

PARTISANS

950 Dupont Street
Toronto, Canada

Jan 9, 2021
Toronto

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

I am writing today to confirm 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.

For context, many of us understand that 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. What is being decided today is how we put the road back together. Should we just pave it over? Or are there smarter ways to do this? We have to be more opportunistic about our objectives as a city, just replacing a water main doesn't maximize our tax dollars if it leads to the inevitability of more work later. These works can be piggy backed on to more ambitious and sustainable results, not just the functional replacement of a pure infrastructure need. For an incremental cost, the infrastructure work can be paired with above ground public realm improvements much more efficiently than splitting the projects up.

YongeTOmorrow is a tremendous opportunity to transform Yonge Street into a 21st century urban destination that supports critical public health objectives - for a world with COVID-19 and beyond, including cultural advancement. 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. The potential for the proposals to extend south to the lakeshore should also be recognized, for the problems of public realm reach a climax when trying to get to the lake.

Below Queen St, Yonge is defined by a rhythm of heritage structures and mid-late 20th century office infill. All of these at zero lot line for the most part. The infill is ripe for updating and replacement. Reduced automobile right of way will allow for better development of the south core along Yonge. Furthermore, Yonge, south of Front St becomes congested by overpasses. We need to re-examine the public realm to get people down to the water, this has been a consistent issue in our city: we need a plan to get people to the lake in a comfortable and

beautiful way. We also need to recognize that the financial core is becoming a neighborhood. It is no longer a bleak desolate place after 5pm, it is a bustling place where people live and there is pressure for us to supply more housing in closer proximity to the jobs there. The plan at hand for YongeTOMorrow begins to right size our streets to build the core into a dynamic global community.

Downtown Yonge St 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 encourage you to support the plans that are on the table and to envision their positive impacts on a better future for our city.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Josephson'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

Alexander Josephson

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