



November 27, 2020

Matthew Green, Clerk  
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Chair and Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

***RE: IE18.1 (REimagining Yonge)***

We support the Transform Yonge option for Yonge Street in North York Centre. We believe that a bikeway along Yonge Street from the Waterfront to Steeles Avenue is a vital element of a city cycling network.

The [Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition](#) includes a diverse group of advocates with backgrounds in road safety, social justice, health care, business, and law. We believe that an enhanced role for bicycles would help our city achieve its policies relating to public health, equity, accessibility, and climate change. Our campaign takes its inspiration from [the letter to council of May 2020](#) signed by 120 community groups, and a related petition from 5,500 people, calling for the urgent installation of 100 km of bikeways to provide a transportation alternative to essential workers and transit-reliant and other residents along busy transit routes as part of the response to, and recovery from, the pandemic.

Transform Yonge – which includes protected bike lanes and wider sidewalks – would be consistent with City Council approval last month of a study of bike lanes on Yonge in Midtown from Bloor to Lawrence for installation next year. Transform Yonge also aligns with the recommended yongeTOMorrow design from Queen to College, which includes protected bike lanes and pedestrian priority areas. If the City commits to these three improvement projects, the overall quality of Yonge’s design will at last be raised to a level commensurate with its role as Toronto’s most important street.

We also note that Toronto’s Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Eileen de Villa supports Transform Yonge based on the public health benefits offered by *complete streets*. We hope that Dr. de Villa’s support convinces Mayor Tory to reconsider his previous position of moving the bike lane from Yonge Street to Beecroft Road. Shifting the bike lane to Beecroft would significantly add to the cost of this project while leaving cyclists, who will continue to use Yonge Street given its many appealing venues, without safe infrastructure.

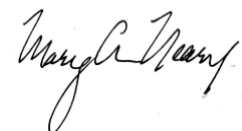
Given that reconstruction of Yonge in North York Centre is not expected until at least 2025, **we urge your Committee to consider and approve a pilot, for installation as soon as possible, consisting of bike lanes and wider sidewalks.** A pilot would not only help people practice physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic and provide an alternative for people who remain hesitant to take the TTC, but also help guide the detailed design process and identify any additional improvements needed ahead of reconstruction. We note that Motion CC21.20, approved in May 2020, included a similar ask to use the CurbTO and ActiveTO programs to make use of the curb lanes from Sheppard to Finch.

Assuming Transform Yonge and bike lanes along Yonge in Midtown proceed, there is one gap that will need to be addressed, namely the interchange at Highway 401. The interchange is dangerous for people who bike given the fact of motorists who regularly travel at faster than the posted 60 km/h speed limit, almost guaranteeing death in the event of a collision. Since crossings of 400-series highways fall under provincial jurisdiction, we encourage the City to reach out to Queen's Park to work out a solution that addresses this significant barrier. We note that the only safe crossing of Highway 401 in Toronto is on Conlins Road in Scarborough.

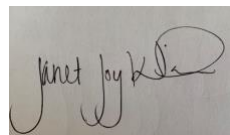
If Toronto is to become a safe and vibrant city beyond downtown, we urge this Committee and City Council to replace this decades old six-lane urban highway with a main street that includes protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks, expanded patio spaces for businesses, and an overall improved public realm.

Thank you for taking these thoughts into consideration. We would be pleased to discuss this matter further with you.

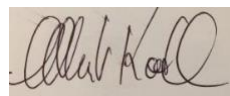
Sincerely,



Mary Ann Neary



Janet Joy Wilson



Albert Koehl

*on behalf of the coalition.*