



Safe streets
Healthy city
Vibrant voice

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December 15, 2020

Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Members of Toronto City Council,

**RE: IE18.1 North York Centre - REimagining Yonge (Sheppard to Finch)
Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study**

Cycle Toronto strongly supports the staff recommendation for this opportunity to REImagine Yonge Street in North York.

Two years ago, City Council's deferral of REimagining Yonge was a disappointment for many local residents and advocates. Now, the updated report prepared by Transportation Services includes a thorough study on transit impact and a set of accompanying recommendations in IE18.2 to improve the transportation network around the surrounding service roads. This is a quantitative improvement on the original recommendations.

Yonge Street in Willowdale is in dire need of a full reconstruction within the next decade. There is no "do-nothing" option. Every member of Council knows the importance of maintaining our roads and infrastructure.

Now is the chance to build back better. Should the future of Yonge Street be a busy street clogged with cars and traffic, or a destination with clean air for people to socialize and a place for families to stroll and linger?

We can change Yonge Street in Willowdale from a six-lane highway to a four-lane main street. REimagining Yonge is a chance to rethink our streets not just to move cars through neighbourhoods, but encourage movement within our neighbourhoods on a more accessible human scale. This is a meaningful opportunity to support local businesses, make the neighbourhood more enjoyable for the nearly 100,000 residents that live within walking distance, and address the serious safety flaws of this section of Yonge that has seen 159 people walking or cycling struck in the past decade.

Two years ago the Transform option was arguably ahead of its time. But initiatives like CurbTO, CafeTO, and ActiveTO have shown our city's ability to transform our streets this summer. The pandemic has exposed our need for public space—not just to support physical distancing now, but to make our cities more liveable, connected, and vibrant when the pandemic is over. With a looming climate crisis, advancing city-building projects like REimagining Yonge will be essential to meeting our TransformTO goals.

As Mayor John Tory said back in May, "Our streets are going to look different in many places in the post-COVID world. We will need more road space for walking. We will need quiet streets. We will need more bike infrastructure. We are going about this in a responsible, common sense way with Toronto Public Health, Transportation Services and local councillors all involved in making common sense, health-focused decisions which broaden out our transportation network."

REimagining Yonge checks all the Mayor's boxes: support from Medical Officer of Health Dr. Eileen de Villa and Toronto Public Health; a thorough, detailed recommendation from Transportation Services; and a tireless champion in Councillor Filion.

We urgently stress Council to vote in favour of IE18.1 and IE18.2.

Sincerely,



Michael Longfield
Interim Executive Director
Cycle Toronto

Cycle Toronto is a non-profit organization representing 3,000 members that is advocating for Toronto to become a safe, healthy, and vibrant cycling city.

