

March 1, 2019

To: Mayor Holder and Members of Council
Re: The East/West Bikeway Project

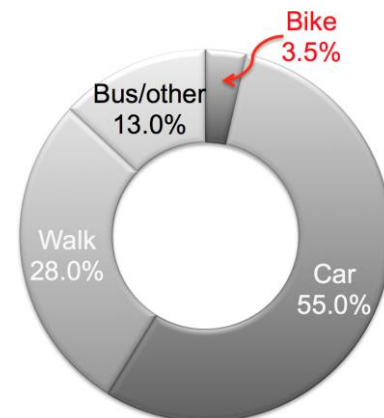
Since early 2018, the Old East Village (OEV) BIA has been in discussion with both City Planning and City Transportation Engineering Departments regarding the Old East Village Secondary Plan, the Dundas Infrastructure improvements and, later, the East-West Bikeway. The OEV BIA staff, Board of Directors, businesses, and property owners participated extensively in the two public community consultations. Furthermore, BIA staff, Directors, and advisors participated in several additional meetings with Department staff and toured both Departments and the Consulting Teams through the Village in order to provide clear understanding of the impact of the proposals.

Throughout the consultation process, a clear and consistent concern was raised by the businesses with regard to incorporating a cycling lane on Dundas Street between Adelaide and Ontario Streets – the loss of street parking; this concern was clearly relayed to City staff and the Consultants. The most vocal group of voices to contact the BIA was the group of businesses located on the south side of Dundas, which will be most impacted by the proposed bike lane and required removal of street parking. The majority of these businesses have no access to their property from the rear and have shared that they rely on these parking spots as loading areas. The City recently repaved and enhanced the three nearby municipal parking lots, with excellent lighting, landscaping and public art. Unfortunately there is no connectivity between Dundas Street and these lots. While they are the least expensive in the city (\$0.75 per hour), the more expensive street parking (\$1.00 per hour) is often full while the parking lots remain underutilized. Businesses have shared that often if drivers cannot find street parking they will simply not stay. Business and property owners have stressed that street parking removal without a *strategy and funding* to create strong connectivity to other parking options will significantly risk their economic viability.

A similar concern was raised with respect to bus bays, which are currently possible due to the existence of a parking lane. Many patrons of the social services in the neighbourhood require extended times to embark/disembark busses and the removal of bus bays is a significant concern for safety and the impact on traffic flow.

On February 20th, London Cycle Link proposed to Civic Works Committee a two-way cycle track along the South side of Dundas Street in Old East Village. This by-directional design is only possible at the expense of dramatically limiting our pedestrian spaces (with sidewalks being reduced to the minimum of 1.5 m in several locations). Minimization of the already narrow sidewalks would eliminate opportunities for pedestrian friendly amenities such as street retail, patios and landscaping. This plan is also likely to jeopardize the inclusion of loading areas and strategically placed bus bays, which have been deemed a necessity to business activity. Importantly, the Old East Village Secondary Plan, which was approved by Planning Committee in draft form on February 19th, prioritizes pedestrian friendly assets to further area revitalization. Therefore, the businesses and the Old East Village BIA cannot support any bike infrastructure – such as the proposed two-way cycle track on Dundas Street – that eliminates such opportunities.

The Old East Village BIA is extremely familiar with every aspect of life along the Dundas Street Corridor and is providing this recommendation based on historical considerations, the types of businesses and services along the corridor, and the immense revitalization of the area since 2008. In fact, since 2011 the BIA – in partnership with area businesses and art venues – has tracked the mode of transportation most used by customers and patrons. As shown in the adjacent graphic, over the period from 2011-2018 a mere 3.5% of those who shop in Old East Village identified cycling as their preferred mode of transportation to visit the Village. Even considering the anticipated 300% increase of cycle traffic promised by cycle lobbyists, the number of customers coming to shop in Old East Village by bike could only reach 10% of our customer base. From a business perspective, this small anticipated increase in patrons cannot justify the potential loss of prized parking spots, impacting traffic flow and local bus transit, or removing the opportunity for pedestrian-friendly enhancements to the street-scape.



Regardless of our concerns, we are a cycle-friendly community so in the spirit of moving cycling infrastructure in our city forward there could be justification for removing parking on the South side of Dundas Street to accommodate a single bike lane, *provided that appropriate supports are in place prior to the conclusion of construction*. Most critical is improved connectivity, through pedestrian lighting and landscaping, to the existing and redeveloped Municipal parking lots located both North and South of Dundas Street. These connections should be mid-block as well as on the connector streets in order to be most effective. Enhanced additional cycling amenities will also be required, such as directional signage for cars, pedestrians, and bikes, including signs to towards the municipal parking lots and fully outfitted and secure bike racks. We have worked with City Staff to help identify potential opportunities to integrate formal loading zones and reintegrate critical bus bays and – *provided the timely implementation of the above-mentioned enhancements* – the BIA supports the “preferred Dundas Street and Queens Ave OEV Hybrid plan” through Old East Village.

The Draft Old East Village Dundas Corridor Secondary Plan and the London Plan both prioritize dynamic pedestrian spaces. The Transportation Master Plan promotes an increase in multi-modal and active transportation. The BIA’s support of the East-West Bikeway – as presented by Staff at Civic Works Committee on February 20th – is in respect to the vision of these three foundational documents. We recognize that our support will result in fundamental changes to the commercial corridor. If not acknowledged and addressed in a timely manner, these changes may result in damaging the two decades of investment and steady area revitalization. BIA Staff and Directors look forward to continue working with City Staff to realize the kind of connectivity required to create a climate where the existing parking lots and new single bike lane may work together to provide successful multi-modal opportunities in the Old East Village.

We ask you to support the preferred Dundas/Queens Ave Hybrid on March 5th as well as the required funding for connectivity-related infrastructure, as plans are finalized in the coming months.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to this transformative infrastructure project.

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Old East Village BIA

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