



Steepprock-Bathurst Manor Cycling Connections

May 2024

Executive Summary

The City is proposing to install cycle tracks on Steepprock Drive, bike lanes on Whitehorse Road and Rimrock Road and on-street shared lane markings on several streets in the Bathurst Manor area in 2024 and 2025. These changes are part of a plan to improve road safety and build connected cycling routes from Bathurst Street to the Finch Hydro Corridor. Public and interest group consultation for this project took place from January to April 2024 and included a mailed postcard about upcoming cycling projects in the Bathurst and Finch area (approximately 27,000 recipients), a public notice to the project area (approximately 18,000 recipients), a pop-up event (approximately 30 participants), in-boulevard signs in the community, and email/phone comment tracking (43 comments). The project team also met with two representatives of the Duke Heights Business Improvement Area in January 2024.

Several respondents raised questions regarding the scope of the work and construction impacts. A common question from local businesses was about construction impacts and duration, often citing the recent construction on Chesswood Drive. City staff were able to provide more information about how this project differs from Chesswood Drive given that it would be completed using pavement markings, signage and 'quick-build' materials, which involves short installation time and minimal disruption to traffic.

Another common question was whether proposed changes in Bathurst Manor include bike lanes or cycle tracks and if they would reduce motor vehicle lanes or have parking impacts. Staff were able to clarify that proposed changes in Bathurst Manor are on-street shared lane markings which do not impact the number of motor vehicle lanes or existing parking.

Several respondents expressed general support for increased east-west connections through the neighbourhood and improved safety for people cycling, including expanding connections to the Finch Hydro Corridor. However, others were concerned about traffic impacts related to motor vehicle lane changes on Steepprock Drive, some noting that relatively low existing cycling volumes may not justify the proposed works. Some residents of Bathurst Manor generally objected to additional cycling infrastructure in the neighbourhood, regardless of the design, over concerns about possible traffic impacts and additional costs to taxpayers.

Several respondents provided suggestions to improve the proposed plans, including potential future cycling connections or requests to upgrade proposed on-street shared lane markings in Bathurst Manor to bike lanes, including some concern that on-street shared lane markings are an insufficient improvement.

What We Did

A variety of methods were used to notify residents and businesses of the project and opportunities to participate:

- Project web page toronto.ca/steeprocbathurstmanor (44 unique visits between March 14 and April 15, 2024)
- Postcard-style notice about Bathurst and Finch area projects (26,822 addresses in and near project area)
- Detailed notice delivered through Canada Post (17,926 addresses in the project area)
- Email notification to project mailing list subscribers from the Bathurst Manor Neighbourhood Mobility Plan project (toronto.ca/bathurstmanor) (92 contacts)
- Email to interest groups including businesses along impacted streets, residents associations, community groups, organizations, institutions and elected officials (81 recipients)
- Social media posts by @TO_Cycling
- 12" x 16" in-boulevard signs advertising the project (11 throughout the project area)

Comments on the project were received through the following activities:

Activity	Date	Participation
Pop-up event at Earl Bales Community Centre	March 15, 2024	Approximately 30 participants
Email/Phone	March 14 – April 16, 2024	43 comments received from 40 individuals and businesses
Meeting with DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area (BIA)	January 18, 2024	2 representatives from the BIA

What We Heard

Summary of Comments from Businesses

Staff met with the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area (BIA) on January 18, 2024 to present and gather feedback on the proposed changes. Key takeaways included:

- The BIA expressed support for the planned changes in the DUKE Heights business area and Bathurst Manor neighbourhood and were supportive of opportunities to improve connections for people walking, cycling and driving between nearby residential areas and the business park.
- The BIA suggested improvements and shared their own conceptual plans for changes to both the intersection at Overbrook Place and Dufferin Street, as well as the intersection of Rimrock Road and Allen Road, to improve connectivity for people walking and cycling.
- The BIA raised concerns about construction impacts to local businesses on Steeprock Drive.

Eight comments or questions were received from businesses in the DUKE Heights business area via email or phone call. Comments included:

- Inquiries about the impact and duration of the construction to implement the cycle tracks and bike lanes, including questions related to business operations, access to driveways and ability to make turns, as well as potential road closures and reduced access to TTC stops and routes.
- Some businesses questioned the necessity of cycling infrastructure in this area due to the sense that there are currently low numbers of people cycling in the area and observations about low usage of the recently completed Chesswood Drive cycle tracks.
- Some businesses on Rimrock Road commented that the proposed painted bike lanes and “no stopping” restrictions would prevent large trucks from parking on the road and impeding turning movements for other trucks.

Summary of Comments from Residents

Staff held a pop-up event at Earl Bales Community Centre on March 15, 2024 to raise awareness of this project and other area cycling projects with residents. Staff spoke with approximately 30 residents and received 10 comments relevant to this project at this event. Staff also received 35 comments by phone and email from area residents about the proposal for bikeways and on-street shared routes in the DUKE Heights Business Area and Bathurst Manor Neighbourhood.

In some cases, the comments received were discussed with residents further to clarify that the proposed designs through Bathurst Manor do not encompass separated bicycle lanes or cycle tracks and will not involve a reduction in the number of motor vehicle lanes or impacts to parking. Below is a list of comments received.

- Support for increased east-west connections through the neighbourhood and improved safety for people cycling.
- Uncertainty about the details of the proposal through Bathurst Manor, and questions regarding whether the lane markings would include separated bike lanes or cycle tracks through Bathurst Manor, and whether this would in turn impact parking or traffic flow.

- Concern that regardless of the design, there is potential for negative traffic impacts due to increased bicycle traffic on neighbourhood streets.
- Concern that neighbourhood streets are not appropriate for cycling improvements.
- Concern about lack of sidewalks on some of the proposed routes in Bathurst Manor and conflicts between people driving, cycling and walking.
- Questions about the necessity of the bikeways given low amounts of current bicycle traffic in the area.
- Concerns about the cost of the project and overall prioritization of resources towards cycling infrastructure in the area versus other road upgrades.
- Concern about the removal of the left turn lane at Steeprock Drive and Chesswood Drive and impacts to traffic on Steeprock Drive.
- Concerns about effectiveness and value of previously installed bikeways along Chesswood Drive and Wilmington Avenue.

Suggestions

- Explore additional potential future cycling connections in the neighbourhood to ensure improved connectivity to area trails (various locations were suggested).
- Upgrade existing painted bike lanes on Wilmington Avenue.
- Upgrade the proposed on-street shared lane markings to cycle tracks or bike lanes; or upgrade proposed bike lanes on Rimrock Road and Whitehorse Road to cycle tracks.