

# **THE TAYLOR MASSEY PROJECT**

## **Celebrating and Protecting Taylor Massey Creek**

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August 24, 2006

Councillor Michael Thompson  
City of Toronto  
PDF via e-mail

Dear Councillor Thompson,

Thank you for supporting and participating in the June 11 tour of possible cycling paths in the upper portion of Taylor Massey Creek.

Before we share our thoughts with you, allow us to apologize and explain the low turnout of one member of the Project. This low turnout was caused by a perfect storm of unfortunate possibilities: unavoidable commitments for other Board Members; our own internal publicity going out late; the event being not listed in the City's Bike to Work Week postings, and; picking a time that competed with soccer's World Cup.

Regardless, the intimate group of you, Dan Egan, and the one TMP member who attended appears to have allowed for a series of good discussions, as we understand from Andrew. Key aspects that we seek to underscore for you and the City at this time include:

1. East-West linkages under the Gatineau Hydro Corridor

As you know, The TMP has been focused mostly on improved North-South linkages, as there is an existing cycling path under the Gatineau Hydro Corridor. Nonetheless, we had some general concerns about public safety, and therefore the viability of increased recreational and commuter cycling, as a result of the four major roads that the Gatineau trail crosses.

Having been briefed by Andrew about your efforts on these four main roads – Victoria Park, Pharmacy, Warden, and Birchmount - we compliment you on and offer our support for your suggested series of trail re-alignments, improved crossings, and proposed new traffic lights as needed where the trail crosses these four roads. These improvements will address public safety, and increased safety will hopefully result in increased cycling, especially commuter cycling. While we understand you have already obtained funding for some of these improvements, we support the full funding of all of them, as well as early construction, and thank you for your on-going leadership and creativity on these four crossings. Our only recommendation is that the City ensure the budget for the improvements include significant signage for public safety – both to alert cyclists about required stops before crossing the streets and to alert drivers to adhere to new traffic signals or signs.

## 2. Linkages North and South from the Gatineau Hydro Corridor

The tour also identified two possible cycling paths that could run north and south from the Gatineau Hydro Corridor, as follows:

Eastern path: An almost contiguous trail and on-road cycling path is possible from the Gatineau line up to Ellesmere. From the south, this path would start where the Gatineau line intersects Taylor Massey Creek, just west of Birchmount. It would be located on the old railway bed beside the Creek up to Lawrence, beside which the TMP and our local partners, including the City, have planted almost 1,000 trees and shrubs in the last three years, making this reach significantly more attractive, with more bird life, than four years ago.

Cyclists would need to dismount and walk on the sidewalk on the south side of Lawrence for 50 metres, to an existing traffic light at Crockford. After crossing at this light, we suggest that both sides of Ellington could accommodate on-road cycling lanes, taking cyclists to where Ellington turns west and joins Warden Avenue just south of Ellesmere. At this junction, signage could point them to other cycle paths.

Western path: A western cycling path is also possible, and is almost completely in greenspace, most of it in the Warden Hydro Corridor. In fact, this cycle path could perform a valuable role in the use of the Warden Hydro Corridor as new City greenspace to offset the loss of public lands along the Creek itself between Ellesmere and Lawrence, a vision the TMP has been championing for 4 years as part of the Taylor Massey Trail.

From the north, this path could start in Councillor Kelly's ward, running from the Terraview Willowfield concept site just south of the 401 - and indeed might be able to be connected to trails north of the 401 - down to Ellesmere, where a traffic light would be needed. Once south of Ellesmere, the cycle path could run for several kilometres down to Wexford Park and the Gatineau Hydro Corridor.

Minor cycle-vehicle considerations would have to be designed where the cycle path would cross Joy, Brian, Sherwood, and Clearfield, as well as more stringently designed safety features where the path would cross the railway track and Lawrence Avenue.

One excellent aspect of this proposed trail is that it could tie in to the proposed trailhead, BIA parking area, and community parkette that you have already proposed for the north side of Lawrence under the Warden Hydro Corridor.

The TMP has been proposing the creation of this section of the Taylor Massey Trail within the Warden Hydro Corridor for four years, as is well known to many City staff, including Alex Shevchuck in Economic Development, Jane Welsh in Urban Planning, and Rod McPhail in Transportation, as well as other Taylor Massey councillors.

On the June tour, Andrew was pleased to hear, as was the Board, that Dan Egan thought so highly of the potential of a cycle path in the Warden Hydro Corridor that he felt that this route might be considered as an alternate to a proposed on-road cycling trail along Pharmacy.

We hope that you and your colleagues on Council will move forward on this, providing both policy direction and funding for staff to incorporate the Warden Hydro Corridor into the City's green inventory, as well as to plan for it to become a meaningful addition to the City's cycling infrastructure.

Again, we thank you for your support of participation in the tour; for your leadership in addressing the public safety issues of the existing east-west cycling path; and for your vision for the trailhead and community gathering area where the Warden Hydro Corridor meets Lawrence Avenue.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Penny*  
Chair

cc Mayor Miller  
Councillors Norm Kelley, Harvey Barron, and Janet Davis  
Staff members Dan Egan, Rod McPhail, Alex Shivchuck, and Jane Welsh  
Task Force to Bring Back the Don  
Don Watershed Regeneration Council