



The Bike Brigade
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September 29, 2021

Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
councilmeeting@toronto.ca

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors,

RE: [MM36.18](#) Making Immediate Safety Improvements to Avenue Road

Our community of 1000+ volunteers at the Bike Brigade are devastated by the death of 18-year-old Miguel Joshua Escanan on August 18. Miguel was struck by the driver of a cement truck on Avenue Road just north of Bloor Street. Miguel is the fifth person on a bike to be killed by a person driving a vehicle on our streets since the start of the pandemic, including Giuseppe (Joe) Pellerito and Inus Goussard last September, John Offutt in November, and Alex Amaro in December. These deaths aren't statistics. They are the lives of friends, colleagues, and family members lost forever. These deaths were preventable.

The Bike Brigade supports [Councillors Layton and Matlow's joint letter to Barbara Gray](#) requesting immediate intervention on Avenue Rd, specifically extending the ActiveTO: University Avenue protected cycle tracks past Bloor St and up Avenue Rd. **We urgently request, however, that any intervention to improve cycling along Avenue Rd continue north to St Clair Avenue.**

We ride these streets. We are volunteer cyclists helping community organizations that serve isolated and vulnerable communities, offering free delivery of essential items for those in need. Most of us are not professional couriers, but regular folks moved by the urgency of the pandemic. We deliver by bicycle everything from prepared meals, food hampers, medications, therapy supplies and other essential items to people who are unable to pick up these items themselves.

Protected cycle tracks along Avenue Rd would improve the comfort, efficiency, and safety of our volunteers—and thousands of other people riding bikes. **Among our partner organizations is the Avenue Road Food Bank (ARFB) located at The Church of the Messiah (Anglican) at the corner of Avenue Rd and Dupont Street.** We've done 233 deliveries (and counting!) from ARFB by bicycle since December 2020, and many other campaigns travel through the area.



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Community Fridges TO, Fort York Food Bank, and Parkdale Community Food Bank deliveries, for example, would all benefit from safe cycling infrastructure up Avenue Rd into midtown.

Cycle tracks that end suddenly at Davenport Rd and force people on bikes to cycle along a fast, wide 6-lane highway (or beside parked cars risking doorings) would continue to be a deadly hazard. Building out the network from the existing cycle tracks at University Ave and Bloor St would improve road safety for all road users and bring us one step closer to meeting our TransformTO climate action goals.

We want to acknowledge the work of groups like the [Avenue Road Safety Coalition](#) and [Cycle Toronto](#) for advocating to improve this dangerous corridor. Count our voices in the chorus demanding action now and no more deaths on Toronto streets.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Longfield
Policy & Advocacy Lead
The Bike Brigade

Rachel Wang
Executive Director
The Bike Brigade

Cecily Lo
Campaign Lead
The Bike Brigade

Kerri Scheer
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Jonathan Gruber-Benaich
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Since the start of the pandemic, the Bike Brigade community—now 1,000+ volunteers—has delivered over 20,000 hot meals and 10,000 food boxes by bikes and trikes to sustainably address food insecurity in Toronto. We've ridden thousands of kilometers and reduced up to 10 tonnes (CO₂) GHG emissions by replacing vehicles with bikes.