



To: Councillor McKelvie and members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee
cc: Matthew Green, Clerk, IEC (sent as email attachment)
From: Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition
Re: ActiveTO Midtown Complete Street Pilot – Yonge Street (IE28.7)
Date: March 28, 2022

The Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition is a volunteer advocacy group that believes transportation priorities in Toronto must be urgently re-ordered toward better cycling, transit, and walking facilities. We advocate for the reallocation of public road space away from motor traffic to cleaner, more efficient transportation options. We believe that by creating welcoming, vibrant streetscapes for people, we encourage healthy, active transportation within sustainable communities, and a more liveable city.

Recommendations

We support the ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Complete Street pilot project. It is our preference that the installation be made permanent during the spring season, 2022. However, should it be felt that more time is necessary to complete a proper evaluation of the project, we would support the proposal by staff in their March 15, 2022 report, 2021 ActiveTO Cycling Network Expansion Project Updates (“staff report”) to continue the pilot until July 31, 2023, at which time a decision is to be made regarding permanency.

Furthermore, we believe that physical extensions of this pilot to both the north and the south would maximize the many benefits of the present installation — which currently functions as a stub located between Bloor St. and Davisville Ave. We look forward to the linking of the midtown bike lanes to the first and second phases of the YongeTOMorrow project, which would get cyclists safely down to Queen St. Extending bike lanes northwards to Eglinton (and perhaps Lawrence) would enable a connection to the east-west bikeway that is being built as part of the Crosstown LRT. Growth is necessary to convert what is currently a stub to an integral component of Toronto’s cycling network.

Yonge Bike lanes constitute a lifeline for cyclists

Toronto is now North America’s fourth largest metropolis. Although it has been growing rapidly, our city is nowhere near as large as, say, New York or Paris, where the primacy of the automobile has long been challenged. Our city is still ruled by cars, both moving and parked. Instead of addressing this problem, Torontonians persist in treating the automobile’s dominance of surface space as something that justifies the perpetuation of a business-as-usual approach. We continue to see complaints that a transformed

Yonge Street impedes “traffic” when in fact a transformation of our main street would facilitate greater and safer traffic movement by curtailing the amount of space devoted to the least space-efficient mode of transportation — namely passenger cars, which are often driven during rush hour on a single-occupant basis.

Davisville Village is in the process of doubling in population, and the number of new tower projects far exceeds those going up in the neighbourhoods near Summerhill. High-rise development is even more intense in the Yonge and Bloor neighbourhood as well as at Yonge and Eglinton. A significant proportion of these tower dwellers do not own cars; they have benefited from the Complete Street pilot project, which connects the midtown with the downtown. Indeed, it functions as a veritable lifeline, linking the various dense nodes. Using the present bike lanes on Yonge, a cyclist can safely ride in a direct, straight line from Davisville Ave. to Bloor St. — **a distance of 3 kilometres**. Before the bike lanes were installed, a ride along this stretch of Yonge was terrifyingly dangerous. Now, it is actually enjoyable.

We sometimes hear it blithely said that bike lanes should be installed on local side streets rather than on an arterial such as Yonge. However, the very same barriers that restrict options for ‘landlocked’ motorists also negatively affect cyclists. There are two side street routes that offer reasonably safe alternatives to Yonge. One goes through Rosedale, while the other is located in Forest Hill and Rathnelly. Both are convoluted and involve **double the distance of the Yonge route: 6 kilometres**. Toronto is in a situation where we must make a choice between adding a few minutes to motorists’ travel times on Yonge or requiring cyclists to double their distance and trip time in order to stay safe. The answer seems obvious: if our city is to meet its Vision Zero and Climate Action Plan goals, the safety of cyclists should be prioritized. It is ethically unacceptable to put cyclists in a situation where they have to risk their lives simply in order to ride from one populous area of the city to another.

From an equity perspective, it is hardly excessive for ActiveTO planners to allot two roadway lanes on Yonge for safe cycling when motor vehicles dominate over twenty lanes on half a dozen north-south roads in central Toronto. These two lanes are being well-used. Cycling volumes have more than doubled in the period from May 2021 (pre-installation) to July 2021 (post-installation). This number is particularly impressive given that many people are cycling despite the lack of safe connections on most segments of the Yonge bike lanes. That we have tolerated this shortcoming for so long is shocking in the context of the benefits of cycling to the climate, and the fact that it is now almost 35 years since our city hosted the first conference of climate scientists in 1988.

Pandemic response and essential workers

The bike lanes have provided a safe, outdoor alternative to the Yonge subway for Torontonians who have been concerned about the risk of viral transmission inside subway cars and on crowded platforms. The ActiveTO project has also provided an opportunity for people to find relief from confinement at home — which in many cases is a small apartment or condo — and obtain exercise and fresh air outdoors. The bike lanes aren’t just used by commuters and recreational cyclists. The staff report specifies that approximately 20% of the project’s users are food delivery workers, a group that can account for up to 40% of riders at peak times. This includes members of the Bike Brigade, who have been volunteering to deliver food and cooked meals to seniors and people with disabilities. At a focus group meeting, cyclists who do food deliveries indicated that they prefer using Yonge because the bike lanes make it far safer than parallel routes such as Avenue Rd. and Mt. Pleasant Rd. (notable for gas stations and a cemetery). In contrast, Yonge has far more restaurants which actually supply the meals

which are being transported. We expect that many riders and food delivery workers will continue to cycle on Yonge, even when the pandemic has subsided.

Complete Streets

The ActiveTO Complete Streets project has enhanced the Yonge streetscape, with all users benefiting. The number of outdoor patios has been increasing each year, and we hope that this trend helps restaurants to get on a more solid financial footing. Although the primary purpose of a bike lane is to improve the safety of cyclists, it also has a positive impact on curbside patios because it functions as a buffer between diners and vehicular travel lanes. People walking on sidewalks benefit from the same buffer effect. Moreover, they gain additional protection from the project's many curb extensions. Motorists may complain about the reduction of the number of car lanes on Yonge — not so pedestrians, who now have a shorter 'danger zone' when they make mid-block crossings.

Complete streets emphasize multimodality. Pedestrians and transit riders who used to be intimidated by the prospect of riding on Yonge when it was without safe cycling infrastructure can now rent a BikeShare and try out the protected bike lanes without thinking about updating their life insurance policy.

We are also pleased that the vibrancy of the Complete Street has been increased by the installation of planters and public art.

Corridor Study

Ideally, the commencement of a Complete Street pilot project would have occurred after the completion of the much-anticipated, formal Corridor Study, which is focusing on the future of the midtown sections of Yonge, Avenue Rd., and Mt. Pleasant Rd. As with so many other matters, Transportation Services' well-laid plans were disrupted by the unexpected onslaught of a certain novel virus. We found ourselves in a new ballgame. A winning strategy required quick responses to the pandemic. ActiveTO was born on the fly, and it precipitated the launch of the Yonge pilot. This was not preceded by a multi-year, Municipal Class Environmental Assessment. In fact, this pattern may also be observed in cities such as Paris, which responded to the pandemic by implementing more radical streetscape redesigns than Toronto's — sans formal planning exercises. This is not surprising. Covid has been disrupting normal traffic patterns around the globe, making reliable data collection difficult. During a crisis, action is needed, not EAs.

It would be a mistake to conclude that the launch of the pilot was premature because City staff have in fact performed a less ambitious Corridor Comparison Analysis which has progressed far enough for reliable conclusions to be drawn. Their preliminary deliberations were presented in the staff report, "ActiveTO: Lessons Learned from 2020 and Next Steps for 2021" (March 9, 2021). They scored the 3 streets using 19 criteria — in 13 of which Yonge received a higher ranking than the other two (Avenue Rd. and Mt. Pleasant Rd). We shall mention several criteria relevant to active transportation.

Elevation change is a factor that is extremely important for cyclists. The Davenport Escarpment cuts across all three streets, creating steep hills that some people have difficulty riding a bike up. It was found that Yonge has the most moderate slope. In the cycling community, Mt. Pleasant Rd. has a reputation for being such a tough climb that few have ever considered it a serious candidate for bike

infrastructure. Neither Poplar Plains Rd. nor Bathurst St. fell within the scope of the Corridor Study, but it is worth noting that they are also steeper than Yonge, as is the hill up Avenue Rd.

Staff found that almost 90% of the frontage on Yonge Street is designated for mixed-use, as opposed to only 20% of Avenue Rd. and Mount Pleasant Rd. This means that Yonge has a far higher number of trip destinations that cyclists want to bike to (compared to Avenue Rd. and Mt. Pleasant Rd). From the standpoint of local business and the CafeTO program, it is clear that Yonge is the arterial best suited for a Complete Street makeover. In fact, exactly the same conclusion was reached in 2013, when Cycle Toronto held a workshop attended by over 35 cyclists who overwhelmingly indicated their preference for Yonge as the street on which north-south bike lanes should be aligned. In the years since 2013, multi-residential development in the midtown has been concentrated within a strip along Yonge and to the east of it. It is clear that when it comes to trip origins — as with destinations — the centre of gravity is at Yonge. In comparison, Avenue Rd. is a lightweight candidate for bike lanes.

For pedestrians, the Corridor Comparison Analysis also indicates Yonge as the preferred choice. Staff note that although vehicular traffic volumes on Yonge are lower than on Avenue Rd. and Mt. Pleasant Rd., 10 collisions involving pedestrians occurred on Yonge between 2015 and 2019 — while the other two roads only experienced 3 collisions each. Yonge is clearly the best choice for traffic calming. From the Vision Zero standpoint, slowing down traffic saves lives.

Best north-south vehicular routes

While route selection for active transportation is subject to many constraints, motor vehicle travel is more flexible. Cars can travel faster than bikes, and individual drivers will use devices such as Waze to divert from a congested route onto an alternative that may be some distance away. Collectively, this can lead to an organic redistribution of vehicular traffic when, for instance, vehicular lane reductions are implemented on a street such as Yonge. So what choices do motorists have available?

Drivers who pour down the Allen Rd. often transfer to Bathurst St., which has been allowed to degenerate into a car sewer. Bathurst has become so dangerous and hostile for bikes that few cyclists use it. Score one for drivers.

Avenue Road is favoured by people driving long distances, which is no surprise because it follows the route of former Highway 11A, leading from the lake to the 401. In the late 1950s, Avenue's roadway was widened, at the expense of sidewalks. As a result, it is faster to drive along than Yonge, but is far worse for walking. Score another for motorists.

A third major north-south route is formed by Mt. Pleasant Rd. and Jarvis St. It might be recalled that, a decade ago, bike lanes on Jarvis St. were removed largely to placate midtown motorists who maintained that this was an absolutely essential commuting thoroughfare that must be kept clear of obstructions such as cycling infrastructure. The assumption of the pro-car faction was that the Yonge St. corridor was far less useful to drivers. They got the majority of Toronto's councillors to agree, and the Jarvis bike lanes are history. Now that a full decade has gone by, it is worth reminding ourselves that cars still have a preferred status on Jarvis St. and Mt. Pleasant Rd. — a reality that nevertheless has not prevented (pre-pandemic) traffic from getting backed up during rush hour.

Finally, we come to the elephant in the room. One of the natural glories of Toronto, the Don Valley, was environmentally devastated by the construction of the Don Valley Parkway, all for the sake of faster car commuting. To add insult to injury, taxpayers are currently paying hundreds of millions of dollars to rehabilitate the Gardiner, which connects the DVP to the south end of the city's inner core. These are major sacrifices being shouldered by all Torontonians for the benefit of drivers heading downtown from points northeast. The Don Valley Parkway boasts six lanes. Prior to the pandemic, congestion was such a regular occurrence that the DVP earned the nickname, "the Don Valley Parking Lot". We note that there are no bicycle lanes on the DVP to which blame for gridlock can be attributed.

Many of the objections to continuing the Yonge pilot project are based on the assumption that increasing the number of vehicular travel lanes will offer a panacea for traffic jams. But the above four examples suggest that this is not the case: wherever one looks, traffic is clogged at rush hour. There are gradations, but at the end of the day, one has to conclude that traffic congestion is a fact of life in a metropolis as large as Toronto. Drivers can't have it all — there have to be trade-offs made on at least some streets.

BRT and multimodality

It has been suggested that the curbside travel lanes on Yonge would be better dedicated to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) rather than to bike lanes. If the desire is really for more transit, then the priority should be to remove car lanes.

What is more, we do not see the merit in concentrating rapid transit capacity on and beneath Yonge St. when there is such a dearth in nearby corridors. Optimally, a BRT route should be located on a street other than Yonge in order to:

- a) extend the coverage of the rapid transit network;
- b) introduce efficient bus service to neighbourhoods that currently lack higher order transit; and
- c) avoid duplication by decreasing the overlap of rapid transit routes.

A well-planned, expanded rapid transit network will offer motorists attractive and widely distributed alternatives to single-occupant automobile travel, thus reducing demand on arterial roads such as Yonge.

Additional benefits are obtained when sophisticated cycling infrastructure is installed on a subway line. Bikes and transit complement each other in a multimodal manner. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of building a resilient transportation system, a system where people can, for example, move from transit to cycling easily, and without fear for their safety. Cyclists can take their bicycles on the subway in order to traverse long distances. When they exit a station, they can easily switch travel modes and ride through areas that may lack good surface transit coverage (for instance, the 1 km area between the St. Clair and Davisville subway stations). Alternatively, a TTC rider can rent a BikeShare at any of the subway stations on the Yonge line and then do the 'last mile' quickly on a bike. Because the separation between BRT stops is far greater than that between regular bus route stops, BRT cannot offer the same fine-grain 'last mile' opportunities that are available to cyclists.

We concede that a Yonge BRT would add redundancy to the transit network in the event of an emergency interruption of Yonge subway service. But if Yonge St. was closed at surface level due to a

severe collision, electrical fire, terrorist incident, etc. then system redundancy would be better served by a BRT on a nearby corridor (that connects to the rapid transit grid at Bloor and Eglinton).

Shuttle bus service

There have been complaints that the reduction in vehicular travel lanes on Yonge has resulted in the slowing of bus service and shuttles that carry TTC riders during temporary subway closures. This negative impact is countervailed by the opportunity offered by bike lanes to traverse the segment of Yonge St. affected by a subway closure in a risk-free manner. Cycling eliminates the need to enter a packed shuttle bus or negotiate crowds during the transit transfer process.

Looking beyond the pandemic, we should not overlook timeframes and project completion dates. Most subway closures are being scheduled in order to expedite the construction of the Crosstown LRT, and to install Automatic Train Control (ATC) technology on the Yonge subway line. While both projects are unrelated, they share one similarity: they will be concluding in the next year or two — after which the requirement to run relief shuttle buses will fall dramatically. In the long-term we see the Yonge Complete Street being subject to fewer disruptions. Once its installation is complete, the ATC system will reduce the number of subway closures related to signal malfunctions. The running of shuttle buses will consequently be more infrequent, and therefore less of a consideration.

Landlocking Problem

The Summerhill and Cottingham neighbourhoods may be seen as outliers in that, historically, residents have lived with a different set of transportation options compared to other areas along Yonge St. The local street network suffers from a lack of connectivity. Area residents refer to their situation as being “landlocked”. This is partly the result of being hemmed in by the CPR rail line and the Yellow Creek ravine, which function as barriers that can make it almost impossible for many residents to drive out of their neighbourhood without relying on Yonge St. But another reason is historical. Back in the day, many cottages in the Summerhill and Cottingham areas were inhabited by manual labourers and railway workers who walked to work at the North Toronto Railway Station (now the LCBO flagship) and the adjoining rail yards. They didn’t travel much by car, or by horse and carriage. This is an area which has a tradition of sustainable transportation. It’s been designed to be a walker’s paradise: think byways rather than highways.

Let us explore each of the quadrants:

- East of Yonge and north of the CPR, it will soon be possible to once again walk to St. Clair Ave. East using a marvellous network of footpaths that surround and traverse the Rosehill Reservoir.
- South of the CPR, one can stroll through Scrivener Square and the Pricefield Road Playground, entering Rosedale ‘through the back door’. It is then possible to walk to Bloor or Mt. Pleasant Rd. along beautiful, sedate, tree-lined streets.
- West of Yonge and south of the CPR is Marlborough Ave., a remarkably quaint, one-way street that eastbound drivers can use.
- North of the CPR, one can walk to Avenue Rd., passing through two chained-off chokepoints that prevent passage by vehicles on Cottingham St. and Alcorn Ave. (If residents truly feel that connectivity for drivers outweighs the benefits of traffic calming, it would be a simple matter to remove the chains and open up the street network).

Clearly, the district's street and pathway network is far more porous for pedestrians than the "landlocked" descriptor suggests.

Although the North Toronto Railway Station is no longer operational, "landlocked" residents enjoy top-notch access to the Yonge subway. There are about a dozen blocks between the Rosedale and St. Clair subway stations. Subway entrances exist on no less than five streets: Crescent Rd., Scrivener Square (opening in 2024), Shaftesbury Ave., Pleasant Blvd., and St. Clair Ave. East.

In its March 24, 2022 comments, the Summerhill Residents Association expresses concern about the "future impact on travel modes of reducing the road capacity by 50%." The use of the term "road capacity" is regrettable, since it refers solely to motor vehicles and therefore excludes increases in active transportation levels that occur when the pedestrian environment is enhanced, and when vehicular travel lanes are repurposed as bike lanes. We should be talking about Road Space Reallocation, not Road Capacity.

The unfortunate, car-centric bias of some Summerhill residents is also detectable in their narrow interpretation of what it means to be landlocked. They are talking about cars, and the difficulties of driving. Never mind that people who live in far-flung, transit-poor corners of the city would most be envious of their superlative connections to the subway. Never mind that Summerhill's opportunities for pedestrians would be the envy of residents in neighbourhoods with low walk scores. Never mind that it is possible to cycle in a short amount of time from this "landlocked" area to almost anywhere in the downtown. **The district offers an amazing array of transportation options, but residents only seem to care about the one that is subpar — driving.**

Transportation Demand Management

The shortcomings of emphasizing road capacity extend beyond road space allocation considerations. This is illustrated by the history of the Crosstown Expressway, which the City of Toronto started to build in the 1960s. This project was intended to cut through the very middle of the Summerhill neighbourhood, and it would have provided extraordinarily good car connections to the Don Valley Expressway and the Spadina expressway. Had they all been completed, these three expressways would have dramatically increased road capacity, especially in the vicinity of landlocked Summerhill. But their construction entailed the demolition of many houses and would have devastated entire neighbourhoods and environmentally sensitive areas. As we all know, only one expressway was actually built.

Toronto's expressway history is an object lesson in allowing the debate to be dominated by road capacity, where the focus tends to be on expanding the **supply** of travel lanes and increasing vehicular throughput. The potential to achieve these goals within the Yonge corridor is quite limited due to constrained space conditions.

In contrast, we have far more tools available to achieve real improvements if we concentrate our efforts on **demand**. Instead of reactively spending billions of dollars to subsidize 20th century, car-centric travel habits, it makes better financial and planning sense to proactively influence travel behaviour with the object of making our transportation system more efficient, safe, equitable and environmentally sustainable. It's far cheaper to reduce peak hour demand on the transportation system than to accommodate it by throwing huge sums of money at capital and operational upgrades.

There is nothing new about this concept, which is the basic principle behind **Transportation Demand Management** (“TDM”). Rather than responding passively to unfettered vehicular traffic volumes, a TDM program involves implementing proactive measures and targeting lifestyle changes that will beneficially influence transportation patterns.

Using a TDM approach, we would be wary of hastily making a decision to remove bike lanes on Yonge in order to address road congestion problems. That’s using car-centric supply tactics typical of the expressway-building era. Modern decision-makers would admit that the root cause of congestion is a glut of vehicles choking certain roads during peak hours. The simplest solution is to reduce vehicular demand and use road space in a more efficient manner.

The Yonge Complete Street project has enjoyed what may be called a honeymoon period during its first year-and-a-half, owing to the number of white collar midtowners who have been working at home rather than commuting to offices in the Financial District. But with many downtown workplaces ramping up in-person employment, the traffic pressures on Yonge St. are expected to increase. Some people who were car-less pre-pandemic may have bought a vehicle and will want to get the fullest out of their investment. We are in a tricky situation. Many cars could soon be spending less time parked in garages and more time on the roads. We are facing a situation where, if drivers are left to their own devices, vehicular demand on Yonge will rise. The task for TDM is to send demand in the opposite direction.

Specific TDM measures

The TDM toolbox includes measures that will increase the availability of sustainable transportation alternatives to the automobile (which of course would include the Yonge bike lane). Incentives and rewards should be offered for sustainable options, with disincentives (such as pricing to be imposed on automobiles) that will control demand. In particular, an effective TDM strategy should take advantage of ways in which the pandemic has effected societal change and has altered employment, travel and shopping logistics. They used to be organized in a rigid manner, but in the last two years flexibility has become the norm. A plethora of possibilities have opened up, allowing more choice.

Because a large proportion of midtown’s workers are white collar, the area has always had above average numbers of people who worked remotely. The 2016 census for Ward 12 (St. Paul’s) found that 10.6% of residents age 15+ worked from home. However, their ranks have vastly increased during the pandemic by people who no longer regularly commute on a daily basis to the business district and other areas in the city. The Covid period has also precipitated a well-known demographic trend: large numbers of baby-boomers are retiring from the work force earlier than they had been planning. In consequence, there are more retirees living near the Yonge corridor who have ceased rush hour commuting to the downtown.

Many people have indicated that they would prefer to work from home on a part-time basis. If we lump together fully remote and hybrid workers, and then add retirees and people who are otherwise out of the labour force, we arrive at a category that may be called **non-commuters’** — essentially, people who don’t commute to work often and tend to spend a lot of their time in the neighbourhood. The trips they undertake are usually of moderate distance. They tend to travel within the confines of their local community during the day. For non-commuters, biking and walking are excellent means of obtaining exercise, going to stores and doing chores about town. We can get more of them to do this by bike if we build safe infrastructure for them. Seniors, in particular, benefit from bike lanes.

The percentage of midtowners in 2016 who may be considered non-commuters was around 43% — this figure is surely much higher during the pandemic. Many have a good deal of discretion as to how they structure their daily schedules. If we encourage them to avoid travelling on Yonge St. during peak times, this will relieve pressure on Yonge's roadway and subway. The same benefit accrues, should they be able to stay home on days when severe weather events are forecast.

Also, companies should be encouraged to schedule in-person meetings such that attendees can travel to them outside peak times. To be specific, effort should be made to avoid having employees commute during rush hour on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (which seem to be the most popular times for hybrid workers to travel to the downtown). Another time-tested TDM measure that firms can implement is the travel plan. For example, the Financial District BIA has worked with Smart Commute on this for years.

Some people who have to juggle schedules (such as working parents or caregivers) may prefer in-person work set to non-traditional schedules outside of bankers hours. They should be offered flex-time arrangements, if possible. Likewise, consolidating employment duties within a four-day work week will enable people to commute at off-peak times — relieving stress on our transportation system.

Transit use can be increased by incentivizing fare pricing and introducing an economical monthly pass that would appeal to hybrid workers and seniors who do not use transit every weekday.

Failure to address passenger congestion on the subway will result in more vehicle congestion on Yonge Street at surface level. Accordingly, the TTC should monitor subway train crowding at Davisville, Summerhill and Rosedale. If packed trains are difficult to board at rush hour, the TTC should increase subway train frequency and reduce headways, exploiting the recently installed automatic train control system.

Up to 25% of morning rush hour car trips are made to drop off and pick up children at school. Walking and cycling to school are a good open-air corrective to the home confinement that youths have been subjected to during pandemic lockdowns. The Complete Street improvements on Yonge have made it safer for active transportation use by children going to school — a trend that we should be encouraged if we want to reduce the number peak-time car trips to and from schools. Unfortunately, the TDSB has really dropped the ball on its active routes to school program in the last few years. An effective TDM strategy would involve a serious a serious commitment to revive the program.

Those people who are travelling to in-person classes, workplaces, retail, dining or entertainment destinations can use Yonge's bike lanes to get there safely, thus relieving overcrowding on car lanes and within TTC vehicles. Of course, an added benefit is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. If the Yonge pilot is not made permanent, then we will revert back to former conditions in which there was no direct way of safely riding a bicycle along the central Yonge corridor in order to get from the midtown to the downtown. Some people who were riding bikes will start driving, with negative impacts on road network congestion.

The popularity of remote work opens up other opportunities. We are seeing more midtown residents spending a greater amount of time getting about their local neighbourhoods than during pre-pandemic period (when they were likely commuting regularly during rush hour). Now, during working hours, they need to get out of the house or condo for a break. Typically, their trip will be less than 5 kilometres.

Rather than dropping off laundry or grabbing coffee or lunch at locations in the underground PATH network, they are frequenting traditional businesses on arterials like Yonge. This means that Yonge will be viewed by them not so much as a commuting thoroughfare as a main street where they shop, dine and relax. Doing this by bicycle or on foot will enable them to get more fresh air and more sun than by driving and fretting about finding parking space. Bike lanes make the daily routines of remote/ hybrid workers both safer and more pleasant. Thus, new bicycle infrastructure should be seen as an important adjunct of remote/ hybrid work that facilitates this new employment trend.

Another factor that is relevant to TDM is the frequency of trips, not just their length. Motorists often make multiple trips per day, many of them short. They often don't plan ahead, and just pull out in their car as the need arises. These trips can be reduced by encouraging people to walk or cycle when travelling distances less than 5 km. of travel. Without the need to search for car parking, errands can be efficiently combined and taken care of one after another in a sort of chain — which is why this method is called trip-chaining. When trip-chaining is incorporated into one's daily routine, it becomes natural to plan out one's day with a trip-chain in mind, rather than taking the car out spontaneously on whim. Fewer trips means less distance has to be covered, making active transportation a more viable option that requires less physical effort. If novice cyclists are intimidated by the prospect of transporting groceries without a car, we should offer workshops that teach the use of bike baskets, panniers and bundle-buggies.

Finally, it is necessary to mention a basic principle of marketing: price influences demand. It is a reality that we will see fewer cars on our streets if we impose congestion pricing on road use, financially penalize single occupant driving, raise gasoline taxes, increase the cost of parking, and reduce the number of parking spaces on our streets. These measures won't be popular, but they are effective options.

MoveTO

Many municipalities in Ontario have active TDM programs, the City of Ajax being a leader. Unfortunately, Toronto has not made comparable commitments to TDM. Our program constitutes one of five parts of the anti-congestion MoveTO initiative (which seems to emphasize traffic management measures and technical fixes). The TDM component updates work that the City had done through the older Smart Smart Commute program, providing support for employers in encouraging sustainable transportation choices.

It is our hope that City staff who are working on the Yonge Complete Street project within the framework of ActiveTO collaborate more closely with their colleagues who are involved with MoveTO. Together, they could develop a more fully fleshed-out TDM strategy that will address the various problems concerning Yonge St. that stakeholders have brought attention to. As part of this effort, they could consult staff from groups such as the TDSB, the TTC, and the Toronto Parking Authority.

One of the goals of such a collaborative approach should be to establish protocols that can be used to proceed with future Complete Street installations in a seamless way, employing TDM methods that will reduce community concerns about such potentially contentious matters as bike lanes, congestion and overburdened transit. Although the City conducts a certain amount of community consultation, we feel that more emphasis should be made in working with residents to influence demand in a positive

manner. As mentioned earlier, **TDM is all about lifestyle choices — and this won't work without effective community collaboration.**

Idling and greenhouse gas emissions

Those who advocate for motorists' mobility can display a preternatural ability to avoid being stressed by the harm caused by driving. Road fatalities are unfortunate accidents. Going to war in order to protect oil supplies — well, what's good for General Motors is good for (North) America. But the one thing that they may find really difficult to take in stride is the idling of vehicles caused by gridlocked cars — next to extensive bike lanes. This combination is something that deeply worries them. They like to expound on the connection between idling and increases in toxic tailpipe discharge and greenhouse gas levels. At TCBC we are having difficulty with the subtleties: it seems that while emissions produced by a vehicle barreling down a highway may not be a cause for concern for some people, emissions may be absolutely alarming if they come from a vehicle that is stuck in traffic on a road with a bike lane. The science is not really very clear. All we are being told is that, somehow, tailpipe discharge is more toxic within the proximity of cycling infrastructure. At any rate, the mere mention of the words "idling" and "bike lanes" in the presence of car enthusiasts can touch off in them a new-found enthusiasm for environmentalism.

We are not so sure that this enthusiasm is justified. The emissions produced by the operation of electric vehicles are virtually nil, regardless of whether they are in motion or idling. Moreover, an increasing number of cars powered by internal combustion engines are equipped with 'start-stop' technology, which cuts the engine when the car comes to a full stop and restarts it when the foot is taken off the brake.

Another important consideration is what transportation planners refer to as 'induced demand'. When more roadway space is allocated to motor vehicles, a feedback effect usually comes into play: the growth in capacity encourages people to take more car trips than they used to, or to drive longer distances than before. Thus, expensive attempts to relieve congestion can be counter-productive, and in the long run may result in more congestion.

In 2009, U. of T. researcher Matthew Turner published a study which found that increases in road capacity were mirrored on an exact percentage basis by the same increases in driving levels. The two moved in lockstep. Another study from Portland State University (2012) states that "more focused research on a limited spatial scale has shown that induced demand from individual traffic flow improvements can entirely offset emissions rate reductions." In a nutshell, less idling can lead to more driving and the spewing of more harmful emissions.

At TCBC we tend to believe that people who have a sincere concern for the environment will simply try to minimize their use of fossil fuels — without resorting to talk about idling and other sophistic subterfuges.

Climate crisis

On the issue of climate change, we no longer have the luxury — as the declaration of the city's climate emergency makes clear — of pushing action to some other place or to some other day. The only meaningful time and place for action is here, and now.

We appreciate that the bike lanes on Yonge Street are an inconvenience to some motorists. However, our notion of what constitutes an inconvenience is put into a different perspective when we ponder the “inconvenience” of death and injury to city residents from road crashes (including on sidewalks). We are all affected by the “inconvenience” of violent storms, heat waves, and floods. Climate change is making these extreme events all too common in our city — and it is causing even more drastic “inconveniences” to the millions of people around the world who have had to flee their homes to escape drought, massive hurricanes and other catastrophes. As one of the wealthiest cities in one of the wealthiest countries, it is time we took responsibility for our own significant contributions to the environmental balance sheet, including per capita emissions of greenhouse gases that are among the highest in the world

Conclusion

We congratulate Councillors Mike Colle, Josh Matlow, and Mike Layton for championing the Yonge project, which is a boon to city residents who want to travel by sustainable transportation.

Cycling and walking remain risky activities in Toronto, as confirmed by the 1,000 deaths and serious injuries of cyclists and pedestrians over the last five years alone. We cannot continue to promote walking and cycling in our city if we are not prepared to implement measures to make these streets safe, including a Complete Street on Yonge. We therefore urge Council not only to make this pilot project permanent but to move quickly toward approving an extension of the bike lanes north and south. An ongoing commitment to high order bicycle infrastructure will create a connected cycling network in Toronto that will benefit the city’s vibrancy and liveability, the health of residents, equity standards, and the climate.

Sincerely,

Michael Black and Albert Koehl

Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition
<https://www.communitybikewaysto.ca>