

November 20, 2024

Environmental Policy Office  
438 University Ave, 12th Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Attention: Katerina Downard

**RE: OSPAPPH Response to Bill 212 – Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024 –  
Framework for bicycle lanes that require removal of a traffic lane, ERO# 019-9266**

Dear Ms. Downard,

I am writing on behalf of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) to express our strong support for the concerns raised by the Rural Active Transportation Collaborative of the Ontario Society of Physical Activity Promoters in Public Health (Rural Active Transportation Committee - RATC) regarding [Bill 212 Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024 – Framework for bike lanes that require removal of a traffic lane](#) and its potential impacts on our province's active transportation system. Over the years, SMDHU has been a steadfast advocate for developing a robust cycling infrastructure within our catchment area, recognizing the vital role it plays in fostering healthy built environments and promoting active lifestyles for our residents.

The introduction of a provincial approval process for bicycle lanes could slow local efforts to improve our roadways and integrate cycling facilities. We believe that local authorities are best positioned to understand and respond to the unique needs of their communities. Delays in local processes could reduce responsiveness, and impact construction times and budget which may lead to leaving out proposed cycling facility changes to meet project timelines or budgets. Safe bicycle lanes are not merely a convenience; they are essential for promoting equity and ensuring that all community members can engage in active transportation. By encouraging municipalities in Simcoe Muskoka to provide safe and accessible cycling routes, we promote healthy public policy and allow the opportunity for more individuals to choose biking as a viable mode of transportation.

In February 2024, the SMDHU Board of Health supported a motion to endorse a series of policy statements titled *Addressing Climate Health, Healthy Built Environments and Health Equity Through Public Health Advocacy*. One of the policy statements indicates that SMDHU supports approaches that advance community well-being by creating healthy, active, resilient, and sustainable communities. These communities provide physical, social-cultural, and economic environments that enable everyone to live to their full potential. Healthy communities can effectively respond to and rapidly recover from current/emerging health threats including climate-related hazards.

□ **Barrie:**  
15 Sperling Dr.  
P: 705-721-7520  
F: 705-721-1495

□ **Barrie Clinic:**  
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F: 705-721-7848

□ **Collingwood**  
280 Pretty River Pkwy.  
P: 705-445-0804  
F: 705-445-6498

□ **Cookstown**  
2-25 King St. South  
P: 705-458-1103  
F: 705-458-0105

□ **Gravenhurst**  
2-5 Pineridge Gate  
P: 705-684-9090  
F: 705-684-9887

□ **Huntsville**  
34 Chaffey St.  
P: 705-789-8813  
F: 705-789-7245

□ **Midland**  
A-925 Hugel Ave.  
P: 705-526-9324  
F: 705-526-1513

□ **Orillia**  
120-169 Front St. S.  
P: 705-325-9565  
F: 705-325-2091

Consistent with endorsement of above policy statement, the SMDHU echoes RATC's emphasis on the benefits of cycling infrastructure to support residents to achieve the minimum requirements for physical activity needed for good health. This can only be achieved if there is a local environment where cycling is available as a safe and accessible mode of active transportation. We must support local processes that allow for timely new construction or refurbishment of roads to accommodate other forms of travel beyond vehicular traffic. We encourage you to continue to support the infrastructure changes required and the accompanying processes that support movement towards more sustainable community transportation systems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AMK', written in a cursive style.

Ann-Marie Kungl  
Chair, Board of Health  
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

AMK:CB:mn