



October 24, 2017

Dear Bloor Annex BIA members,

For the past two years, we have been working together to build a safer Bloor Street through the Bloor Street bike lane pilot project. Last week, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee approved staff recommendations to make the lanes permanent. Our work isn't finished however, and we're writing today with an update and to let you know about next steps.

The Bloor bike lane pilot project has been the most comprehensively studied transportation project in our city's history. The city conducted traffic counts on Bloor and surrounding streets and measured travel time using vehicles, video analysis and more. An opinion survey was filled out by 14,000 people. The Parking Authority conducted parking studies on streets and in Green P lots. Your BIA partnered with the city and others to commission the University of Toronto and the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation to interview shoppers and business owners. And, for an even more comprehensive review of business impacts, for the first time ever the city collected Moneris point of sale data on debit and credit transactions in the area, surrounding area, and across city wide averages. Finally, while it is too early to get complete data from the Ontario collision centre, preliminary data from the University of Toronto using camera footage of Bloor Street to examine safety and count "near misses" shows a decrease in collisions between all types of road users.

During the different stages of the project – through the design, consultation and pilot phases – we spoke with thousands of people at design charrettes, public consultations, one-on-one conversations, through public surveys and more. Critically, we worked closely with you and your BIA Board, as well as neighbouring businesses and BIAs.

In the design phase, Bloor-Annex BIA Board representatives attended stakeholder design charrettes, public consultations, and arranged for City staff to attend regular Board meetings to discuss design needs and requests of individual local business. At the outset, four options were presented for discussion and feedback, including one that removed all on-street parking. After hearing loud and clear from your BIA Board that removing all on-street parking was not palatable, we removed that option from consideration.

As we moved through the design consultation and discussions continued, changes were incorporated to planned locations of on-street parking to respond to business needs, additional bike parking was installed, and locations were secured for new parking

spaces in the BIA area. We worked together to widely disseminate public consultation materials - including door-to-door flyers and updates - survey information and more, to ensure that a wide variety of business perspectives were captured and incorporated into the design.

Pilot projects aren't meant to be perfect – they allow us to test changes, see what's working, and make improvements. We worked together to lay out a design, and continued to make improvements along the way.

During the pilot period, we heard from businesses regarding loading and deliveries. We worked together with your BIA Board to find solutions and make improvements to address these concerns – we distributed letters door to door to advise businesses that deliveries could be made on adjacent side streets, in particular areas just off Bloor Street. Taking that even further, we moved quickly to install pavement markings designating loading areas in 9 locations throughout the pilot area.

We also heard from your BIA that despite the availability of Green P parking lots adjacent to Bloor, many customers were not aware of their locations. So, we worked to create and distribute a parking map for customer-use, with locations of Green P lots and FAQs included. We also heard about the need for more bicycle parking – so, we walked the corridor with the Bloor-Annex BIA Chair throughout the year to continue to identify additional locations for new bicycle parking spots.

Additionally, if individual businesses came forward to our offices or the BIA with questions or suggestions, we arranged site visits to specifically address the needs to businesses on a one-on-one basis.

All this work resulted in a better pilot – a project that worked better for cyclists, motorists, businesses and pedestrians.

As we mentioned, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee voted overwhelmingly to approve the recommendations of our professional city staff to make the lanes permanent. The data clearly showed our work paid off - in just one year we've seen the number of cyclists using Bloor increase dramatically, making it the second most-used cycling facility in the entire City. We've created an environment where people feel safer – not just cyclists, but motorists and pedestrians. We've seen a real decrease in collisions, and we've successfully made improvements to vehicle travel time, impacts now reduced by 50% since the first data collection during the pilot. And, we've seen that based on debit and credit transactions, business went up by nearly 5% on Bloor.

But, we know there is more work to be done to continue to improve the lanes. The Bloor-Annex BIA Board, when considering the staff report at its last meeting, voted to support its permanence, on the condition that a requirement be included for us to work together, as part of the permanent design, to continue to improve access for business loading and deliveries, accessibility, and safety for all road users. We worked with Committee members, and this motion is now part of the formal recommendations from Committee to City Council.

A permanent street design can facilitate changes not possible during a pilot – we can consider changes to intersections, separation, to facilitate loading and deliveries and more, that just aren't possible when a road configuration is temporary. With the direction to our city staff we designed with the BIA, we can continue to work together to make this project more successful.

The final decision on the pilot will be made by City Council at its meeting on November 7th and 8th. If the project receives Council endorsement, we will begin work on next steps with local business, residents, and other stakeholders on the permanent design for Bloor Street.

If we want to continue to build safer streets, to build a city that attracts 21st century investment and moves more people safely, the Bloor Street pilot project must be made permanent. We will work together to make continued improvements to build a better design, and a better Bloor Street.

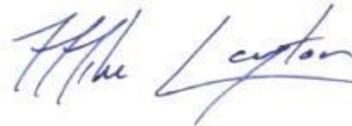
If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,



Joe Cressy, City Councillor
Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina
councillor_cressy@toronto.ca



Mike Layton, City Councillor
Ward 19, Trinity-Spadina
councillor_layton@toronto.ca