

Re: **MM36.18 Making Immediate Safety Improvement to Avenue Road**

Dear Toronto City Councillors,

We are writing to beg you with all our hearts to adopt this member motion to make safety improvements to Avenue Rd. It should never have come to begging, yet here we are after the violent, horrific death of Miguel Joshua Escanan. This beloved young man was killed on his bike by a cement truck driver, where decision-makers could have built a cycle track that would have protected him, but chose not to. Every time you choose to do nothing, while funneling billions of dollars into an obsolete elevated expressway and a pointless three-stop subway when instead you could rapidly build Vision Zero infrastructure everywhere for a tiny fraction of those wasted billions, you destroy families and lives. Every single time.

If you are a councillor who intends to vote 'no' to this motion, who wants Avenue Rd to stay the deadly same, we ask you to take some time to try to imagine what it feels like to be Miguel Escanan's mother. His empty bedroom. Do you strip the sheets from his bed now? What to do with all of his clothing? Including the blood-stained, ripped clothing you got back after the morgue released his mangled, dead body? You think about how his eyes used to look when you laughed at his silly jokes. Do you wash the bloody clothing? His empty shoes by the door, his photos on the wall, his old schoolwork on the fridge. You don't have to buy food for his favourite meals at the grocery store anymore, and you barely eat anyway. How can you ever write a grocery list again?! You can barely think straight. There is only agony now where it used to be that your heart could have exploded with love every time you hugged him tight. Part of you is dead now, too. These are only a few of the things bereaved families face. What if YOU had to face that?

Everything else is figure-out-able. Well-funded BIAs who are more concerned about a few parking spots than the lives of vulnerable road users. A construction industry that seems to shrug as their truck drivers crash into and kill innocent Torontonians, as if that were a normal part of their activities, as they continue to occupy ever more sidewalks and bike lanes with no enforcement or consequences, risking the lives of vulnerable road users by forcing them into motor vehicle traffic where they could be killed in a heartbeat. Those entities can and must be reined in and figured out. Your own child's death can never, ever be figured out.

If you could easily face your own child's bloody killing, and would welcome this violent fate into your own family, if you value a few moments of someone else's car commuting time over your own child's life, go ahead and vote against this. If you would want to keep your own child alive, unbloodied, un-crushed, un-dragged along asphalt, then the only moral path forward is to vote for this, to strive to rapidly transform **every** arterial into a safe, complete street, and never, ever again vote to defeat a Vision Zero measure. To do any less is to be morally bankrupt. To do any less is to guarantee more ongoing death by road violence to Toronto residents and be a vile, inhuman hypocrite, doing unto others as you would never do unto yourself.

It is easily foreseeable that some members of council who regularly try to obstruct road safety improvements might try to say we can only have a complete street on one or the other: Yonge St or Avenue Rd. To be clear, the nearby ActiveTO Midtown Complete Street pilot on Yonge St should be made permanent and not be considered in any way as being competition to a complete street on Avenue Rd. Both arterials - and every arterial in the GTA - should be made into a safe, complete street for every road user. Both arterials carry cars, and both arterials must likewise have dedicated, protected space for active transportation. To try to choose one over the other would fly in the face of Toronto's goal of Vision Zero. To use the existence of one as a justification to deny the other would be to condemn more Torontonians and their families to a fate of road violence in the future.

As an elected leader in Toronto, **road safety is your job**. Do your job. Treat road violence like the urgent, devastating public health crisis that it is. Stop doing so little so slowly while innocent people are violently killed like Miguel Escanan and our family members were. The time for bold, widespread action is NOW.

Sincerely,

Friends and Families for Safe Streets