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DUNDAS PLACE CYCLING CONFIGURATION

Councillor Elizabeth Pelozo, Chair
City of London, Civic Works Committee

Dear Councillor Pelozo and Civic Works Committee,

The purpose of this letter is to share concerns regarding the recent staff proposal to accommodate cycling on Dundas Place. I appreciate staff's acknowledgement that the current configuration is unsafe for cycling, and accept their willingness to listen to the community as an invitation to find a design that is safe for users of all ages and abilities. It is my view that when designing any street, **the safety of any user group cannot be prioritized below the convenience of another**. This guiding principle should provide all the direction required to create a safe, and attractive street for all users.

There are three considerations at play before thinking about what a design should look like during the 2021 construction season and beyond:

1. Traffic on Dundas Place will increase substantially in 2021 due to the closure of all eastbound lanes on King Street, and the resumption of usual activities toward the end of the summer once Covid vaccines are widely available.
2. Illegal parking is a serious concern today. Many of the drivers parked illegally are employees of food delivery services, which have increased dramatically in number due to Covid-19. However, the concerns about illegal parking and illegal stopping pre-date the pandemic, and were visible on opening day of the flex space. Illegal parking will continue to be a major issue in 2021 and beyond if not addressed.
3. Vehicle speeds regularly exceed the posted 30 km/h limit in the present two-way configuration.
4. Steel bollards that line the road presently are a danger to cyclists. They aren't particularly visible, and there are high consequences if accidentally contacted. They also prevent safe egress to the sidewalk if a driver makes an error.

The proposed design does little to change the streetscape from a safety point of view, and does not invite the thousands of daily users of the Thames Valley Parkway into downtown. In many ways, the proposed changes make the street more dangerous. Below are my concerns.

The proposed design ...

- does not separate motor vehicle traffic from cyclists with any physical barrier.
- does not lower motor traffic volumes to near-zero levels required for all-ages-and-abilities mixed traffic riding (e.g. like a residential street).
- requires drivers to cross the bike lane to park. This has the subsequent challenge of allowing drivers to enter the bike lane for other reasons, such as illegal stopping or illegal parking. As illegal parking is a serious concern today, it is my view that the bike lanes would be used for even more illegal parking in the new design.
- attempts to increase available parking by time-limiting parking to one hour. Increased frequency of parking/pulling out of a parking space means increased conflict with cyclists, as motorists must cross the bike lane to park.
- places the cycling lane in the “door-zone” of parked vehicles on both sides of the street. The consequences of a door zone collision, in the westbound direction in particular, would result in a cyclist being knocked into oncoming traffic, giving the driver little to no reaction time, and a likely catastrophic outcome.
- leaves no margin for error, if a child was using the bike lane and deviated a few centimetres outside the lane, they may be at risk for a collision. While driving a motor vehicle requires licensing, testing, and adult judgment, a child does not possess the same skills and training. We must not exclude children by design from our cycling facilities.
- increases the driver’s field of vision, and perceived space to operate their vehicle, therefore it is likely that drivers will travel faster given their wider position in the center of the street, free and clear of physical barriers.
- changes a two-way street into a one-way street. Two-way streets are superior for business, safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. For example (<https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2019/07/09/cities-benefit-one-way-two-way-conversions>)

Any street design for Dundas Place (or any downtown street) should invite users of all ages and abilities to cycle, wheel, scooter, or use an assistive device to access the core of our city. Cars can be permitted, too, but must only be permitted when safety of other users is prioritized first.

Sincerely yours,



Ben Cowie