

June 24, 2021

Dear Chair and Members of Toronto and East York Community Council,

**Re: Two-way Operation of Charles Street West between Balmuto and Yonge Streets**

Yonge and Bloor is one of the busiest intersections in the country and this area is seeing additional traffic due to construction from nearby developments. This pressure will only increase in the coming years, especially as the TTC conducts extensive improvements to the Bloor-Yonge subway station.

Due to the speed and volume of cars coming through the area and construction, many residents feel unsafe being on bike, or walking through the intersection being placed too close to traffic.

Charles Street West, west of Balmuto to Bay operates in both directions. Converting the section from Balmuto to Yonge to two-way operation would help to improve connectivity for residents of Balmuto Street by car or bicycle without having to travel the wrong way down the street, or having to engage with the busier intersection at Bloor and Yonge.

Taking steps to alleviate pressure on this intersection would also improve safety with less cars having to make right turns through the cycling infrastructure on Bloor.

Vision Zero attempts to reduce dangerous interactions, and this improvement would help accomplish this in a multitude of ways.

At the meeting of Toronto and East York Community Council on November 14, 2017, Transportation Services submitted a report on their review of permitting two-way traffic flow on Charles Street West, and determined that this conversion was feasible. It was stated that because this section of the street has a pavement width of 9.8 meters, it could accommodate two-way traffic, and the parking lane could be maintained. It was determined that alternatively, if parking was removed from both sides of the street, then the westbound left-turn lane at St. Nicholas Street and eastbound left-turn lane at Yonge could be maintained.

At the time, the General Manager, Transportation Services, was directed to conduct further study on Charles Street traffic operation; to conduct community consultation; to factor in the increased density from new developments; and to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council in the first quarter of 2019. As new buildings nearby reach occupancy, and the TTC's work commences, implementing two-way operation on this stretch is becoming more urgent. I have consulted with the BIA, the Greater Yorkville Residents' Association, the Manulife Centre, and residents of Balmuto Street, and they are in favour of this change.

**Recommendation:**

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1. Direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, to review and report back to Toronto and East York Community Council in the third quarter of 2021 on the feasibility of permitting two-way traffic flow on Charles Street West, between Yonge and Balmuto Streets.

Thank you,

Councillor Mike Layton  
Ward 11, University-Rosedale