

BLOORYORKVILLE

Bloor-Yorkville Business Improvement Area
1200 Bay Street, Suite 310
Toronto, ON M5R 2A5

May 26, 2020

SENT VIA EMAIL

Mayor John Tory and All Toronto City Councillors
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors,

Re: CC21.20 Cycling Network Plan Installations: Bloor West Bikeway Extension & ActiveTO Projects

We have reviewed an email sent by Councillor Layton to our Executive Director, Briar de Lange, on Saturday, May 23rd and find it unfortunate that neither Councillor Layton, nor ActiveTO included our BIA in your bicycle lane expansion decision making, despite our multiple requests to participate, in the process, over the past years. There has been no public consultation or any community engagement with the Bloor Street property owners and businesses.

We represent a unique, high end retail node. Our section of Bloor Street is one of only two streets in Canada offering a world class shopping experience for both residents and tourists. However, retailers are suffering from the effects of the pandemic more than most. Bankruptcies are being announced daily, including such illustrious stores as Neiman Marcus, J. Crew and Bergdorf Goodman.

Now is not the time to be creating additional challenges for our retailers. We need to keep the shops open and we would like to help our merchants by organizing a scheduled curbside pickup service on Bloor between Church Street and Avenue Road. We have been working with Toronto Police Services to allow cars to stop for pick ups and are working with City Transportation Staff to set up a curb lane enclosure area for customer pick up.

The Bloor Street businesses paid more than \$13 million to improve the street and continue to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars each year for trees, flowers and street maintenance, well above the current City standard. We also designed the street to have very wide sidewalks to safely accommodate more pedestrians. A standard width throughout the city is 1.8 to 2.1 meters, where our boulevard ranges from 4.5 meters up to 11 meters in some places. The curb lane was made intentionally wider at 3.3 meters to accommodate cyclists in a sharrowed lane versus a standard car lane of 3 meters. The sharrowed lane has worked well over the past 10 years, since its installation. These costly upgrades were only put in place, once the City of Toronto approved our designs.

While we recognize that this proposal is being presented as temporary response to the COVID-19 crisis, we expect that the City will be pressured to make these bike lanes permanent and to date, the City has done a very poor job with the existing bike lanes with shoddy infrastructure, confusing pavement markings and unsafe conditions. Both drivers and cyclists are confused by the current bikes lane systems, which are inconsistent throughout the city.

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The pinch point conditions created by the bike lanes on Bloor Street, west of Spadina, have caused the Santa Claus Parade to reroute because the street is now too narrow to accommodate their floats. If the same entanglement of bike lane infrastructure is carried further east, then the future of all parades and events for Bloor Street and the Danforth will be in jeopardy to include: Santa Claus Parade, PRIDE Parade, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Yorkville Exotic Car Show, which to date has raised in excess of \$400,000 for Prostate Cancer Canada, TD Toronto Jazz festival and any other future events. The Danforth and Greektown BIAs will be relaying the many impacts that these proposed bike lanes will bring to their struggling communities as well.

Should we lose a significant number of retailers in the coming months, it will take a decade for the street to recover. Further financial hardships will impact Bloor Street rental rates, negatively impacting City's ability to maintain commercial property tax revenue, thus, increasing pressure on residential property tax mill rates.

Our retailers need your help now.

Yours truly,

BLOOR-YORKVILLE AND BLOOR STREET BIA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Valentine Lovekin
Bloor-Yorkville BIA Chair

Robert S. Saunderson
Bloor Street BIA Chair