



Monday, December 18, 2023

Letter to IEC

Bike lanes that are safe and passable for bikes

Recommendations

Councillor Dianne Saxe recommends that:

City Council direct the General Manager of Transportation Services to take all reasonable steps to make designated bike lanes safe and passable for bicycles during the winter season.

Summary

The minimum standard of ice/snow management on most Toronto streets is described as “safe and passable”. In practice, Toronto streets are almost always “safe and passable” for cars and trucks. However, bike lanes are only “safe and passable” when they are “safe and passable” **for bicycles**. In Toronto’s weather, because of our frequent fluctuations above and below zero, no bike lane is “safe and passable” unless it is cleared to bare pavement. Layers of snow/slush that are passable for cars quickly become icy and unsafe for bicycles.

Last year, protected bike lanes (cycle tracks) were generally properly cleared after the first few weeks of confusion. However, on-road bike lanes were often left hazardous with frequent patches and barriers of ice, especially in the most dangerous locations such as curves and hills.

Improved winter bike lane maintenance is necessary for Vision Zero and to support Toronto’s climate commitments, in particular to allow $\frac{3}{4}$ of local trips (year round) to be made by foot, bicycle or transit by the end of this decade. It is also necessary to support other city initiatives, such as the five dollar a year Bikeshare membership just extended to TCHC tenants, and the work being done to encourage downtown deliveries by cargo bike.

Councillor Dianne Saxe

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