

October 24, 2024

Matthew Rae,  
MPP Perth-Wellington  
55 Lorne Avenue East, Unit 2  
Stratford, ON  
N5A 6S4

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria  
Minister of Transportation  
Ministry of Transportation  
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1Z8

Dear Mr. Rae and Minister Sarkaria,

Re: Opposition to Bill 212 - "Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act"

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of Cycle Stratford to express our strong opposition to Bill 212, specifically part XII "Municipal By-laws and Bicycle Lanes" currently before the Ontario Legislature.

As representatives of numerous cycling enthusiasts in Perth County, we are deeply concerned about the negative impact this legislation would have on cyclist safety and sustainable transportation initiatives in our community and across Ontario.

We strongly reject the arguments presented by the Conservative government in support of this bill, which seem to be rooted in short-sighted concerns about traffic congestion and parking availability. Research consistently demonstrates that well-designed cycling infrastructure not only enhances safety for cyclists but also improves overall traffic flow and reduces congestion in the long term (Toronto Centre for Active Transportation, 2018). Additionally, studies show that businesses in areas with protected bike lanes tend to see an increase in sales, driven by greater foot and bicycle traffic (New York City Department of Transportation, 2014). These facts contradict the government's claims that bike lanes negatively impact local businesses and inconvenience motorists.

This legislation is dangerous and counterproductive for several reasons:

- It undermines Vision Zero initiatives adopted by municipalities across Ontario to eliminate traffic fatalities
- It contradicts Ontario's own Climate Change Action Plan by discouraging active transportation
- It removes local decision-making power from municipalities who best understand their communities' transportation needs
- It increases risk to vulnerable road users by potentially eliminating existing protected infrastructure

The timing of this legislation is particularly concerning given that cycling fatalities in Ontario have increased substantially in recent years. Removing bike lanes and inhibiting their installation in the future will only exacerbate this tragic trend.

The introduction of Bill 212 sends a chilling message to communities that safety is secondary to the convenience of motor vehicles. Removing or restricting bike lanes makes cycling considerably more dangerous, as it forces cyclists to share the road with faster-moving and potentially inattentive drivers. Data from jurisdictions worldwide shows that dedicated bike lanes significantly reduce the number and severity of collisions between cyclists and motor vehicles.

The idea that bike lanes "clog" traffic or create an unnecessary burden is not only false but contrary to the goals of sustainable and safe transportation planning. Cities around the globe—from Copenhagen to New York to Toronto—are proving that investing in cycling infrastructure is a crucial component of modern urban planning. It is a necessary response to the dual crises of climate change and urban congestion. By promoting cycling as a safe and viable transportation option, cities can reduce car dependency, lower carbon emissions, and improve the health and well-being of their residents.

It is clear that Bill 212 runs counter to common sense and the evidence-based planning needed to ensure the safety of all road users. As a long-term resident of Stratford who has cycled in all seasons for over 25 years, I, along with our board, can attest to the benefits of dedicated cycling infrastructure. A safer, more bike-friendly community is one that is healthier, more connected, and more sustainable. To roll back the progress we have made is to undermine years of investment in road safety, environmental sustainability, and economic vibrancy.

As your constituents and active members of the Perth County community, we urge you to:

1. Vote against Bill 212 in its current form OR drop the amendments listed in Part XII
2. Support evidence-based transportation planning that protects all road users
3. Meet with our board to discuss sustainable transportation solutions for our region

The safety of your constituents and the future of sustainable transportation in Ontario depend on defeating this dangerous and regressive legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter McDonnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "M".

Peter McDonnell  
President  
Cycle Stratford