



Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Toronto and East York Community Council
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, Ontario

submitted electronically to teycc@toronto.ca

To the clerk of the committee,

Re: Pilot wider sidewalk on Avenue Road

We fully support the call by a coalition of community groups, the Avenue Road Safety Coalition, for a pilot wider sidewalk on Avenue Road, from Bloor St. to St. Clair Ave., for installation this year. Indeed, we support a permanent wider sidewalk on Avenue Road, consistent with the city's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, which is premised on good road design that prevents predictable mistakes by road users from becoming deaths or serious injuries.

The [Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition](#), established in June 2020, includes a diverse group of community advocates who believe that the city urgently needs new bikeways, including to the inner suburbs along the busiest TTC bus routes and cross-town along the Yonge and Bloor-Danforth. We take our inspiration from a May 14, 2020 [letter](#) signed by 120 community groups calling for 100 km of new bikeways as part of the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic. This demand was supported by a petition signed by 5,500 people.

The narrow sidewalks on Avenue Road were inadequate for pedestrian safety long before the global pandemic; the imperative for social distancing has made those sidewalks narrower still. On some stretches of Avenue Road, the sidewalks are so narrow that pedestrians can barely pass each other while people with baby strollers or mobility devices fare even worse.

The current road design, which dates from the late 1950s, promotes speeding by motorists. A city study prior to the pandemic found that 60,000 motorists exceeded the speed limit by over 10km/h in a single week. We know that speed kills. In fact, 26-year old city resident Adam Excell was killed while riding his bicycle in June 2015 at the corner of Avenue and Davenport Roads, a particularly dangerous intersection, by a speeding motorist.

We are also calling for the priority installation of a cross-town bike lane on Yonge St. to mirror the busy Yonge subway. A Yonge bikeway is especially important for the many residents,

including essential workers and transit-reliant individuals, who remain hesitant to take the TTC, but have few other options.

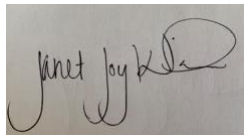
Building a resilient city, not only for the current pandemic, but for objectives related to equity, climate change, affordability and public health, means improving the safety of vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. In fact, these goals are ingrained in city policies such as the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, TransformTO, and last year's declaration of a climate emergency. We note that the number of road deaths per year in the first three years of Toronto's 2017-2021 Vision Zero plan have actually increased relative to the previous five-year period (2012-2016).ⁱ This is not acceptable.

It is for these reasons that we fully support the urgent installation of wider sidewalks on Avenue Road, a road safety design improvement that would send a critical visual cue to motorists to slow down.

Sincerely,



Mary Ann Neary



Janet Joy Wilson

Email: community.bikeways.toronto@gmail.co

Cc Barbara Gray, Manager, Transportation Services
Becky Katz, Manager, Pedestrian and Cycling Projects

ⁱ Vision Zero, based on City of Toronto data: ave. number of deaths per year, 2012-2016 = 60; serious injuries = 363/yr. For the 1st three years of the 2017-2021 Vision Zero Plan, deaths per year = 64/yr; serious injuries = 346/yr.