

Life**New Queens Quay accommodates all modes of transportation**

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COLE BURSTON / TORONTO STAR

A cyclist uses the new bike lanes on Queens Quay between Yonge and Bathurst Sts.

By: Shawn Micallef Living Columnist, Published on Thu Jun 18 2015

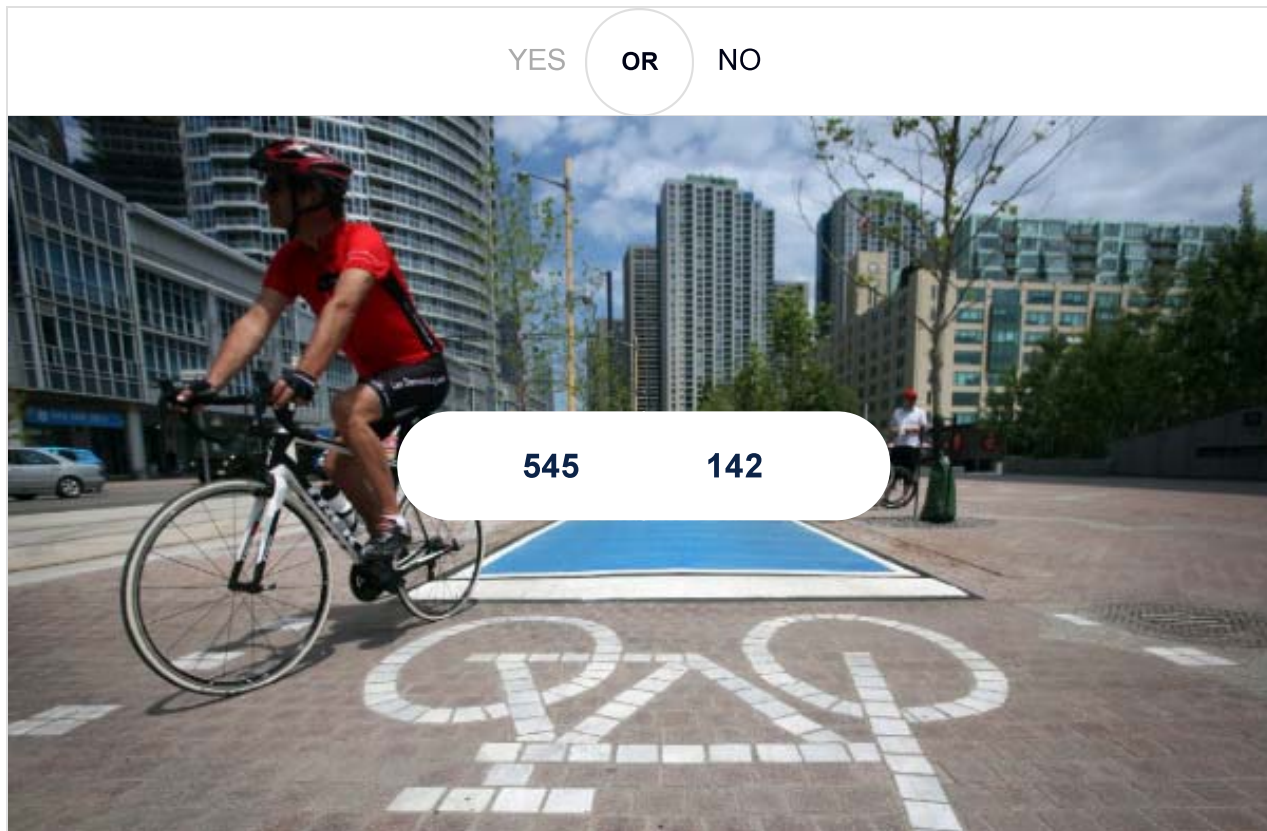
When Queens Quay officially reopens this evening, Torontonians may not recognize their new waterfront promenade: it all seems a little too European for Toronto.

Are we allowed to have something this nice?

Well, yes. The three years of construction has been worth the wait and I predict the city will fall as madly in love with this place as they did Sugar Beach. Both are the result of more than a decade's worth of [public consultation and work undertaken by Waterfront Toronto](#).

There's a lot to like about the new Queens Quay but, most importantly, there's a place for everybody now: there are separate lanes for cars, streetcars, cyclists and pedestrians. A "complete street," as the urban planners say.

Were the 3 years of construction on Queens Quay worth it?



The opening today is a pleasant counterpoint to the past few weeks, when a shocking number of pedestrians and cyclists have died on the streets of Toronto while the city was obsessed with the Gardiner East debate.

On Finch by York University, [44-year-old cyclist Zhi Yong Kang](#) was killed by a hit-and-run driver. On Avenue Road near Davenport [26-year-old cyclist Adam Excell](#) was also killed by a hit-and-run driver. And [75-year-old architect Roger du Toit](#) died after being hit by car in Rosedale.

The group that [installs white “ghost bikes” where cyclists have been killed](#), Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists, has said the deaths are now so frequent that they’re running out of bikes for the memorials.

During those same weeks, a man in North York and a woman in Don Mills were both killed by out-of-control cars that climbed the sidewalk. So far this year, 21 pedestrians and three cyclists have been killed on the streets of Toronto, [a trajectory that may break the city’s death record](#). About 2,000 pedestrians are injured in Toronto each year.

The silence from Mayor John Tory ([open John Tory’s polocard](#)) on these deaths and injuries is deafening and telling. It’s about who matters most in Toronto. Moving around this city on foot or two wheels feels increasingly fragile. Drivers seem more aggressive and entitled than ever, with the usual low levels of driving skills.

Tory used up an incredible amount of his political capital to get a squeaker of a win for his vision of a rebuilt Gardiner but, as several observers have pointed out, when he speaks of transit, it’s for “people who can’t afford cars.”

That's a patent untruth of course: many people who ride transit, bike and walk own cars, too, as I do. During the Gardiner debate, one of Tory's hand-picked deputy mayors referred to "real people" who drive cars without a peep of correction from the mayor.

Why create these divisions? At some point, even the most committed driver becomes a pedestrian after they leave their car, so mobility safety is a universal issue. Yet, silence.

I wonder if the "Slow Down: Kids at Play" movement isn't the most hollow one in the city. Do all the [people with one of those signs on their lawn](#) support blanket 30 km/h speed limits on residential streets in Toronto, or does their concern end half a block from their driveway?

True, it isn't this mayor's fault the city's design is inherently dangerous for the humans in it, but it's his job to lead us somewhere better, not exclusively pandering to a lazy notion of congestion being a kind of automobile victimization.

There is no war on the car — come to Queens Quay and see for yourself this weekend. Everybody can, in fact, get along, Toronto just need leaders who can help that happen.

Mayor Tory, people are dying on your streets and we need to know that all of us matter to you and are part of the "One City" you like tout. We are all traffic. We need you to lead us somewhere better. Look to Queens Quay for inspiration if you need it.

Shawn Micallef writes every Friday about where and how we live in the GTA. Wander the streets with him on Twitter @shawnmicallef.