

January 7, 2021

To the Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee  
Toronto City Hall, Suite B25  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

**RE: IE19.11: yongeTOMorrow - MUNICIPAL CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ON YONGE STREET FROM QUEEN STREET TO COLLEGE/CARLTON STREET**

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee:

**We strongly urge the Infrastructure and Environment Committee to re-evaluate the Recommended Design Concept presented in IE19.11 with a greater focus on the concerns of the business community as outlined in the September 11, 2020 letter prepared by the Downtown Yonge BIA and submitted to the Committee.**

Toronto's Downtown Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) represent an area of the City that include Canada's largest employment centre with more than 400,000 employees, the highest intensity of public transit, and vibrant concentrations of retail, hospitality, arts, culture, and tourism. Efficient and reliable access to these businesses and amenities is critical to the recovery of Toronto's downtown economy post COVID-19.

We recognize the important implications COVID-19 has played in necessitating an expanded pedestrian and cycling network to support physical distancing, along with reducing the demand for public transportation. However, we also know that COVID-19 has been particularly harrowing for businesses in downtown Toronto. Predominant business organizations have been consistently at the table indicating that the Recommended Design Concept put forward for Yonge Street does not accurately reflect the needs of the business community or other key stakeholders. As presented in the September 11, 2020 letter prepared by the Downtown Yonge BIA, business stakeholders have voiced continuing concern about economic impacts. These concerns have not been reflected in the Recommended Design Concept – 4D.

The downtown BIAs are champions of our districts and for business communities in Toronto as a whole. BIAs provide the best local perspective for our areas and should therefore be engaged as partners in the decision-making process, ensuring the voices of business communities are heard and addressed in all streetscape planning and design projects. BIAs represent those who work, own properties, and pay commercial taxes and rent in the neighbourhood. BIAs are organizations that understand the impact of street level design decisions and their effect on daily operations for business and commerce. BIAs represent businesses whose contribution to the economics of the city are significant and critical to maintaining the quality of life for Toronto residents.

**yongeTOMorrow Key Considerations:**

- Consistent commuter, transit, and commercial delivery access to and from downtown businesses must be maintained as the yongeTOMorrow project advances.
- The return of the downtown economy must support all modes of travel.
- The City should work with the business community to develop a flexible street concept to permit temporary street closures for pedestrian priority areas.
- BIAs play a key role in the advocacy, operational, and communications components of these projects and should be continuously engaged throughout their execution. Within the city planning process, the Downtown BIAs should be included as an equal partner in decision making. All BIAs should have an important role in their own catchments and be afforded every right to have their voice heard.

Should you have any questions, please contact any of the undersigned.

Best regards,

**Al Smith**  
Executive Director  
St. Lawrence Market  
Neighbourhood BIA



**Briar de Lange**  
Executive Director  
Bloor-Yorkville BIA

**BLOORYORKVILLE**

**Grant Humes**  
Executive Director  
Toronto Financial District BIA



**Janice Solomon**  
Executive Director  
Toronto Entertainment District BIA



**Mark Garner**  
Chief Operating Officer and  
Executive Director  
Downtown Yonge BIA



**Tim Kocur**  
Executive Director  
The Waterfront BIA



cc: Mayor John Tory  
Deputy Mayor Denzil Minnan-Wong  
Councillor Jennifer McKelvie  
Councillor Mike Colle  
Councillor Mike Layton  
Councillor James Pasternak  
Councillor Anthony Perruzza  
Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services  
Jacquelyn Hayward, Director, Project Design & Management, Transportation Services