



November 12, 2024

councilmeeting@toronto.ca

Ms. Sylwia Przewdziecki

Toronto City Hall,

100 Queen Street West 22nd Floor, West Tower

Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Mayor Chow and Members of Council:

Re: CC23.1 – Respecting Local Democracy and Cities and

MM23.14 – Provincial Overreach and Toronto's Infrastructure

The Bloor Street East Neighbourhood Association (BENA) is a non-profit corporation whose boundaries are roughly from Parliament to Yonge (east to west) and the Rosedale Valley Road to Selby/Charles (north to south). Its footprint encompasses condominiums, purpose-built rentals (both current and approved developments), businesses, single family homes and churches. Our catchment area has a portion of the Bloor Street East bike path which connects to the one on Sherbourne Street to the south. BENA fully endorses both the Mayor's and Councillor Saxe's motions regarding the Province's Bill 212 and urges you to pass the motions unanimously (CC23.1 and MM23.14 respectively).

We also support the letter submitted by the Bay Cloverhill Community Association and will not repeat their comments rather add our specific issues and concerns.

BENA has been consistent in its support of "Complete Streets" with one of those components an accommodation for cyclists. Bloor Street East from Parliament to Yonge along Bloor is a busy street with connector points from streets to the south. The City's intensification policy under the Downtown Secondary Plan (approved by the Province) calls for shorter trips be completed by means other than vehicles (walking or cycling) thus those living in and around our area need a safe alternative to vehicles. The intensification in our area, mandated by the Province, means that our streets are no longer simply a means for vehicles to move through; they must also accommodate those of us living in and around those streets and all modes of transportation.

Our Experience with Temporary Bike Lanes

We currently have temporary bike lanes which were installed in three phases as part of the City's Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

The first was Parliament to Sherbourne on Bloor Street where, Council in its wisdom, decided that cyclists should detour onto the Sherbourne bike lanes and continue with the Wellesley Street bike lanes to go west or vice versa going east. Cyclists, wanting a direct route chose to continue riding on Bloor Street. Without a bike lane, they found the street unsafe resulting in use of our sidewalks by cyclists putting pedestrians and those with mobility issues at risk. You simply cannot legislate where pedestrians or cyclists will go as was attempted in this iteration.

Our second phase occurred during COVID and bridged the piece between Sherbourne and Yonge along Bloor Street East. There has been an adjustment period for vehicles, while cyclists mostly embraced them immediately.

The third and final phase was the area in front of the development site located between Huntley to Sherbourne. It was completed by the developer based on the City's required design for the sidewalk, bike lane, parking and drop off zone. The pictures below show the before and after at the intersection of Bloor and Sherbourne. The first two highlight the safety issues that occurred at this intersection without proper markings and separation with the second the safer intersection.

Before proper installation

Vehicle blocks bike lane cyclist in vehicle lane



Cyclist hit by SUV - EMS present

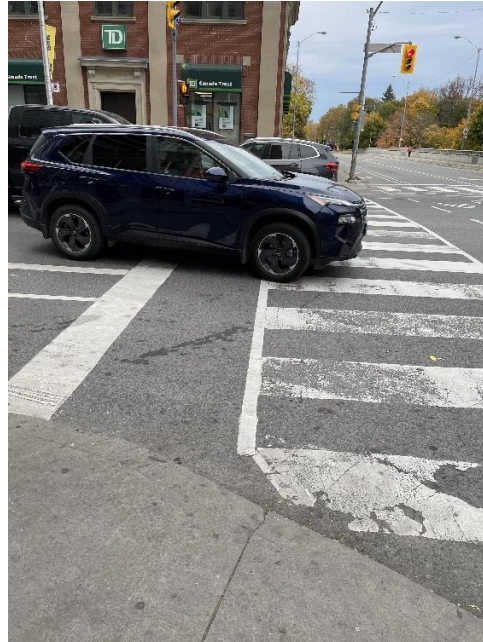


After proper installation

Everyone in their place



Proper turning



The safer cycling lanes has meant more people getting out of cars and the ability to use them recreationally. We have cyclists who say – do not force me to drive my car again and drivers who say while I would rather see bikes gone, at least I know where they are.

Bloor Street East Capital Transportation Project – Under Threat?

We have concerns as to what effect this could have on the rebuilding of Bloor Street East from Parliament to Church Street. This project is currently in the 10-year capital plan for 2026 and calls for dedicated permanent bike lanes. This project has been delayed for years and we do not want any of the following possible results that may come from Bill 212:

- The diversion of resources to the removal of bike lanes putting it further behind
- Applications to the Ministry of Transportation for the design of the bike lanes
- Ordered removal of the temporary bike lanes which could result from this Bill.

Conclusion

While the removal and reduction in bike lanes is intended to keep vehicles moving, it could have the opposite long-term effect of adding to the vehicles and making congestion worse. Another unintended effect could be on the affordability of housing in both building housing and maintaining them. We need to move forward to build an inclusive and more affordable Toronto.

Regards;

Linda Brett, President BENA

On Behalf of BENA

- cc. Mayor Olivia Chow
Councillor Saxe, Ward 11
Councillor Moise, Ward 13
MPP Bell, University Rosedale
MPP Wong-Tam, Toronto Centre
MPP Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation
Alison Stewart, Bike Mayor of Toronto
- bcc. The BENA Executive