



GATEWAY BICYCLE HUB

10 Gateway Blvd. Suite 100, Toronto ON M3C 3A1

Tel: 416-551-2011

Web: www.gatewaybikehub.org Email: info@gatewaybikehub.org

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Overlea Bridge Letter of Support

Infrastructure and Environment Committee (IEC)

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the IEC,

We are pleased to support the students of Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute's (MGCI) proposal to revamp the Overlea bridge and making the streets of the Thorncliffe and Flemingdon communities safer and more accessible. We have been partners with MGCI since the inception of the Gateway Bicycle Hub in 2018 and we look forward to working closely with them along with other community partners to continue building a culture of cycling in Thorncliffe and Flemingdon neighbourhoods and further support ActiveTO project initiatives during this pandemic.

GBH-The Gateway Bicycle Hub is a well-established community-based service agency funded by City of Toronto's Solid Waste Management in their Community Reduce and Reuse Program providing a wide range of cycling related programs and services supporting low-income and newcomer communities in Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park at no cost. Operated in partnership with 3 reputable community agencies (The Neighbourhood Organization, Flemingdon Health Centre, and Evergreen), we are committed to building a safe and healthy community through supporting and strengthening the quality of individual and community by educating and empowering residents about active transportation and bicycle maintenance.

GBH is very aware of the barriers of the current state of the Overlea Bridge and the need to rectify the limitations it has for residents to safely commute to school or work by bicycle or even walking. Limitations such as the narrow roadways as well as tight pedestrian walkways pose dangerous conditions for anyone who wish to travel across the bridge. The bridge serves as a critical link between communities that are interconnected by businesses and schools. The Gateway Bicycle Hub plays a vital role in identifying, addressing and removing individual and external barriers to cycling. We at GBH agree with MGCI students in recognizing the poor state of condition of the bridge and is in definite need of repair and is poorly lit which makes it intimidating to cross at night.

The Pandemic has revealed the increased demand of cycling. During the lockdown and restrictions, green spaces and roadways have become a couple of sources of resilience to maintain a healthy mind and body. There are gaps in connectivity currently facing local residents when they consider active transportation. GBH is pleased to support MGCI through this proposal in addressing the Overlea bridge challenge and continue to work together to support community building. I welcome any questions you may have about our rationale behind the enthusiastic backing of the students and youth.

Sincerely,

Ed Mark | Manager, Gateway Bicycle Hub

