

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM36.18	ACTION			Ward: All
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Making Immediate Safety Improvements to Avenue Road - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Josh Matlow

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Josh Matlow, recommends that:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services to expedite the Avenue Road Safety Coalition’s requests for a complete streets pilot and intervention, and extend this approach south of Davenport Road.
2. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services to provide an update to the December 2, 2021 meeting of Infrastructure and Environment Committee on:
 - a. a broad based, systemic, street-by-street approach to proactively address dangerous roads (6+ lane arterial roadways with high speed limits);
 - b. implementation of greater safety measures for cyclists during construction activity; and
 - c. implementation of safety mandates for heavy trucks and downsizing fleets.

Summary

Following the devastating news about the death of an 18 year old cyclist on our streets and several other incidents of pedestrian safety around the City, Council must make immediate intervention on Avenue Road.

Death on our streets can be prevented. The situation on Avenue Road took place along a stretch of Avenue Road which Council has previously identified for study for ActiveTO intervention (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC21.20>) and the installation of basic cycling infrastructure as identified by Councillor Matlow. We must complete the new design and make other changes now to make Avenue Road safer for cyclists, pedestrians, and all road users.

Investing into transformation of our streets is essential. Other cities around the world, including

New York and Paris, have boldly challenged the status quo by prioritizing substantially safer streets. Unfortunately, Toronto's priorities remain stuck in the middle of the last century demonstrated by recent budgets featuring billions of dollars funneled toward the Gardiner Expressway. Meanwhile we wait years for cost effective cycling infrastructure that is proven to make our roads safer for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Immediately prior to the tragedy on Avenue Road, a video shared on social media showed an area of cycling infrastructure just southeast on Bloor Street obstructed by road work and insufficient signage, causing drivers to dangerously merge into the cycling lane, and leading to many near misses. The following day, the same issue occurred at the southwest corner of the intersection. City Council has repeatedly asked to review these issues, which come up frequently, and to make changes that would support the safety of residents. However, we continue to be met with delays.

City Council has approved measures that have seen limited implementation which could have helped to avoid serious injuries, including: work zone coordination issues in relation to disruption of the bike lane; the need to implement a 1-metre passing rule between cyclists and vehicles on all roads; and advocacy to Transport Canada for the installation of side-guards (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL23.7>).

City Council also supported Councillor Layton's request for implementation of greater safety measures for cyclists during construction activity, with a focus on the development of new construction condition practices, and ensuring that protocols are in place that allow for the maintenance of cycling infrastructure during road construction and closures (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PW5.10>).

Avenue Road has also been identified for numerous safety improvements by the Avenue Road Safety Coalition (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.TE19.49>). The Coalition's recommendations include lowering the speed limit to 40 kilometres per hour, narrowing the roadway by dedicating the curb lanes to pedestrian use by separating them from live traffic with sturdy barriers and widening sidewalks, and providing ramp access to existing sidewalks and greening the new landscape. We sought to have this pilot extend from Bloor Street to St. Clair Avenue, but were advised that this is not feasible. This installation, in combination with cycling infrastructure, would significantly lower speeds on this stretch, and create a buffer between fast moving traffic and our most vulnerable road users.

In the absence of regulatory changes, and the political will and dedication of resources needed to impact behavioural change, the physical environment must be altered to reflect the vision of safety that we purport to support through Vision Zero. We need a broad-based approach to proactively address roads with similar characteristics as Avenue Road (6+ lane major arterial roadways with high speed limits and major destinations). The City of Toronto declared support for Vision Zero 5 years ago yet we're still missing the systemic, street-by-street approach that will prevent unnecessary deaths on our roads.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM36.18