

February 8, 2012

RE: Submission of comments for Item PW12.3 – John Street Corridor Improvements
TO: Public Works and Infrastructure Committee – Meeting 12, Committee Room 1, City Hall, Feb. 15 '11
FROM: Christian Chan, 676 Huron Street, Ward 20

Dear Public Works and Infrastructure Committee Members,

I applaud the efforts of staff to bring this report to the Committee and eventually, to Council. This represents a determined direction in which Toronto sets an example of inclusive and sustainable living, while allowing reasonable increases in the development of this City, and an inclusive, mobile downtown.

Upon review of the John Street Corridor Improvements Environmental Assessment Study (“the Report”) of January 25, 2012, I strongly believe that a thorough assessment of the opportunity to include provisions for proper cycling infrastructure was not conducted, and the Study should not be considered completed until there is sufficient evidence presented by staff to support their position.

This Recommended Design put forth by the Report does not represent “good planning” by not fully considering and providing comments thereof upon the implementation of cycling infrastructure as per the current planning policies of the City, and instead parlaying the research of a cycling network to the Downtown Transportation Operations Study and Richmond/Adelaide EA Study.

This is an established cycling corridor, and with the proposed changes, this will not change, as presented by staff in the Report – with the statement that Staff does not expect the cyclist use of this corridor to change. The Report states that there is not enough space to accommodate a right of way for cyclists; however I will provide that an alternative can be forged.

It has been established in the downtown pedestrian zones of Copenhagen, which shares many of the same features of the proposed pedestrian designs for John Street, that a simple surface texture change can guide the division of pedestrian traffic from cycling traffic in the proposed corridor. An example would be of a cobblestone roadway, with a concrete line to indicate both to the pedestrian and cyclist of where they are infringing on their respective paths (see Photo below). With this simple intervention, I cannot support Staff in their assumption in this Report that the concerns of the cycling community are satisfied.

Policy that supports the directive of Staff to defer and review this Report with more consideration towards cycling infrastructure can be found in many City of Toronto reports.

As part of the **Toronto Bike Plan**, provisions include that every street should be made as safe and comfortable for cyclists as possible, and that every Toronto Street is a cycling street. With this in mind, I am not satisfied that Staff sufficiently considered cycling infrastructure as part of this Study.

Section 4.1 of the Toronto Bike Plan directs that transportation policies, practices and regulations support increased safety and access for roadways, and intersections (among others). The Report has staff suggesting to not accommodating cyclist safety, contravening the direction that Transportation Services itself wishes to pursue in its Bike Plan.

According to **Section 5.1 of the Toronto Bike Plan**, there is no specific “bikeway type” that his Report even refers to – more supporting evidence that the City has not considered the implications. The only comparable definition of what is supported in the Bike Plan for this classification is as an “Off – Road Path”. There should be another classification added as an amendment.

In **Section 5.2 of the Toronto Bike Plan**, there are provisions for connectivity and continuity, directness and safety, and road characteristics and operation. The decision to not include some sort of designated pathway on John Street violates those criteria that the City is to evaluate the Corridor Improvement. On this basis, it should be reconsidered.

It is alarming in the report that cycling, as an increasingly popular mode of transport in all seasons in Toronto, is seemingly overlooked and that the Report gives consideration (understandably) to pedestrians, more considerations to vehicles and their access, and limited consideration for cyclists, which is a complementary mode of travel to pedestrians.

In **Recommendation 5-1 of the Toronto Bike Plan**, Transportation Services themselves suggest the implementation of the innovative design of the coloured bicycle lane, which I proposed earlier as a textual surface intervention to guide the bikes on their paths, and the pedestrians on theirs. There is even a picture provided, in which I have duplicated for you here.

Under **Recommendation 5-2**, there are provisions for Transportation Services, again, as written by their own staff in the Bike Plan, to research, design and demonstrate innovative measures to enhance the bikeway network. In the Report, there is no reference to any undertaking of Staff to partake in these policy initiatives, especially in consideration of the alternatives that were shelved with any reference to cyclists.

Similarly, the **Toronto Official Plan states in its Transportation Vision** that an effort must be made to make all streets more bicycle friendly – and this corridor has the opportunity to do just that. One of the provisions of the **2000 “Toronto at a Crossroads” Report** and the **Waterfront Plan** is that traffic engineering and street design should encourage walking and cycling.

Again, this corridor improvement has the opportunity to do just that, however these aims are not reflected in the Recommended Design of this Report. Under **Section 2.2.1 Policy 11, the Toronto Official Plan** provides measures to be undertaken to make it safer to walk and cycle in the Downtown, the Report does not provide any measures or considerations for any cycling aspect of this Recommended Design, it merely mentions that it was considered and then deemed not feasible. This is

not a sign of an administration that practices what it preaches through its extensive policy library, and my concerns are related to this review process as setting precedent for further plans not considering and attempting to implement in the Recommended Designs of any urban improvement policies, as authored by City of Toronto staff.

I respectfully submit and recommend that Committee members further consider the implications of the City of Toronto's various cycling related policies, as exhibited above, in the Toronto Bike Plan and Official Plan for the regeneration of the John Street Cultural Corridor.

Regards,

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(Photos below referred to by text above)

