

# **Dowling Cycling Route Consultation Report**

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## 1.0 Introduction

The City of Toronto Cycling Network Plan was approved in principle by Council on June 9, 2016 with the understanding that each route recommended in the plan would require further consultation to inform design options and to evaluate potential parking and traffic impacts. Dowling Avenue is an identified cycle route within the plan.

In 2016 Transportation Services completed some preliminary analysis to identify the existing conditions for all road users on Dowling Avenue, including traffic volumes, cycling volumes and flow, and a survey of the existing parking supply. Presently, Dowling Avenue between King St. West and Queen St. West carries traffic one-way northbound and so the feasibility of introducing a southbound "contra-flow" bicycle lane is being evaluated. This proposal would allow for lawful two-way cycling travel, however due to the narrow width of this roadway the introduction of a bike lane would require the displacement of approximately 32 on-street parking spaces. Based on this preliminary analysis, the Dowling Cycling Route could include bike lanes, traffic calming measures, cycling wayfinding, and new or modified traffic signals.

## 2.0 Public Open House #1

Date: September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Location: Parkdale Public Library, 1303 Queen Street West

The City held an initial public open house to inform residents of the preliminary analysis and gather feedback on the range of opportunities and potential measures to help inform the preferred design solutions.

### Notification

Local residents were notified of the public open house through the following methods:

- A notice was delivered to residents of Dowling Avenue, Beaty Avenue, Laxton Avenue, Leopold Street, Queen Street West (between Dowling Avenue and Beaty Avenue), and King Street West (between Dowling Avenue and Beaty Avenue) on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- Information about the open house was posted on the project website, along with all display panels and related documents: [www.toronto.ca/yellow-bike-lanes](http://www.toronto.ca/yellow-bike-lanes)
- Notice was provided to Councillor Perks' office

### Attendees

Fifty-eight (58) people signed in to the public open house, and some attended but chose not to sign in.

### Project Team Members in Attendance

- Christina Bouchard, Transportation Services
- Jennifer Hyland, Transportation Services
- Kanchan Maharaj, Transportation Services
- Darryl Olsen, Transportation Services
- Simon Fogel, Transportation Services
- Shirendra Giri, Traffic Operations
- Kate Nelischer, Public Consultation Unit

Councillor Perks, Executive Assistant Meri Newton, and Constituency Assistant Clive Scott were also in attendance.

### **Information Displayed**

The first public open house focused on sharing the preliminary design for the Dowling Cycling Route and gathering feedback from the community. The following information panels were displayed and can be found on the project webpage:

- How to Participate
- Background
- Connecting Parkdale to the Waterfront
- Road Safety
- Toronto Cycling Mode Share
- Other Types of Cycling Infrastructure in Toronto
- What are Yellow "Contra-flow" Bicycle Lanes?
- Yellow "Contra-flow" Bicycle Lanes in Toronto
- Existing On-Street Parking
- Cycling Wayfinding
- Traffic Regulations
- Dowling Road Width – King to Queen
- Dowling Road Width – King to Rail Corridor
- Traffic Signals
- City Services
- Contact and Next Steps

### **Feedback Requested**

Participants were invited to ask questions and offer comments about the project in general, but the project team was also specifically seeking responses to the following questions, which were included in the comment card provided during the public open house:

- How do you travel around the neighbourhood?
- What do you like about the proposal?
- Do you have any concerns regarding the proposal?
- Do you or your guests currently park a motor vehicle on Dowling Avenue?
- Do you have access to any private parking spaces?
- Does your building, residence or property have parking spaces which are not in use?
- If you park on Dowling Avenue, how often do you usually park on this street?
- How you use the parking spaces on Dowling?
- Do you have a disability, or medical condition which makes it difficult to walk?

## **3.0 Public Comments**

The project team was pleased to receive many comments and questions both at the public open house and afterwards via phone and email. This feedback came in the following forms:

- Eighty-three (83) comment cards submitted by the December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 deadline
- Comments submitted separately via email or phone
- Staff spoke with attendees and recorded notes

Many participants responded positively to the City's intention to provide an additional north-south cycling route in Parkdale and to enhance cycling access to the waterfront. There was concern over the elimination of on-street parking on Dowling Avenue associated with the proposed design. There were also concerns around the proposed contra-flow bike lane, and some suggested an alternative option would be to provide a cycling route along Beaty Avenue.

Below is a summary of key comments received, grouped according to topic.

### **Cycling Infrastructure in Parkdale**

- I welcome improvements to the cycling network and waterfront connections as these are key elements in shaping Toronto's future.
- Please do your best to continue expanding our cycling infrastructure in Toronto.
- This is a needed addition to bike lanes for safe travel away from main routes for cars, ie Jameson.
- The need for an integrated network of bicycle lanes has never greater as I see more and more cyclists on my daily travels.
- I hope the City continues to support those who bike as I use and value existing bike lanes.
- Connection to the waterfront is an important issue across the city. I can fully appreciate the City's constant drive to improve cycling networks to improve multi-modal transit options.
- Already access to waterfront via Roncesvalles and Jameson, so a third option within a few blocks is not a major issue.
- It is very much in line with the conclusions of the western waterfront master plan. I would like to see even more initiatives to expand Parkdale's access to this great natural resource that is our waterfront.
- I have a 7 year old and a 10 year old who are just beginning to cycling on quieter streets. A bike lane allows them to do this safely!
- As it is, there is a lack of safe passage for cyclists to the lake in this area.
- A 2-way bike lane on Dowling would be great for me. My only access to the waterfront bike path is either the Roncesvalles bridge, further west than I need, or down Jameson which is very busy and tight. Dufferin, which is also busy and tight, brings me into the CNE grounds, so it's more complicated.
- I believe in access to Waterfront for the west end on as many streets as possible. Dowling would be a good start.
- I think the Dowling Cycle Route a great idea and I would tell you to just go for it any way you can.
- Permitted two-way traffic (cycling) is essential for safety and encouraging more area residents to feel comfortable using active transportation.
- As a resident of Parkdale I 100% support the extension of cycling infrastructure, and the implementation of a contra-flow lane, from Sorauren to the Dowling pedestrian bridge.
- I use the contra-flow bike lane on Shaw St and it is amazingly wonderful to both bicycle on it and to be a driver! Everyone has their space, everyone has the rules outlined clearly and no one gets in anyone's way!
- I highly support a cycling route on Dowling Ave. I use that bridge frequently for both running and cycling purposes. It's a fantastic stretch that means I don't have to run or bike down Jameson, which can be both busy and scary to navigate at night.
- Jameson Avenue is too dangerous for bicycles.

- As a cyclist who frequently uses the trail along Lakeshore, I can attest that a safe and direct connection between Parkdale and the Lakeshore would be highly desirable for cyclists in the area.
- Right now, access to the waterfront from Parkdale, especially during the Ex and then summer months is quick challenging. The bicycle route through the Exhibition Grounds can often be blocked by events, and the crossing at Jameson is treacherous given the volume of high-speed traffic (this is especially true coming back from the lake, where there's no clear bike route). As a Parkdale resident, I'd be extremely pleased to see a contra-flow route on Dowling which would allow a safe, non-intrusive route to and from the lake thanks to its quiet traffic and connections with Queen and King.
- Bike lanes are not only unnecessary but not warranted and that this bike lane in Toronto is not used enough to turn residential street into bike lanes.
- We are highly supportive of placing planters between King and Queen St to separate bicycles from motor vehicles. The physical buffer will add an additional layer of protection and predictability for all users of the road.
- I know people hate their parking to be removed but Parkdale has a high mode share of cycling, a low percentage of residents with licenses or cars, and many people eager to cycle (for leisure or transport). Please keep having the vision to use contra-flow lanes.
- The connectivity and safety of using the Dowling bridge (which is already much better than crossing at Jameson) would increase with a contra-flow lane.
- Prefer contra-flow lane on Dowling to another light on Beaty.

### **Alternative Cycling Route Design**

- Southbound cyclists have 2 options within eyesight (Beaty and Jameson).
- Great idea! Wrong street.
- Beaty would be more ideal as it is larger and you can keep parking and put bike lanes in as well.
- I don't believe building a contra-flow bike path on Dowling to be necessary. Beaty Ave can continue be used as the Southbound route for cyclists continuing from Sorauren, perhaps adding a crosswalk or light at the intersection with King St would be sufficient to assist in crossing the street and allowing safe access to Dowling Ave south of King St. Add some sharrows on Beaty to remind drivers that they need to share the road.
- Cycle traffic going Northbound on Dowling can be accommodated by adding Sharrows, speed humps, and signage and whatever traffic calming measures are deemed necessary. You'd still need to add a crosswalk or light at Queen for the safe crossing of the street to the north side.
- Why does the city believe that bicycle traffic needs to exist in both North and South directions on the same street? These kinds of measures don't work well when tacked onto existing infrastructure. It needs to be considered as part of a complete street design and neighbourhood design.
- This is a great idea but the bike lanes don't attach to any other bike infrastructure. Sorauren is not a "Quiet Street". Make Sorauren a one way for cars and two way for bikes. This will help.
- Change Beaty Avenue to one-way northbound and Dowling Avenue one-way southbound.
- There is far more driveway parking available to those on Beaty than to those on Dowling.
- It would be wonderful for there to be bike lanes separated from vehicular traffic with a row of parked cars, space permitting.

- Areas that are marked with sharrows are no safer than they were before. Sharrows show an area to be safe for cycling when in fact they are not. Separation should be added to the contraflow bike lane.
- The cycling route could be diverted to Roncesvalles and bikers can use the bridge over to the lake.
- Change the one-way directions of Dowling and Beaty between Queen and King. This eliminates left turns against right-of-way traffic at both Beaty/King and Dowling/Queen.
- On Beaty, the lane going contra-flow would already be flowing on a traffic controlled street, adding further protection for cyclists as Beaty has numerous speed bumps much like Sorauen Ave.

### **On-Street Parking**

- It is difficult to park, spots should not be removed unless new ones can be created on streets nearby.
- Save our on street parking!
- I am all for cyclists but no way should you remove even one of those 32 parking spaces.
- I am very concerned that eliminating the 32 on-street parking spaces along the length of Dowling Avenue will result in me and other Dowling residents not being able to find nearby on-street parking due to less supply and the same demand for parking.
- I am a car owner in the neighbourhood without parking at home and so understand intimately the parking challenges we face - nevertheless I feel that bike lanes need to take precedence over parking spots on the street.
- On many occasions I have to park on Dowling due to no permit parking available on my street (Beaty). We have a church on the corner that has many things going on during the week as well as on Sundays. This already causes a lack of parking during critical times.
- As a daily bike commuter I'm always ready to support more bike lanes but being a Parkdale resident I can't see the Dowling bike lane being feasible if it means losing 32 parking spots in my neighbourhood. Even with a permit it can be very difficult to find a parking space.
- Poor weather conditions will make travelling long distances from residence to vehicle tedious at best.
- As a Beaty Ave. resident, I am concerned about the loss of on-street parking spaces pushing more cars onto my (and other) already crowded side streets.
- Another concern that I have would be related to safety if any individual has to travel long distances at night to either go to or return from their vehicle. Dowling area is not the safest area at night.
- Please ensure the parking spot reductions that occurred through the closure of underground parking at 182 Jameson (corner of Jameson and Leopold) are taken into account. I have noticed a distinct increase in parking demand on Dowling since they renovated, then closed, the apartment building's surface and underground parking facilities.
- Having to park 5 blocks away is not a desirable 'new normal'. Imagine having to transport groceries that distance, now imagine the same if you are a less than able bodied person. Imagine also the impact on either a designated bike lane, or the cities revenue from filming permits not being issued.
- If a contra flow bike lane was installed, the lack of sufficient space to move around vehicles would cause both bike riders possible injury, as well as significant inconvenience to the home owners and renters in the area.

- Dowling Avenue already has very difficult parking in the winter. If the residents of the area were forced to park elsewhere, the parking congestion would be abysmal. The amount of parking spots proposed to supplement the absence would still leave the area without 17 parking spots, creating issues for anyone with children, disability, or someone trying to simply drop off groceries.
- With regard to on-street parking, we would like to emphasize that Parkdale has a very low — and steadily declining — motor vehicle mode share compared to the rest of the city. According to a 2013 statistical analysis by Global News, only 49% of residents in the area immediately surrounding Dowling Ave have a driver's license.
- The city could potentially co-ordinate with nearby apartment buildings to share the excess parking spaces to accommodate the loss.
- We feel that the community will be more likely to benefit from the space designed as a contraflow bike lane, as opposed to car parking.
- A strong enough proposal of potential solutions for the displaced parking spaces has not been provided.
- I am concerned my property value will be affected by decreased parking for deliveries, guests and family as well as unloading my car.
- There are plenty of rear parking spaces, front driveway spaces, as well as available parking spaces on other streets.
- With the removal of the parking on Dowling all of that will fall into Leopold St and Laxton Ave. These streets already lack parking.
- Additional parking pads in front of houses could provide needed parking spots.
- Dowling properties without existing parking, which is roughly 50% of the buildings, will have a hard time attracting tenants who require parking

### **Traffic**

- At the best of times people SPEED up Dowling as it's a shortcut to bypass traffic on Jameson or King. The only elements that slow them down has been the parked cars. If they are removed, traffic calming features or speed bumps need to be included.

### **Other Comments**

- I would like the Dowling bridge rebuilt to accommodate traffic, pedestrians and cyclists as it did before.
- Please find a happy medium so no one street of residents has to pay the price.
- The laws need to be enforced, because late at night people who don't live in the neighbourhood park their cars.
- In order to alleviate some of the strain this will put on our community could we open up the Jamison ramp to the westbound Gardner full-time?
- There are occasional film shoots on Dowling. These are usually disruptive for a few days a few (3-5) times a year.
- Reduce trash stuck under cars.
- Spend this money on upkeep and clean neighbourhood.
- Please consider traffic lights for the Dowling/Queen intersection. It is already dangerous as is, especially with parking on the north side of Queen.
- Please introduce more cyclists operated signal changes.
- No additional pad parking on Dowling please. Would ruin the look of the street
- The proposal was clearly laid out and easy to understand!
- Focus on more pressing core issues (potholes, transit, electrical grid, water mains).

- For future Ward 14 cycling projects, there should be coordination with apartment buildings on excess parking capacity in order to mitigate concerns.
- Wayfinding from Queen and King needed.
- The Metrolinx EA for the permanent bridge needs to ensure bridge is wide enough for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as improved sightlines.
- A safe connection on Queen from Dowling to Sorauren is needed.
- Speed bumps to slow down aggressive vehicles especially on Dowling from King to Queen would be safer.
- Do bikes have to dismount on the bridge? That would be bad.
- Question on the connection between Sorauren and Dowling through Queen. How will that be done? We will need a signal on Dowling/Queen and protected bike lanes on Queen to get to Sorauren.
- Were disabled parking permits included in the numbers presented on parking permits?
- Push button at the Dunn intersection does not work.

In addition to the above listed comments, the City received a petition organized by local residents who opposed the removal of parking from Dowling Avenue. As of December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the petition had received 52 signatures.

#### **4.0 Post Public Open House #1**

Following the first public open house and the receipt of follow-up comments and questions via email and phone calls, the City provided an update to the community on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. This was emailed to the project mailing list and posted on the project webpage.

This update included a reminder to submit comments and questions, and provided information on revisions to the proposed plan under consideration by the City. The City noted that it was investigating a possible cycling route design that would use both Dowling Avenue and Beaty Avenue, in response to comments received from the public. The update also noted that additional information would be provided in 2017 during a second public open house.