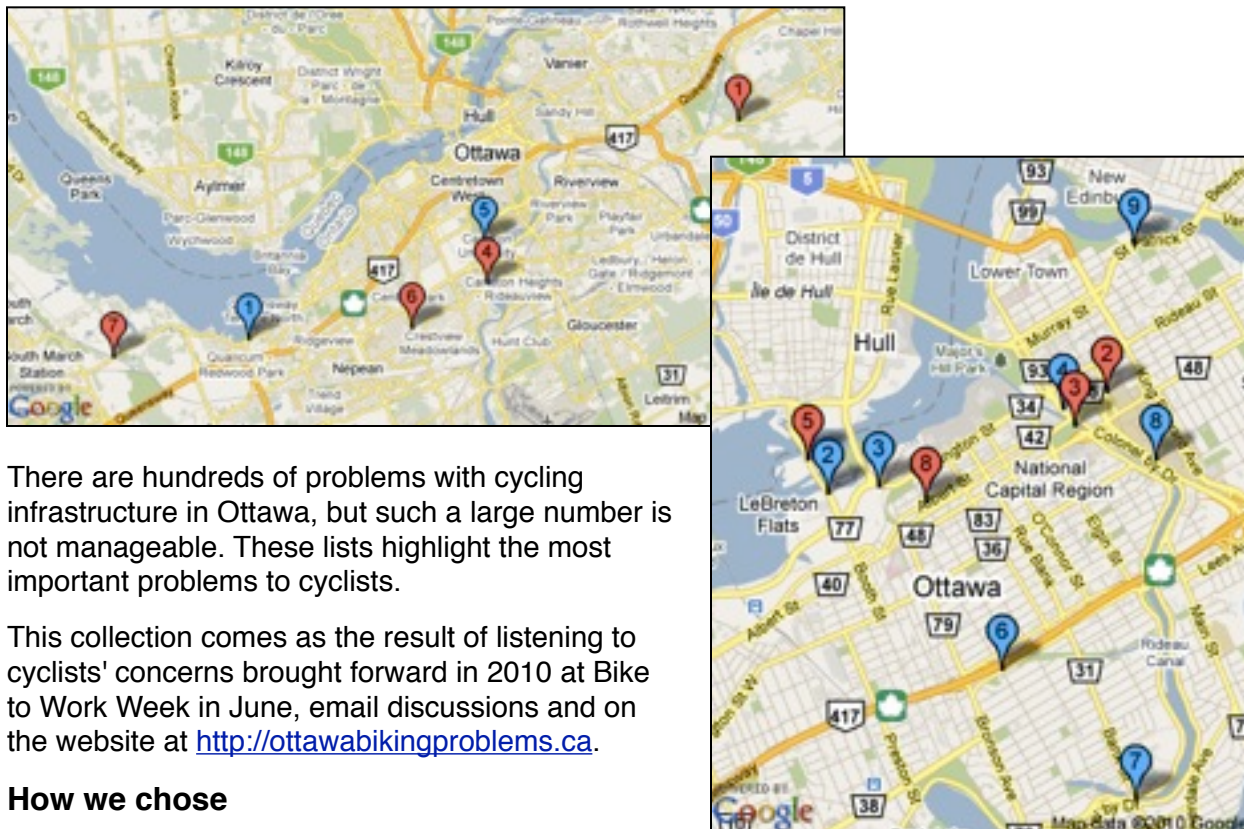


2010 Top Ten lists of Easy Fixes and Large Problems

Making Ottawa cycling safer and easier



There are hundreds of problems with cycling infrastructure in Ottawa, but such a large number is not manageable. These lists highlight the most important problems to cyclists.

This collection comes as the result of listening to cyclists' concerns brought forward in 2010 at Bike to Work Week in June, email discussions and on the website at <http://ottawabikingproblems.ca>.

How we chose

These were analyzed and prioritized for the following characteristics:

- popularity: how many cyclists are affected?
- cost: signage, painted lines and changing signals are considered cheap
- safety: these are projects that address safety
- convenience: these make it easier for people to adopt cycling as a mode of transport
- distribution: they are in different areas across the city

These lists are not in order; there's no implication that one problem is more important than any other within these lists.

Jurisdiction

Cycling around Ottawa involves three jurisdictions: City of Ottawa, National Capital Commission and the City of Gatineau.



Top Ten Easy Fixes

This list shows problems that could be fixed by changing signage, resurfacing, painting lines or minor changes to signals.



Carling pathway

There is a 3.2km bicycle path that runs along the north side of Carling between the end of the NCC Ottawa River pathway all the way to Moodie. It passes by Andrew Haydon Park, and could be used by commuters heading to Kanata.

The path's surface and the curbs at the intersections make this path unusable. Biking here is very slow and could break rims. Instead, cyclists have to share the road with drivers on Carling Ave.

Cheap solution:

- depress all the intersecting curbs
- resurface the path to remove unevenness



Signals at NCC Ottawa River pathway and Booth St.

There are thousands of cycle trips daily along the NCC Ottawa River pathway. The intersection at Booth St. (behind the War Museum) requires that cyclists dismount, press the pedestrian signal button and wait several minutes. Given how busy this intersection is, bicycle traffic should sometimes have priority.



Cheap solution:

- paint a bike lane across the intersection so cyclists don't have to dismount
- add sensors for bicycles on the NCC path that trigger the lights, and provide feedback so cyclists know it has been triggered
- change the timing so that cyclists are given priority, and are frequently offered a green light as they approach the intersection

Citizens for Safe Cycling, v0.91





Signage to get from Ottawa River pathway to downtown

Riding from the NCC Ottawa River pathway from near the War Museum to the downtown core requires navigating a sequence of turns through various paths to get under the Portage Bridge up to Wellington. Only the experienced know the route, because there is no clear signage to explain the right way to get to the downtown core. The NCC is happy to show the way along the river at the bottom of Parliament Hill, somewhere very few commuters want to go.

Cheap solution:

- install proper signage along the path with a localized map



Colonel By and Daly

The NCC Rideau Canal eastern pathway ends under the Laurier Bridge. However, many cyclists want to continue on to the downtown core or the Byward Market. The current connection is unsigned, and leads cyclists on something that could be a sidewalk, and dumps them at a crosswalk over Colonel By at Daly.

Cheap solution:

- convert the existing path to a multi-purpose path
- install cyclist-friendly signaling to cross Colonel By

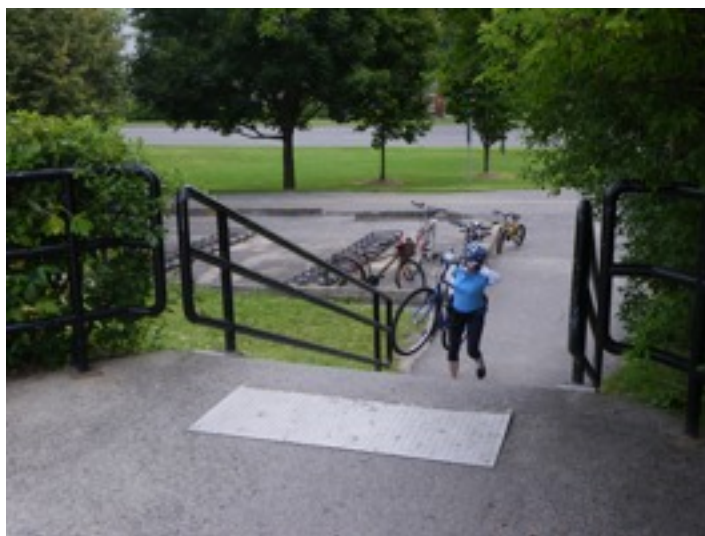




Hartwell Locks

The Parks Canada Hartwell Locks are used by cyclists to cross the Rideau Canal, connecting Carleton University with the Experimental Farm. Crossing the locks saves a 4km detour in heavy traffic. But the locks are only designed for pedestrians; cyclists need to lug their bicycles up steps and carry them across the locks.

Adding a proper ramp for bicycles and widening the walkway across the locks would make traversing the canal a lot easier.



Cheap solution:

- install a ramp
- provide appropriate signage



Percy and Chamberlain

The bicycle route along Percy is a north/south route to get between the Glebe and downtown. It helps cyclists avoid Bank and Bronson. Northbound, the path is an abandoned sidewalk and has never been properly converted; there are high curbs and no signage.

Cheap solution:

- remove the curbs, repave the bicycle portion of this path
- install proper signage so cyclists know where to ride to avoid pedestrians





University of Ottawa underpass

There is a tunnel under the Transitway at the University of Ottawa that connects Colonel By Drive to campus, just south of the Corktown bridge near Somerset. The city's online cycling guide describes this as an "existing off-road pathways route".

Signs indicated that cyclists are supposed to dismount on this bicycle route, and cyclists complain that the tunnel is dark and dangerous at night. There is space for both cyclists and pedestrians.

Cheap solution:

- add proper lighting to make the tunnel safer
- create a segregated bicycle lane under the bridge



Bank Street Bridge

The Bank Street Bridge joins the Glebe with Old Ottawa South. Going north towards downtown, cyclists will want to take a left on Wilton Cr. to follow the bike along Monk St., which circumvents having to bike on Bank St.

However, the rise of the bridge makes it dangerous for cyclists to get into the left lane. It is unclear where cyclists should cross, and drivers are surprised to see bicycles in the left lane.



Cheap solution:

- Change the signage to warn drivers that there will be cyclists in the left turn lane, and indicate to cyclists that they should change lanes before the crest of the hill.



St. Patrick

St. Patrick is a designated bicycle route and carries bicycle traffic from Vanier and Rockliffe into downtown. However, between the bridge and King Edward, the bicycle lane starts and stops with no warning. This forces cyclists into heavy traffic, which is made worse by the poor surface. The bicycle lane should be continuous.

There are also problems getting onto St. Patrick from Cobourg, and getting off of St. Patrick at Beausoleil. These intersections need better signage and curb cutouts.



Cheap solution:

- extend the bike lane between the river and King Edward



Repave rightmost parts of bicycle routes that are on the road

The city has a number of bicycle routes indicated with signage and on the City of Ottawa bicycle map. These roads are maintained like other roads, where the priority is to reduce potholes in the middle of the road. Cyclists are supposed to ride on the right side of the road, which falls in disrepair more quickly. They then need to ride in traffic, slowing down drivers.

Although all such roads should be surveyed, highlights include Main St., Monk St., Gladstone Ave. and Lees Ave.



Top Ten Large Problems

These areas require significant redesign and require more planning.



Waller and Stewart

There's an east/west bicycle lane on Stewart which joins the Mackenzie King Bridge with a jog at Waller. It is used as a route from the east to downtown. Going west, there is no way safe way to cross Waller to get into the bike lane. Doing this manoeuvre requires crossing three lanes, then a median, then two more lanes. There is no signage to warn cars, or directions for bicyclists. It is heavy traffic with busses and trucks.

A solution to this problem would provide a dedicated, signed and unblocked route that would cross Waller and lead the cyclist directly to the Mackenzie King Bridge bike lane.



Chaudière Bridge

The Chaudière Bridge is an important connector for cyclists that need to cross the Ottawa River to go between the NCC paths that run on each side. The surface of the road and the bridge are part of the problem, but the narrowness of the lanes and the fast moving traffic make this dangerous.

The cities of Gatineau and Ottawa with the NCC need to provide a dedicated bicycle path that will separate cars from bicycles.





Route between Elgin and western Rideau Canal pathway behind the NAC

An important route for cyclists is to get from downtown to the NCC Rideau Canal pathway on the west side of the canal. Heavy traffic on Elgin and Laurier makes this dangerous.

An unofficial route currently used is to tuck in behind the NAC to connect to Queen Elizabeth Drive. The NCC should consider installing a multipurpose path in this area.



Hog's Back

A common route for cyclists is to come from the intersection of Meadowlands and Prince of Wales Dr., take a right on Hog's Back and get to the NCC Rideau Canal pathway. This current route requires cyclists to share a busy lane with cars and is poorly indicated how cyclists can connect to the NCC path.

The reverse direction is even more complicated. If cyclists follow the south end of the NCC path, they will be delivered on the wrong side of Hog's Back and will need to walk some distance and have to cross Hog's Back.

However, a reasonable alternative exists; cyclists could be funneled over the canal locks to avoid the entire intersection.

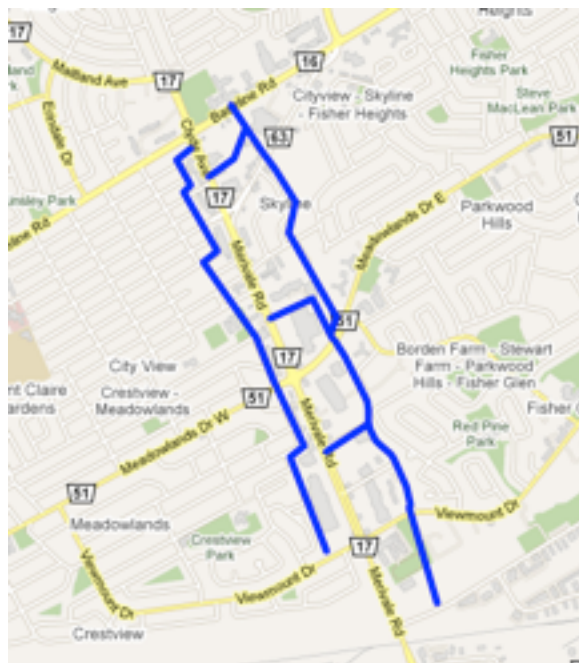


Merivale Rd. commercial strip bypass

Merivale Rd. between Colonnade and Baseline Rd. is a difficult route for cyclists since there is heavy traffic, and there are so many parking lots and traffic lights.

Calmer routes exist on the east and west sides of Merivale, some of which have been completed.

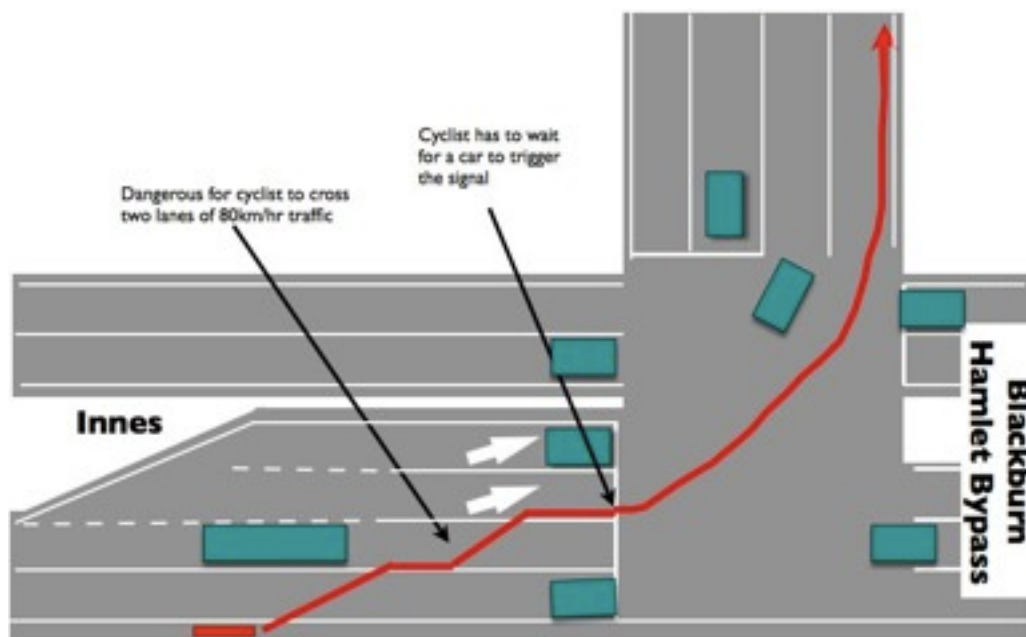
A signed bicycle route using the existing connections and providing a few new bicycle/pedestrian connections on local streets would provide a quieter alternative to the heavy traffic on Merivale.



Innes and Blackburn Hamlet Bypass

Going east, the bicycle lane on Innes is supposed to continue on Innes by taking a left turn at the traffic lights at Blackburn Hamlet Bypass. This is very difficult as it requires crossing two lanes of 80km/hr traffic that rarely stops for a red light.

Add a signal sensor under the bike path to pause traffic so bicycles never need to cross the traffic. Add a left turn lane through the intersection so bicyclists know the path they are to take.





Train culvert on Carling

The CN Rail owned train bridge that crosses Carling between Moodie and Herzberg provides a very narrow opening for 80km/hr traffic. Beyond just adding signage, this bridge needs to be widened to allow enough space for bicycles and cars to travel side-by-side.



Bay St.

There is a bicycle route that connects Wellington to bike lane on southbound on Percy St. The current route chosen is poorly signed, and requires sharing a narrow sidewalk for four blocks.

There should be a contra-flow lane installed on Bay St. to keep pedestrians and cyclists separated.

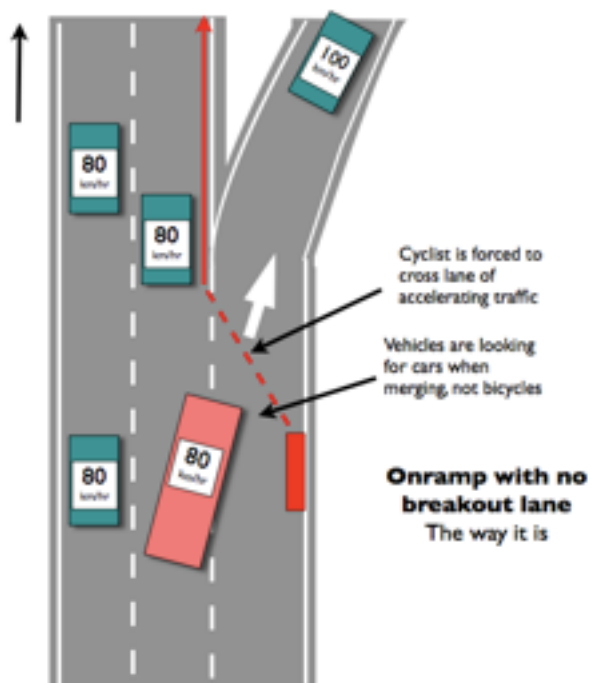




Overpasses of the 416 and 417

Many overpasses on Highways 416 and 417 in the city are problematic for cyclists. The on- and off-ramps force cyclists to deal with fast-moving traffic. Long turn lanes make it difficult for cyclists to safely cross the paths.

For all the overpasses on these two highways, bicycle lanes should be added so cyclists can safely cross on- and off-ramps. Motorists must yield to cyclists in the lanes, rather than cutting the cyclists off at high speeds. Signage should be added so drivers know where to expect cyclists.



Difficulties in crossing downtown

Crossing downtown east/west is difficult in Ottawa. The heavy bus, car and truck traffic on the roads available make it difficult for cyclists. The city should create a designated bicycle route that is designed specifically for cyclists.