

IE18.1 - Re-Imagine Yonge (Sheppard to Finch)
Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study

Submission to Infrastructure and Environment Committee

December 1, 2020

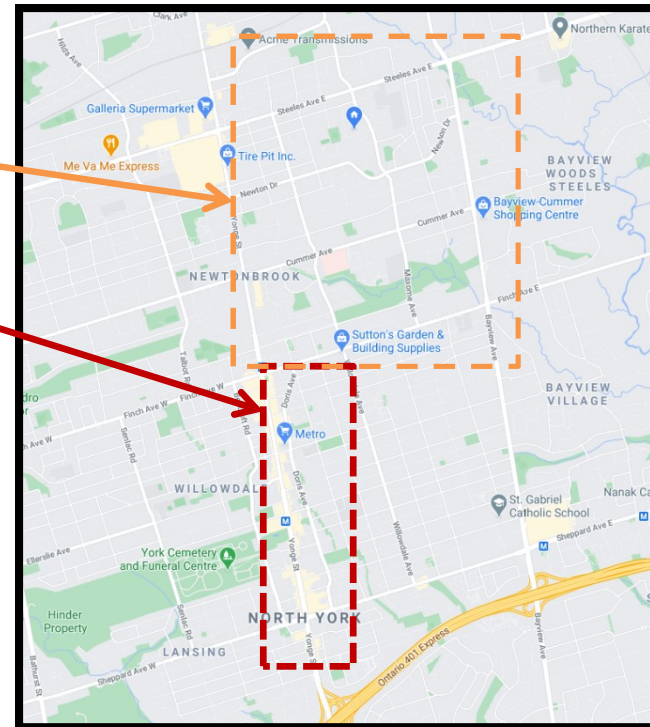


About Us

- The Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association (BCNA) and Silverview Community Association (SCA) have represent the interests of residents within Newtonbrook East for over 42-years.
- Our *catchments* adjoins the area being proposed for *lane reductions on Yonge Street* in which a bottleneck will be created to accessing HWY 401.
- Our neighborhoods are home to busy millennial parents, well educated professionals, scientists, and small business owners; and active older working “boomers”.

BCNA / SCA
Area

Re-Imagine
Yonge
Lane Reduction
Bottleneck

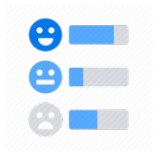


Purpose of BCNA and SCA Submission

Purpose:



To voice the concerns of residents regarding the proposed lane reduction “bottleneck” under consideration under the Re-Imagine Yonge proposal, and share geospatial trends based on pre-COVID census data, and more recent survey research held over the last three months during the pandemic.



Provide details of the results of our recent *Willowdale Lane Reduction Survey* which found that:

71 per cent were not aware of proposed lane reductions on arterial roads, including Yonge Street

82.5 per cent did not support lane reductions for private vehicles on Yonge Street.

82 per cent felt lane reduction related delays could limit employment or extra curricular activities for residents and children.



Raise concerns with the undue influence of the *Metcalf Foundation*, the *Toronto Atmospheric Fund*, *Clean Air Partnership (CAP)* in transportation planning process – and recent media releases orchestrated with groups funded by the City, without meaningful consultation of residents living in our area.

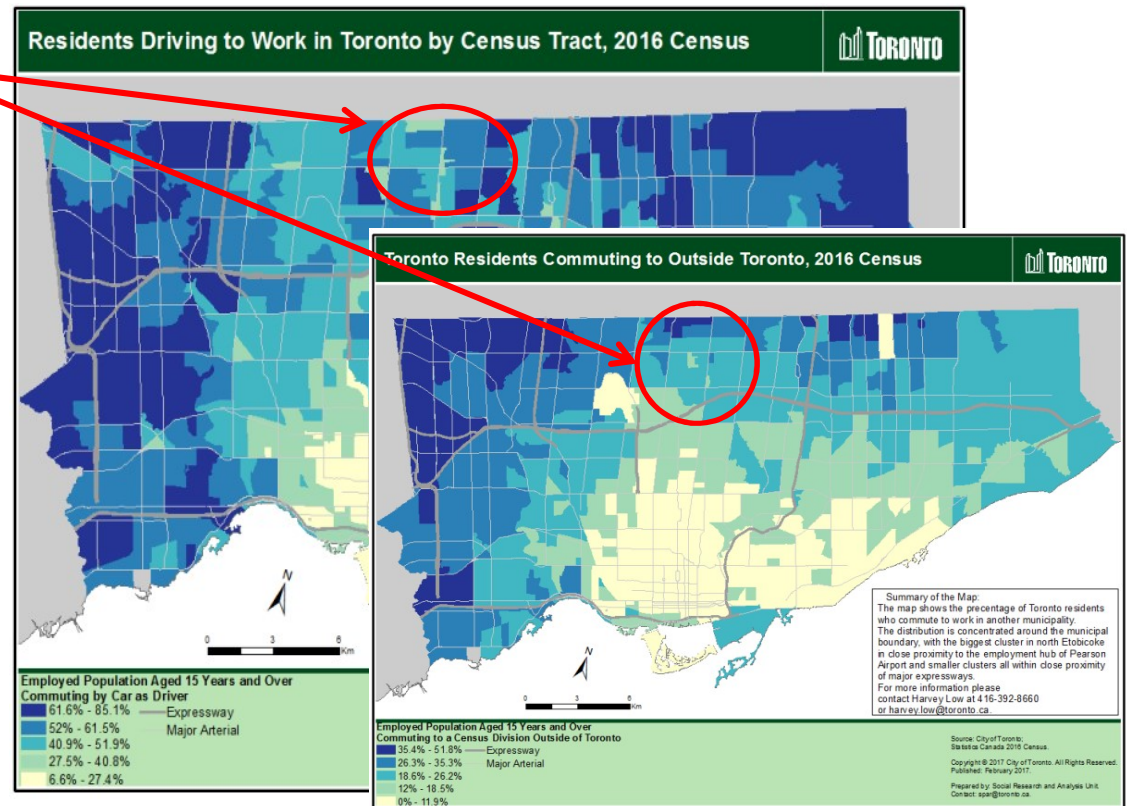
Re-Imagine Yonge & Census Data

Up to 85.1% of residents in the planning area drive to work, and **at least 51.1%** of households have a breadwinner needing to access HWY 401 to work outside the City.

By comparison only 11.9% of households downtown have members who work outside of the City, due to geographic proximity to the core and further from the 401.

BCNA & SCA Policy Considerations:

- The *Re-Imagine Yonge* staff report does not include North-South access to HWY 401 within its study, only considers access for travelers on Sheppard.
- The staff report lacks sensitivity to dynamic household transportation needs north of 401, may limit social and economic opportunities for residents inside, and around the planning area.



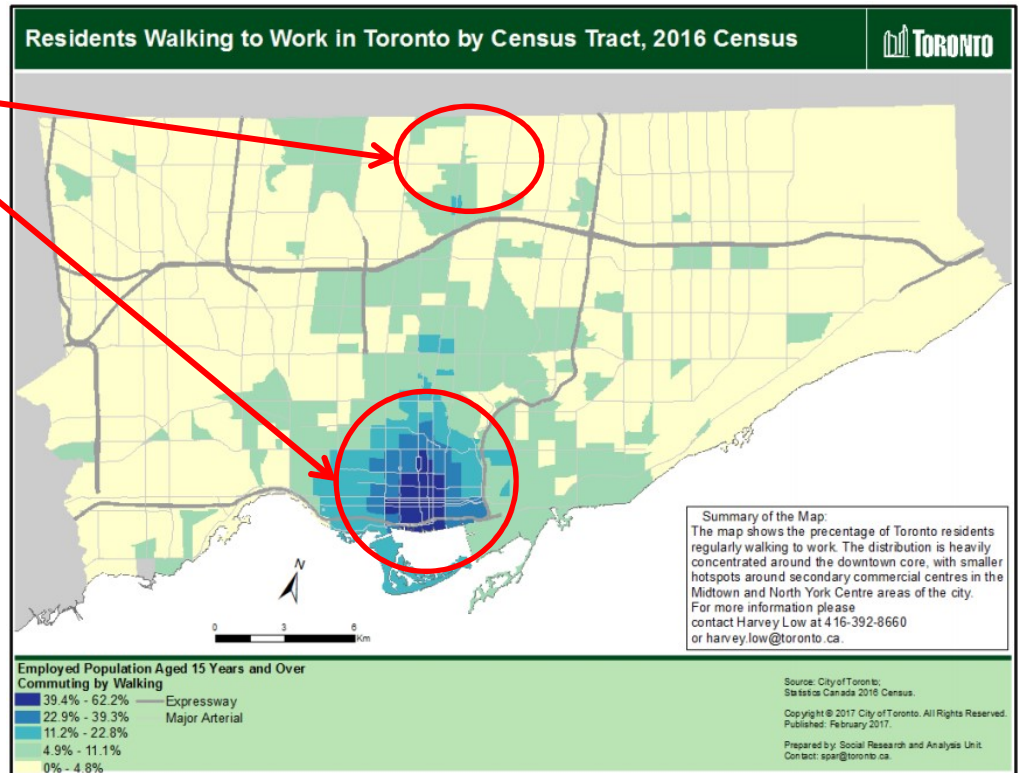
Re-Imagine Yonge and Census Data

Less than 4% in the proposed area are able to walk to work compared with nearly **62%** downtown due to proximity to commercial employment in the hub of the City.

3/4 of the 60,770 of people working Willowdale (Ward 18) are in professions such as, financial services, sales, service sector, legal, government, manufacturing and applied sciences – employment options not within walking distance or accessible via subway/bus.

BCNA & SCA Considerations

- “Streetscape” proposals in Re-Imagine Yonge which call for “lane reductions” as a tradeoff for “wider sidewalks”. We don’t believe that this is reflective of the travel & employment characteristics of our residents.
- While vehicle and pedestrian safety data on the City’s open data portal shows that over **40,000 vehicles cross Yonge and Steeles each day** to avoid costly HWY 407 – the proposed “Bottle Neck” created would result in dangerous overflow into Newtonbrook East, with no alternatives as Doris Ave. can not extend northward. This has not been modeled in the Staff Report.



Source: Traffic Signal – Vehicle and Pedestrian Data: https://ckan0.cf.opendata.inter.prod-toronto.ca/download_resource/ea4d9b68-f645-4878-bd1d-d7273450255c

Statistics Canada: Census 2016 – Willowdale CMA - <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=FED&Code1=35115&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&SearchText=Willowdale&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&type=0>

Re-Imagine Yonge and Census Data

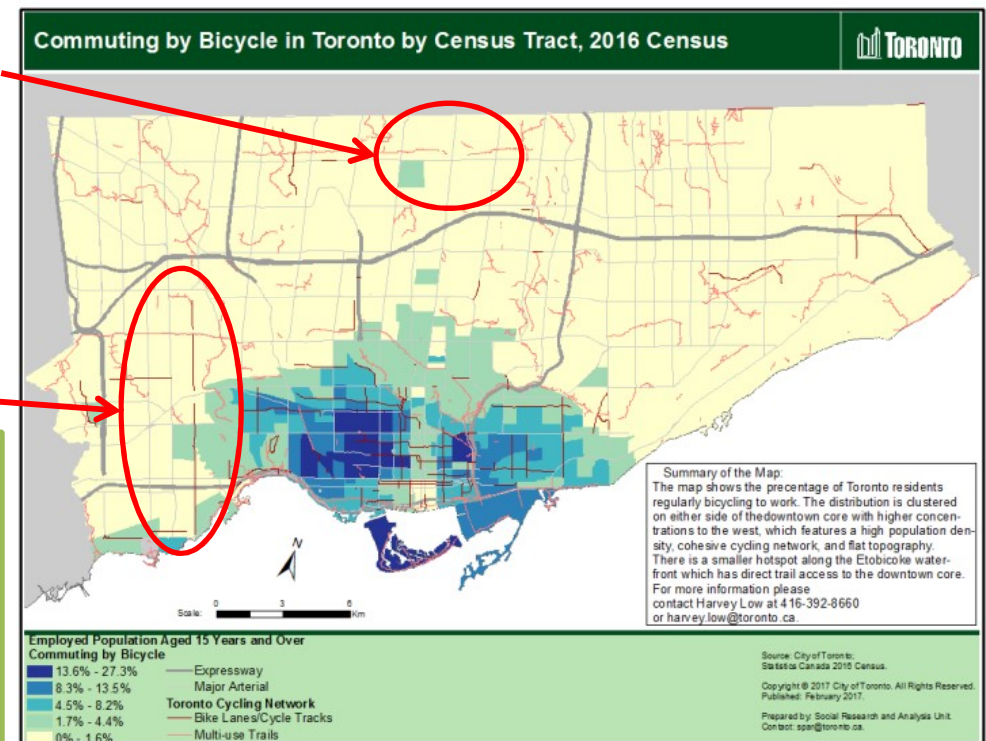
Less than 1% of residents in the planning area have [occupations](#) within 5km that would enable them to cycle to work.

The age profile of residents suggest that they would be less able to use active transportation and many may not be able to walk to the bus.

In suburbs where infrastructure was implemented over a decade ago **less than 1%** have used them, yet congestion has increased ten fold and spilled neighborhoods in those areas.

BCNA & SCA Concerns

- At the Infrastructure and Environment committee, the BCNA raised concerns with lack of consultation on the **10-Year Cycling Plan** which none of our residents were included.
- Councillor Minnan Wong proposed installing technology on Willowdale Ave to measure usage, but this proposal was rejected by Councillor Jack Layton and Councillor McKelvie (i.e. **Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF) funding interest groups advocating for Re-Imagine Yonge**)



Details of Willowdale Lane Reduction Survey

Rationale for the Willowdale Lane Reduction Survey

- The survey provided by the City of Toronto and our Councilor in Ward 18 has had a number of shortcomings:
 - It could be taken several hundred times by the same user on the same device resulting leaving it vulnerable to a being skewed by a number of special interest groups, funded by the Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF), Clean Air Partnership (CAP) and Metcalf Foundation.
 - (e.g. David Suzuki Foundation, 880 Cities, Cycle TO etc,)
 - It did not address the central and most contentious issue of lane reductions reducing access to HWY 401 for residents in North-South travel.
 - The City staff reports examines social equity and environmental issues of road users from a special interest point of view (e.g. David Suzuki Foundation and Cycle Toronto), but does not consider the social and economic consequences of lane reductions on the majority of residents impacted by time delays.
 - Assumptions have been made that proposed lane reductions would improve social and environmental implications without consulting the planning area to confirm that this was a widely held view.

Details of Willowdale Lane Reduction Survey Results

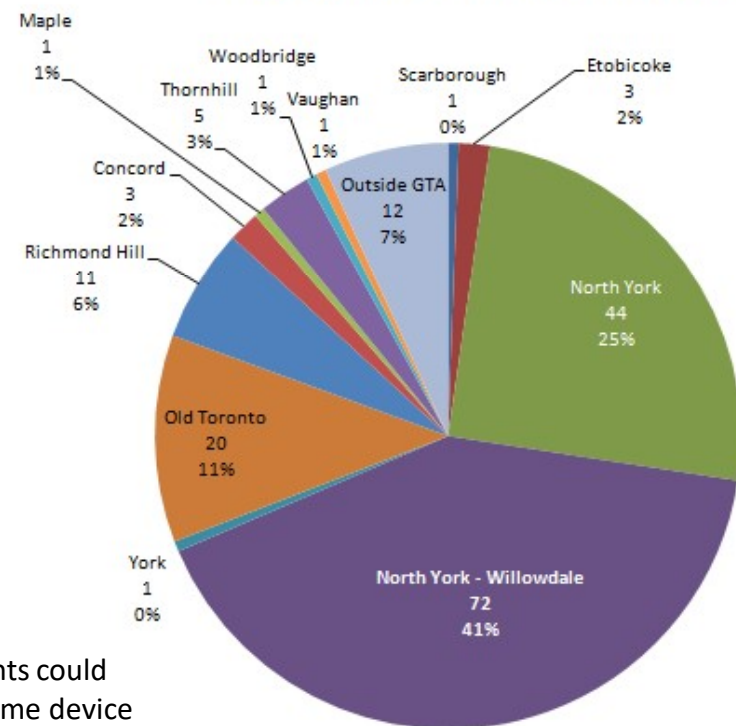
66% of the 180 respondents lived in North York

41% of the respondents resided in Ward 18 – Willowdale

14% of the respondents resided in communities bordering North York where some of the lane reductions would occur.

Note: Survey was conducted using Survey Monkey software, respondents could only respond once, and ***could not*** skew results by repeating with the same device or IP address, as is the case with the City of Toronto's, Yonge Street North Planning Survey or the Road User Survey conducted by Councillor Filion.

Willowdale - Lane Reduction Survey
Geographical Location of Respondents



Details of Willowdale Lane Reduction Survey Results

- Respondents were provided a link to the virtual consultation on YouTube of the **Yonge Street North Planning Study**, and **Master Transportation Plan** and asked to respond to a series of questions to assess their awareness of the externalities of various proposals, including lane reductions:

Did you receive formal notice in the mail or see notice of consultations from the City of Toronto regarding the Yonge Street North Master Transportation Plan?

78% of respondents were had not received notice of consultations or had seen a notice regarding the Re-Imagine Yonge or other lane reduction proposals



72% of Willowdale (Ward 18) respondents in the planning area, also did not receive or see a notice and were not aware.

Are you aware that the City planners have proposed permanent lane reductions on a the following arterial roads: Finch Ave East; Steeles Ave. West; Yonge Street; Bescroft Road, and Willowdale Ave?

72% of respondents were not aware of the proposed “lane reductions” proposed as part of Re-Imagine Yonge.

Details of Willowdale Lane Reduction Survey Results

- The City's Yonge Street North Master Transportation Plan does not include HWY 401.

Do you think access to Provincial HWY 401 should be a priority consideration in the Yonge Street North Master Transportation Plan and include travel time statistics within the survey?

84% of respondents believed that access to 401 should be a priority consideration in the plan.



87% of Willowdale (Ward 18) respondents believed that access to 401 should be a priority consideration in the Yonge Street North Master Plan, and **86%** believed it should be a collaborative effort between the Province and the City.

There is no evidence that the Re-Imagine Yonge Proposal has consulted the Province in its proposal which is conducting its own study for the 401 on-ramp.

Do you think the Province and City should collaborate on the Yonge Street North Master Transportation Plan?

84% of respondents believed the province and the City should collaborate.

Details of Willowdale Lane Reduction

- **The survey assessed social, economic and environmental of lane reductions:**

Do you feel that time delays resulting from lane reductions could limit employment or extracurricular opportunities for residents or children in our neighbourhood?

82% believed that the lane reductions would limit opportunities for residents.

Do you think lane reductions on all the arterial roads identified (i.e. Finch Ave E, Yonge St., along with increased development will increase or decrease environmental pollution in our neighborhood?

79.1% of respondents believed that the lane reductions would increase environmental pollution in our neighbourhood.



77% of Willowdale (Ward 18) respondents believed that the lane reductions and associated time delays would limit employment or extracurricular opportunities for residents and children



74% of Willowdale (Ward 18) believed the proposed plan would increase environmental pollution.

Details of Willowdale Lane Reduction Survey Results

A Bus Only Lane (BOL) is dedicated only for buses and is often painted red. Unlike High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, it does not matter how many people you have in your vehicle, you will not be able to use it at any time if you are in a car.

Do you support the idea of a lane reduction for private vehicles (e.g. cars) to create Bus Only Lanes (BOL) on Finch Ave. East?

79% did not support reducing Finch Ave. East to a single lane for private vehicles.

Do you support the idea of a lane reduction for private vehicles (e.g. cars) to create Bus Only Lanes (BOL) on Steeles Ave. West?

76.8% did not support reducing a lane on Steeles Ave. West for a Bus Only Lane (BOL)



81% of Willowdale (**Ward 18**) respondents wanted to maintain two lanes of traffic for private vehicles on Finch Ave. East. ; and **71%** also did not support reductions on Steeles Ave.

Special Interests and Re-Imagine Yonge



The City of Toronto continues through both its local boards, the **Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF)** and the **Clean Air Partnership (CAP)** continue to have a disproportionate impact and “baking in” a bias for anti-car planning policies before public consultation begins.

- TAF and its Board members continue to use taxpayer money to create and fund these special interest groups to appear at deputations to create an illusion of broad public support for its lane reduction policies.
- For example: TAF funded the creation of the “**TTCriders**” in 2010, and other groups such as 880 Cities to influence Re-Imagine Yonge promoting “lane reductions”, carefully orchestrated “media advisory sessions” and even Regional Transportation Plans (RTP) of Metrolinx.

7. Internal program allocation requests (for recommendation)

(March 22, 2017) internal program allocation requests, submitted by Ian Klesmer, Grants Manager & Policy Advisor

a) Move the GTHA: Supporting Move the GTHA core groups and strategy development – \$51,300 over six months

The Committee recommended an internal program allocation of up to \$51,300 over six months to:

- enable continued core member participation in the Move the GTHA collaborative;
- organize capacity building workshops in collective impact for core participants; and
- develop an updated communications strategy.

8-80 Cities	Pollution Probe
Asthma Society of Canada	Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment	Sustainable Prosperity
Canadian Urban Institute	Toronto and York Region Labour Council
Canadian Environmental Law Association	Toronto Atmospheric Fund
Clean Air Partnership	Toronto Centre for Active Transportation
CivAction (The Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance)	Toronto Environmental Alliance
CodeRedTO	Toronto Region Board of Trade
Cycle Toronto	Toronto Public Health
David Suzuki Foundation	Transport Action Ontario
Ecojustice	TTCriders
Environmental Defense	Transport Futures
Evergreen City Works	Wellesley Institute
Ontario Chamber of Commerce	Western GTA Summit MOVE Task Force
Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association	WWF Canada
Pembina Institute	

Source: Move the GTHA interim report, Toronto Atmospheric Fund Agreement, June 2014, updated by Evaluation Committee.

Special Interests and the Planning Process

- More recently, TAF has continued to fund a myriad of groups to run campaigns, fund the enlistment of local advocates in Willowdale, at a recent “Transit Summit” held in May 2019 – where advocates were “sharing insights and lessons” from King Street to push for Bus Only Lanes (BOL) in North York.
- As we shared with the **Special Committee on Governance**, we believe that there is an inherent conflict of interest where members of the **Infrastructure and Environment Committee** who are responsible for Yonge Street North Master Transportation Plan, and are simultaneously serving as Board members of TAF funding these special interest groups to attend deputations and support contentious “*bake in*” lane reduction policies into surveys and community consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The VP, Programs & Partnerships recommends that the TAF Board of Directors:

1. Approve the following grant requests funded jointly from the Ontario and City of Toronto endowments except where otherwise indicated:
 - a. \$225,100 over two years to City of Markham to research, coordinate, and design initial concepts for a net-zero neighbourhood of approximately 400 homes anchored by a district geothermal system (funded from the Ontario endowment only).
 - b. \$91,748 over one year to TTCriders to educate and engage the public regarding the King Street Pilot Project, to build public support for the implementation of the TTC's Ridership Growth Strategy, and to share insights and lessons with transit advocates in the GTHA.



- * In May 2019, TAF funded a TTCRiders to hold a “[Transit Summit](#)” recruiting local residents to advocate for transit priority projects, designed by like-minded City transportation planners.

Special Interests and the Planning Process

- The **Clean Air Partnership (CAP)** is also a local board of the City of Toronto co-located with TAF, under the TAF Act, and has been explicitly exempt from the City of Toronto's, [Chapter 140 - Lobbying Code](#), under Schedule A. and does not hold open meetings.
- Within CAP local board runs the [The Centre for Active Transportation](#) a co-funded partnership with Cycle Toronto the Metcalf Foundation.
- The Metcalf Foundation has also provided:
 - **\$404,000** to the **David Suzuki Foundation** in 2020 to work with **Cycle Toronto** to support to support “community organizing and government relations” to accelerate implementation. These do not appear on the City’s lobbyist registry.
 - **\$186,000** to CultureLink Settlement and Community Services & the Toronto District School Board to “**train teachers and parents**” to become “**advocates in key wards where bicycle infrastructure is being proposed**” and appear in deputations supporting lane reduction policies.

David Suzuki Foundation, The	Environment	Cycle City	2019	\$204,000
Description in collaboration with Cycle Toronto, to support community organizing, business engagement, government relations, and media outreach, to accelerate the implementation of protected bike lanes on Toronto's streets - first year of two-year commitment				
Website http://www.davidsuzuki.org				
David Suzuki Foundation, The	Environment	Cycle City	2020	\$204,000
Description in collaboration with Cycle Toronto, to support community organizing, business engagement, government relations, and media outreach, to accelerate the implementation of protected bike lanes on Toronto's streets - second year of two-year commitment				
CultureLink Settlement and Community Services	Environment	Cycle City	2019	\$93,400
Description to work in partnership with the Toronto District School Board and other community partners to train a select number of teachers and parents to become cycling advocates in key wards of the city where new bike infrastructure is being proposed, to produce a teacher and parent-friendly guide for cycling with children, and to organize events with forty school and ward councils - second year of two-year commitment				

We do not support the Re-Imagine Yonge “Bottleneck”

- The Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association (BCNA) and Silverview Community Association (SCA):
 - Do not support a plan which involves lane reductions on Yonge Street or the creation of a bottle in front of our Newtonbrook East communities which would:
 - Increases the dangerous through traffic through our neighborhood due to the bottleneck created.
 - Limit choice for active families struggling to get home on time from work outside the City to pick up their children due to reduced access to HWY 401.
 - Limits timely access to HWY 401 and practical employment or extracurricular options for residents in our community.
 - Incentivizes the extension of Doris Ave through the Silverview neighborhood potentially expropriating properties of homeowners to compensate for reduced capacity on Yonge Street.
 - As property taxpayers we do not believe that that the City should commit over \$60 million (equivalent to a 2% increase in property taxes) during an economic crisis.
 - The majority of residents in our neighborhood voted for the Mayor and his commitment [not to reduce lanes of traffic on Yonge Street.](#)