



Economic Development Committee
City of Toronto
c/o Dela Ting, Secretariat Contact
10th floor, West Tower, City hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

April 15th 2014

RE: Open Streets Toronto

Dear Chair & Members of the Economic Development & Culture Committee

The Downtown Yonge BIA has committed to providing unique and vibrant urban experiences since its inception in 2001. We represent over 2,000 businesses within our boundaries between Richmond Street and Alexander Street, and Bay Street and Church Street.

We would like to express our strong support for the Open Streets TO program. It is our belief that to remain competitive in the International marketplace, Toronto must deliver these innovative programs to attract world class talent to our city. This program has been delivered in over 100 cities throughout North America including Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. We are delighted by the possibility to add Toronto to this distinguished list of cities that supports community engagement, active transportation, and unique urban experiences.

Open Streets is good for Business

We are delighted to have an opportunity to host part of the Open Streets TO route on Yonge Street and to be a part of this city-wide initiative. Yonge Street has long been the city's main street, and it has undergone an incredible transformation in the last 20 years. This program offers something truly unique by providing safe open space for people to walk and cycle, and enjoy our ever changing iconic street.

The Downtown Yonge BIA supports the principles of Open Streets to bring free and inclusive recreation to our streets through active community engagement. We have 2,000 diverse and creative businesses on Yonge Street who will be delighted by the opportunity to engage in a unique community event, and attract new people to their shops and restaurants. Our Downtown Yonge BIA team will be working closely with businesses and community





stakeholders to promote healthy lifestyles and provide free programming such as exercise classes, art workshops and free community activities for the whole city to enjoy.

Based on Open Streets events elsewhere in North America, we are confident that this program will increase foot traffic on Sunday mornings and increase business for our members. For example,

- In Los Angeles, business along the route increases by 10-57% during Open Street events.
- St. Louis's event in 2011 demonstrated that 68% of participants became aware of a store or restaurant that was new to them; 73% participants spent money at a restaurant or store along the route.

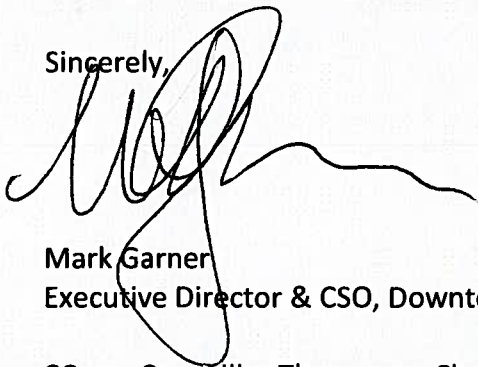
Traffic Impact

We believe that a soft close of Yonge Street to vehicular traffic, with major east/west links remaining open, will accommodate access requirements in the area.

- Since 2009 we have conducted pedestrian and vehicle counts on Yonge Street and know that on average 75% of all users are pedestrians during the summer months.
- Closing Yonge Street to vehicular traffic occurs regularly in the summer. Over the last 2 years, we commissioned traffic studies at two events which featured different types of extensive street closures (Celebrate Yonge & Scotiabank Buskerfest). Both studies have shown that vehicular traffic is accommodated on alternative arterials.

Once again, we are very excited by the possibility to bring an Open Streets program to Yonge Street and will work diligently with the Open Streets TO team and they have our full support in making this application, and delivering the program.

Sincerely,



Mark Garner
Executive Director & CSO, Downtown Yonge BIA

CC: Councillor Thompson, Chair Economic Development Committee
Councillor Wong-Tam, Ward 27
Councillor McConnell, Ward 28

