



September 16, 2020

Toronto and East York Community Council
City Hall, Committee Room 1
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Chair and Council Members,

Re: Underpass Park Community Safety Improvements

Located in the heart of Corktown, Underpass Park is a community hub for skateboarders, basketball players and home to the Underpass Farmer's Market. Nestled beneath the Gardiner Expressway, this park has a unique aesthetic of graffiti and concrete, optimal for an urban photoshoot. This is one of the many reasons vehicles enter, and drive through the park. Since opening, nightly innumerable vehicles circle the interior of the park, including passing through the basketball court and skatepark. This poses a serious threat to the safety and enjoyment of the public park.

Originally designed by Waterfront Toronto, the surrounding street is Trolley Crescent. It is a woonerf, a Dutch word meaning 'living yard', designed to promote a shared space, and traffic calming. Unfortunately, this curbless woonerf design allows vehicles to drive the pedestrian boulevard, and enter the park. The addition of more street furniture and other design elements would deter vehicles and preserve the intention of this street design.

Additionally, the land abutting Trolley Crescent is owned by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and is flood protected land. Vehicles visiting the park, or neighbouring condominiums, have been continually parking on this environmentally sensitive land and destroying the natural setting.

The expansion of the woonerf as well as design solutions, such as recreation facilities and a decorative fence, to the interior and border of Underpass Park will support community use, and prohibit vehicles from driving through the park. By curbing vehicle use, we will be able to ensure Underpass Park is a safe and beautiful space for the local community to enjoy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in partnership with the Toronto Region

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Conservation Authority to review the feasibility of post and paddle fencing along Trolley Crescent to prevent illegal boulevard parking, and protect the ravine lands and report back at the October 15, 2020 meeting of the Toronto and East York Community Council.

2. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and any other relevant city divisions, in consultation with the local community and the local councillor and to report back to the October 15, 2020 meeting of the Toronto and East York Community Council on potential design solutions to prevent undesired vehicular access to Underpass Park, including:
 - a. Extending the current fence around the perimeter of the park;
 - b. Cattle gates at the entrance of the pedestrian ramps;
 - c. P gates to accommodate vehicles at the Lower River park entrances, facilitating event permits; and
 - d. Adding picnic tables, or other recreational facilities, to better program areas of the park.
3. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report as required through City Council any budgetary approval or section 37 funding required to fund design solutions to prevent undesired vehicular access to Underpass Park.
4. Toronto and East York Community Council request Waterfront Toronto in partnership with the General Manager of Transportation Services, and any relevant city divisions, to explore the feasibility of street furniture, or other public realm improvements, along Trolley Crescent to prohibit illegal boulevard parking and report back at the October 15, 2020 meeting of the Toronto and East York Community Council.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam
Ward 13, Toronto Centre