

Dear Civic Works Committee,

I am writing to you today to plead with you for safe bike routes in our downtown core. Since the shift of bus routes onto King Street, (the most-used, and lowest-grade (least steep hill) bike access to downtown from the river valley) has become a deadly mix of heavy-volume car and bus traffic. Buses now have to cross what's left of the King Street "bike lane" (which currently isn't marked for more than half a block, total) dozens of times per hour to pick up passengers. This situation feels very dangerous on a bike, and I am sure it's uncomfortable for LTC drivers, too. I've attached a couple photos I took on Thursday last week, on a single traverse of King. It's this bad every day.

The best and safest way to make King Street Great Again would be to add a protected two-way bike lane to the left side of the street, removing parking where required, and using parking to protect the bike lane where the street is wide enough. [Jeff Speck explains this as "Road Diet #1" here: https://vimeo.com/136672997](https://vimeo.com/136672997)

A protected bike lane would make it safe for users of all ages and abilities to access downtown, enabling families to ride to festivals, visit the Market, or see a show at Bud Gardens. A protected bike lane would enable individuals to ride to work who currently don't ride because of safety concerns (32% of Ontarians would ride to work if it was safe, and a **two-thirds majority** support construction of protected bike lanes - [Share the Road Survey 2018](#)).

Two-way protected bike lanes (like the image attached) are never desirable on two-way streets, however, a two-way bike lane on a one-way street can be suitable when it is positioned on the left-hand side of a street (remember that bikes are traffic, and in North America oncoming traffic approaches from the left).

A two-way bike route on the left hand side of King Street that is connected to Colborne Street N-S would allow several positive things to occur over the short and long term.

- People on bikes gain safe access to downtown places, whereas today there is **currently no safe way to access downtown on a bike from any direction**. In the current configuration, vehicle throughput is prioritized over bicycle safety, and the result is a car sewer that's sole-designed purpose is to transport vehicles "downstream" without any consideration for vibrancy, safety, or street life. This is inconsistent with the concept of Vision Zero that was adopted by council as City policy last year. Downtown is a destination, not a "through" street, and **no amount of increased traffic flow is permitted to compromise safety of people using any street under a Vision Zero mandate**.
- A connected cycletrack into downtown will increase bike traffic to the core, [increasing business and tax revenue](#). "Connected" is the important word here - by connecting the TVP to downtown, downtown businesses will see increased traffic from families who currently shun the core for street safety reasons (this is representative of many of our customers who will ride to our shop on a weekend, and won't bring their kids on bikes, but would like to).
- With a two-way protected bike lane on King, Queens Ave downtown can be re-purposed more easily for BRT. Allowing bikes to access Riverside Drive via King -> TVP -> Harris Park Gate.
- Dundas St E protected bike lane ("Bikes on Dundas") does not interfere with Dundas Place in the future. The Dundas protected bike lane would begin at Colborne, and continue EB to link with Quebec St. There aren't any destinations on King Street east of Colborne, and the high speeds of vehicle traffic on King make it far less desirable than Dundas for people to ride bikes. Dundas is the unanimously preferred location for a protected bike lane from everyone in the community that we've spoken with, including business owners in the Old East Village.

We've checked the widths of official city maps against the Ontario street design code, and the protected bike lane solution fits legally, and logistically. So let's build it. Let's make it safe for people to ride bikes to destinations in London. Let's make the shift from "sport" to "transport" on bikes in Downtown London.

Best,

Ben

ps - a personal anecdote: my typical morning routine used to arrive at the Cafe, jump on a cargo bike and do a little loop down York to Talbot to King, to pick up our bakery at Petit Paris in Covent Garden Market. Since the buses have been moved to King, I just walk to the market. It's too dangerous and uncomfortable to ride on King Street. When expert riders are changing their habits, the design is surely uncomfortable for a novice.

pps - long-term, for a vibrant downtown, King and Queens should be redeveloped as two-way streets. I realize nobody's talking about this right now, but it's probably the only way to revitalize these car sewers into places where people actually want to be. Hamilton has had unbelievable success with this recently, and given the research and experience from dozens of cities who have done the same thing, there's no reason we shouldn't pursue this too.

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