



April 8, 2019

Mayor and Members of the Public Works Committee,

Please accept this letter outlining Cycle Hamilton's formal position regarding the motion for a *hybrid solution to on-street parking on Bay Street North between Barton Street West and Stuart Street*.

Cycle Hamilton's View

Cycle Hamilton is a not-for-profit organization advocating on behalf of our members, which includes individuals and businesses who want safer and more bike-friendly streets in the city. As such, we firmly object to the proposition that the Bay Street bike lane between Barton Street West and Stuart Street be converted into either sharrows or a hybrid bike lane allowing for parking on so called "off-peak" hours.

The Bay Street bike lane facilitates safer road use along a fundamental North-South corridor for cyclists. The infrastructure has been well studied and intelligently implemented and is a very important component of Hamilton's aspiration to encourage more cycling throughout the city. Rather than weakening protection for cyclists on Bay Street, there is in fact work to be done to strengthen our cycling infrastructure to align with international best practices, which would include physical separation between motor vehicles and cyclists. The hybrid suggestion would certainly be a step backwards.

An Unworkable Suggestion

The hybrid and sharrow suggestions are against best-practices and would put the most vulnerable road users at risk. It would create confusion, lack of predictability, and unlike 1 of 2 *driving* lanes being used for parking on off peak hours, the suggested hybrid approach in this case would mean the *complete removal* of the bi-directional cycling infrastructure all together during off-peak hours.

When considering this suggestion, the City must question if this change would align with its own vision to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

Not Us vs. Them

We wish to caution the City against viewing this issue as a conflict between cyclists and drivers, or worse, between "cyclists and taxpayers" as erroneously suggested by the complainant. Of course, cyclists are also taxpayers, and often drivers too!

The "us vs. them" dichotomy isn't helpful nor is it accurate and it appears to be at the heart of this issue. This can't be about the mere preferences of one "interest group" up against the parochial preferences of a few property owners. We are all in this together. The City as a whole has recognized the need to reduce congestion and get cars off the road; to encourage healthy and active behaviour; to make our streets safer for everyone; to do our part to combat the climate emergency; to connect residents to our beautiful waterfront at the end of Bay Street; and to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

That takes commitment and a collective willingness on everyone's part to adjust accordingly. We cannot make these types of progressive changes on any civic issue if, at every turn, we're asked to make special exemptions to simultaneously preserve the status quo for those that preferred things just the way they were.

Cycle Hamilton is cognizant that some people are inconvenienced by a variety of new City initiatives including, from time to time, bike lanes. Without being insensitive to these inconveniences, it is possible to also stay the course and accept the notion that everyone has to make adjustments and yes, put up with some inconvenience, as we slowly change, adjust, and improve as a society.

Not Only About Numbers

Lastly, we wish to caution the City against viewing this as a numbers game as was suggested by the complainant. The suggestion that the Bay Street bike lane may not be all that important because it is only used for 28,000 trips per year, is based on the false understanding that the bike lane exists merely to service those people who are already cycling. In fact, the reason the City is increasing the prevalence of safer cycling infrastructure across the city is to encourage more people to choose to ride. This habit change takes time, and is working! It would be an error along the way to point to a year or two of data in an effort to de-legitimize an attempt to build the complete network of infrastructure needed to precipitate culture change.

Thank you for taking the time to consider Cycle Hamilton's view on this matter and we welcome the opportunity to engage in further dialogue on this or other related issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Whalen".

Kate Whalen
Co-Chair, Board of Directors
Cycle Hamilton
Chair@cyclehamont.ca