

November 18, 2013

PW 27.15 – Confirmation of Levels of Service for Roadway and Roadside Winter Maintenance Services

Chair Minnan-Wong and Members of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Cycle Toronto encouraging Public Works and Infrastructure Committee to direct Transportation Services staff to **develop a comprehensive network of snow routes for cyclists**. Cycle Toronto is a diverse, member-supported organization that advocates for a healthy, safe, cycling-friendly for all and currently represents over 2,300 Torontonians.

The commentary based on the telephone survey conducted by HDR Inc in *Appendix 6: Toronto Winter Maintenance Survey Findings* reveals that **cyclists surveyed are generally dissatisfied with the level of winter service provided to cycling infrastructure:**

- *Q1: Rating of overall job done by City of Toronto providing winter maintenance services*
“Respondents...whose primary mode of travel is by bicycle are more likely than others to rate the job done by the City as ‘poor/fair’”
- *Q5-11: Satisfaction levels with specific winter maintenance services delivered by the City of Toronto*
“Those whose primary mode of travel is the bicycle are more likely to express lower satisfaction levels.”
- *Q14: Level of agreement with the statement... ‘The current level of winter maintenance services are appropriate to meet the City of Toronto’s needs’*
“Respondents...whose primary mode of travel is the bicycle are more likely than others to ‘disagree’”

According to the 2009 City of Toronto Cycling Study, only 10% of Toronto cyclists continue riding in the winter. When asked what the City could do to encourage individuals to ride in the winter, 29% of respondents said better clearance of bike lanes, paths and streets. Ten percent indicated that more bike lanes and paths would get them riding throughout the winter.

Due to challenges associated with removing all snow from curb lanes, Transportation Services sets the goal of having at least 1 metre of bike lane open for use. However, this standard is difficult to achieve because many painted bike lanes are positioned next to on street parking. When cars are parked in on street parking spots during snowfall, the roadway becomes difficult to clear. As cars drive through the snow cleared into the bike lane, “large piles harden after freeze/thaw events and ice is formed.”



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While Transportation Services does a good job describing the problem, they provide few solutions. Cycle Toronto proposes the development of a comprehensive network of snow routes for cyclists, including the following components:

1) Create a network of snow routes for cyclists

While painted bike lanes typically receive a poor level of service due to the constraints described above, the new separated bike lanes on Sherbourne received an effective level of service keeping the lanes clear of snow for all of last winter (see photo to the right). Rapid completion of the downtown network of protected bike lanes is an important priority for Cycle Toronto. An additional benefit of the downtown network of protected bike lanes is the potential for a more effective level of winter service. However, cyclists also need consistently cleared routes to access the downtown network of protected bike lanes.



Transportation Services should plan for and execute a network of snow routes for cyclists that would receive priority clearing during and after snowfall. These routes would include protected bike lanes, painted bike lanes and shared roadways.

2) Create new cycling snow route signage and post along the network

New cycling snow route signage should be developed. The signage communicating the new standards should be posted across the network of snow routes for cyclists. The signage would enable cyclists to plan accordingly during snowfalls.

3) Actively promote new network of snow routes for cyclists

Considering that 90% of cyclists do not ride through the winter, but close to one in three have indicated that they would given better snow clearance, the City should work to promote cycling as a year round transportation option in part to help reduce an over capacity transit system. In order to keep more Torontonians cycling throughout the winter, the City should take the above steps and actively promote the new standards through traditional (TTC, print) and non-traditional (social media, group rides) advertisements and activities.

On behalf of Cycle Toronto, I urge you to direct Transportation Services staff to **develop a comprehensive network of snow routes for cyclists.**

Sincerely,

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