park Square (in front of Bank of Montreal)



Figure 4: The “Wheel Bender” bicycle rack in Victoria Park Square (in front of Bank of Montreal – reverse angle)

The shops of Brian Village (2046 Sheppard Avenue East)

No bicycle parking was found at this plaza at all. A cyclist is forced to lock their bike up to itself and watch it closely while visiting the shops in this plaza. Some of the store proprietors are willing to allow a cyclist to bring in their bicycle off the street but this is rare occurrence as the stores tend to have small square footage.

Pleasant View Toronto Public Library Branch (575 Van Horne Avenue)

The local library branch has a reasonably good bicycle rack that allows one to lock up both the bicycle's wheel and frame. However, it gets easily overwhelmed by patrons (mostly local children) who bicycle to the library on the weekend or during other peak times.



Figure 5: Bicycle rack in front of Pleasant View Public Library. Note that the number of bicycles exceed available capacity. Some are not even locked up at all!

As can be seen, some patrons are forced to just park their bicycles where they can, without being able to securely lock them up. It is a testament to the safety felt by the residents of Pleasant View that one can observe bicycles left unattended and unlocked by library patrons.

Pleasant View Community Centre (575 Van Horne Avenue)

The community centre, located in the same “plaza” as the public library, also has its own bicycle rack. The rack need to be modernized though, as this is another example of the “wheel bender” bike rack. One cannot get their bicycle far enough into the rack to allow for at least two points of contact to secure the wheel and frame to the rack (though at least one could theoretically lock their bicycle to one of the outside edges).



Figure 6: The “Wheel Bender” bike rack in front of Pleasant View Community Centre. Note that one cannot lock a bicycle’s wheel and frame with this style of bicycle rack.



Figure 7: The “Wheel Bender” bike rack in front of Pleasant View Community Centre (reverse angle)

Conclusion

The neighbourhood of Pleasant View would greatly benefit from upgrades to the quality and quantity of the existing bicycle parking infrastructure across all plazas. Even though the public library has somewhat better bicycle racks, they lack capacity to allow all patrons to lock up their bicycles securely at peak times. The community centre, without question, needs a new bicycle rack. The shopping plazas all need to upgrade or add bicycle parking infrastructure. Better bicycle infrastructure, including parking facilities, induces more people to ride their bicycles instead of driving. Less driving will benefit the environment and the residents of Pleasant View by reducing vehicle congestion in the plazas and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.