



Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

To: Toronto City Council Members

Date: June 12, 2023

Re: June IEC Item IE4.3 Cycling Network Plan - Bloor Street Complete Streets

CC: Deputy Mayor McKelvie and all Toronto City Councillors

Dear Deputy Mayor McKelvie and Councillor,

Those of you on IEC would have already received this letter as part of your meeting on this item last week. That said, I am resending this to allow all Toronto City Councillors to understand that the residents of Etobicoke are in need of new safety protections on our roads and these bike lanes are a start. I do hope that you will consider the importance of making Etobicoke safer for active transportation so that more residents in our communities will feel comfortable to choose alternative modes of transportation and leave our cars at home more often.

My name is Jennifer Alexander and I am a lifelong resident of Etobicoke Centre (Ward 2) and I am very much in favour of seeing the Toronto Cycling Network extended along Bloor Street West from Runnymede Road to Resurrection Road. While I am just a two minute walk from a part of Bloor Street that is just a bit west of this location, my neighbours and I would still be able to easily access this location near Six Points. I do hope that in future phases that this part of the cycle network would extend further west to accommodate the residents who live further west in my ward towards the Mississauga border.

That said, today I write to you not only as a resident but also as a local safe roads advocate and Editor / Writer of a community online newsletter, *The Etobicoke Voice*.

For many years I have been working to make the community safer for all who choose to or are required to travel around Etobicoke without a private vehicle. I have worked with local school councils, residents, our TDSB Trustee, and our City Councillor to look for solutions to make our roads safer for everyone; from our youngest children to our vulnerable senior population, and

those with special mobility needs. While many people around the city assume that Etobicoke residents are just “pro-car” that is not in fact true, we just don’t always feel safe as cyclists or pedestrians. In fact many residents tell me on a regular basis that they would much prefer to bike or walk but are afraid to just cross our busy and dangerous crosswalks, let alone ride a bike on our main roads that can easily resemble six to eight lane highways! Many would love to ride from our end of the city to the core to avoid the delays many currently endure on the TTC on a daily basis to get to work. Could you imagine how these bike lanes could help your crowding problems both on the road and on TTC Line 2 each day!

Last year the work I have been doing led to my launch of the Walk Safe Etobicoke Project. We are a small group of concerned residents who see what a walkable area we could live in with some small design modifications to update our road ways from how they were initially designed in the early 1960’s. The project is continuing and we will eventually release a report on these many issues of concern we share with other areas of the city. However, by approving this section of bike lanes along Bloor Street, some of that work will already be completed. It would show how a bit of work in design can make changes that will lead to even more interest by residents to become more involved in active transportation alternatives.

The Etobicoke Voice has grown out of my initial work as I discovered when launching Walk Safe Etobicoke that many in Etobicoke feel very disconnected from the rest of the city and are not always aware of new projects that the city is working on and this one is no different. As I have been connecting more and more with my readers there is one major common question when it comes to bike lanes; they are a great idea but do they work? Once I explain the project and show pictures the idea becomes more clear; yes this plan would make biking AND walking safer for everyone and that is something everyone can get behind! I have written about the benefits to our climate and how bike lanes in other parts of the city have helped build up community and these are things many want to see throughout Etobicoke.

Today I ask the committee to please approve the staff report and bring it forth to council as I know that my community will benefit greatly from this extension. With safer ways to enjoy active transportation we will finally be able to join many other Toronto residents in getting out of our cars more often! It will also make a great improvement to those of us who do not drive and must use other methods to get around the city. Considering how I began my advocacy and writing journey, this will of course also benefit our local kids who will finally be able to benefit from a new road design, something I have been asking from our city for years. These improvements in road safety will help to encourage more walking and biking to school which as we know has so many benefits for that next generation! It's not a full solution but it is a great start that I look forward to seeing completed soon.

Thank you for your support in making Toronto a more active and safer city for all residents!

Jennifer Alexander
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