

Maintenance of Bike Lanes around Construction Projects

Date: September 9, 2024

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director Operations and Maintenance Transportation Services, Director Permits and Enforcement Transportation Services, and Director Traffic Management Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 4, Parkdale-High Park; Ward 9, Davenport; Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York; Ward 11, University-Rosedale; Ward 12, Toronto-St. Paul's; Ward 13, Toronto Centre; Ward 14, Toronto-Danforth; Ward 19, Beaches-East York

SUMMARY

The maintenance of bikeways is an essential service to ensure the safe and comfortable travel of people cycling. The increasing number of bikeways has expanded the reach of the cycling network to serve more people. Today, Toronto has over 390 km of multi-use trails, 86 km of cycle tracks and 142 km of bike lanes.

On July 10, 2024, Toronto and East York Community Council directed Transportation Services to implement a protocol to ensure bike lanes are clear and safe from debris and dust following construction projects in Toronto and East York, and to investigate Greenwood Avenue and Danforth Avenue, and Carlaw Avenue and Dundas Street East to address any unsafe cycling conditions. This report provides an overview of how the City monitors the condition of bikeways and the responsibilities of constructors for ensuring the roadway and any bikeways abutting construction sites remain clear of debris during construction work.

This report also provides a summary of the City's roles and responsibilities for bikeway sweeping and upcoming planned changes to sweeping operations. Further, an update to planned repair work at the intersections of Greenwood Avenue and Danforth Avenue and at Carlaw Street and Dundas Street is provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director Operations and Maintenance Transportation Services, the Director Permits and Enforcement Transportation Services and the Director Traffic Management Transportation Services recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 10, 2024, Toronto and East York Community Council directed Transportation Services to implement a protocol to ensure bike lanes are clear and safe from debris following construction projects and investigate the condition of two intersections in Ward 14 to address any unsafe cycling conditions.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE15.65>

COMMENTS

Bikeway Sweeping in Work Zones

Generally, within work zone areas, it is the responsibility of the constructor to ensure that adjacent sidewalks, bike lanes and the roadway remains clear of construction debris. The City is responsible for sweeping bike lanes outside of work zone areas. Depending on the nature of the construction work, there may be additional conditions placed on constructors that are described in the following sections of this report.

Third Party and Private Construction Projects

Construction projects including, but not limited to, condominium developments, utility services, and residential homes often require occupation of adjacent municipal right-of-way property to facilitate the work. Permission for such occupation is issued in the form of permits with special conditions and in compliance with Municipal Code, Chapter 743 - Streets and Sidewalks. This Chapter describes 'no fouling of streets with any construction debris or discharge'. This Chapter also stipulates that no person shall obstruct or cause obstruction to safe passage of road users. To further emphasize these points, permits often include special conditions to reiterate that fouling of the City right-of-way is not permitted, and the site protection must not cause any safety hazards. For more impactful construction staging projects that require Community Council or City Council authority to temporarily close a portion of the City's right-of-way, applicants are directed to sweep the construction site area and adjacent sidewalks and roadways daily, or more frequently as needed to be cleared of any construction debris and made safe. Enforcement is driven by routine inspections and complaint-based inspections. Penalties for non-compliance vary depending on the severity and frequency of the violations. These penalties may include Notice of Violations, Fines, Stop Work Orders, and permit revocations. Transportation Standards Officers will re-visit the site after

issuing warnings and/or penalties to ensure the applicant has taken remedial action. Any immediate safety concerns are addressed on site before enforcement staff leave the site.

City Construction Projects

For construction projects, including those delivered by Engineering and Construction Services (ECS), there are general specifications that are standard in all contracts that speak to site cleanliness, for example:

- The Contractor is responsible for the restoration of all existing roads, fencing, guide rails and landscaping to pre-construction conditions or better
- The Contractor shall complete all maintenance and cleanup of the Work and Site within 24 hours of written notice from the Owner or Contractor Administrator of such
- The Contractor shall keep all portions of the Work well, properly and efficiently drained, to at least the same degree as that of the existing drainage conditions, during construction and until the Work is completed
- The Contractor shall provide and ensure, at all times, and at no extra cost to the Owner, safe and adequate pedestrian and vehicular access
- Stockpiling of excavated material within the City street allowance is not permitted
- The Contractor shall dispose of all excavated material off site immediately upon removal
- Some conditions, such as loose gravel, sand and mud, uneven road surface and debris will pose hazards to cyclists but not to motorists. Minimization, identification and mitigation of those hazards shall be according to Ontario Traffic Manual - Book 7 (April 2022) Section 3.7.2.1 Cyclist Protection in the Work Zone.

Failure to abide by the specifications noted above may result in actions ranging from negative impacts to the Contractor's performance evaluation, hold backs to payments, and deduction of payments in the event the City incurs cost to rectify.

Metrolinx Projects

Metrolinx is responsible for ensuring the safety and accessibility of temporary and permanent bike lanes adjacent to its construction sites, recognizing the importance of maintaining these routes for active transportation users in an urban environment. This includes keeping the lanes clear of debris, ensuring pavement markings are visible, and addressing any hazards that may arise. These responsibilities are formalized as permit conditions and are monitored by City staff for compliance. Key measures typically implemented include:

- **Enhanced Signage:** To ensure the safety of all road users in the work zone, Metrolinx works with their traffic management team and City staff to improve signage around the construction zone. This includes providing advanced notification to drivers and cyclists about any lane realignment, single-file traffic where motorists and cyclists share travel lanes and ensuring that all signs are visible and clear.
- **Improved Lighting:** Recognizing the importance of visibility for cyclist safety, Metrolinx undertakes lighting upgrades in areas where construction may have reduced illumination. This includes installing additional lighting under bridges where cyclists may be at risk.

- **Road Surface Improvements:** To mitigate the impact of construction on road conditions, Metrolinx instructs their contractors to ensure a smoother and safer surface for cyclists. This is particularly important in urban areas with high cycling traffic.
- **Daily Sweeping:** Metrolinx contractors are required to sweep and clear bike lanes of gravel, debris, and other potential hazards at least once daily. This is crucial in maintaining safe and usable bike lanes throughout the construction period.
- **Ongoing Inspections:** Metrolinx and City staff regularly inspect the work zones to ensure maintenance practices are followed and that bike lanes remain clear and safe for cyclists. Metrolinx also encourages residents and cyclists to report any concerns directly, allowing for timely responses to emerging issues.

Bikeway Sweeping

Currently, Solid Waste Management Services (SWMS) operates five small scale sweepers, seven days per week to service the City's separated cycle tracks within the Transportation Services right-of-way. Separated bike lanes are serviced a minimum of once per week and some are serviced more frequently based on area need and operational feasibility during the non-peak season.

For bike lanes that are not physically separated from vehicle travel lanes, Transportation Services sweeps the bike lanes at the same time the road is serviced. Frequency of sweeping is based on the level of service for the road type. Major roads are swept either once or numerous occasions per month based on area needs and operational capacity, while local residential streets are swept once a season in Spring, Summer, and Fall.

Transportation Services is purchasing new specialized cycling infrastructure sweepers so that the sweeping of all bikeways within Transportation Services right-of-way will be provided by Transportation Services. The procurement for new cycling infrastructure equipment is expected to take approximately 12 months, therefore Transportation Services will intend to assume bikeway sweeping responsibilities in late 2025.

Transportation Services currently does not have service standards for bikeway sweeping. Transportation Services is completing a street sweeping review exercise that will include the establishment of bikeway sweeping service levels.

Investigation of Greenwood Avenue and Danforth Avenue, and Carlaw Avenue and Dundas Street East (Ward 14)

In response to TE15.65, staff performed a visual assessment of the pavement conditions within the intersections of Greenwood Avenue and Danforth Avenue, and Carlaw Avenue and Dundas Street East. Following the assessments, immediate action was taken to address areas of concern including asphalt patching both within and outside the bike lanes at both intersections. In addition to the immediate actions, Transportation Services is also planning additional repairs to localized sections of the asphalt surface in the bike lanes at the two intersections identified. This work is anticipated to be completed by the end of the 2024 construction season pending any unforeseen circumstances.

Staff also identified some utility cuts that require permanent restoration and are following up with the respective utilities to advance their work.

In 2026-2027, a major road rehabilitation is tentatively programmed on Greenwood Avenue from Danforth Avenue south to the rail line. Transportation Services is currently identifying opportunities to improve the existing pedestrian, cycling and motor vehicle infrastructure. Proposed changes will be brought forward to the local Councillor and the public and if required, for City Council approval. As part of this project, the intersection of Greenwood Avenue and Danforth Avenue is programmed to be resurfaced, which will extend the life of the road by 20 to 40 years and be a more permanent repair than asphalt patching.

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