

Bridget MacIntosh & Associates

Jan 8, 2021

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

I am writing today to affirm my support for the staff recommendations in item IE19.11 yongeTOMorrow - Municipal Class Environmental Assessment on Yonge Street from Queen Street to College/Carlton Street which will be discussed at the January 11th committee meeting.

The City of Toronto is mandated to replace a failing water main that is over 100 years old and buried directed under downtown Yonge Street. This will require major construction, and disruption in the area. What is being decided today is how we decide to put the road back together.

yongeTOMorrow is our once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform Yonge Street into a world-class, 21 century urban destination that supports critical public health objectives - for a world with COVID-19 and beyond. yongeTOMorrow proposes a full and flexible redesign of the street from College St, south to Queen St, where sidewalks will be expanded, vehicle lanes modified, restaurant patios extended and street furniture and streetscape elements added.

Lined with brand destination retailers, restaurants, music venues, theatres, the Eaton Centre, and Yonge Dundas Square, yongeTOMorrow is our chance to bring one of Toronto's most historic and culturally important streets back onto the world stage. In the wake of the successful ActiveTO and CafeTO initiatives, this is the moment to mobilize huge public support and think boldly about the future of this iconic city street. This is the time for Yonge TOMorrow.

As a Cultural Strategist and Next City Vanguard Fellow based in Toronto, I've had the pleasure of working in the arts, culture, festival, and tourism industries with clients based in Toronto and across Canada. Over the past 20 years, some of the events I had the honour of working on include Nuit Blanche Toronto, The Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival, The JUNO Awards, and the Pan-Am Games. I've also managed arts, culture and event portfolios for municipalities across the GTHA and can attest from firsthand experience that a pedestrianized Yonge Street could support more festivals and music performances, supporting a tourism industry that generated \$6.7 billion in visitor spending, while bringing in 28 million visitors to Toronto in 2019. Through my current consultancy practice, I leverage opportunities for arts and cultural expression to be recognized, protected, championed, and meaningfully integrated into public planning, space and policy. yonge TOMorrow is exactly the bold, forward thinking initiative that Toronto needs to embrace now. By adopting a complete street approach as we re-build Yonge Street, we make it easier for Torontonians and visitors from around the world to safely access the street and all the history, businesses, food, industry, culture, arts and music it has to offer. The social, economic and health benefits are numerous, as people explore and experience the gems to be found along this historic street.

Downtown Yonge Street is a neighbourhood's backyard and a country's Main Street. yongeTOMorrow needs to cater to both. This proposal addresses the hyper-local needs of a community, while also strengthening the long term economic development and success of the whole city.

I urge you to support this once in a lifetime opportunity to amplify Yonge Street's prominence as a vibrant, pedestrian-prioritized, globally-significant and flexible destination street.

Sincerely,

Bridget MacIntosh

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