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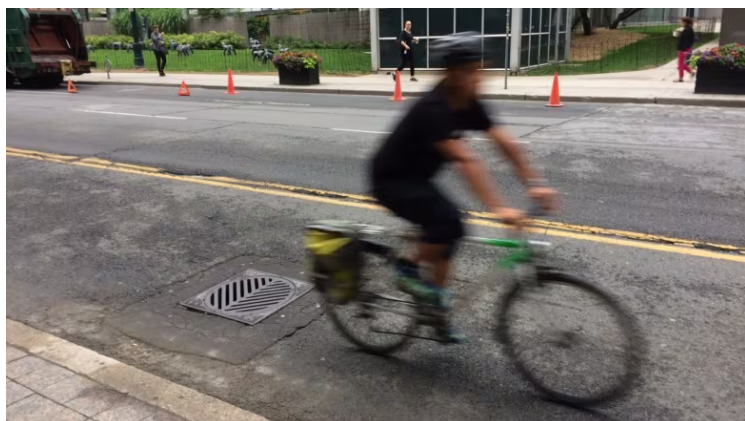
Toronto

# What Mississauga and Scarborough need to encourage more cycling in suburban areas

Advocates say separated bikes lanes are needed in both areas to make cyclists feel safe

[Taylor Simmons](#) · CBC News ·

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Cycling downtown comes with a unique set of challenges, but according to Marvin Macaraig, places

like Scarborough are still lacking when it comes to basic biking infrastructure. (Taylor Simmons/CBC)

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Marvin Macaraig would love to see more cyclists in Scarborough, but there's just one problem.

"Scarborough currently has no separated bike lanes," he said. "The suburbs present an opportunity. The cities and the communities that can transform their streets quicker are the ones that are going to benefit."



Macaraig and Scarborough Cycles offer people who'd like to begin biking a supportive network to learn the necessary skills and workshops to refine them. (Taylor Simmons/CBC)

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Macaraig, who's the Bike Hub Co-ordinator with Scarborough Cycles, spoke with *Metro Morning* Monday to highlight the particular

challenges cyclists in suburban areas face when it comes to having a safe, enjoyable ride.

He said many people would be more open to using their bikes if they had a reliable, separated network.

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It's a problem echoed by Mississauga Ward 3 Councillor Chris Fonseca, who's also a member of the Mississauga Cycling Advisory Committee.

"Those interested but concerned riders want to ride more," she said, citing surveys the city has conducted on cycling. "We've heard from over 2,000 of them that they would like to ride more; however, they don't feel necessarily safe enough on some of that infrastructure."

Both Macaraig and Fonseca agree, the suburbs have great multi-use trails for both recreational use and for commuting, but more people would regularly cycle if they saw designated routes as part of each city's major arteries.



Macaraig mentioned the Gatineau Hydro Corridor as one of the many great biking trails you can find in the suburbs. (Toronto and Region Conservation)

With some streets in the suburban areas as wide as four lanes, Macaraig said, it can be a loud and fast ride. If you're not comfortable, you're forced onto the trails.

"The network is a patchwork," he said. "We need that minimum grid."

## More cycling routes planned

Both advocates could get their wish though, as each area has plans in the works to create more cycling infrastructure.

Fonseca said the city is in the midst of executing their Cycling Master Plan, which includes the intention to create more than 900 kilometres of on and off-road cycling routes over the next 20 years.

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The city will also consider cyclists as they move forward with other projects, Fonseca said, such as the Hurontario LRT corridor and Dundas Connects, which is a plan to enhance Dundas Street from Oakville to Toronto. Those plans could include creating routes that directly connect with transit hubs.



Fonseca, an avid cyclist herself, is working towards creating more bike lanes in Mississauga, as she agreed she doesn't feel completely safe while riding on the roads. (Taylor Simmons/CBC)

"Rather than cycling being an after-thought, it's important to have a multi-modal approach, and we're hearing that from everyone," she said.

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Last year, Toronto City Council also identified Scarborough's Kingston Road as one of eight streets that could be configured to include bike lanes or bikeways. It's part of a 10-year plan to add 525 kilometres of biking infrastructure to the city.

Still, Macaraig thinks more could be done to create a network beneficial to residents.

"People come into our bike hub and tell me all the time, they understand the benefits cycling can bring, they don't want to be on transit, they don't want to be in their car, but it's safety," he said. "People want to feel safe when they ride."

*With files from Metro Morning*

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