

Councillor Olivia Chow
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite C50
Toronto, M5H 2N2

June 18, 2003

Regarding: College Street Revitalization Initiative

Dear Councillor Chow:

The cycling group Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists ARC has recently received a copy of a letter sent to you from the Harbord Village Residents' Association HVRA . This letter outlined five possible options for bicycle lanes on the north side of College.

The HVRA believes the best choice is the first option, the "Rush hour Shift", also known as a "floating" bike lane.

ARC feels this option is inferior to a normal, fixed bike lane, and may in fact be a danger to cyclists.

We believe that prior to and just after the rush hour around 4pm and 6pm , it will be confusing to road users. There will be scofflaw drivers and parkers taking advantage of the switchover, and there will be variations in the clocks in people's cars. The result will be, at the time of heaviest bicycle traffic, cyclists weaving in and out of the curbside bike lane and the rush hour lane.

We worry that during off peak hours, the 4.5m shared between parked cars and the bicycle lane is too wide. In our experience, some impatient drivers will use it as a passing lane when traffic is slow, presenting a serious danger to cyclists.

We find it difficult to imagine a system of signage or pavement markings that would clearly explain to a car, rushing westward on College at or near rush hour , which lane they should be driving in.

ARC also does not like the precedent of allowing cars to park in certain bike lanes at certain times. We are concerned that this will further reduce drivers inhibitions to parking in other bike lanes.

We believe that a bicycle lane needs consistency to ensure safety; consistency in both time not changing depending on the time of day and space staying in the same physical space at all times .

We asked the Vancouver cycling organization BEST www.best.bc.ca about the "floating" bike lane on Pender Street, which the HVRA has pointed to as a model for College Street. The responses attached at the end of this letter were, at best, mixed.

ARC loves most aspects of the HVRA College Street Initiative. We support the widened sidewalks and extra trees which would make College a wonderful avenue to visit and live near. The current bike lanes on this stretch of College have their own problems and could certainly be improved. But this proposed bike lane is nothing more than a compromise.

We cannot support the idea that maintaining rush hour driving lanes and all on street parking spaces are more important than providing proper bike lanes. College Street is a highly visible cycling artery and there exists an opportunity to showcase high quality bike facilities and heavy cycling traffic in the heart of the city.

ARC would love to help the HVRA and Brown & Storey make the revitalization of College Street a political reality. It could set the pace of urban design in Toronto for years to come. However we respectfully ask that the needs of cyclists be included in the process.

Thank you,

Rick Conroy: ARC, Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists

Enc: Letters from Vancouver cyclists
cc: Dan Egan: Manager, Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure
Rory Sinclair: Chair, HVRA
Gord Brown, Richard Gilbert, Bob Frankford, Bob Stambula: HVRA College St. Initiative