



**Toronto Youth Cabinet**  
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## **Re: IE18.1 North York Centre - REimagining Yonge (Sheppard to Finch) Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study**

Hello Infrastructure and Environment Committee Members,

The Toronto Youth Cabinet is appreciative of the work done by staff to put together this report. As the city's official youth advisory body, we have been following the progress of REimagining Yonge, and support the recommendations of staff to Transform Yonge street as proposed.

This stretch of Yonge Street is vital to the city, but also a pillar for the North York community. REimagining Yonge will help to push this important corridor of our city into the future and support many objectives that the City has set. Various initiatives and plans have been tabled relating to active transportation, sustainable development, and road user safety over the years. The proposal to transform Yonge has the potential to encourage active transportation in this densely populated node, which at its current configuration is less than appealing, and unsafe. In doing so, it also encourages sustainable transport. At this point, North York Centre is more suited for automobile trips, whereas the density of residences, employment and amenities makes other forms of transportation more convenient and efficient.

The potential benefits are no less evident than through the possibilities it offers for young people. There are many youth who live in the area, and frequent the corridor to attend the five schools in close proximity to the corridor (Cardinal Carter Academy, St Cyril Catholic School, Earl Haig Secondary School, McKee Public School, and Claude Watson School of the Arts). Some other major amenities that attract young people from across the city include the North York Civic Centre, the North York Public Library and the Douglas Snow Aquatic Centre. Aside from the common knowledge that the current formation of Yonge doesn't really work for the 70% of young people across the city who don't drive to complete their trips, it is clear that transforming Yonge to enhance other forms of transportation such as walking and cycling will support youth in accessing these and other amenities in the area.

Finally, we believe that this may set the precedent for future transformations of nodes in the city, particularly in the inner suburbs. At this time, we believe that the city should undertake efforts that build a more equitable future for the city and for young people. We must be ambitious in how we integrate different road users into our city, but also how we enhance services and the built environment overall for people across Toronto. Initiatives like REimagining Yonge are few and far between in what it can do to support various goals the city



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has related to development, active transportation, road user safety and well-being for its residents. This is further magnified for young people, who stand to benefit more from main streets and major city nodes that are complete, animated, accessible and safe.

The Toronto Youth Cabinet is pleased to support the recommendations, and implore Council to move forward with this vital project to transform Yonge.

Sincerely,

Michael Manu, Executive Director