

David Suzuki Foundation's Bike Lane Campaign

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Overview

- Transport is largest source of Ontario GHGs. Much of it from cars.
- The David Suzuki Foundation is working to find new revenue tools to fund public transit (e.g., road tolls).
- Working to promote separated bike lanes.
- Today I'll offer case study: Our campaign to get bike lane on Toronto's Bloor Street.
- Will discuss strategy and tactics and tease out lessons useful to others working in this area.

Bloor bike lane campaign: Overview

- Toronto opened pilot bike lane (2.4 km) on Bloor in Aug 2016 following 38-3 vote.
- DSF partnered with Cycle Toronto to urge Council to make pilot permanent.
- Though majority of councillors approved pilot, no guarantee they'll vote to keep lane.
- Mayor has no problem removing lane if data show it's not working.



Bloor bike lane campaign: **Strategy**

- With Cycle Toronto, developed campaign strategy to win council vote in fall 2017. Strategic assumptions:
 - Mayor and Public Works Ctte's support is key.
 - Lane must promote safety of *all* road-users, including drivers.
 - Must be popular with voters *across the city*.
 - Must be compatible with success of local businesses.

Bloor bike lane campaign: Tactics

- Sent action alerts to DSF supporters asking them to email mayor (5,500 emails sent).
- Asked Olympic athletes to help: cyclist Curt Harnett signed action alert; kayaker Adam van Koeeverden wrote *Toronto Star* op-ed.
- Worked with Doctors for Safe Cycling to write article showing bike lanes promote health for *everyone*.



Bloor bike lane campaign: **Tactics**

Commissioned poll from Angus Reid Forum (802 residents, June 2017).

--Overall, 69% of Torontonians say keep bike lane on Bloor.

--Majority support even in inner suburbs: North York (69%), Scarborough(63%), Etobicoke(57%).

--Key finding: Not just a downtown thing. Lane popular *across the city*.

Bloor bike lane campaign: **Tactics**

- Worked to develop – and publicize – business support for the lane.
- Produced (and shared with councillors) 2 videos interviewing business owners who believe the lane brings customers.
- Supported Cycle Toronto's "Tour de Bloor Passport", which asked cyclists to shop on Bloor and get their "passport" stamped by participating merchants. Those with 20 stamps could win prizes.
- Key message: bikes mean business!



Bloor bike lane campaign: Tactics

- Ran this ad in subway stations near City Hall so councillors would see it.
- Two strategic messages:
 - Bloor lane is popular (7 in 10 support it).
 - Bloor lane promotes safety (kids can ride it).

7 in 10 Toronto residents say
keep the Bloor bike lanes...
including *us!*



Bloor bike lanes: Keeping our children safe.



Safe streets
Healthy city
Vibrant voice



David
Suzuki
Foundation

#VisionZero #KeepTorontoMoving

Bloor bike lane campaign: **Latest developments**

- City report says pilot led to 49% increase in cyclists' use of Bloor – about 5,000 riders now use lane every weekday!
- Conflict between bikes and motor vehicles down 61%.
- U of T report finds visitors to Bloor spend more in local businesses.
- Mayor supports making lane permanent.
- Public works ctte voted Oct 18 to make lane permanent.
- Final step: city council vote Nov 7, 2017.

Bloor bike lane campaign: **Lessons**

- Though DSF is an enviro group, we rarely used enviro arguments.
- To persuade key councilors, we showed Bloor lane is popular, promotes safety for *all* road users and enhances business.
- Worked with "unlikely suspects" including doctors, nurses and Olympic athletes.
- Careful not to criticize drivers: Presented bike lanes as helping drivers leave the car at home and bust congestion.

Bloor bike lane campaign

- Thank you! I'm happy to answer any questions.