



May 27, 2020

Sent via Email

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

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors.

Re: Proposed New Bike Lanes on Danforth

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Broadview Danforth BIA, we wish to express disappointment with how quickly this week's announcement regarding the Active TO cycling network was publicly circulated without first consulting the BIAs being impacted, particularly given this is an issue that was already of extreme interest to our small businesses.

As you are all aware, restaurants and retailers across our city are struggling to survive amid COVID-19 and this announcement puts additional stress on small businesses to manage details such as curb side pick-ups, deliveries and parking; not to mention, the longer-term impact bike lanes may have on their survival.

Your messaging conveys the temporary nature of this initiative and promises consultation; however, the message being perceived is one of permanence and quick installation with plans having already been determined. This announcement does little to diminish an already high level of cynicism amongst many of our members given they had the impression we would be participating responsibly in a City-run consultation process on bike lanes; and were looking forward to this collaborative approach.

In preparation for such a collaboration, we ran a survey of our membership last year on bike lanes coming to the Danforth, which had mixed results, but it was clear that opposition to bike lanes could be overcome by preserving access to customer parking and delivery service vehicles. To support the public consultation process, Broadview Danforth received an innovation grant to highlight innovative features of a streetscape demonstrating how cars, bikes, and pedestrians could coexist over a weekend test pilot which was to take place this June.

In the past 48 hours we have received numerous messages from our members who are looking for greater detail on the Active TO cycling network, particularly as it relates to who will cover the costs to implement the initiatives (i.e extended patio, seating, additional ppe) in front of their storefronts. As we can all appreciate, restaurants and bars wouldn't be able to cover any of the above additional costs – they are barely managing to cover rent month to month and most have

now tapped out any available credit or savings that they might have had. Some have closed, and some have been forced to close. We are eager to understand what portion of the \$4M budget announced for the Danforth will be directed towards assisting local businesses see success with this program.

In your letter to BIAs you promise that our “feedback will be needed on streetscape improvements, addressing on-street parking and loading needs, and opportunities for new or expanded patios.” We urge you to ensure this happens. We understand that this initiative is important to aid with physical distancing, but with June’s rent due in 4 days and without the help of a moratorium on commercial evictions or any truly impactful assistance from governments (including the City of Toronto), businesses are nearing the end of their rope and need to be considered in the planning of this initiative so that they can embrace this program and look forward to reopening.

Albert Stortchak
Board Chair

Philip Kocev
Board Treasurer