

June 14 2022

Re: IE30.19: Revisiting ActiveTO Interventions on Lake Shore Boulevard West

Dear Mayor John Tory and Toronto City Council,

The City of Toronto has committed to Vision Zero - a program with the goal of abolishing fatalities and serious injuries on Toronto's streets. This vision can only be realized if City Council takes serious action and supports bold, effective changes. We are writing today to ask that you:

1. **Maintain ActiveTO on Lake Shore West with a regular, predictable schedule** so that people can plan ahead - either to participate, or to find other driving routes in or out of the city on those days.
2. [Follow Cycle Toronto's guidance](#) to **permanently allocate two curb lanes of Lake Shore Blvd for active transportation as a quick-build pilot with crash-proof Jersey barriers** to provide true protection and separated space for people using active travel at slower speeds on the already congested Martin Goodman Trail.
3. Support the Western Waterfront Master Plan as a long term strategy to **transform Lake Shore Blvd into a complete street**.
4. Although this is not under consideration at the June 15 Council meeting, **ActiveTO cannot be considered in isolation of the regularly blocked and dangerous state of Toronto's cycling and walking infrastructure**. We ask that you immediately adopt a construction zone policy that prioritizes temporary sidewalks and bike lanes at construction zones to ensure a safe network for active transportation is maintained throughout the city.

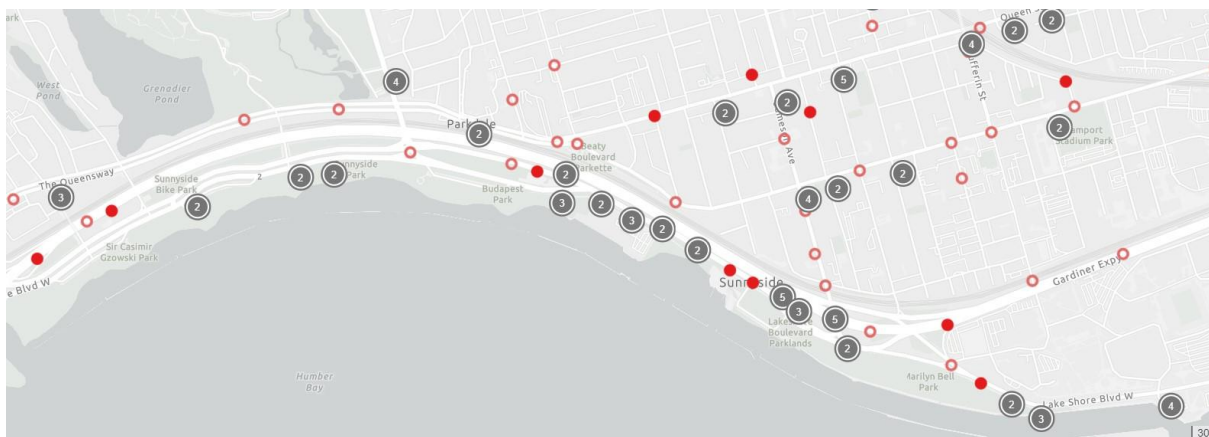
A great deal of controversy was recently generated by a letter from Mark Shapiro, CEO of the Toronto Blue Jays and a corporate employee of Rogers Communications, demanding the complete cancellation of ActiveTO on Lake Shore West rather than coordinating the schedule with home games for the Jays.

Part of the outrage against cancelling ActiveTO comes from the fact that Lake Shore Blvd West has been confused with the Gardiner Expressway, but it is not and should not be operating like a highway. **Lake Shore Blvd is a local lakefront street but it is currently dangerous by design and home to far too many instances of preventable, senseless and devastating road violence**. These include:

- On May 14 this year, [a young person was nearly killed](#) by a driver who veered off Lake Shore and crashed into them at high speed.
- 5-year-old [Xavier Morgan](#) was killed May 24 2017 on Lake Shore West because the city didn't bother to follow its own guidelines and build a barrier between the high-speed urban arterial and the users of the Martin Goodman Trail.

- On May 15 2018, 36-year-old [Jonas Mitchell](#) was killed by a speeding driver who ran a red light at Lake Shore and Colborne Lodge Dr.
- At the very same intersection on Sept 26 2010, 28-year-old [Nigel Gough](#) was killed by a driver while riding his bike.
- On June 2 2015, a person in their early 30s was severely injured by a driver while walking at Lake Shore and Strachan.
- On September 17 2017, a person in their late 20s was severely injured while riding their bike at Lake Shore and Remembrance Dr.
- On September 28 2017, a cyclist in their late teens was severely injured at Lake Shore and British Columbia.
- On June 23 2013, a cyclist in their late 20s was severely injured on Lake Shore at the Boulevard Club.
- Our own member Ingrid Buday was also struck by an uninsured driver and seriously hurt at the Boulevard Club driveway, requiring surgery.
- On February 17 2008, a pair of pedestrians were struck by a driver and severely injured on Lake Shore near the Palais Royale.
- On April 16 2010, a person in their late 50s was struck and severely injured at Lake Shore and Budapest Lane.
- On November 29 2010, a person in their early 50s was struck and severely injured at Lake Shore and Parkside Dr.

This list doesn't include the additional motorists and motorcyclists who have been killed and injured in high-speed crashes on Lake Shore, nor the uncountable multitude of people whose injuries and traumatizing brushes with preventable collisions aren't categorized as "severe" in the KSI (Killed and Severely Injured) database. In other words, as you can see from mapped KSI data provided by the City, Lake Shore Blvd West is a deathtrap.



These data points are not just dots. They are loved human beings. The anguish of the bereaved families and survivors in the aftermath of road violence is impossible to put into words. It is worse than your worst imagination. It is worse than any traffic jam, and it is worse than being late to a baseball game. It is worse than being encouraged to use transit when you are accustomed to driving. Had a program like ActiveTO been in place at the time, these devastating injuries and deaths could have been prevented. It is essential that our leaders embrace the principles of Vision Zero and make decisions that value human life above all.

Thousands of people who use ActiveTO on Lake Shore West are flocking to the only place in the city that has a true all ages and abilities place to walk, wheel and bike without the threat of encroaching vehicles, there is no other road in the western part of our city like it. These are also people who attend sporting events and festivals in our city, people who bike with their families, and people looking to use our public waterfront, not as a driving thoroughfare, but as the public space that it is.

Blue Jays fans do, in fact, have safe and useful alternatives to driving downtown. They can use the GO network or the TTC, parking at the edge of the city and taking transit nearby to the front door of the Rogers Centre. If ActiveTO road closures were programmed predictably and announced early, event organizers could plan around these dates and encourage other ways and routes to travel.

Deadly, high-speed arterial roadways like Lake Shore Blvd West should not exist in dense urban areas like our downtown waterfront, because they are designed for unfettered high-speed car throughput and not for the safety of all users, especially those outside of cars. **It is long past time to redesign Lake Shore West and reallocate more space for human-powered transportation.** This would be easily possible by narrowing lanes for cars to reduce driving speed and employing crash-proof jersey barriers to separate the active transportation lane from the lanes for cars. Every arterial road, the most dangerous type of road that exists in Toronto, should be transformed into a complete street to save lives, and we can start now with Lake Shore Blvd West.

Please maintain ActiveTO with a regular, well-advertised and predictable schedule, implement a quick-build complete street pilot on Lake Shore West this summer, and reimagine our public space as something that truly belongs to all of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Spieker', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jessica Spieker
Spokesperson, Friends and Families for Safe Streets

Friends and Families for Safe Streets (FFSS) is a group of people who are survivors of traffic collisions and friends and families whose loved ones have been killed or severely injured by careless drivers and dangerous conditions on Toronto's deadly streets. We are fighting to eliminate death and severe injuries from our roads so nobody else ever has to suffer the preventable devastation that we have.