
Looking Back at the 2006 Bike Plan Progress

by Martin Koob

2006 was another year of slow progress on the Toronto Bike plan. While the implementation of new cycling infrastructure projects lagged behind what was promised there were still some accomplishments worth celebrating.

About 9.6 km have been added to Toronto's Bikeway Network. This includes 6.5 km of projects left over from 2005 and 1.7 km of the 28 km of the 2006 projects so there is still a long way to go to getting the pace of construction on track.

There are 6 bike lane projects that have been approved and should be completed by the end of 2006.

The Harbord St. Bike Lane from Grace to Ossington has been finished extending the Bike Lanes on Harbord St. another kilometre. A new 1 km bike lane has gone in on Strachan Ave. from Lakeshore Blvd up to King Street. This connects to the Martin Goodman Trail south of Lake Shore Blvd. There are still problems with trying to ride from the Martin Goodman Trail northbound to get onto Bike Lanes. That is an issue that still has to be resolved.

In Etobicoke Bike Lanes on Birmingham Ave. from Islington to Dwight have been scheduled for fall construction extending those a further 7 km. When that is completed so they will run from Kipling to Dwight.

In North York bike lanes have been put in place on Sentinel Avenue from Finch to Pond Road. This is part of a total 2.2 km project that will eventually run from Grand ravine up to Pond Road on York University Campus. Another North York Project is a 1 km bike lane on Elmridge and Roselawn from just east of W. R. Allan Road to Salinas. This will provide a connection to the new Beltline Trail which starts around Danesbury. There is also a bike lane approved for Marlee from Roselawn to Lawrence that is part of the reconstruction on the street. I haven't heard yet if that project is completed. Hopefully it will be done by the end of the year.

There are also a couple of bike path projects that have been completed.

The ongoing project to reconstruct the Eglinton Ave. Boulevard Path involved realigning and rebuilding the path for a

further 1 km from Islington to Royal York Road.

Another path reconstruction project was the project to twin the Martin Goodman Trail through Marilyn Bell Park and up to Ontario Place. This resulted in a much improved water's edge path in Marilyn Bell Park and a bypass trail closer to Lake Shore Blvd. The bypass trail was continued along Lake Shore south of the CNE grounds up to the edge of the Ontario Place property. This bypass trail is intended to ensure that cyclists and other trail users will have safe access through the area when there are events along the water's edge like the CNE or the Air Show. There are plans to improve the trail through Ontario Place. Hopefully that work will get started next year.

The most exciting trail project is the new Scarborough Waterfront Trail that has been built by the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation that starts at the foot of Port Union Road and extends 1.4 km west to the mouth of Highland Creek. Here a new bridge has been built over the creek to connect to the Highland Creek Trail. If you haven't been out to see this you really should put it on your list of places to ride this year.

The next phase of this project will start next year to extend the path east from Port Union out to the Rouge Beach Park. Also as part of this project a new ramp has been constructed for the bridge over the Rouge River into Pickering so that cyclists can now ride up to the bridge rather than bump their bikes over the odd steps that were on the old ramp.

This winter more bike route signs will go up marking both bike lanes and the signed routes, (streets which don't have bike lanes painted on them but they are signed and are generally quieter). This winter signs will go up on new routes in south Etobicoke on 30th St. Birmingham St., Royal York Road south of the GO station, and on Lake Promenade. In west Toronto they will go on the new Harbord Bike lane and along a route that runs between Harbord and Ossington to College and Lansdowne Ave. mainly along side streets. From here the new route will go to High Park along Dundas St. West, Sorauren

Ave and High Park Ave. This will extend route number 14 from downtown right to High Park.

Another area to get the new signs will be Scarborough. Cyclists who get to the eastern end of the Martin Goodman Trail will finally get some indication of how to continue their trip through Scarborough. A new signed route will run from Queen and Balsam along various streets almost up to the Scarborough GO station. Further east the route will pick up again with a route being signed from Bellamy Rd. to East Point Park following roads such as Hill Cres., Sylvan, Guildwood Parkway with some other connecting streets. This is an already popular route with TBNers it will be nice to have it marked for new cyclists who don't know the area.

There are other streets getting bike route signs. You will be able to see them all in the 2007 Bike Map.

Next year we should also finally see the route signs go up along a park trail. The first trails to be signed will be the Don Trail system.

The plans for the 2007 projects have not been released yet. That should happen in January. This election TCAT has been working to ensure that the council candidates commit to accelerating the progress on the Toronto Bike Plan. I am writing this before the election so I [UTF-8?]donâ€™t know who the new Council will include. Whoever

is there we will have to get active to ensure that they take cycling seriously. The first challenge will be getting the budgets for cycling approved. That should start in January. The next challenge is getting the bike lane projects approved. Your involvement in the

political process is crucial. Watch www.BikeToronto.ca for news and for ways you can get involved to ensure that 2007 is a much better year than 2006.

Martin Koob

TBN representative to the Toronto Cycling Committee.

tcc-rep@tbn.ca



Photo by Dave Bolivar