

May 27, 2024

Dear **Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee**

I am writing on behalf of The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), a project of the Clean Air Partnership. TCAT conducts research and education that support a vision for cities that are safe, equitable and enjoyable communities to walk and bike. As a national leader on best practices and research for supporting sustainable mobility, TCAT has worked with the City of Toronto on evaluating the impacts of several cycling initiatives, including the Bloor Street bike lanes, the Destination Danforth project, and the Midtown Yonge Complete Streets pilot.

The Cycling Network Plan Update for 2025-2027 calls for many needed infrastructural improvements that will improve road safety, increase shifts towards sustainable modes of transportation, support local businesses, increase levels of physical activity, and save lives. The plan aligns with City of Toronto goals and strategies that will create healthier, safer, more equitable communities, including Vision Zero and Transform TO.

In reviewing the Cycling Network Plan Update, and in light of the alarming rate of people on bikes who have been killed on city streets so far in 2024 (more in the first five months of this year than in the previous three years combined), TCAT has some concerns for the plan as currently constructed. We would like to bring these concerns to the attention of the committee:

1. **Lack of progress in extending safe, all ages and abilities bike infrastructure to the suburbs.** Research has found that one third of all trips in suburban Toronto are less than 5km in distance, a distance that is easily bikeable by most people. Suburban Toronto is also where the vast majority of all deaths and serious injuries on Toronto's streets take place. Lastly, the majority of newcomer, racialized, and lower income residents of the city live in the suburbs of North York, Etobicoke, Scarborough and York. It is imperative that safe cycling and Vision Zero infrastructure no longer be geographically limited to

the dense urban core. We encourage members of the IEC and the Cycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure unit to focus on improving suburban road infrastructure and increasing access to safe, comfortable walking and cycling routes in suburban communities that need it most.

2. **Not on track to meet Climate Action and Road Safety Goals.** Transform TO has set the goal of 75% of all trips under 5km to be walked, cycled or by public transit by 2030. Vision Zero has set the goal of reaching zero traffic deaths on Toronto's streets. The City is nowhere close to meeting those targets. Doing so will require a more ambitious Cycling Network Plan than is currently being proposed. Cities like Paris and Montreal have demonstrated that leading transformation by expanding their respective cycling networks benefits everyone and is incredibly popular. TCAT calls on members of the IEC to bring forward a more ambitious plan that includes 150km of new infrastructure over the next three years and provides City Staff with the necessary resources to support implementation of this more ambitious plan.
3. **Lack of pedestrian infrastructure improvements considered for Avenue Road.** TCAT fully supports the recommendation for installing bike lanes on Avenue Road between Bloor Street and Davenport Road. This is a deadly section of roadway that has already claimed the life of one person riding a bike so far this year. However, this section of Avenue Road is also horribly unsafe for pedestrians. It is severely lacking in infrastructure to support safe and comfortable walking despite being home to dense neighbourhoods where most people rely on walking to get around. A more cohesive approach for improving road safety on Avenue Road is urgently needed. We call on members of the IEC to reduce vehicles lanes on Avenue Road from Bloor to Dupont from 6 lanes to 4 lanes, thereby allowing for expanded sidewalks that are up to AODA standards. In accordance with Vision Zero best practices, we also recommend implementing curb extensions and reducing turning radii at key intersections along Avenue Road between Bloor and Dupont and installing a mid block crossing between Davenport and Dupont to facilitate safe access to Ramsden Park.

Our Transform TO climate action goal of achieving 75% of trips under 5km walked, transited, or bikes by 2030 is only 7 years away. TCAT urges you to support and provides resources for a more ambitious cycling plan that provides safe infrastructure across the entire city over the next three years.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

David Simor

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Director

The Centre for Active Transportation