

Jan 7, 2021

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

I am writing today to affirm my support for the staff recommendations in item IE19.11 yongeTOMorrow - Municipal Class Environmental Assessment on Yonge Street from Queen Street to College/Carlton Street which will be discussed at the January 11th committee meeting.

The City of Toronto is mandated to replace a failing water main that is over 100 years old and buried under downtown Yonge Street. This will require major construction, and disruption in the area. What is being decided today is how we decide to put the road back together.

yongeTOMorrow is our once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform Yonge Street into a world-class, 21st century urban destination that supports critical public health objectives - for a world with COVID-19 and beyond. yongeTOMorrow proposes a full and flexible redesign of the street from College St, south to Queen St, where sidewalks will be expanded, vehicle lanes modified, restaurant patios extended and street furniture and streetscape elements added.

Lined with brand destination retailers, restaurants, music venues, theatres, the Eaton Centre, and Yonge Dundas Square, yongeTOMorrow is our chance to bring one of Toronto's most historic and culturally important streets back onto the world stage. In the wake of the successful ActiveTO and CafeTO initiatives, this is the moment to mobilize huge public support and think boldly about the future of this iconic city street. This is the time for yongeTOMorrow.

This kind of vibrant main street is crucial to the arts and culture sector as well as increasing our tourism opportunities. We can look to examples in Edinburgh and how the Royal Mile is transformed during festivals, or in Winnipeg and Edmonton, home to the largest fringe festivals Canada, to see how far ahead of Toronto they are in animating the streets around their festivals, increasing footprint not only to their event but to the surrounding businesses. Toronto is filled with a diverse and talented group of artists, and overflowing with festivals and events that could fill this space with so much wonderful programming.

Downtown Yonge St is a neighbourhood's backyard and a country's Main Street. yongeTOMorrow needs to cater to both. This proposal addresses the hyper-local needs of a community, while also strengthening the long term economic development and success of the whole city.

I urge you to support this once in a lifetime opportunity to amplify Yonge Street's prominence as a vibrant, pedestrian-prioritized, globally-significant and flexible destination street.

Kind regards



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