

Lesson 12: Cars and bikes – can they share the road?

Media article; vocabulary builder

Council Approves Jarvis Bike Lanes

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CITY HALL BUREAU



Note: This article has been modified from www.thestar.com

Toronto city council has approved a plan to build a bike lane on Jarvis Street. The \$6.3 million "Jarvis streetscape improvement" was approved by a 28-16 vote after a day-long debate. The bike lane idea was supported by those councillors who are enthusiastic cyclists, but not supported by councillors who are worried about the increased amount of traffic the bike lane would produce.

The Jarvis streetscape improvement includes:

- widening the east sidewalk;
- planting more trees; and
- adding heritage plaques.

The improvement project will now go to the province so that it can be approved. The bike lanes would cost about \$75,000 to build and be fairly easy to install. They may possibly be completed as early as the fall of 2009. The remaining improvements would require longer to complete.

Councillor Kyle Rae, who pushed for the changes, said the road should be shared among drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. "What you want on Jarvis is to maintain the traffic, but to share that with all the users - not just for the car alone," he said.

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Media article; vocabulary builder (continued)

Mayor David Miller kicked off the debate by calling on motorists to accept longer driving times to provide more space for the growing number of cyclists to ride safely. "We're not talking about a huge transformation for drivers; we're talking about minimal inconvenience, if any," Miller told council, noting that there is a two-minute difference in driving time. "The current situation just doesn't work for cyclists," he said.

The city needs a network so cyclists can travel their entire trip safely using bike lanes, Miller said. "Cycling and the number of people who cycle in this city is booming," he said.

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Part 1 – Student worksheet for media article

Each morning, you get up and go to school by car, walking, biking or taking public transit. Thousands of other kids and working adults use the same types of transportation. With all these people trying to get somewhere at the same time, the streets can get crowded with vehicles. The result of having so much traffic is traffic jams. This causes increased emissions of greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide), which are warming the planet. It also causes air pollution which makes it hard to breathe.

We need to be able to use a variety of ways to get to school and work. We need different ways of travelling that are less polluting like walking, bike riding, or carpooling.

Answer the following questions. Use the article to find the answers:

1. What has City council approved on Jarvis Street? _____
2. Did all councillors agree this should happen? _____
Explain: _____

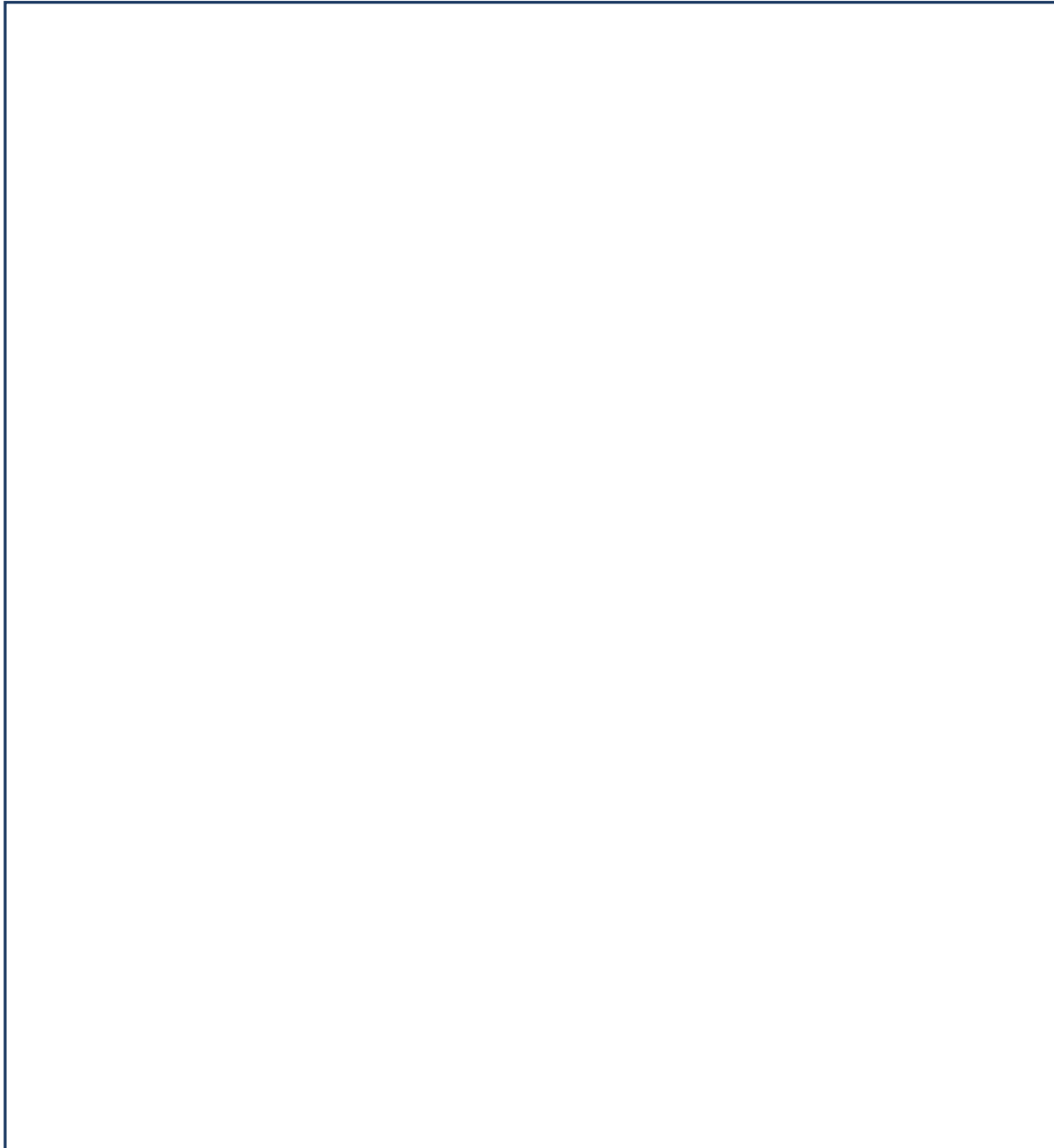
3. Do you think having a bike lane on Jarvis Street is a good idea? _____
Explain: _____

4. If you were told to recommend more bike lanes on city streets, which streets would you recommend? _____
Why? _____
5. We make bike lanes by painting a line on the side of existing roads. Is there another way to create bike lanes that will get more people biking in the City? Explain: _____

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Part 1 – Student worksheet for media article (continued)

6. Sketch a map of your neighbourhood below. Outline in green, all the routes that you could take your bike on.



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Part 2 – Student survey worksheet

Step 1: How do students in your classroom travel to school?

(A) Survey the students in your classroom. Tally how many:

Are driven to school	Take public transit	Take the school bus	Walk/cycle	Come in a carpool with other students	Other (e.g. skateboard, rollerblade)

(B) Draw a bar chart to show the final results

Step 2: How willing are your classmates to try more non-polluting ways to get to school?

(C) Survey students in your classroom who **are driven to school**. Find out if they would like to try another cleaner option for a two-week period. (For those who say “yes”, put the tally in the option they would like to try.)

Take public transit	Walk/cycle	Join a walking school bus	Come in a carpool with other students	Other (e.g. skateboard, roller blade)

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Part 2 – Student survey worksheet (continued)

Step 3: If all the students who are driven to school were able to switch to cleaner transportation, how much could your classroom reduce vehicle use? Find out the percentage of reduction by filling in the blanks below!

1. The total number of students tallied in (C) are: _____
2. The number of students who **are driven to school**, tallied in (A) are: _____
3. Take your answer from number 1 and divide it by your answer in number 2. Like this:

$$\frac{\text{total number of students tallied in (C)}}{\text{number of students who **are driven to school**, tallied in (A)}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

4. Take your answer from number 3 and multiply it by 100. Enter your answer here: _____%. Your classroom could reduce vehicle use by this much!

CARS and BIKES



Can they share the road?

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Teacher instructions

Introducing the activity

- Ask students about the different ways students might be able to get to and from school. Answers will likely include being driven, taking the school bus, walking, cycling or public transit.
- Ask students to estimate how long they think it took them to get to school that day, whether they thought it was a faster or slower trip than usual and why. This will likely lead to a discussion about traffic. If it does not, probe further by asking students if they think the roads (and school area) are busiest with traffic in the morning, lunch or after school.
- Poll students to find out their favourite way to get to and from school. This thinking will set them up for their worksheet exercises and may even spawn some new ideas for future transportation options!

Ideas for teaching Part 1 – student worksheet for media article

- Have students read the article and then ask them to select five words or phrases that they find most interesting or don't know.
- Write those words on the board and if there are any words that they don't know, discuss them and use the members of the class as consultants.
- Read the article again with the students and review the worksheet questions out loud. Record their answers on the front board to make it easy for students to complete their own worksheet.
- When taking up the answers to question 3, you may want to divide the classroom and set up a debate. For example, students could craft some arguments that they think may have been put forward during the vote "for" and "against" bike lanes.
- When taking up the answers to question 5, ask your students if they know of other countries that have a better bike-path system than Canada. (*Holland has the best cycling lane network in the world, with 19,000 kilometres of dedicated bike paths and lanes*). You may want to turn this question into a research project.

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Teacher instructions (continued)

Ideas for teaching Part 1 – student worksheet for media article (continued)

- This article also provides you with an opportunity to explore issues related to government and municipal politics. Ask students which level of government was responsible for the vote on the Jarvis Street Improvement. Poll students to find out how many have gone with their parents to vote and whether they know how old you need to be to vote. (*18 years of age.*) Do they think this age too old or too young and why? Probe their knowledge of other levels of government or government bodies such as the United Nations.

Ideas for teaching Part 2 – student survey worksheet

- **This is a good exercise to do in class before you begin the transportation part of the 20/20 Planner.** It simply gets students to think about or imagine how they might “clean air commute” to school, which is a good lead in to the actual commitment they (and their Clean Air Buddy at home) make in the 2-week transportation program outlined in the 20/20 Planner.
- Review the student survey worksheet with your class. For **Step 1**, you can divide your students into small groups and rotate them to survey each other. You can also simply poll the classroom out loud and have students record the answers on their worksheet.
- For **Step 2**, you may want to open this up to a classroom discussion, with students who get driven to school taking the lead. It will allow all students to brainstorm ideas for helping each other find cleaner ways to get to school and overcome some of the obstacles for doing so (e.g., how does a child convince a parent not to drive? how does a child deal with the fear about biking?)
- **Step 3** requires math skills, so depending on your grade level, you may either have students work through this on their own or else guide them through it out loud. The final result should give students a sense of the potential reductions in vehicle use that their classroom could achieve when kids who are driven to school are able to switch to cleaner options.