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IE20.12 -- ActiveTO

Infrastructure and Environment Committee (IEC)
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
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Dear Members of IEC,

I am writing on behalf of Midweek Cycling Club, a non-profit organization affiliated with the Ontario Cycling Association. In non-pandemic times, Midweek Cycling runs sanctioned bike races and learn-to-ride clinics focused on youth engagement building confidence and mastery to create athletes for life. We want safer streets because we know it's crucial for our young people.

Like almost all amateur sports across the province, organised cycling events were necessarily postponed or cancelled due to the public health crisis. **Fortunately, riding a bike still remains a safe, efficient way to stay active and get around for physical and mental health.**

We commend the City of Toronto's historic rollout of ActiveTO last year, particularly the dual focus on transportation--with the acceleration of the Cycling Network Plan--and on recreation--with the Major Road Closures. Creating more space to cycle for transportation and recreation makes our city safer, healthier, and--frankly--happier. We thank you, City Council, the Mayor, and Staff for your efforts.

We fully support the proposal for a Destination Danforth-style transformation of midtown Yonge St. Many of our members live north of Bloor St, and bike lanes on Yonge to connect to the growing network downtown would help make our trips throughout the city safer. The proposed bike lanes on lower Bayview would also help connect users along the valley. **We also support the still pending ActiveTO Overlea project**, particularly along the fast, dangerous Overlea bridge, a common route used by many people on bikes and a key connector between Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park.

We're also very encouraged about the return of the weekend Major Road Closures including Lake Shore E Blvd, although we share the disappointment about Lake Shore W Blvd. While we understand the rationale, we ask the committee to prioritize working with staff to find solutions to keep this continuous 5.5 km stretch open to tens of thousands of people every weekend. The cycling app Strava indicates I rode the ActiveTO Lake Shore W loop 49 times last year, and without doubt it was essential for helping me cope with the stresses of the pandemic.

Similarly, we encourage expanding the Major Road Closures outside the core. A list provided by Cycle Toronto including the Allen Rd, Black Creek Dr, Hwy 27, Danforth Ave near Kingston Rd, and McNicoll Ave all appear promising proposals to make the programme more equitable and help bring the joy of riding a bike across the city.

Best regards,

Michael Longfield
President, Midweek Cycling Club