

Proposed Bike Lanes on Willowdale Avenue Bishop Avenue to Empress Avenue

Public Consultation Report

June 2019

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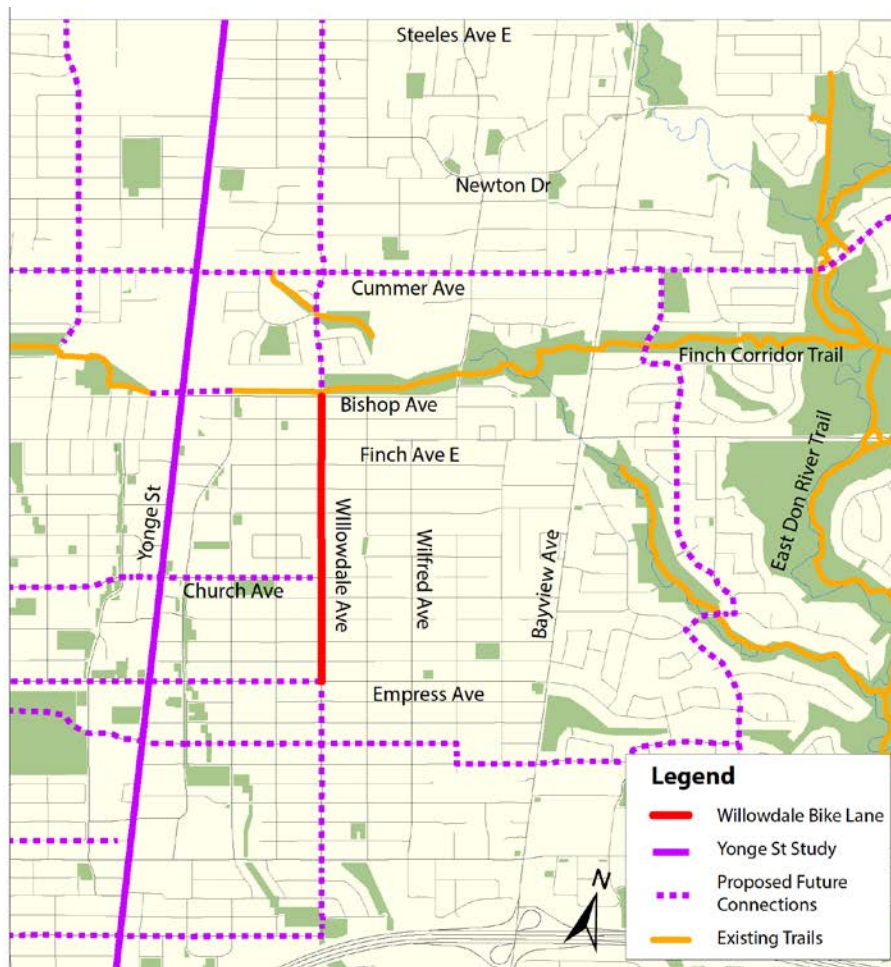
Executive Summary

Public consultation for the proposed Willowdale Avenue bike lanes took place from May 1 to May 27, 2019. This included a flyer distribution, public drop-in event, a project website, and targeted emails to the project stakeholder list. Over 9,000 flyers were distributed throughout the Study area and over 40 people attended the May 13 public event.

A range of responses were received with most feedback strongly in support of the proposed cycle tracks. Some respondents expressed concerns about traffic delays from the removal of bus bays and/or turn lanes.

Introduction

Willowdale Avenue was identified in the Ten Year Cycling Network Plan as a route that would connect Steeles Avenue East to east-west routes south of Sheppard Avenue East. The scheduled roadway reconstruction project in 2019 provides the opportunity to install cycling infrastructure for the section from Empress Avenue to Finch Avenue. Extending the cycling infrastructure further north of the reconstruction limits to Bishop Avenue would provide a connection to the existing multi-use trail in the Finch Hydro Corridor.



Overview of Communication Activities

The public communications for this project included the following:

- 9,100 pieces flyer notices delivered by Canada Post Unaddressed Ad Mail to the area bordered by Cummer Avenue, Wilfred Avenue, Elmwood Avenue, and Kenneth Avenue
- 40 participants signed-in at the May 13 public event
- 48 comment forms received (including 1 by email, 21 by postal mail)
- 16 emails received and responded
- 1 phone conversation documented

The published URL on the flyer was: toronto.ca/cycling/willowdale

A copy of the flyer is included in the appendix.



May 13 public drop-in event

Feedback Summary

Below is a summary of the feedback heard through all communication channels. Participants were self-selecting and not a representative sample of the affected community.

Overall Summary of Feedback

Most participants strongly supported the bike lanes, including a consistent preference for physical separation as a cycle track. Some participants expressed concerns about traffic delays from removal of bus bays and or turning lanes.

Comments by Theme

Following are topics that were raised at least once in the public feedback. Frequently raised comments are noted as such. Comments are summarized and paraphrased for succinct clarity. Statements in comments are not necessarily accurate or agreed by City.

Support for Bike Lanes

- Popular support for the bike lane
- Cyclists appreciate much improved safety
- Many suggest physical separation is necessary, especially with speeds over 60 km/h
- Will encourage more cycling in the area
- Especially useful for students going to school
- Want clear separation, e.g. green paint
- Bike lanes will reduce cyclists on sidewalks
- Need clarity on who has right of way at right turns
- Not concerned about traffic impacts

Do Not Support the Bike Lanes

- Concern with traffic delays caused by loss of turning lanes and bus bays
- Do not understand rationale
- Use other north-south streets instead
- Not enough cyclists to make it worthwhile
- Concern about traffic infiltration on side streets
- Concern about challenges getting in and out of driveways

Bike Lane Design

- Connect effectively to Finch hydro corridor trail
- Include a cycling crossing at Bishop Avenue for connecting to trail
- Request for Sherbourne Street style elevated cycle tracks at bus stops
- Request for separation at intersections
- Flexi-posts are ugly
- Consider a lay-by for the apartment building on west side
- Extends north to Steeles Avenue

Other Design Considerations

- Add pedestrian crossing north of Bishop Avenue (Silverview Drive and Revcoe Drive) for bus stops
- Concern about the lane reduction north of Bishop Avenue
- Church Street is the only through street to Yonge Street so higher left (right on McKee Avenue, north of Church Street)
- There are accidents at McKee Street
- Section between Bishop Avenue to Finch Avenue is confusing and needs clarify for road users
- Will there be bus shelters?
- Add bike stands
- Suggestion for more traffic lanes

About the Consultation Event

- Generally thought it was good
- Most residents do not have time to attend public event
- Would have liked to see materials online before event

Other

- Who will this effect garbage pick-up?
- More bike lanes are needed to grow the network
- Like to see bike repairs station at trail entrance
- Permeable paved trails is a good idea
- Cyclists need to follow the law, especially using lights at night
- Request for traffic light at Willowdale Avenue and Church Street
- Concerns about street racing at night

Next Steps

The Project Team will review all feedback received, together with technical considerations, and stakeholder comments to finalize the recommended designs for Willowdale Avenue Bike Lanes. A Staff Report with the recommended design will be presented to the City's Infrastructure and Environment Committee in June 2019, and considered by City Council thereafter.

Appendix A: Flyer Notice



Public Drop-in Event

April 29, 2019

Willowdale Ave. Reconstruction & Proposed Bike Lane from Bishop Ave. to Empress Ave.

Expected Start Date: August 2019 Expected End Date: November 2019

**Timeline is subject to change. Future notice to be provided.*

Project Overview

This fall 2019, the City of Toronto will be reconstructing Willowdale Avenue from Finch Avenue East to Empress Avenue and potentially installing a new buffered bike lane from Bishop Avenue to Empress Avenue.

The new bike lane would provide a dedicated space for cyclists, improving safety and comfort for all road users. The bike lane would expand the local cycling network by connecting to the existing Finch Hydro Corridor multi-use trail.

The road needs to be reconstructed and sections of damaged curb and sidewalk need to be replaced to bring them to a state of good repair.

This work is part of the Council-approved 2019 Capital Works Program to renew aging city roads and sidewalks for current and future needs.

What to Expect Before Construction

Work crews will mark sidewalks and curbs requiring replacement and the locations of underground utilities, such as gas, water, and cable so that the construction work does not interfere with these utilities.

Affected properties will receive a Construction Notice approximately two weeks before work begins with more information about the work.

Work in the boulevard in front of homes and commercial properties is expected. This work includes removing and replacing driveways, municipal sidewalks, and grassed boulevards, where necessary.

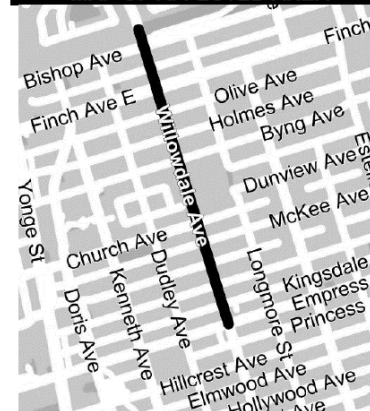
Property owners should remove items located within City property limits (boulevard), such as landscaping and / or decorative objects before work starts. If you have a sprinkler system within the boulevard, please contact the Project Manager that will be listed on the notice prior to construction.

During construction, the road will be closed to northbound traffic.

EXAMPLE BUFFERED BIKE LANE



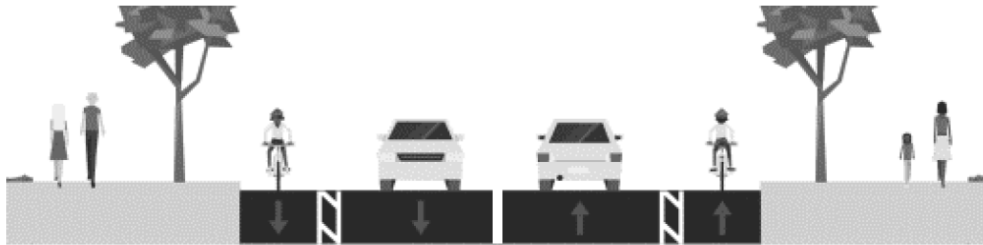
MAP OF AFFECTED AREA



Accessible Accommodation: Residents who require accommodation (level entry, longer notice, etc.) must contact the **Project Manager** to arrange for access during the construction period. Contact information will be provided on the notice prior to construction.

Proposed Bike Lanes

Cycling is one of the fastest growing transportation modes in Toronto. The City is working to make travel by bike safer and more inviting. Making it easier for people to choose to cycle, helps ease congestion on the streets and transit, creates a cleaner environment, and promotes a healthier public.



The proposed bike lane design is to add a one-way buffered bike lane on each side of the street, and maintain the existing single travel lanes in each direction at a reduced width.

The painted buffer (hatched white lines) would provide additional separation between cyclists and motor vehicle traffic.

This design would require the removal of dedicated left turn lanes at Byng Avenue and Empress Avenue – left turns would still be allowed from the travel lane. Traffic is expected to continue to flow as it does now, with a few extra seconds delay at some intersections on occasion.

This design would prohibit stopping or parking along this segment of Willowdale Avenue.

Other Safety Improvements and Changes

In support of the City's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, pedestrian safety improvements are being made. Intersection corners will be adjusted to reduce turning speeds and tactile walking surfaces will be installed at road crossings.

The existing TTC bus stops will remain but the bus bays at the stops would be removed. Additional street trees may be added – to be determined.

There are no planned changes or expected impacts to Wheel-Trans, emergency services, garbage pick-up or other City services as a result of this project.

Public Drop-in Event

Join us to view information materials, speak with the project team and provide your feedback.

Date & Time: Monday, May 13, 2019 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Location: Earl Haig Secondary School 
100 Princess Avenue

All information materials will be posted online shortly following the event.

toronto.ca/cycling/willowdale

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