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October 15, 2020

Toronto and East York Community Council
100 Queen Street W
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Avenue Road Pedestrian Safety Improvement Pilot Project

Dear Chair and Members,

We are writing to Community Council to support us in our goal of improving pedestrian safety on Avenue Road between Davenport Road and St. Clair Avenue West, through the implementation of a pilot project.

We had brought forward items regarding pedestrian safety on this stretch of Avenue Road several times to Community Council, yet little has changed on the ground. Improvements are long overdue, and many in our communities are frustrated about the lack of practical advancements, even after years of working with City staff on solutions. Based on our 2019 motion, Transportation Services have committed to a comprehensive study of the area (Avenue Road Feasibility Study), but that has been delayed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is now more important than ever that we recognize the need for safer pedestrian infrastructure on Avenue Road, especially with social distancing requirements that simply cannot be met in the current arrangement of the street.

We have been closely working with the Avenue Road Safety Coalition (ARSC) on these concerns for over two years, and they have requested that the City does two things on a pilot basis: lower the speed limit to 40 km/h and widen the sidewalks between Davenport Road and St. Clair Avenue West. While staff had advised against such changes as part of the ActiveTO Program in our last meeting with Transportation Service and ARSC several months ago, we want to see if the existing Avenue Road Feasibility Study can incorporate these changes on a trial basis. Rather than relying solely on modelling and theory, the pilot would allow for staff to see how some of these changes would work on the ground, what is successful, and what needs to be corrected. Rather than a detractor to the existing study, the pilot could enrich it and provide additional insights that modelling alone would not be able to do.

RECOMMENDATION

That Toronto and East York Community Council:

1. Direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to report back to Community Council in Q4 2020 or as soon as possible on the feasibility of doing a pedestrian safety improvement pilot project on Avenue Road between Davenport Road and St. Clair Avenue West, which would include but not be limited to:
 - a. Lowering the speed limit to 40 km/h;
 - b. Occupying curb lanes on both sides of Avenue Road and dedicating them for pedestrian use by separating them from live traffic with sturdy barriers and providing ramp access to existing sidewalks;
 - c. Regularly monitoring and adjusting the setup as needed;
 - d. Provide clear timelines and identify any potential issues that would need to be addressed in order to go ahead with pilot implementation;
 - e. Include findings as part of the Avenue Road Feasibility Study.

Sincerely,

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