

KS AOB TORONTO INC & DUNDAS ATRIUM TORONTO

KS AURA RETAIL

January 11th, 2020

Good morning Chair McKelvie and Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on behalf of the owners of Atrium on Bay and Aura Retail properties both located within the proposed yongeTOMorrow Environmental Assessment Study area comprising approximately 1.2 million square feet of combined office and retail.

I am speaking to you today to voice our opposition to the staff report and recommendations before you today on the yongeTOMorrow Environmental Assessment Study.

We have helped to build a community that is vibrant and an attractive destination for tourists, students, employers, and major events and festivals. We have continued to invest our time, money, and energy in this neighbourhood in spite of rising commercial taxes, endemic social problems that the City continues to struggle to address, and serious congestion that ensnares daytime delivery and garbage removal operations, adding to the already very challenging operating environment. We do not disagree that pedestrians need more space on portions of Yonge Street, however the pedestrian only zones and bike lanes that are now part of the current preferred design concept would be especially damaging for local businesses.

Yonge Street is Toronto's most iconic main street. Although well served by public transit, public transit is not robust enough, our tenants both office and retail rely both public and vehicular transit for their success. Removing daytime vehicular traffic from Yonge Street will not strengthen the economic viability of this world-class destination. It will remove necessary access for deliveries, resulting in additional staffing and logistics costs for businesses. There is no laneway access along several stretches of the study area and many suppliers are not able to provide their services before or after regular business hours. The proposal places an unnecessary and potential crippling cost burden on the already stretched businesses in the catchment area.

This past year, businesses saw a decline in visits to Yonge Street since COVID-19, any further closures in the area will only worsen the current situation. Businesses on Yonge Street have been significantly impacted with many having closed never to open again as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Those that manage to make it through will struggle again during the lengthy watermain replacement work and rebuild of Yonge Street over the next few years. Now is not the time to be creating additional challenges for local businesses, who cannot take yet another hit by rebuilding the street in a way that completely undermines the commercial operations and vibrant character of the area, which have been built-up over decades.

Transportation experts and advocates have recognized that there will likely be an increase in car demand as the economy re-opens from the COVID-19 pandemic, while social distancing on public transit downtown will remain a challenge for the foreseeable future. In addition, the DYBIA noted during the last

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SAG meeting #7 in December 2020 that because of COVID-19 the amount of vehicle traffic is currently increasing within the residential population, as a result of delivery services, i.e., Skip the Dishes, UberEATS. This is creating congestion.

There are operational concerns regarding the safety and management of space along Yonge Street. Without additional community resources, fully closed and pedestrian-priority streets will have fewer eyes on the street in off peak hours and will be less safe for the community at-large.

For these reasons, we strongly recommend that the Committee defers consideration of the December 18 staff report, to allow for further consultation with concerned stakeholders and the community about the future of Yonge Street.

Thank you for your time.



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