

PROPOSED MIDTOWN YONGE BIKE LANES

Deputation to City of Toronto Infrastructure and Environment Committee

March 23, 2021

Madame Chair, Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Gideon Forman and I'm a transportation policy analyst at the David Suzuki Foundation.

We're here to offer strong support for a complete-street pilot on midtown Yonge.

We support this visionary project for a number of reasons.

First, it will benefit stores and restaurants that have been battered by COVID-19. As staff make clear in their excellent report, the proposal is designed to assist neighbourhood merchants: "Similar to Destination Danforth, this [Yonge] project would focus on supporting local main street businesses..."

Because the project will be good for business, it's not surprising that Toronto's business leaders have endorsed it. For example, Christopher J. Wein, chief operating officer at Lanterra Management, recently offered his support. As you know, Lanterra is one of the city's most respected condominium developers.

Mr. Wein added his name to an open letter that reads, in part: "Making Midtown Yonge into a complete street, and bringing back CaféTO on-street patios, will also offer a much-needed boost to our main street businesses after this winter's tough lockdown."

As well, the proposed pilot will help the city meet its climate targets. When the COVID pandemic has been tamed – and we hope it's soon – the city will still face that *other* emergency.

Gasoline-powered cars are a massive source of greenhouse gas emissions, and we cannot tackle the climate crisis unless we give residents safe, convenient alternatives.

The pilot is great because it makes leaving the car at home more attractive. It will connect bike lanes on Bloor to future lanes on main streets such as Eglinton — a key step in creating a cycling network that runs city-wide. It will let us reach our jobs *downtown* or visit a restaurant *uptown* without using a motor vehicle.

The pilot will also make a real contribution to public health – improving our fitness and allowing residents to travel and exercise in a physically distanced manner. No wonder local physicians and Doctors for Safe Cycling endorse the project.

Finally, the pilot is democratic: local residents want it!

In fact, nine residents' groups – including the Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations, the Deer Park Residents Group and the Lytton Park Residents' Organization – signed an open letter we circulated supporting the pilot.

Good for business, good for the climate, good for health, good for democracy: a complete street on midtown Yonge would benefit Toronto in a host of ways.

We urge you to support it, and we're certain your constituents will applaud you if you do.

Thank you.