

Councillor Adam Vaughan  
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I am writing to you on behalf of Urbane Cyclist, a worker cooperative that operates a year round bicycle shop that is geared to daily riders. Our store employs 20 full time and 8 part time employees.

Our store chose its location 13 years ago on the west side of John Street, north of Queen Street, as John Street is the major north-south bicycle route from and to the downtown core west of University Avenue in the City of Toronto south and north of Queen Street West. Our cooperative's advocacy committee has deliberated over the proposed network of separated bicycle lanes, and wants you to know our view point before this matter comes to Council.

We wrote to you and the environmental assessment consultants on June 18 expressing the cooperatives opinion that the redesign of the John Street corridor should include provision for bicycle lanes on John Street from Stephanie Street to south of Queen Street to the future east west bicycle lanes on Richmond or Adelaide so that there can eventually be a continuous north-south route from the Beverley St - St. George Street bicycle lanes to Adelaide or Richmond and then to Simcoe Street to the downtown and the Lake.

John Street has been heavily used by cyclists traveling southbound on St. George - Beverley Street who wish to go south of Queen Street towards the downtown core and the lakefront for over 20 years. They make a left hand turn onto Stephanie Street and then turn southbound onto John Street. Northbound cyclists on John Street continue their journey north of Queen Street West by making a left Queen Street West, and then turn right and continue northbound onto Beverly St.

We understand you are advocating the use of Phoebe/Soho/Peter Streets as continuation from Beverley for cyclists who want to travel south and north of Queen Street West to and from the St George Beverley bicycle lanes. The proposed Phoebe/Soho/Peter Streets particularly concerns us as it would require cyclists travelling to and from Beverley Street south and north of Queen West to make a left turn on Queen Street across streetcar tracks; a recipe for accidents.

As you know a continuous downtown bicycle lane system separated from traffic was proposed in a petition filed this past summer with Public Works and Infrastructure Committee of Toronto City Council. The network and petition was also supported at PWIC by the Toronto Cyclists Union, the York Quay Neighbourhood Association, The University of Toronto Graduate Student's Union, the St Lawrence Neighbourhood Association and the ABC (Yorkville) Residents Association organisations representing over 20,000 people. These resident associations represent our customers who use St. George and John Streets to access our store, and to get to and from downtown.

What was proposed was a continuous network of bicycle roads separated from traffic.

Two east west:

1. Harbord - Wellesley from Parliament to Ossington;
2. Richmond Street from Bathurst to Parliament.

Two north south:

1. Starting at Prince Arthur on St George Beverley to John Street connecting to new bicycle lanes on Simcoe, via the Richmond Street bicycle lanes , to the Lake;
2. Sherbourne Street from Elm Avenue in Rosedale just north of Bloor all the way to Queens Quay.

I understand the petition's proposed network will be coming back to PWIC and Council in the New Year.

As a constituent I am asking you to support this network of separated bicycle lanes in the coming Council term.

We are asking you to support the networks proposal for separated lanes on John Street from Stephanie to Richmond Street West; Richmond Street from Parliament to Bathurst; and Simcoe Street from Richmond Street West to the Lake and the future Queens Quay Pedestrian Promenade.

These cycling infrastructure improvements would be very meaningful to our customers, particularly recreational cyclists who are not confident urban cyclists and cyclists with young children.

Separated bicycle lanes are needed for the following reasons:

A. Bicycle Lanes are blocked by Illegally Parked Cars and Delivery Vehicles

Taxis are allowed to legally obstruct bicycle lanes stopping to pick up and drop off passengers. Canada Post is also legally allowed to obstruct bicycle lanes. This is set by Federal legislation there is no ability for the City of the Province to regulate this. There is no ability to enforce illegal parking in the bicycle lanes with these huge exceptions being exempt from controls. Secondly the police will not effectively enforce illegal parking in bicycle lanes. The issue of illegal parking in bicycle lanes came before the Toronto Police Services Board in November of 2009. 100's of emails were received by the Board requesting the Police enforce the no parking in bicycle lanes rules. There has been little change in enforcement since then. There is only one way to prevent illegal parking in bicycle lanes it is to physically separate them with curbs or bollards so the lanes cannot be parked in. It is the only solution to illegal parking in bicycle lanes.

B. Snow Removal in Bicycle Lanes

We don't have snow removal in bicycle lanes now. We will under this proposal. Denzil Minnan Wong is proposing that this network of bicycle lanes have snow removal. This is the only proposal put forward for a network of separated lanes serving the downtown ever put forward by anyone.

C. Encourage People who Are Afraid of Cycling Downtown to Ride Their Bicycles

This proposal is not for experienced cyclists as much as for inexperienced cyclists who are too afraid to ride on our city streets; the vast majority of people in the City of Toronto. Even

experienced cyclists feel differently when they have a small child on the back of their bicycle in unseparated lanes.

D. Children will No Longer Have to ride Their Bicycles on Downtown Sidewalks

It is currently legal for bicycles with less than a 20 inch wheel to ride on the sidewalks downtown. The exemption is designed to permit children to ride legally on sidewalks. Once bicycle lanes are separated from traffic 8-12 year olds will be able to ride with their parents in safety on city streets and off of sidewalks.

E. Separated Bicycle Lanes Increase Pedestrian Safety

Separated bicycle lanes have been proven in New York City to significantly reduce serious pedestrian injuries on the streets they are installed in. See the New York Times in the last months on this issue <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/10/nyregion/10bikes.html>.

The evidence that bicycle lanes separated from traffic are safer for cyclists and pedestrians is irrefutable. In the Netherlands almost the entire network of bicycle roads is separated from traffic and the rates of injury and death for cyclists are lower than in Canada or North America, even though most cyclists in the Netherlands don't wear helmets which are ubiquitous in North America.

F. The Bixi Bicycle Programme

A network of separated bicycle lanes will support the Bixi program. In all other cities where Bixi has been introduced a network of separated bicycle lanes was created BEFORE the Bixi program was launched. New tourists to our City will be more likely to use Bixi bicycles if they feel safe and they will feel safer with a network of separated bicycle lanes downtown.

Toronto is far behind many major cities in the completion of its bikeway network. Montreal, Vancouver and New York all have extensive and continuous bikeway networks that are separated from traffic.

We would request you reconsider your position on these proposals and look forward to hearing from you.

Urbane Cyclist Advocacy Committee

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