

January 8, 2021

To the Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee

**Re: IE19.11 yongeTOMorrow – Municipal Class Environmental Assessment on Yonge Street. Staff Report and Recommendation before Infrastructure and Environment Committee – January 11, 2021.**

Cadillac Fairview, as owner and operator of CF Toronto Eaton Centre and on behalf of the businesses within it, is writing to again object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed reconfiguration of Yonge Street ("Recommended Design Concept 4D") – most especially **the effective closure of the Street to vehicles**. City staff's recommendation found within the above-referenced report will damage the community and vitality of business in this neighbourhood and have serious negative consequences both operationally and economically.

In addition to our property generating hundreds of millions of dollars in sales taxes, CF Toronto Eaton Centre is one of the City of Toronto's largest taxpayers contributing approximately \$80 million annually. Through our relentless reinvestment in the physical property and taxes, we have helped to build a community that is vibrant and an attractive destination for tourists, students, employers, and major events and festivals. We have committed to invest our time, money, and energy in this neighbourhood in spite of rising commercial taxes, endemic social problems, and serious congestion that significantly impacts daytime delivery, adding to the already very challenging operating environment.

We are aligned with members of our community and are eager to have an improved pedestrian experience and public realm; however, the pedestrian-only zones and bike lanes that are now part of the current preferred design concept would be especially damaging for CF Toronto Eaton Centre and local businesses. We request, in the strongest terms, that these plans be re-evaluated to maintain essential and continuous access along Yonge Street. Overall logistics are confusing and will not be adhered to and there is no additional funding for long-term enforcement.

Additionally, our clients in the shopping centre have been and will continue to be financially impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, facing a long road to full financial recovery. Moreover, these same clients will struggle again during the lengthy water main replacement work and rebuild of Yonge Street in the next few years. This is why **now is not the time to create additional challenges for local businesses**. We cannot take yet another hit by rebuilding the street in a way that completely undermines the commercial viability of our complex and neighbouring businesses. No improvement of the pedestrian realm can result from failed businesses on the street.

CF Toronto Eaton Centre's management team would like to show support for the following principles, some of which the Downtown Yonge BIA has identified as vital in the yongeTOMorrow initiative's planning for the revitalization of Yonge Street to foster economic prosperity and a vibrant community:

- **Permanent street closure, even for scheduled hours, is not acceptable.** Eliminating vehicular traffic would be catastrophic for business, significantly curtailing the number of customers and their interactions in the area. The closure of Yonge Street would exacerbate congestion on other downtown north-south arteries, as well as the east-west streets at either end of the closed section. Deliveries, waste management and other services for downtown businesses would be severely hampered.
- **A "flexible street" concept is supported for activations.** Sections of Yonge Street can be restricted to pedestrian traffic for major festivals and events – such as Luminato and NxNE – and other activations, but only for these occasions. Activations are key economic drivers and Yonge Street is an attractive location for them. By definition they take place during a finite time period; Yonge Street should be open for regular vehicular traffic at other times.

- **No bicycle lanes.** The addition of the bike lanes on Bay Street, University Avenue, and Church Street can accommodate the north and south flows while connecting to the already established bike lanes for east-west flows via Gerrard Street, Shuter Street, Richmond Street, and Adelaide Street.
- **Include power and water in street design.** Power and water supplies are essential for both regular maintenance and to support activations. Redesigning Yonge Street will be a generational opportunity to upgrade underground systems and must be considered in all planning decisions.
- **Take a holistic approach to safety.** It is imperative that designs for Yonge Street address existing and ongoing community safety issues. There are several societal issues which are now heightened during the global pandemic and have yet to be addressed in a holistic manner. These include poverty, homelessness, mental health and substance abuse. Pedestrianizing any part of Yonge Street, at any time, requires the appropriate social services and wrap-around supports.

We respectfully ask that the Committee ask staff to revisit the current vision based on the feedback you have received from key stakeholders, local businesses and the community.

Sincerely,



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