



- A Stroll in The Park
- Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists
- Bikechain
- The Bike Joint
- bikeToronto
- Bike Train
- BikingToronto
- BIG (Bloor Improvement Group)
- The Clean Air Partnership
- Community Bicycle Network
- The Conservation Council of Ontario
- Conservation Development Association
- Cycle Ontario
- DIG IN (Dupont Improvement Group)
- East Toronto Climate Action Group
- Feet on the Street
- Friends of the Don East
- Friends of Fort York
- Go for Green
- Grassroots Environmental Products
- Green Communities Canada
- GreenHere
- Harbord Village Residents' Association
- Hoof & Cycle Active Transport Workers Guild
- I Bike TO
- The Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) BUG
- LEAF (Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests)
- Mountain Equipment Co-Op
- National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy
- Ontario College of Family Physicians
- Ontario Smart Growth Network
- Parkdale Community Legal Services BUG
- Pollution Probe
- PPS (Project for Public Spaces)
- The Running Room
- Sierra Club of Canada (Toronto Group)
- smartliving St. Lawrence
- South East Toronto BUG
- South Riverdale Community Health Centre
- St. Clair West BUG
- Streets Are For People!/P.S. Kensington
- Take the Tooker
- Toronto Bicycling Network
- Toronto Community Foundation
- Toronto Cyclists Union
- Toronto Environmental Alliance
- Toronto Green Community
- Toronto Public Space Committee
- Urbane Cyclist
- Walk & Bike for Life
- Walk Here

Chair Shelley Carroll  
City of Toronto Budget Committee  
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2

February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Re: 2008 Operating Budget – Priorities for Cycling and Walking**

Dear Chair Carroll and committee members,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation (TCAT), which was formed in 2006 to give a unified voice to the many groups working for a better cycling and pedestrian environment in Toronto.

TCAT currently represents **more than 50 community organizations** across Toronto, and we advocate for improved infrastructure, programs and policies for walking and cycling in Toronto.

Last November TCAT spoke to this committee on the need to invest in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure through the City's Capital Budget. Through that process we were happy to see the cycling infrastructure budget almost doubled and a staff directive to report on the implementation of the Toronto Bike Plan by 2012. This report is due in April, and the fact that we are already way behind on implementation means City Council should act now and ensure that there is sufficient staffing in place to step up efforts and implement the recommendations made in the forthcoming report **in 2008**, without delaying until 2009 to hire new staff and bump program budgets.

There is also just as strong a need to support staff and programs that work to improve the City's pedestrian environment. TCAT is pleased to see that Council is taking innovative initiatives (such as hosting the recent Walk21 conference, requesting a Walking Strategy, and creating a Public Realm Office), and we expect Council will follow through with these initiatives and continue to make our streets safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

TCAT recommends that City Council take immediate action by:

- **Doubling the current funding dedicated to cycling promotion, safety and education staff and programs – like Bike Month and Kids CAN-Bike Camps – from \$164,000 to \$328,000 in the City Planning operating**

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**budget.**

- **Funding a full-time trails and pathways planner to coordinate the planning, consultation, construction and maintenance of bikeway network infrastructure projects in Toronto's parks – approximately \$80,000 in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation operating budget.**
- **Ensure the Public Realm Office is established and permanently funded as requested by staff – \$3.598 million in the Transportation Services operating budget.**
- **Ensure the Clean and Beautiful City initiatives are funded – \$1.699 million in the Transportation Services operating budget.**

**The impetus for change:**

As you are all aware, Toronto's **Medical Officer of Health** released a report in November expressing the need to cut vehicle emissions, which contribute to an average of 440 deaths each year. A 30% reduction in vehicle emissions could save almost **200 lives** and almost **\$1 billion in healthcare costs**. In order to reduce vehicle emissions, the City must **immediately** accelerate its investment in sustainable and active transportation.

In July, City Council approved its *Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan*. This plan is a vital step in the City's commitment to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and smog. Sustainable transportation initiatives are a key component in this plan, and we applaud the City for its renewed commitment to complete the infrastructure elements of the *Toronto Bike Plan* by 2012 and to develop and implement a *Walking Strategy*.

Last year, City Council approved two **new tax measures** for Toronto. A portion of the vehicle tax is intended to fund active transportation. From the Mayor's Fair Tax Plan web site: "*A Personal Vehicle Registration Fee... would raise about \$60 million a year, to be directed to road repairs, public transit, cycling and pedestrian improvements and other transportation projects.*" TCAT will be pleased to see City Council follow through with this commitment to fund cycling and pedestrian improvements. This new revenue should be used in 2008 to help fund the new and enhanced cycling and pedestrian programs and services we are recommending above.

The City has also committed to directing infrastructure investment to the **13 priority neighbourhoods** across the city, most of which are highly car-oriented with inadequate cycling and pedestrian facilities.

With all these commitments in mind, TCAT has examined the proposed 2008 operating budget and wishes to provide the following comments and recommendations. The relatively small amount of funding it would take to support cycling and pedestrian programs in the **immediate future** would go a very long way to mitigate congestion, improve air quality, and reduce healthcare costs from smog-related illnesses, as well as car-related injuries and deaths.

**Bike Plan Implementation – Supporting the work of dedicated staff**

Toronto's Bike Plan was approved by Council in July 2001 for implementation beginning in 2002 until 2011. Many of the plan's short and medium-term goals have not been met. **Immediate** action is needed to catch up and then continue to meet the plan's targets by 2012.

There is a lot more to the Toronto Bike Plan than the Bikeway Network of on-street and off-road cycling routes. As the City's capital program is accelerating the implementation of cycling infrastructure, staff

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have to be in place for the cycling safety, education and promotion work necessary to encourage more people to cycle, and at the same time reduce cycling-related injuries. New projects like a Bike Station at Union Station and a public bike program, as well as Bike Month and Kids CAN-BIKE camps all require money for staff to plan and organize. For example, with an additional \$50,000 the City could offer the Kids Can-Bike Camp in one more **priority neighbourhood** and 80 youth would be trained in bike safety and get a new bike through leveraged outside sponsorship. With \$100,000, this program could be offered in two more priority neighbourhoods, providing opportunities for an additional 160 youth. This is an added budget item Councillor Heaps has also requested the Budget Committee to consider.

The current budget for cycling safety education and promotion programs is \$164,000 – a zero increase from 2007. TCAT recommends you double this budget to \$328,000, in line with the doubling of the cycling infrastructure budget in the 2008 Capital Budget. City Planning has already requested an additional 12 full-time planners with one dedicated to transportation planning. Since staff will be reporting back soon on the **Sustainable Transportation Initiatives** – many of which include cycling projects – Council could designate this transportation planner to work on cycling issues – covering approximately half the \$164,000 TCAT is requesting.

### **Into the Parks – Catalyzing action**

The other significant component of the Bike Plan is under the purview of the **Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division** (PF&R). PF&R is responsible for installing and maintaining recreational paths in the City's parks. Many of these are part of the Bikeway Network. There are two important types of projects:

1. New trails
2. Repairs and upgrades of existing trails to current standards

Currently, there is no dedicated staff person to oversee that these projects are scheduled and carried out annually. Year after year we see the trails and pathways back-log grow because there is no one responsible for ensuring these projects happen. Transportation Services has been successful in accelerating the implementation of their portion of the Bikeway Network because they have multiple full-time staff dedicated to cycling infrastructure. That is why we are asking City Council to fund a trails and pathways planner (approximately \$80,000) to handle Bikeway Network implementation in Parks.

### **These Streets are Made for Walking**

Finally, the Manager of Transportation Services has requested \$3.598 million to establish and permanently fund the Public Realm Office, as well \$1.699 million for Clean and Beautiful City initiatives including administration, Ward-based community projects/demonstration projects and remaining installation to cover orphan space maintenance. The City's forthcoming Walking Strategy and new commitment to sustainable transportation, including walking, require that Council provide sufficient staff and resources to make our City a truly walkable place to live. So we ask the Budget Committee to approve this request and commit funding for these two initiatives.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment. On behalf of the over 50 groups and hundreds of individuals who support the work of TCAT, we sincerely hope this committee and Council will see the need to devote more resources to implementing the Bike Plan and investing in active transportation. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or for clarification on any of these points.

Sincerely,



Fred Sztabinski  
Project Coordinator, Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation (TCAT)

p.p. TCAT Steering Committee

C.C. Councillor Paul Ainslie  
Councillor Maria Augimeri  
Councillor A. A. Heaps  
Councillor Joe Mihevc  
Councillor Gord Perks  
Councillor Kyle Rae