

March 2, 2021

Shelley Carr
BYCS.org, London, Ontario Bicycle Mayor
Web: www.BYCS.org

Re: DUNDAS PLACE CYCLING CONFIGURATION

Councillor Elizabeth Pelozo, Chair
cwc@london.ca
City of London, Civic Works Committee

Dear Councilor Pelozo, Civic Works Committee and other stake holders,

I am reaching out to share concerns about the staff proposal to accommodate cycling on Dundas Street during the construction of King street commencing this spring. I have shared concerns with you as well as other councilors about the unsafe conditions for all vulnerable road users on this stretch.

The immediate issue on Dundas Place is the “Wild West” feel. There appears to be little or no enforcement of illegally parked vehicles at any given time. Pedestrians are often threatened by cars doing illegal U-turns pulling into sidewalk areas. The slew of illegally parked food delivery vehicles from 4 pm onwards only adds to the hostility of the area. It is the combination of food delivery vehicles and through traffic that causes the largest hazards for cyclists. Only the hardest of cyclists will take the lane causing hostility from drivers who attempt to close pass, pushing riders into the metal bulwarks located on the sides of the roadway. I can only see that the loss of King street will exacerbate this problem.

So, I view the new design with concern. None of its features will make Dundas Place more friendly to pedestrians or cyclists, in fact placing a one-way street on Dundas will only encourage more speeding on this route. With little to no enforcement of parking past 6 pm, the goal of making a safe route for riders and pedestrians will be lost. And the original goals for Dundas Place will be lost as well. A place for the people has become even more so a place for vehicles.

Before, I begin on possible solutions to the Dundas issue, there are a number of assumptions I have to make:

1. That a safe route connecting Ridout and Dundas will be found that does not involve cutting through an unplowed, poorly lit park. Ridout is an important thoroughfare for riders coming from the south. The loss of King street means that

riders must ride North on the sidewalk up Ridout to reach Dundas Place. This should be addressed through an all ages/abilities, gendered lens.

2. That a safe route is developed along Talbot (St. George/James to Dundas) which would reduce parking and the chances of dooring of bicycle riders.
3. That a safe route from Riverside is developed to ensure that riders are not “right hooked” by vehicles turning right onto Ridout.
4. That parking will be limited to one side of Dundas Place to ensure riders are not endangered.
5. That parking will be enforced stringently.
5. That engineers have consulted with the NACTO Urban Bikeways design book.

Some of my possible recommendations for street bike design on Dundas place are:

1. Create a permanent Dundas Place with concrete blocks located at the East and West section of the Richmond intersection. In addition, make parking for only people with accessibility stickers and loading/unloading areas for businesses. This allows full access to all users and deters drive through traffic. This will reduce but not eliminate the chances of
2. Install permanent bollards for a bi-directional Contra flow lane on the North side of Dundas Place. This would also include bollards being installed in “open areas” on Dundas Place that are allowing turn arounds/illegal parking.
3. Would be a combination of recommendation 2 & 3. Install bollards for the safety of pedestrians and riders. And limit the use of parking spaces. With 13,000 spots in the downtown area, the problem is not so much a matter of “not enough spaces” but a matter of perception in the mind of the driver of “not enough spaces right at the door of the business”

My preference would be recommendation #3 which would ensure safety for all vulnerable road users, a solution to business deliveries and more designated parking spaces for those unable to use active transportation measures. And I would like to add, that this design should not be seen as a temporary measure but as a solution to a problem that we will encounter well after the construction on King Street and Queen Street is done. Putting in LRT, although a positive for the City in regards to traffic, does not elevate the issues of vulnerable road users who will still need an East/West passage way from Colborne/Ridout/Riverside and the Thames Valley pathway in the daytime.

The key to building a city friendly to bicycle road users is to take into consideration the 66% of riders who are interested but concerned. They generally fall into categories that are not considered by engineers. Definitely social equity, gender, BIPOC persons and LGBTQ2+ are not considered during road design which then never creates modal share growth. Our goal should always be to create routes that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 4 seasons of the year and make the user feel safe. Paint has never accomplished this and in fact is considered by most delivery vehicles as “theirs”. With so much room dedicated in this City dedicated to vehicles, it is time to lay claim to infrastructure for vulnerable road users. Dundas Place can be that place, if we only design it to be so.

Sincerely,

Shelley Carr