



# CASE NOTES

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Councillor, Ward 29  
Toronto-Danforth



September 6, 2006

**To: Ward 29 Residents**

**Re: Bicycle Lanes**

You recently contacted me regarding bicycle lanes and I wish to clarify several points. There are many issues related to transportation and bike lanes. I am a firm advocate for balanced, realistic and environmentally-sound transportation planning. I believe that alternative transportation modes to vehicles are imperative for a healthy city, including public transportation, biking and walking. I believe that some roads are appropriate and desirable for bicycle lanes. However, I do not believe that motorists should be penalized because they need to drive, or choose to drive. While encouraging people to use TTC, and to bike and walk, we must accept the reality that many people drive, and they have the right to do so.

In July, 2006 I successfully brought a motion to City Council, to have Transportation staff conduct a survey of local area residents, regarding the Cosburn bike lanes. I want to find out if the community that is most affected wish to keep the bike lanes, or if they would like them removed. My motion was a result of transportation studies conducted in October 2004 and June, 2005, and a community survey that was conducted in July, 2005.

## **Delays to Motorists Increase Smog Emissions**

Transportation studies showed that in both the morning and afternoon peak periods, there was an increase in traffic delay traveling on Cosburn Avenue after the implementation of bicycle lanes. The morning peak period showed a significant increase in travel times. Maximum travel time increased by almost one and one-half minutes, which represents over a twenty percent increase. Idling vehicles that experience delays increase smog emissions into our atmosphere, and this obviously has a negative impact on our environment.

## **Cosburn Bike Lanes Increases Traffic Infiltration on Parallel Residential Streets**

The transportation studies measured change in peak hour volumes on Plains Road and Mortimer Avenue. While the traffic studies showed an increase of vehicle volume on parallel streets to Cosburn during the afternoon peak times, the more critical impact was during the morning peak hours. There was a clear increase in traffic congestion during the morning commute time. Vehicles on Plains Road increased from 141 vehicles to 246 vehicles. Many residents who live on streets in the vicinity of Cosburn have contacted me to complain about the increase in vehicular traffic in front of their homes.

## **Alternate East/West Bicycle Route Options**

There are a number of good east-west bicycle route options for riders, without using Cosburn Avenue, including Sammon Avenue and Plains Road.

## **Bicycle Counts**

Although bicycle volume increased on Cosburn Avenue following the implementation of the bike lanes, transportation studies show that overall there is relatively low bicycle traffic volume, compared with other streets that have bike lanes. The report states that actual bicycle volumes on Cosburn Avenue are still relatively light. I would presume that many bicycle riders actually choose to use alternate east-west routes, other than Cosburn, and this supports my theory that the Cosburn bike lanes may not actually be worthwhile.

## **Parking**

In July 2005 survey respondents expressed a concern regarding access to on-street parking, including the reduction of parking spaces and increased traffic queuing or congestion on Cosburn and the negative impact this has in residents trying to exit their driveways.

## **Safety Concerns – Road Markings**

A number of survey respondents stated that they felt the bike lane pavement markings were unclear or confusing.

In spite of the improved conditions for cyclists, bicycle traffic volume is relatively light compared to other streets with bicycle lanes. Motorists experience delays (resulting in greater smog emissions), and vehicular traffic is choosing to use parallel streets to avoid Cosburn, thereby causing traffic volume concerns. Street such as Cosburn were intended to carry the majority of traffic, and it is not desirable for cars and trucks to move to smaller, residential streets.

Considering that there are a number of good east-west options for cyclists, and considering the increased traffic volumes and congestion, I believe that it is imperative to poll the affected community and find out if the majority of residents wish to maintain the Cosburn bike lanes. I trust that this clarifies my reasons for bringing my motion to City Council, and polling the Ward 29 residents on the future of the Cosburn bike lanes.

Please contact me if you would like assistance with any municipal issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Case Ootes".

**Councillor Case Ootes  
Ward 29, Toronto-Danforth**