



City of Toronto Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
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November 18, 2015

To the Committee,

The Environmental Justice & Sustainability Committee, together with the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU), would like to express adamant support for a pilot project for protected bicycle lanes on Bloor Street between Shaw Street and Avenue Road.

The UTGSU represents over 16,000 graduate students at the University of Toronto, with over 14,500 of these based at the St. George Campus in downtown Toronto. According to the 2012 Tri-Campus Commuting Survey, 18% of graduate students at St. George arrive by bicycle. The mode share for cycling was greater than that for walking, driving, or regional transit, and was second only to the TTC. These numbers should not be surprising given the significant presence of bicycles on St. George Campus year-round which are indicative of the importance of cycling for many members of the larger University of Toronto community.

Bloor Street crosses through the northern part of our campus, serving as an important access point and a cycling arterial for students coming from the west. The route is straight, simple, free of streetcar tracks, and a centre of activity, which we feel that cyclists should be able to access safely and comfortably. The current layout of Bloor Street, however, is dangerous due to the narrow, high-risk space between automobiles in motion and those that are parked; where an open door from a parked car can lead to a serious accident or even death. Despite these risks, Bloor Street is a common cycling route utilized by the Toronto cycling community.

Cycling is a low-cost means of travel and has positive civic and environmental impacts; considerations that are important to graduate students. Bicycle travel has no direct emissions: it does not contribute to local air quality issues nor to climate change. Cycling also requires less road and parking infrastructure per commuter than travel by car, and can be an alternative to the TTC, which is frequently overcrowded. The bicycle lanes on College and Harbord streets have already proven to be a tremendous success as they provide safe bicycle access to the south end of campus, and move larger numbers of commuters than would be possible with the same road space allocated to private vehicles. These routes are so popular that bicycle congestion occurs during peak hours, a problem which could be alleviated by a safe and efficient parallel route on Bloor Street.

The City of Toronto has already made great improvements to cycling infrastructure in recent years and the numbers show that the community is eager to embrace this efficient mode of transport. We urge you to continue expanding the cycling network to include safe lanes on Bloor Street.

Thank you for your consideration of our statement, and we look forward to your final recommendations to Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nickie Van Lier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Nickie Van Lier
Civics & Environment Commissioner
University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union

On behalf of the Environmental Justice & Sustainability Committee and the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union