



# Bike Ottawa Annual Report 2018



# Table of Contents

This year, in addition to our general updates and assessments of cycling in Ottawa, we've zoomed in on Ottawa Centre, South, East, and West to showcase highlights of recently completed infrastructure, what's upcoming in the 2018 City budget, and profiles of cyclists in the different areas of our big city.

Message from the President . . . . .	2
Our Work . . . . .	3
Our New Data Group . . . . .	4
By the Numbers . . . . .	5
Budgets and Bike Counters . . . . .	6
Review of Progress Since 2012 . . . . .	8
Recommendations for 2018 . . . . .	10
<b>Ottawa Centre</b> . . . . .	11
JP Torunski on Shopping by Bike . . . . .	12
Laurier Avenue Corridor Safety Review . . . . .	14
<b>Ottawa South</b> . . . . .	16
José Badillo on Winter Cycling Outside the Core . . . . .	17
<b>Ottawa East</b> . . . . .	18
Joana Chelo On Cycling with Kids . . . . .	19
Adàwe Bridge - As Busy As It Is Beautiful . . . . .	21
<b>Ottawa West</b> . . . . .	22
References . . . . .	23



# Message from the President

The annual Bike Ottawa Report on Cycling is always an opportunity to look back, and to look ahead.

Looking back, in this report we review our top 10 cycling needs from five years ago. Five years is enough time to make meaningful progress. Never doubt that Ottawa has made substantial progress. The groundwork of advocacy laid by our members is definitely paying off: five years ago, we didn't have the Adàwe bridge, Airport bridge, Max Keeping bridge, Hickory bridge, multi-use paths like the O-train path, Sawmill Creek, the Scott Street path and its connection to Laurier, or cycle tracks on O'Connor, Main, Mackenzie, and Churchill, to name a few. We didn't have bike boxes, cycle-specific signal heads, cross-rides, or a winter-cleared network. We didn't have bike repair stands, bike parking corrals, a one metre law and a device for enforcement. All of this effort is reflected in the growing popularity of cycling, now the fastest-growing mode of transportation in the city, according to the latest census.

Looking ahead, these are exciting times for cycling in Ottawa. The 2017 and 2018 budgets brought unprecedented levels of spending on cycling from all levels of government, and we will soon be reaping those rewards. One of the highlights will certainly be the bridge between Fifth and Clegg, being built as you read this, but many other projects are underway that will make cycling easier, safer, and more enjoyable.

Despite all of this good news, there is still a lot work to be done, and Bike Ottawa is asking all members of the community to play a role. The door is open to constructive discussion with your representatives and city staff. Cycling is becoming a mode of transportation that is taken seriously, so we need you to help take up the cause, be your own best advocate, and keep up the momentum as we work to build a more livable city. Bike Ottawa will be here to provide information, advice, stories, and data, but by adding your voice to the conversation, you will show how much broad support there is for cycling.

This report wouldn't be possible without the volunteers who contributed to it, the participants of our various working groups, and of course our members and supporters. Five percent of the commuters inside the Greenbelt cycles to work now, and many more trips are made for other purposes such as recreation, shopping, going to school, and dentist visits. Your work is paying off. Thank you for joining us in building Ottawa's future as a great cycling city.

Heather Shearer  
President, Bike Ottawa





# Our Work

For the second year in a row, Bike Ottawa hit a record membership number in 2017, with a peak of 400 members. The following illustrates how Bike Ottawa, powered by a fantastic and growing group of volunteers, works with and for these members, and where you can find more on each area in this report!

## Board

Bike Ottawa's Board of Directors consists of nine elected volunteers who direct and oversee the range of our activities.

Contact: [info@bikeottawa.ca](mailto:info@bikeottawa.ca)

## Data

New this year, the Data Group is our research and analysis arm, working with geospatial data to support our advocacy efforts.

Get involved: [data@bikeottawa.ca](mailto:data@bikeottawa.ca)

Learn more: [See page 4](#)

## Advocacy

Our Advocacy Working Group monitors and provides feedback on infrastructure projects for bikes and that have implications for cycling, as well as the policies and plans that affect these projects.

Get involved: [advocacy@bikeottawa.ca](mailto:advocacy@bikeottawa.ca)

Learn more: [See pages 11, 16, 18, and 22](#)

## Communications

We write blogs, produce e-newsletters, write stories about Ottawa cyclists, and of course, produce this annual report!

Get involved: [editor@bikeottawa.ca](mailto:editor@bikeottawa.ca)

Learn more: [See page 5](#)

## Events

We organize and run a series of events that bring Ottawa cyclists together and demonstrate our enthusiasm for safe cycling in our city, all year around!

Get involved: [events@bikeottawa.ca](mailto:events@bikeottawa.ca)

## Membership

For as little as \$10/year, each and every one of our members gives weight to Bike Ottawa's voice in advocating for cycling as a safe, healthy, and fun way of getting around our city. Join us today!

Visit [www.bikeottawa.ca](http://www.bikeottawa.ca)





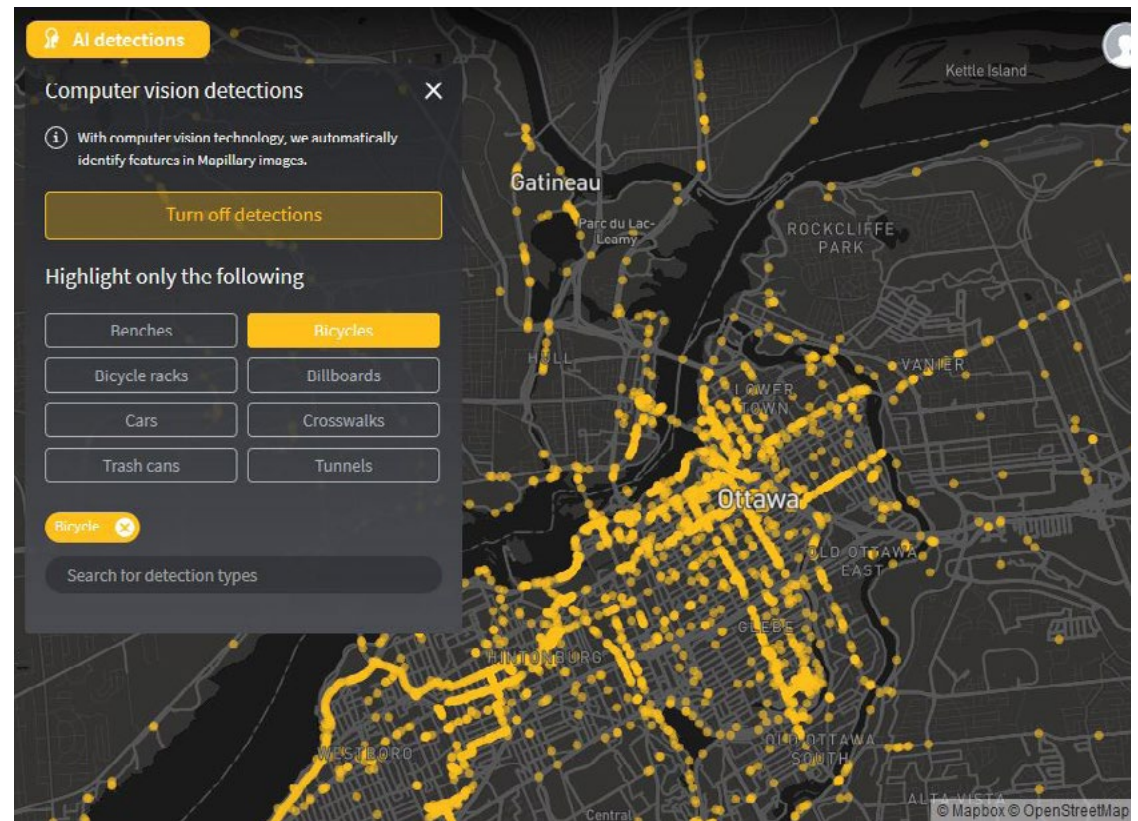
# Our New Data Group

In 2017, Bike Ottawa created the Data Group, a dedicated working group for research and analysis.

Over the last year, the Data Group has been engaging with open data communities to help compile geospatial data that supports our advocacy work. Challenged by the team behind Mapillary, an online platform that hosts street-level imagery data, group members made a huge effort to add 454,934 photos of 2,070 km of streets and bike paths to the database during a one-month event. With some help from OpenStreetMap Ottawa, the Data Group hosted a “mapathon” to review every service road, cycle track, speed limit, and no parking zone in a defined area of Ottawa using the Mapillary photos and volunteers’ firsthand knowledge.

All of that mapping data is shared online and can now be used to identify missing links in the bicycle network, to assess how friendly streets are for biking, or for any projects the Data Group can imagine.

If you’d like to get involved in the Data Group, contact [data@bikeottawa.ca](mailto:data@bikeottawa.ca)!







# By the Numbers

Here are some numerical highlights of cycling in Ottawa as of the end of 2017, as well as some pointers to further reading.

Ottawa has:

- **2,233 km** of sidewalks and pathways maintained by the City in its transportation system network.
- **5,705 km** of road and **230 km** of Transitway and highway maintained by the City.

The City has budgeted:

- Approximately **\$25 million** for cycling-related projects in 2018.
- **\$2.875 million** for completing five community connections projects in 2018.

*Read more: [City budget 2018: The \\$25 million bicycling highlights](#)*

Census says:

- **9.6% of people** in Ottawa commute by active transportation (cycling or walking), the second highest proportion of all Canadian cities.
- Canada saw a **61.6% increase** in the number of people cycling to work between 1996 and 2016, **more than twice** the pace of overall commuter growth.

*Read more: [Ottawa census data show growth in cycling commute](#)*

Just a few highlights of Bike Ottawa's work included:

- Sending four delegates to represent us at the 5th Annual Winter Cycling Congress in Montreal.

*Read more: [Winter Cycling Congress 2017: Bike Ottawa was there](#)*

- Identifying and sharing five easy ways for our members and allies to do bike advocacy.

*Read more: [Commit an act of bike advocacy](#)*

- Taking 454,934 photos of 2,070 km of streets and bike paths as a part of a project by our new Data Group

*Read more: [Joining the Data Group, an FAQ \(and see page 4 of this report!\)](#)*

- Reaching a new membership record of 400 Bike Ottawa members!

*Read more: [Why become a Bike Ottawa member?](#)*

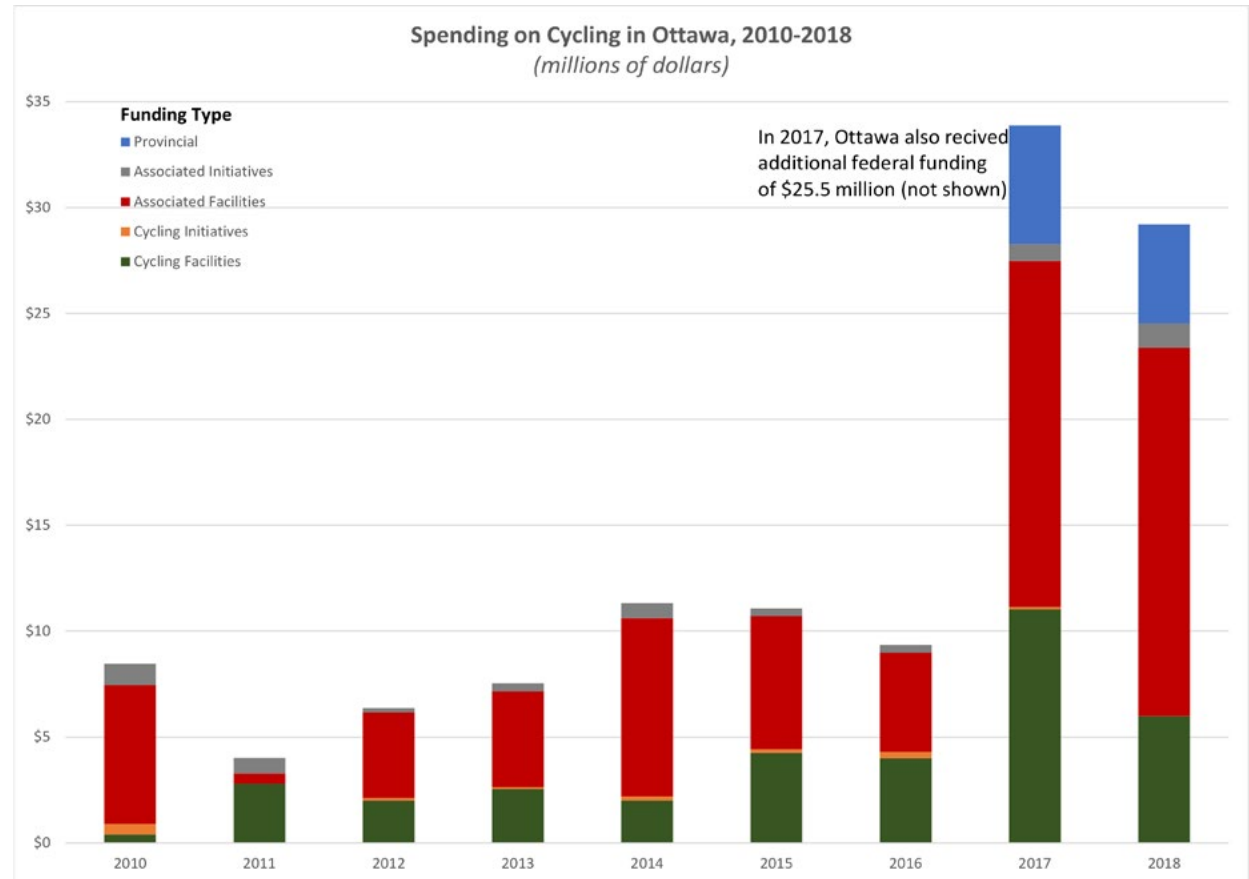




# Budgets and Bike Counters

## Growing investment

Since the Laurier segregated bike lane opened in 2011, we've seen many new pieces of cycling infrastructure and connections. In City of Ottawa budgets for 2017 and 2018 in particular, we've seen a very large increase in investment in cycling, as the city moved to take advantage of funding opportunities from the provincial and federal governments. All levels of government are recognizing that cycling is a smart investment for livability and sustainability. Projects initiated with these funds will soon be complete, and will support continued growth in cycling rates across the city.





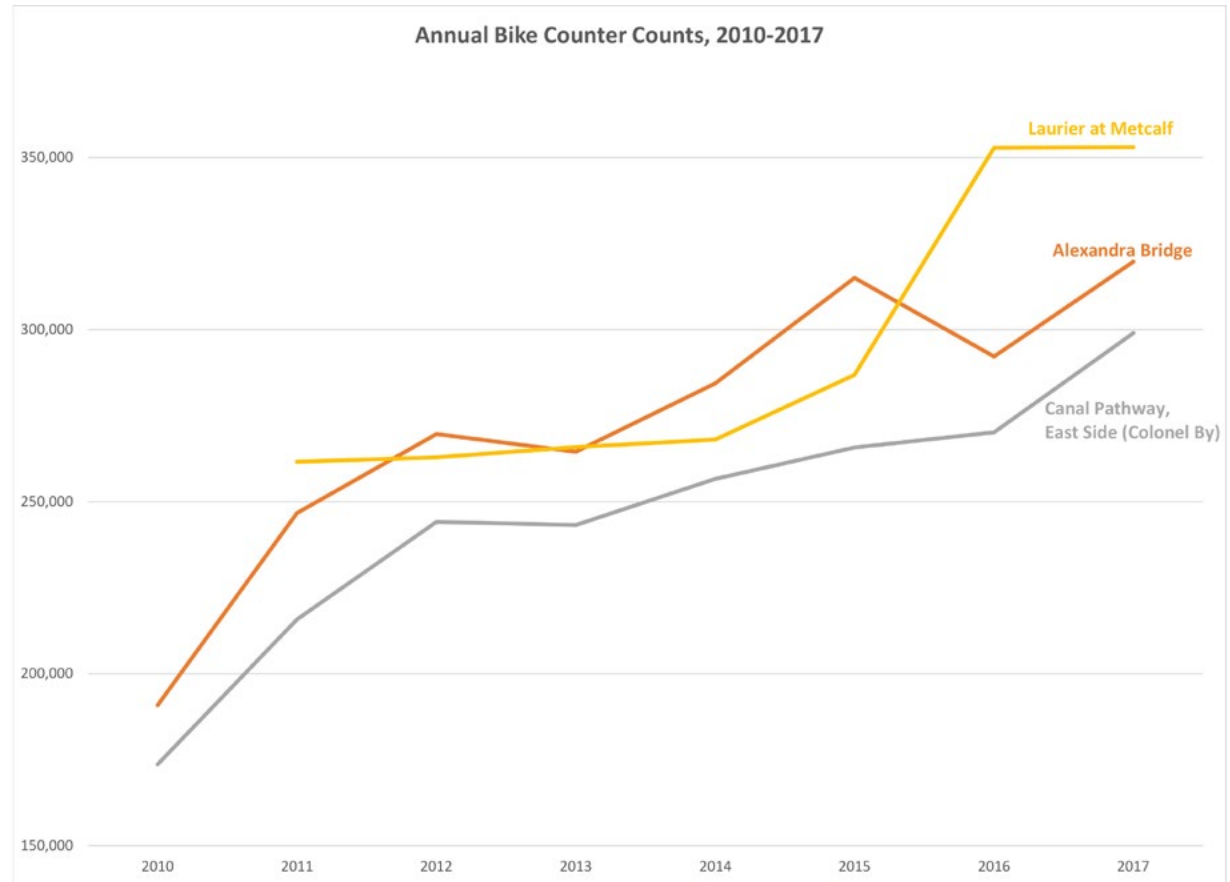
# Budgets and Bike Counters

## Growing ridership

This growing investment is paying off: Cycling is the fastest-growing mode of transportation in Ottawa! At counters around the downtown core, we've seen growth of about seven per cent annually since 2010.

The highest counts are seen on the Ottawa river path near the Prince of Wales train bridge, except in 2017, when unprecedented spring flooding forced people to make other choices. The National Capital Commission has found that about 70% of the traffic is cycling, meaning this path can expect average daily traffic of about 4,000 people (when it isn't underwater). That's as busy as a collector road like Gladstone, all in just a three-metre-wide path.

The lowest counts were seen on the O-train path, but with an average of 1,070 daily bike trips in the warmer months of 2017 (plus plenty of un-counted foot traffic), it's hardly abandoned; this path is as busy as local streets like Gloucester or Percy. It will be interesting to watch how the counts change once the final phase south of Carling is completed.







# Review of Progress Since 2012

In 2012, Bike Ottawa identified 10 main issues to address to improve cycling in our city. Read on to see how we've fared.

## **Inadequate shoulders on fast roads:**

Paved shoulders are being put in place in various locations throughout the city, with help from the province. An example is the Greely/Findlay Creek area of the city.

## **Safety at on- and off-ramps where cyclists travel straight through overpasses:**

While most locations still need improvement, a successful example of new infrastructure with a design that addresses this problem is the O'Connor Street Bikeway at the 417, where a bidirectional lane on one side of the road means cyclists do not pass between traffic going straight and traffic merging towards the on-ramp.

## **Missing links in the cycling network, where bike lanes or paths end abruptly and without signage:**

A number of links are now in place, in part because community connectivity is a priority for Council this term. A recent example of such a link was the addition of a short stretch of bike lane and pathway connecting Coventry Road to paths that reach the Rideau River and beyond.

## **Safety of narrow and dark cyclist and pedestrian underpasses:**

There has been significant progress and many underpasses have been lit or re-lit recently. The tunnel on the pathway near Mill Street Brew Pub is now very well-lit, and painted murals improve the Westboro Beach underpass.





# Review of Progress Since 2012 Continued

## **Stop requiring cyclists to dismount on designated routes:**

While crossrides in select locations represent some improvement by allowing cyclists to ride through intersections legally, new plans are still being drafted with cyclist dismount signs at intersections on dedicated routes.

## **Lack of complete bike routes:**

While there has been progress on the East-West bikeway and a number of major bike arterials, including on Main Street, Churchill Avenue and O'Connor Street, more can be done at the neighbourhood level to complete routes. Local trips to nearby libraries, swimming pools, parks and stores are a starting point for many cyclists and it is often difficult to access these destinations by bike.

## **Designate and clear a winter cycling network:**

A winter cycling network is now in place. There are many opportunities to improve on and grow this base network, including automatically designating new bike infrastructure for winter clearing and prioritizing low-volume streets that may not have designated bike infrastructure, but provide less traffic-heavy connections for cyclists riding through the winter.

## **Timing of traffic signals:**

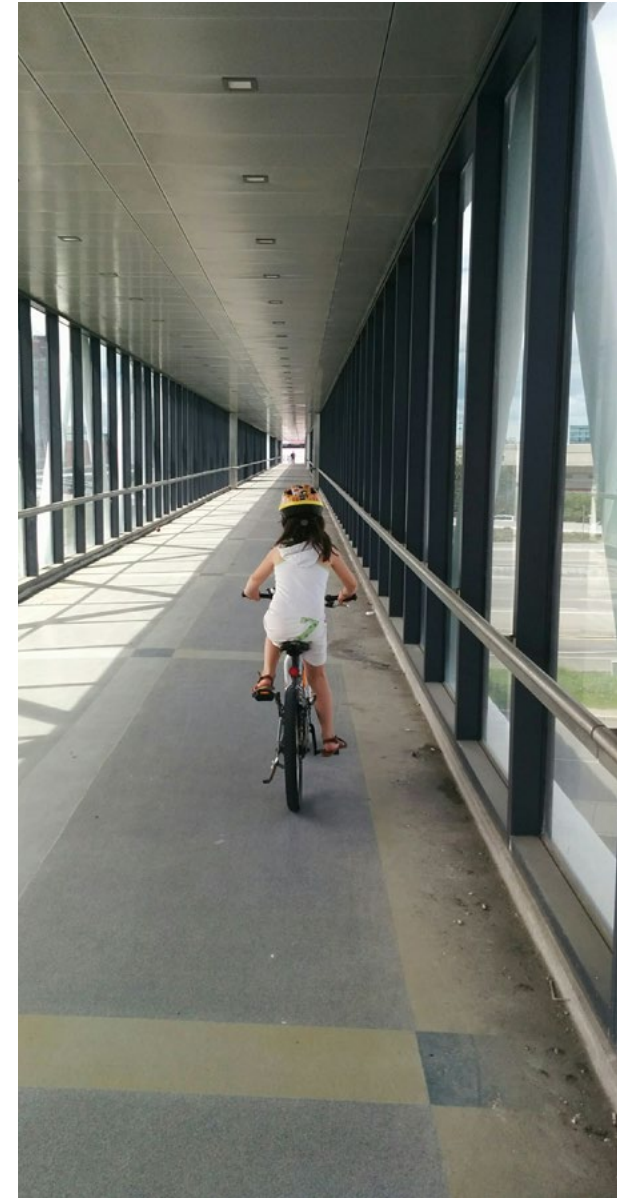
While some intersections are better than others, there are still many examples of intersections where cyclists have a long wait before getting a green light to cross an intersection, even in cases where the cyclist can trigger the light (for example by sitting on the three yellow dots on the pavement).

## **Volume and location of bike parking:**

One example of an improvement in this area was the introduction of bike corrals such as the one at Wellington West and Fairmont (though we would like to see more of these). We are also pleased to see that City Council budgeted \$30,000 for additional bike parking at bus stops. Bike Ottawa would still like to see more post-and-ring bike parking, and better design of bike racks on public and private property.

## **Wayfinding:**

New wayfinding signage has been introduced by the City, but the route numbers and signage are inconsistent with NCC wayfinding. There is an opportunity to improve consistency by ensuring all levels of government involved in cycling in our city are involved in the development of additional wayfinding.







# Recommendations for 2018

This year, Bike Ottawa recommends the following to improve cycling throughout our city:

## **1 Improve lighting for cycling at night.**

This includes ensuring adequate lighting on neighbourhood streets, as well as along multi-use pathways.

## **2 Encourage subdivision design that enables active transportation.**

For example, using street patterns with short blocks and/or adding linking pathways as shortcuts between properties.

## **3 Implement more protected intersections.**

We would like to see these particularly at intersections along bike routes and where there is a high volume of traffic.

## **4 Require bike parking at all businesses and multi-residential housing.**

Include guidelines for the design of bike racks. Many businesses do not provide bicycle parking. In some cases, when racks are provided, they are poorly designed, making it difficult to lock bikes securely. The City's by-laws should be updated to require bike parking at all public buildings, workplaces, and commercial buildings (not just new builds).

**5 Support improvement of bike share services in Ottawa.** To make bike share a viable active transportation option for residents, the network of bike share stations needs to be improved and expanded. Public support and funding for bike share would help make this happen.

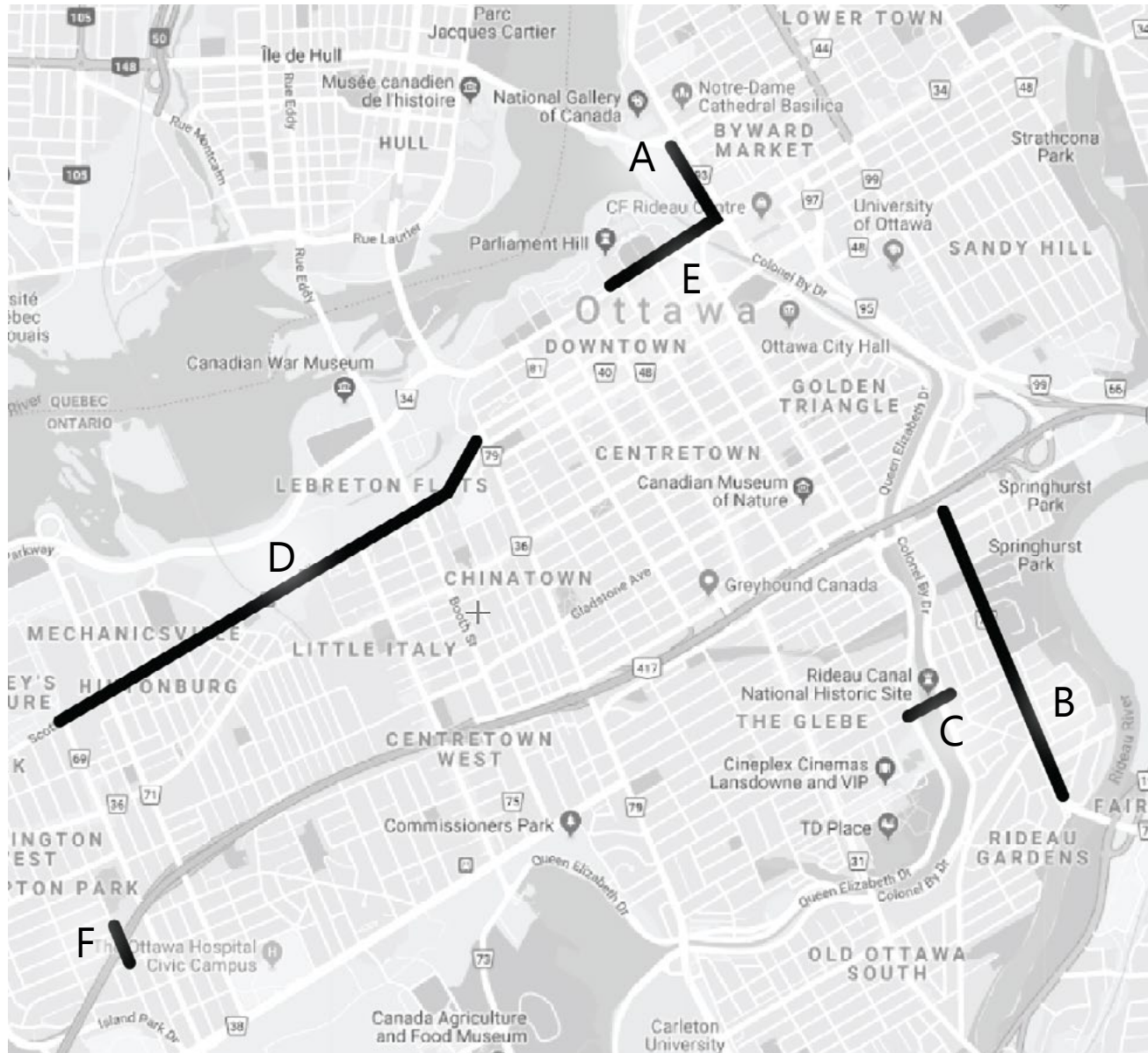
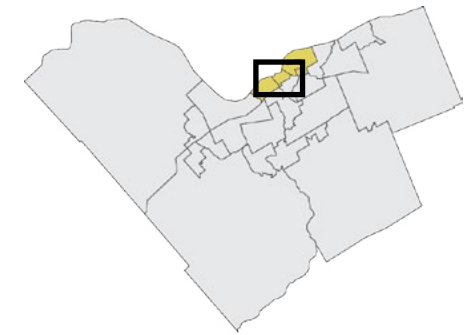
Bike Ottawa will continue to call for these changes through our advocacy work. We encourage you to raise these issues with your councillors, and when providing feedback on projects in areas of the city that you frequent.







# Ottawa Centre



## New in 2017

- A** Bidirectional cycle track on Mackenzie Avenue from Rideau Street to Murray Street
- B** Cycle tracks on Main Street complete street from Graham Avenue to Toronto Street

## In the 2018 City budget

- C** Completion of the canal bridge linking Fifth Avenue to Clegg Street
- D** Cycling facilities along the Albert Street/Scott Street corridor from Holland to Bronson
- E** Cycle tracks on Wellington Street from O'Connor to Mackenzie
- F** Footbridge over the 417 connecting Harmer Avenue North and South



# JP Torunski on Shopping by Bike

*A cyclist for 30 years, and an all-year cyclist for 15 of those years, JP shares experience and tips on shopping by bike, and having a bike as his main mode of transportation:*



## **What motivates you to do your shopping by bike?**

I love driving, but all too often the dream of driving falls short of the reality: being stuck in traffic, circling around parking lots, stress, the high cost of car ownership. I also like the idea of public transit, but the reality of it is also a let-down. Riding a bike means freedom, fun, and convenience. It's economical. You're more connected to the surroundings, to people, to nature. You can stop to chat with people, or if you see a sale, or a beautiful sunset. Shopping by bike is just plain fun. It's safe, it's good for your health, it's easy on the environment, it's cheap.

## **Are there any items you find most useful in helping to use your bike to carry cargo?**

Most of the time I just use my panniers for shopping: I can carry about 100 pounds on my bike without my trailer. I never leave home without my panniers. I carry my wallet and keys and any other essentials in them, so they are like my purse. That way, I'm always ready if I need to carry stuff. I keep a few bungee cords, carabiners, and straps in my panniers in case I need to bring home bulky items.





# JP Torunski on Shopping by Bike

## **What is the biggest item you have ever carted home by bike?**

So far, my biggest haul was about 400 pounds of wood flooring that I carried on my trailer. When you factor in my weight, the weight of the bike and of the trailer, it was almost 650 pounds. I regularly get about 250 pounds or cargo when I go to Costco. Without the trailer, I can carry about 100 pounds on my rack, and most of the time, I just use my panniers for shopping.

## **If someone you knew wanted to start shopping primarily by bike, what advice would you give to help them?**

You don't need anything special to start. I used a backpack that I already had for a few years before I even got a rack and panniers. I just wear my regular clothes. The best thing for people shopping by bike is other people shopping by bike. The more of us there are, the more stores will cater to us, and the more convenient and easy it will become.







# Laurier Avenue Corridor Safety Review

The Laurier Avenue segregated bike lanes opened in 2011 as the first facility of their type in Ottawa. To find out how well they have been working, the city and sustainable mobility consultant Mobycon undertook a safety review in 2017. They studied the effect that the bike lanes have had on all modes of travel, and made recommendations for improvements for both the short term and for when the street is rebuilt.



## **Effects on pedestrian, bike, and car traffic on Laurier Avenue**

The review compared collision data from the four years before and after the installation of the Laurier Avenue segregated bike lanes. Overall, there was an eight and a half percent reduction in the average number of collisions reported each year. Unfortunately, the rate at which collisions caused injuries has remained stable.

Collisions involving pedestrians and collisions involving only motor vehicles both saw reductions in total numbers after the segregated bike lanes were installed. Collisions involving cyclists increased slightly, however the same period saw an increase of 330% in the number of cyclists using the corridor. Overall, there was a 32% reduction in the collision rate in terms of collisions per kilometre cycled, even with the increase in absolute numbers.

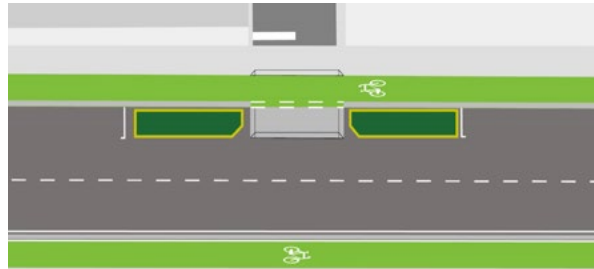
A survey of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians using Laurier Avenue found that conflicts most often occur as motor vehicles turn right across the segregated bike lanes and crosswalks. The data confirm that this manoeuvre accounts for the largest number of collisions between motor vehicles and both pedestrians and cyclists. It would therefore be a good place to start when making changes to increase safety.



# Laurier Avenue Corridor Safety Review

## Suggested improvements for the Laurier bike lane

- Extend barrier curbs at driveways. This would reduce the turning radius and slow vehicles.
- Increased and standardized setbacks for parking spaces at driveways would improve visibility and predictability.



- Apply the pavement colour treatment to the full length of the bike lanes on Laurier Avenue. Experience has shown that the segregated bike lanes can be a conflict point with pedestrians along their entire length.



- Add tactile feedback at driveways. Adding temporary speed bumps or full grade separation would slow turning vehicles.



- Remove the truck route designation from Laurier Avenue. Limit truck access to local traffic only or restrict truck access hours.



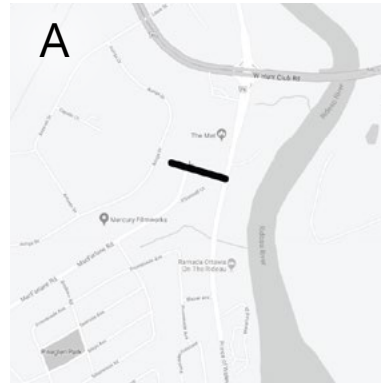
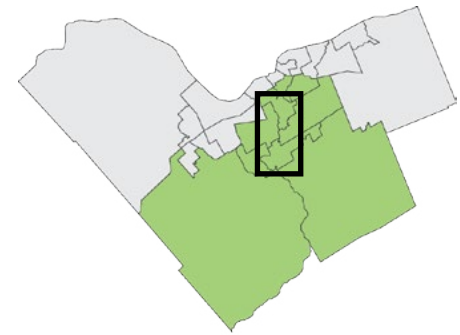
- Remove excess signage to reduce confusion and prioritize essential information.







# Ottawa South



## New in 2017

- A** Multi-use pathway on the south side of Deakin Street between Prince of Wales Drive and MacFarlane Road
- B** Multi-use pathway linking Halley Street and Harthill Way in Barrhaven

## In the 2018 City budget

- C** Segregated bike facilities on Heron Road from Data Centre Road to Bank Street, plus westbound facilities from Alta Vista to Bank
- D** Multi-use pathway along Hog's Back Road and Brookfield Road, connecting to the Airport Parkway multi-use pathway
- E** Multi-use pathway at Trainyards Drive from Industrial Avenue to Coronation Drive





# José Badillo on Winter Cycling Outside the Core

*José Badillo moved to Ottawa from Mexico in 2008. He shares his perspectives on winter cycling outside the core, in and around his community of Riverside South.*



## **When and why did you start riding through the winter?**

My first winter bike ride was in 2008. OC Transpo was on strike at the time, and I bought myself a used bicycle so that I could go to the store and buy groceries. It was cold, of course, but I got used to it. Since then, I have continued to ride my bike almost all year round—I normally don't ride when the temperature dips below  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  or in heavy snow.

## **How do you deal with the cold?**

I continue riding in winter because I enjoy the manageable challenge it presents. I feel accomplished each day as I find the best strategy to keep myself safe and comfortable. I wear different clothes for different temperatures, and combine jackets with a range of under-layers and pants as needed. It is not the same to ride at  $+5$  as at  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ , so I have learned to adjust daily with the conditions.

## **What would improve your winter biking experience?**

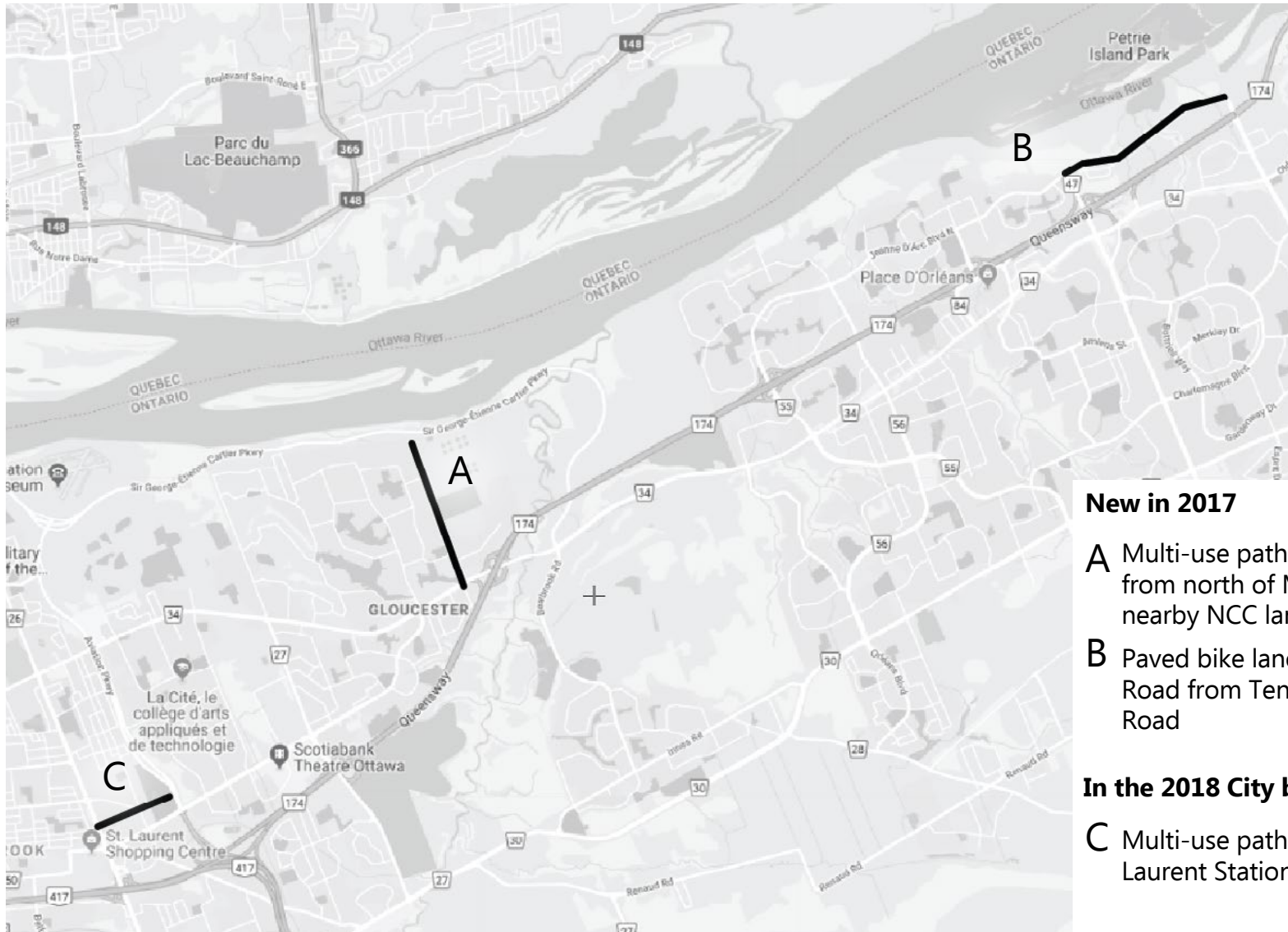
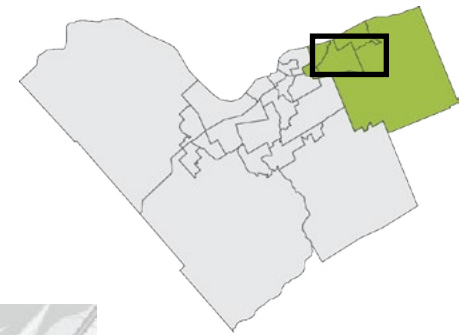
Ottawa is a great city for biking. I have been lucky because I can find a bike route to take everywhere I go, and I want to make as much use as possible of the bike infrastructure available. Of course, I could make even better use of this infrastructure if all of it were cleared in winter! Some bike routes are full of snow, making it impossible for me to ride for part of the year.

## **Do you have any tips for people who are new to winter biking?**

I would suggest that new riders talk with somebody who has experience riding in the winter. It takes some years to gain experience to ride in winter safely and as comfortably as possible. Through Bike Ottawa, I was very happy to find others willing to share stories about winter cycling. Before this, I thought I was alone!



# Ottawa East



## New in 2017

- A** Multi-use pathway on Sheppard Road from north of Montreal Road to the nearby NCC lands
- B** Paved bike lanes along North Service Road from Tenth Line Road to Trim Road

## In the 2018 City budget

- C** Multi-use pathway from Saint Laurent Station to Aviation Parkway





# Joana Chelo On Cycling with Kids

*Joana Chelo started cycling as a child in Portugal, going from her home to a nearby beach. Today, she shares her enthusiasm for cycling with her family of four in Ottawa East, including a six-year-old son and a three-year-old daughter.*

## **Why do you choose to bike with your kids, and what do you use to do it?**

I've never owned a car and got my kids biking as early as possible. It's simply the fastest and most economical form of transportation. With two young kids, our family has tried different types of bikes and equipment each year as they grow. We've used a bicycle trailer, a child seat, a box bike and combinations thereof.

## **What do the kids think?**

My kids are already cycling enthusiasts. In addition to biking to school each day, we go on fun rides as a family. Our three-year-old daughter already wants to ride her own bike and refuses to go in the trailer. My son once cried when he found out that we had rented a car to go to an event instead of biking there!







# Joana Chelo On Cycling with Kids

## **How do you manage biking to school?**

We share duties for bike rides to and from school with another family. A parent from one family bikes to school with the kids, and a parent from the other family bikes home with them. I'm in the process of creating a network of parents and kids who bike to school. Parents can volunteer to accompany kids to and from school on their bikes with set stops, pick-up and drop-off times for nearby families.

## **What advice do you have for families who want to introduce their kids to biking to school?**

Choose your housing so it is within a few kilometres of the kids' school. Share information and responsibilities with other families who bike to school. Be mindful of the kids' state: for example, when coming home from school, the kids are tired and need more breaks.

## **What do you think would encourage more families to bike with kids?**

Families need an opportunity to share their experiences of safe cycling with kids. Furthermore, sometimes what seems safe for adults is not safe for children, so we need to speak up and make sure the needs of young families are considered when planning new infrastructure and the routes we use. For example, pathways that are very close to the river may be scenic, but are riskier with kids.

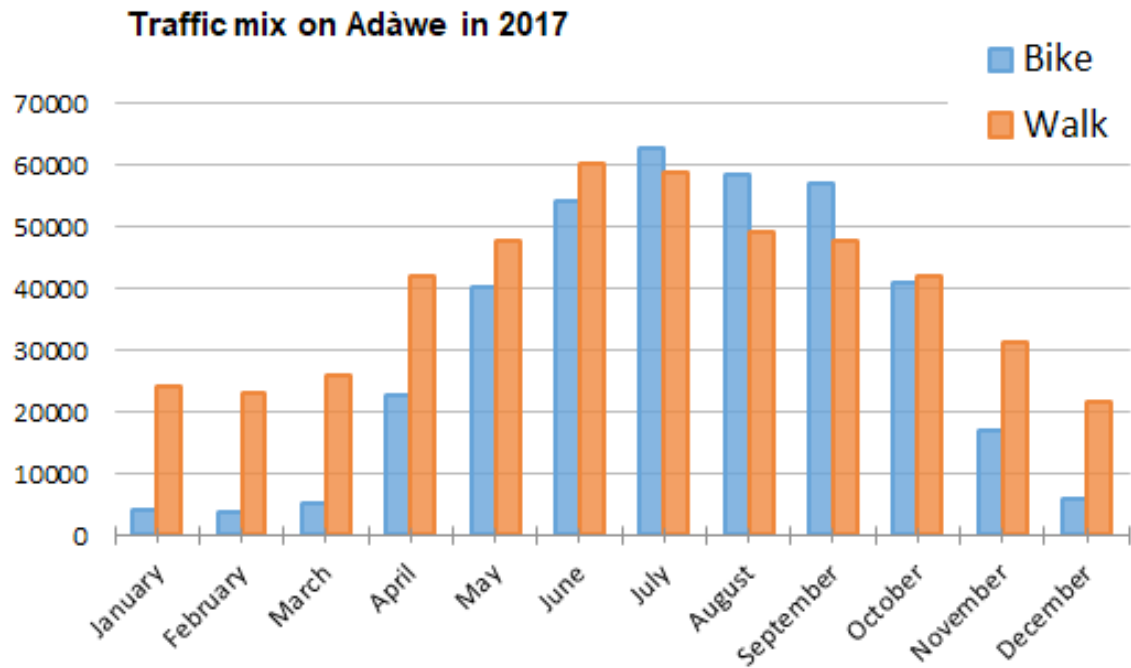




# Adàwe Bridge - As Busy As It Is Beautiful

Adàwe bridge opened in late 2015, and our newest bike counter stationed there tells us that it's as busy as it is beautiful. This crossing of the Rideau River is popular in all seasons, with roughly an equal mix of bike and foot traffic in the height of summer. In 2017, there were 845,556 crossings of the river, an increase of 12% from the previous year.

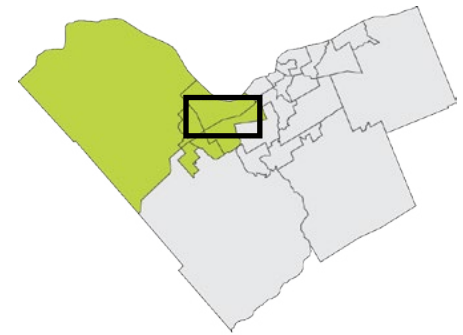
The bridge's beauty is evidenced by the fact that it is now on the tour bus circuit. Don't be surprised to find a crowd admiring the water and snapping photos of their reflections in the mirrored spheres.







# Ottawa West

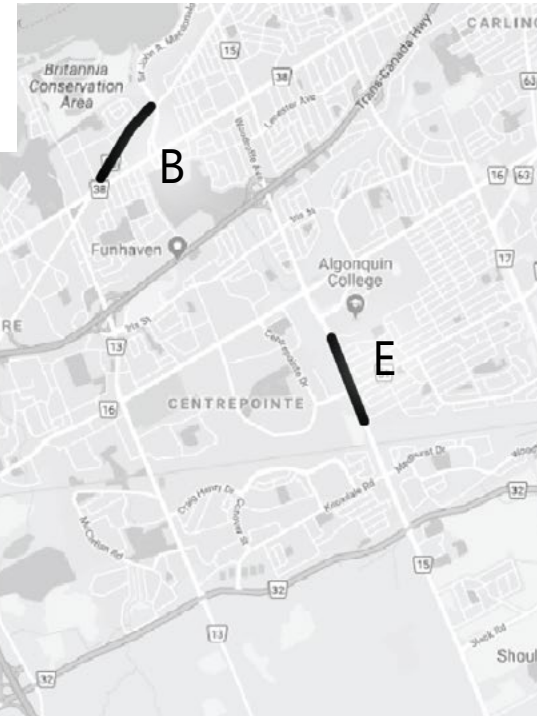


## New in 2017

**A** Bike repair station and multi-use pathway connecting communities north of Terry Fox Drive to the Richcraft Recreation Centre near the new Innovation Park and Ride

**B** Richmond Road cycle track eastbound from Forest Street to the multi-use pathway at Lincoln Fields

**C** Multi-use pathway on Campeau Drive between Teron Road and Knudson Drive



## In the 2018 City budget

**D** Multi-use pathway along Woodroffe Avenue from Norrice Street to College Avenue

**E** Multi-use pathway link in Akerson Road subdivision from Eagleson Road to Trans Canada Trail



# References

## **By the numbers**

- Statistics Canada, 2016 Census <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171129/t001c-eng.htm>
- Ottawa Commute Census Data Show Growth in Cycling Commute <https://hansonthebike.com/2017/12/12/ottawa-commute-census-data/>
- City of Ottawa Budget 2018 <https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/budget-and-taxes/budget/budget-2018#approved-adopted-2018-budget-committee>

## **Budgets and bike counters**

- City of Ottawa Budget 2018 <https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/budget-and-taxes/budget/budget-2018#approved-adopted-2018-budget-committee>
- Bike Ottawa, Annual Reports on Bicycling in Ottawa <https://www.bikeottawa.ca/index.php/2-uncategorised/33-ottawa-bicycle-reports>
- City of Ottawa Bike Counter Data <http://data.ottawa.ca/dataset/bicycle-trip-counters-automated>

## **Adàwe bridge: As busy as it is beautiful**

- City of Ottawa Bike Counter Data <http://data.ottawa.ca/dataset/bicycle-trip-counters-automated>

## **Maps of new infrastructure and budgeted infrastructure highlights**

- New infrastructure crowdsourced and verified on GeoOttawa cycling layer <http://maps.ottawa.ca/geoottawa/>
- Budgeted infrastructure highlights from Bike Ottawa's analysis of City budget 2018 <https://www.bikeottawa.ca/index.php/news/news/239-budget2018>

## **Photo credits**

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## **Production team credits**

The following team of volunteers is responsible for developing this report:

Amy Foulkes, Shawn Gettler, Barbara Greenberg, Julie Ivanoff, Jordan Moffatt, Lynne Patenaude, Hayley Price-Kelly, Maria Rasouli, Heather Shearer.





# Bike Ottawa

Copyright 2018 Bike Ottawa, Citizens for Safe Cycling. Bike Ottawa is an incorporated, not-for-profit, membership-based organization founded in 1984. We are entirely run by volunteers who are passionate about promoting cycling as a safe, fun, and environmentally friendly form of transportation. Visit [www.bikeottawa.ca](http://www.bikeottawa.ca) to learn more and get involved.

