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Advocating for Safe Cycling Throughout Durham Region

Oct 15, 2024

Hon. Todd McCarthy
Durham Provincial Member of Parliament
23 King St. W
Bowmanville, ON L1C 1R2

Via e-mail

Re: Ontario Government Proposed Bill Restricting Future Bike Lanes

Dear MPP McCarthy,

As Durham Region's leading safe cycling advocacy voice, it is with grave concern that I am writing to you regarding the above-noted proposal.

With no supporting facts, your government has signaled via leaked media documents obtained by CBC an interest to put legislation before the House at Queen's Park that would [require municipalities to seek provincial approval for future bike lanes that replace vehicular lanes](#), on the grounds that this would ease traffic congestion.

Journalists have [fact-checked the Premier's remarks](#) and there is ample evidence that disproves bike lanes are the cause of traffic congestion.

Given the lack of detail, we ask that the following be considered;

- The safety of all road users, including cyclists, is a paramount concern and a fundamental responsibility of both provincial and municipal governments.
- The Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario ("OCC") conducted the [Cycling Death review](#), which was the most comprehensive review into the causes of cycling deaths in Ontario. The findings of the review included recommendations which targeted improved cycling infrastructure, education, legislation and enforcement. Of note within the review was the adoption of "[Complete Streets](#)", which emphasizes the planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
- Municipal governments have the local knowledge and contextual understanding necessary to effectively address specific community transportation needs, including the development and maintenance of safe cycling infrastructure within their community.



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- Locally, [Durham Region](#), the [Municipality of Clarington](#) and the [Township of Scugog](#) have funded active transportation plans* in place which recognize the need to support and construct safe cycling infrastructure within our communities, including future bike lanes, as an integral part of improving the safety of vulnerable road users, which is now being jeopardized by this proposed legislation.
- In recent polling conducted by CTV News / [NANOS Research](#), Canadians were asked about their level of support regarding the construction of bike lanes even if building those lanes meant reducing traffic lanes for cars. The response received *“Canadians are more likely to be OK with the construction of bike lanes even if it causes a loss of traffic lanes for cars.”*
- [CAA recent polling further supports bike lanes with the following findings](#): “The poll asked Canadians what type of infrastructure would lead them to cycle more often? *Lanes separated by barriers led the list, with 40% of Canadians saying it would move them to cycle more.*”
- Premier Ford once expressed [on a televised bike ride in 2017](#), that vulnerable road users are at risk without protected infrastructure and that we must ensure their safety.

As such, it cannot be stated enough; bike lanes do not cause traffic congestion, single occupancy motor vehicle trips on our roadways are causing traffic congestion. Should this proposed future bike lane legislation move forward, the opportunity to prioritize safety for all road users is being lost, and worse, more preventable life altering injuries and fatalities will happen.

In closing, our request is simple; we urge you to convince your government to not introduce restrictive bike lane legislation.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Lalonde".

Ron Lalonde
Executive Director
Durham Region Cycling Coalition

cc: Hon. D. Ford, Premier, Province of Ontario
Hon P. Sarkaria, Ontario Minister of Transportation
J. Henry, Regional Chair and CEO, Durham Region
A. Foster, Mayor, Municipality of Clarington
W. Motten, Mayor, Township of Scugog
Durham Region Cycling Coalition Membership

*Municipality of Clarington, Phase Four Approval Pending