



# St Lawrence-Distillery District Bikeway

## Public Consultation Summary

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Prepared by:

Alyssa Cerbu, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

Kate Kusiak, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

Jonathan Lam, Public Consultation Coordinator



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## Executive Summary

The City of Toronto is proposing to install cycling infrastructure on The Esplanade and Mill Street.

The work is part of the Cycling Network Plan approved by City Council in July, 2019, to connect, grow and renew cycling infrastructure across the City. The Network Plan includes a three-year Near-Term Implementation Program, which includes The Esplanade and Mill Street corridor.

The projects' goals are to:

1. improve safety for people walking, cycling and driving;
2. encourage cycling by closing gaps in the network; and
3. Maintain access to local and citywide destinations for people of all modes, and with varying levels of ability.

As part of the project, the project team collected feedback through a public feedback form offered at the David Crombie Park revitalization event and online. The following report provides an overview of the consultation activities conducted thus far as well as a detailed summary of the feedback that was collected from the form. This feedback will be used to inform the next phase of design, consultation and, ultimately, implementation.

## Introduction & Project Overview

- To install a bikeway in the St Lawrence, Distillery District and Corktown neighbourhoods (refer to as St Lawrence), connected along The Esplanade from Yonge Street to Hahn Place/Berkeley Street, through Parliament Square Park and on Mill Street to Bayview Avenue.
- This project also included a bikeway on Berkeley Street from The Esplanade to Shuter Street, which has been put on pause.
- These proposed streets would connect to the existing cycling networks:
  - Berkeley Street would connect with:
    - Shuter bike lanes; and
    - Richmond-Adelaide Cycle Track.
  - St Lawrence corridor would connect with:
    - Yonge Street Bike lanes;
    - Cherry Street Bike lane; and
    - Bayview Avenue Bike lane around Corktown Common.
- Additional benefits include providing route for cyclists to cross the Don River and connect downtown Toronto to the East York/East End by crossing at Martin Goodman Trail, Dundas Street or Gerrard Street (or Queen Street).
- There is a history of traffic concerns and high volume of cyclists (refer to last Cycling Update maps) in this area.
- Bikeway concepts were offered in conversation at stakeholder meetings and the public feedback form. Feedback was requested for:
  - Shared Travel Lanes;
  - Dedicated Bicycle Lanes separated by paint lines;
  - Separated Cycle Tracks (i.e. separated with bollards);

- Combination of above; and
- Other (participants were asked to describe).

## **Consultation Activities**

The following sections summarize the consultation activities that were utilized to reach out, engage and involve local community members. Activities included:

- Councillor briefing;
- Meetings with stakeholders;
- Notification;
- Public drop-in event with Parks, Forestry and Recreation for David Crombie Park; and
- An online feedback form.

### **Councillor Briefing**

An email was sent to both Councillor Wong-Tam and Councillor Cressy. The overall project description, the draft display boards and the feedback form for the drop-in event was shared. A draft stakeholder list was also sent.

### **Meeting with Stakeholders**

A stakeholder list was shared with the Councillors and invitations were sent to stakeholders, inviting a representative to attend one or both site walks. Two dates were provided: Friday December 13, 2019 and Saturday December 14, 2019. The site walk on Friday had 8 participants and unfortunately due to poor weather, the Saturday site walk was cancelled and unable to be rescheduled due to holidays and poor weather in January 2020.

The site walk started at Yonge St and The Esplanade, east to Berkeley St, north on Berkeley St to Queen St, and then continued from Mill St and Parliament St, east to Cherry St. Staff took notes, discussed existing conditions, asked questions and requested any further feedback be shared by email or feedback form.

### **Notification**

Emails to stakeholders and other local groups and representatives were sent on November 29<sup>th</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup>. They summarized the project and included details of the drop-in event with Parks at the St Lawrence Community Recreation Centre.

Distribution included the following stakeholders:

- St Lawrence Neighbourhood Association
- Cabbagetown South Residents Assoc.
- Cycle TO
- Charlie's FreeWheels
- Distillery District
- Downtown Alternative School, TDSB

- Financial District BIA
- Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Assoc
- Historic Queen Street East BIA
- Longboat Area Residents Association
- Market Lane PS
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
- St Lawrence Market BIA
- St Lawrence Precinct Advisory Committee
- St Michael Catholic School
- YMCA Cooper Koo
- Local Champion
- Cycle TO Captain

A postcard was also produced and handed out at the drop-in event. Both Councillors also notified their constituents through their newsletter and online channels.

### Public Drop-In Event

The public drop-in event for David Crombie Park was an opportunity promote this project and receive initial feedback. Project staff were set up in the foyer of the community centre to speak with community members on their way in or out from the event. Display boards, feedback forms, sign-in sheets, a map for posting notes and project postcards were available.

Display Panels provided information on the following:

- Project area
- Project background
- Feedback opportunities

### Online / Feedback Form

A feedback form was provided at the drop-in event where community members could mail in their responses and the postcard included a link to the online form. Project staff requested to receive community feedback by Friday, October 11, 2019.

The feedback form included the following sections and questions:

Part A: Concerns

#### 1. Current Traffic Concerns at Key Locations

What are your top three (3) concerns that affect people walking, cycling, taking transit or driving on The Esplanade, Mill Street and Berkeley Street? Please describe your concern, its impact and a specific location or intersection if possible. Use Question #7 to share more information about other locations.

Part B: Developing Options - Cycling Infrastructure

#### 2. Cycling Connections: The Esplanade, Mill Street

What improvements do you believe may help support people cycling on The Esplanade and Mill Street?

### 3. Cycling Connections: Berkeley Street

What improvements do you believe may help support people cycling on Berkeley Street (from The Esplanade to Shuter Street)?

### Part C: Developing Options - Challenges & Considerations

5. There are many considerations and impacts that must be considered when developing options to provide cycling routes on The Esplanade, Mill Street and Berkeley Street (to Shuter). How do you feel about the following potential impacts on the identified streets or neighbouring streets?

6. What do you feel should be the City's top priorities for The Esplanade, Mill Street and Berkeley Street (to Shuter)? Rank in order of importance. One (1) being the top priority.

7. Any other comments?

A number of comments were received and summarized in the next section.

- 1 email
- 9 mailed in feedback form
- 218 online feedback form completed
- 7+ notes on maps at drop-in event

# Feedback Summary

## Part A: Concerns

### Drivers, Speed, Unsafe driver behaviour, "Dooring"

- 78 comments on driver behaviour, mostly around the intersections of Jarvis/The Esplanade
  - Examples of driver behaviours include:
    - entering the intersection
    - blocking cyclists and pedestrians
    - not stopping at stop signs
- 38 comments about vehicles in street parking "dooring" cyclists, or illegally parking/illegal turns to look for parking
  - Illegal parking, especially on The Esplanade, around the crosswalk
  - Illegal U Turns
  - Double parked
- 24 comments on speeding drivers (speed limits)

### Intersection design, Congestion, Narrow Road Widths, Street Parking,

- 54 comments on congestion, carbon emission concerns and traffic volumes during rush hour and Saturdays
  - Areas of concern include:
    - Christmas Market
    - Parliament/Mill
    - N on Market, R on Esplanade
    - Esplanade/Jarvis
    - Mill/Trinity
    - Esplanade in general
    - Gardiner Access ramp
- 23 comments on intersection design
  - Drivers not providing 1m space to cyclists
  - Too many stop signs on The Esplanade (are ignored)
  - Wide turning radii
  - Intersections include:
    - Mill/Trinity – disordered
    - Cherry/King
    - Esplanade from Yonge to Church
    - Jarvis/Esplanade
    - Mill/Parliament – drivers don't yield to pedestrians and cyclists when turning onto Parliament
    - Yonge/Esplanade has increased traffic on The Esplanade
    - King/River
    - Cherry/Mill
    - Sherbourne/Esplanade – Left turns
    - Berkeley/Front – drivers take the whole lane thinking it is one-way
    - Esplanade/Princess
    - Esplanade/George

- Esplanade/Frederick
- 10 comments on the narrow road widths
  - Mill St.
  - Berkeley, east side car parking
  - Wide roads but not enough parking options for permit holders

### Traffic Signals, Road markings

- 28 comments on traffic signals and road markings, many about cyclists using pedestrians buttons to change the light
  - Examples include:
    - Pedestrian 'beg' button required is difficult for cyclists
    - No lights at Berkeley/Queen
    - Stop sign at Mill/Bayview for cyclists
    - Unclear lane markings
    - Lights are not coordinated, timed too long
    - Berkeley @ Richmond – People believe it is one-way and take the whole road

### Cycling infrastructure (lack of), unsafe cyclist behaviour,

- 58 comments on lack of cyclist infrastructure, with most comments supporting separated/dedicated/protected cycling lanes
  - Examples include:
    - Cross ride at Yonge/Esplanade
    - Berkeley/Front needs clearly defined route
    - Better to have a bike lane on Parliament similar to Sherbourne
- 22 comments on cyclists behaviours
  - Not obeying signals
  - Don't stop
  - Ride on sidewalk
  - Not dismounting in Distillery
  - Couriers

### Sidewalks, Pedestrians, Cross Walks

- 15 comments about pedestrians and sidewalks, that they are too narrow and many visitors and tourists come here to visit
  - Narrow sidewalks
  - Property crossing from Berczy Park onto Front
  - Assisted crosswalks will conflict with continuous cyclists
  - Pedestrians not paying attention, ignoring countdown timers

### Public Transit

- 17 comments about TTC and bus impacts
  - Bus routes being held up/stalled
  - Bus drivers behaving aggressively



## Other

# Park B: Cycling Connections on The Esplanade and Mill Street

## Separated Cycle Track

- 144 Comments
  - Separated or elevated bike lanes are the only safe way
    - Separated track with barriers is always preferable, failing that a clearly marked dedicated lane, failing that, clearly marked shared lanes, possibly with signs telling drivers to yield to pedestrians and cyclists
    - Separated or elevated bike lanes are always better than paint
      - Make bike lanes physically separated regardless of car volumes or speed
      - Just painted lanes (sharrows) are not effective as it does not stop vehicles from parking/idling in the bike lane
      - Paint is like the red traffic light. If the laws are not enforced, it's just pretty art that'll be overtaken during rush hour
    - Bike infrastructure that does not have physical separation is a waste of money and will not lead to increased safety or improved traffic flow.
    - Especially given all recent pedestrian and cyclist deaths in Toronto and the City's commitment to Vision Zero
    - Only way to prevent the bike lane from being used for parking is to provide physical separation, as cars will always abuse painted lines
  - Pedestrians are only safe when bikes are not using their space
    - Bikes only safe when separate from cars
  - Mixed traffic on Mill and the Esplanade
    - Busses going around illegally parked/ stopped cars makes cycling risky
    - Parked/ parking cars, buses, taxis/ rideshare, trucks, emergency and other vehicles in dedicated lanes (Hazardous for cyclists and important to separate)
      - Lots of pick-ups and drop-offs, lots of pedestrians.
      - Separated track would help a lot with TTC bus issue.
    - Separated lane for bicycles would also help drivers as they would know where to expect cyclists
    - Terrified to cycle without a barrier
    - Separation is for the safety and comfort of all road users
    - Lots of tourists around this area, and a school, should be totally protected
  - Construction on Phase 2 of the new builds on the Pan Am site and 60 Mill St.
    - 2 sites will be part of a badly regulated traffic situation, and should have some rational & strict supervision
    - Aging populations and newer residents with small kids – SAFETY Concern
    - Running red lights and stop signs is treated as sport by drivers.

- Dedicated bike lane on esplanade would reduce need for cyclists to merge into rush hour traffic
  - Reducing risk when they travel to and from the financial district

### Dedicated bicycle lane, separated by paint lines

- 22 Comments
  - Fully separated bike lanes with physical barrier and curb
    - Not like Sherbourne lanes
  - East west traffic would be better on front with separated cycle track like Sherbourne
  - Although in favour of separated cycle tracks, painted bike lanes in this location is appropriate
  - Lower volume of traffic, therefore painted dedicated bike lanes would provide sufficient protection for cyclists
    - Dedicated bike path would be helpful for the park path that connects The Esplanade and Mill St., allowing pedestrians, children and dogs to use the path safely

### Shared Travel Lanes

- 5 Comments
  - Both streets are currently good for biking - biggest concern is the speed of vehicles
  - Many near misses with cyclists who go through stop signs, red lights and pedestrians who walk right out in front of me, discouraging drivers
    - Should educate cyclists/pedestrians and penalize those who break the law.
    - Drivers are paying all kinds of fees while cyclists are getting a free ride and at the same time having governments spend enormous amounts of money on them
  - Dedicated bike lanes feel more dangerous on roads where there are a lot of taxis / ubers who park in the bike lanes to drop off or pick up pedestrians. (Especially Mill Street and Cherry Street)
    - Shared lane or cycle track with barrier would be better option
  - Esplanade and Mill Street are rather quiet streets with less traffic and lots of stop signs.
    - Shared travel lanes would be sufficient for us.

### Combination of Above

- 31 Comments
  - Defined bike lanes would be very welcomed, although Mill St./ The Esplanade is not treacherous for bikers
  - The Esplanade & Berkeley too narrow for separated bike tracks but sharrows would help
  - Redevelopment of Crombie Park will be an opportunity to provide a separated bicycle track between Parliament and Market Streets.
  - Dedicated separated bicycle lane/pedestrian path between Parliament and Berkeley Streets would be desirable as the First Parliament site is redeveloped

## Other

- 2 Comments
  - Bi-directional cycle track on the south side of the esplanade would be amazing. Possibly off street running through David Crombie Park
  - Pedestrians fear getting hit by a cyclist (they currently have every right to whiz past me and sometimes do so on my right without warning. Separating the pedestrians and bikes would be a good thing to eliminate the risk of collision
  - Build bike path near park section. Maybe use some space from first parliament sight.
  - Eliminate the ability for bicycles to be on The Esplanade and Mill Street

## **Cycling Connections on Berkeley Street**

### Separated Cycle Track

- 123 Comments
  - Protected cycle track - not bollards
  - Berkeley is a busier street and barrier separated bike lanes would be nice.
  - Near a school zone and should be fully protected from vehicular traffic.
  - A separated lane will need to take into account left turns onto Richmond
  - Only barriers can properly separate cyclists
  - Paint is not infrastructure and does not protect people of all ages and abilities

### Dedicated bicycle lane, separated by paint lines

- 39 Comments
  - Slow street - fine as a cyclist and pedestrian
  - Protected bike lanes already on Sherbourne, I am not as concerned about Berkeley
    - Contraflow bike lanes are needed on Sumach to extend the Cherry Street bike lanes north
    - Remove the pedestrian 'beg buttons' on Berkeley as cyclists cannot easily reach them to trigger the light to change
      - Pedestrians forget to press them
      - Reduce the red light timing to 45 seconds as wait times can be long if you miss the light
  - Shuter is not usable to cyclists unless completely repaved
  - Need a light at Queen and Berkeley
  - No right on red at Front and Berkeley
  - Traffic on Berkeley is less hectic than on streets with public transit

### Combination of Above

- 24 Comments
  - Cycle track always preferable but between Richmond and Queen it may not be feasible.

- Berkeley South of Adelaide is pretty low volume low speed - very dark and narrow at night.

### Shared Travel Lanes

- 10 Comments
  - Currently a quiet street, if increased traffic is anticipated a separation would be better
  - Berkeley is too small for a dedicated bike lane
  - Foot traffic is high, suggest "No Cycling" sign for sidewalk
  - Manage intersections and crosswalks for safety using islands, bump outs, rain gardens, etc.

### Other

- Bicycle detectors at traffic signals to trigger green light
- Bike boxes
- CYCLISTS BELONG ON SIDE STREETS
- Eliminate the ability for bicycles to be on The Esplanade and Mill Street
- Lights at all intersections
- People don't recognize bike lanes without separation
- Traffic signaling to prioritize cycling north/south movement

## **Part C: Developing options, challenges to consider**

### Reduce Permit Parking

- Yes, this is reasonable – 155
- Unsure - 36
- No, this is not reasonable – 26

### Reduced Pay & Display parking

- Yes this is reasonable – 189
- Unsure - 12
- No, this is not reasonable – 17

### Implement vehicle turning restrictions

- Yes, this is reasonable - 198
- Unsure – 14
- No, this is not reasonable – 8

### Options to reduce motor vehicle speeds and volumes

In order to reduce motor vehicle speeds and volumes and improve safety for vulnerable road users, road closures, conversions to one-way or direction changes may be considered.

- Yes, this is reasonable - 190
- Unsure – 22
- No, this is not reasonable – 7

## Ranking priorities

What do you feel should be the City's top priorities for The Esplanade, Mill Street and Berkeley Street (to Shuter)? Rank in order of importance. One (1) being the top priority.

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Pedestrian safety and comfort	174	32	5	6
Motor vehicle on-street parking	5	6	45	142
Cycling safety and comfort	33	165	11	7
Motor vehicle traffic flow	6	13	147	44

## **Other Comments**

82 comments

### Comments that could be considered by the project

- Safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.
- There could be more pedestrian crossings, or signalized crossings to increase safety. Include a bike lane on the parkway and narrow the roads to slow traffic.
- The intersection of Cherry and Lakeshore is tremendously dangerous,
- Provide a connection from the South Side of Lakeshore to the Lower Don Trail.
- Maximize the space along Scadding St, Hahn St, and the inner streets for parking options. Or allow parking along the entire south side/stretch of The Esplanade, leaving the north for motor/cycling paths.
- Address congestion and make intersections safer for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Create a bike path through the Green P lot to connect Mill St. to the Esplanade.
- Improve safety for Christmas market visitors and tourists in The Distillery District and schools and daycares along The Esplanade.
- There is already enough parking through surface lots, Green P, and underground parking in the area.
- Reduce the speed limit on Parliament and do not allow right turns on red.
- Have a traffic light arrow directing turning vehicles for safety.

### Other comments that are out of project scope

- Heavier traffic since King Street pilot needs attention. Slows down the 121.
- More reliable transit service and greater transit options should be added.
- Better promote existing parking options in the area.
- Build a bike lane on Gerrard through the redeveloped Regent Park, and a bike lane on Bay from Queen to Front.
- I really hope to see some improvements to the bike lanes along River.
- There should be more enforcement to prevent people from parking in bike lanes. This creates safety issues for cyclists.
- There should also be greater enforcement for ignoring turn restriction signs and running red lights for vehicles.

- Lower the speed limit from 30 on The Esplanade.

## Next Steps

- Consultation activities with Councillors and key stakeholders, including properties, The Distillery District, the St Lawrence Market, schools and other key groups.
- Public consultation event to be held in the fall where final design options will be presented for final feedback and input from the community.
- Final consultation report will be drafted.
- Project to be presented to committee/council in late fall 2020.
- Implementation in 2021.