

# Laurier Avenue to get safety audit for cyclists and pedestrians

**Mayor to call on transport minister to make it mandatory that large trucks have side guards**

By Laurie Fagan, [CBC News](#)

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A safety audit of Laurier Avenue will look at both cyclist and pedestrian safety. (Trevor Pritchard/CBC Ottawa)

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson says the city is hiring an outside firm to conduct a safety audit of Laurier Avenue to see what conditions can be improved for both cyclists and pedestrians.

The announcement came Wednesday after Watson and three city councillors, including transportation committee chair Keith Egli, met with about a dozen members of the city's various cycling groups.

The meeting was planned before the death last week of cyclist Nusrat Jahran. The 23 year-old student was killed when she was pinned under the back wheel of a construction truck on Laurier Avenue near the intersection of Lyon Street.

"Obviously the tragedy that took place last week was on our minds," said Watson.



Gareth Davies says he would like to see traffic signal timing changed and a better turning radius for vehicles so there is more visibility. (Laurie Fagan/CBC)

"[The meeting] was timely because obviously we want to ensure all our cycling facilities whether it's the segregated bike lane on Laurier or connecting paths or bridges are as safe as possible."

Watson said he will also write a letter to federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau calling on the government to make it mandatory that large trucks have side guards to prevent cyclists from falling under and being crushed by the vehicle's wheels.

## **Cycling advocate calls for traffic signal changes**

In the short term the city can, within a few weeks, also take steps to move back stop bars and move yield signs so they are more visible on Laurier Avenue, said Watson.

Gareth Davies, the president for Citizens for Safe Cycling, is pleased the safety audit of Laurier Street will be accelerated and said he hopes it will be completed within three months.

In the short term he said he would like to see traffic signal timing changed and a better turning radius for vehicles so there is more visibility.

He also thinks the city should show strong leadership and make it mandatory for city-contracted vehicles to have side guards on the vehicles.



Transportation committee chair Keith Egli and mayor Jim Watson met with a dozen members of the city's various cycling groups Wednesday. (Laurie Fagan/CBC)

## **Booth Street bridge mistake**

Davies said his group was at the table to hold the city's feet to the fire. He's critical that the freshly opened Booth Street bridge has no segregated cycling lanes, something the city says it will fix by 2018.

"I think we've seen it with last week's incident and the shortcoming of the Booth Street bridge with its unsatisfactory and unacceptable cycling infrastructure," said Davies. "Those are steps backwards... those are wake up calls."

Watson acknowledged the mistake with the Booth Street bridge.

"The reality is no organization is perfect," said Watson "I think it was a mistake for us to leave off cycling infrastructure on Booth Street — [a] lesson learned no question about that."

Citizens for Safe Cycling says the majority of cycling deaths over the last few years in Ottawa have occurred with right-turning vehicles and often involve large trucks at what they refer to as "unprotected intersections."

These include Laurier Avenue and Lyon Street, Hunt Club and Merivale Road and Riverside Drive at Bank Street.

Davies and Watson say the working group formed out of Wednesday's meeting will gather again in 10 days to two weeks to keep the momentum of cycling safety moving forward.