



May 9, 2023

RE: IE3:8 Local Support for Millwood Road Safety Improvements

To: Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie and City Council

The Women's Cycling Network is an inclusive group of more than 500 women from across Toronto who cycle for transportation, health and the environment. Our grassroots organization was founded in Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park in 2019 and more than 100 of our members call these neighbourhoods home.

Our mission is to promote cycling as “wheels of empowerment” by assisting women in taking up cycling and working with them to make riding a bike safer in their communities. Our vision is to see more women biking and enjoying free and safe mobility throughout the city. **So it should come as no surprise that we strongly support the Millwood Road Safety Improvements as recommended in the original staff report and want to see these improvements implemented as soon as possible.**

We do not support Councillor Robinson's request to “pause and delay” the project and eliminate the northbound bike lane on the east side of Millwood Road on the bridge. In the absence of a safe way to cycle on Overlea Blvd from Thorncliffe Park Drive, many local residents use the trail through Leaside Park to access Millwood Road. If the northbound bike lane is eliminated, we will have to wait until Metrolinx redoes the Overlea/Millwood intersection to have a safe connection to the two-way cycle track on the west-side of the bridge.

While we would welcome additional improvements for people walking, as people who live in the community we know that the removal of northbound bike lane will make conditions worse for pedestrians. The bike lane provides necessary space between vehicle traffic, TTC buses and large trucks that will make walking more pleasant and safer. In addition, residents will be left with no other safe option but to cycle on the sidewalk when exiting the neighbourhood via the Leaside Park Trail.

We also take issue with Councillor Robinson's assertion that the “community was not consulted”. The information about the project was widely shared through various community forums. However, attendance at the online and in-person consultations may have been lower when compared with other city neighbourhoods. Perhaps this is because staff produced an well-designed proposal that will bring the best practices in road safety to our neighbourhood,

that Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park residents have many, many more pressing things to worry about, and that if the project was objectionable, residents would have certainly come out and voiced their objections. We would like it recognized that attending these events is a luxury for many in our neighbourhoods, especially women who shoulder a heavier burden in many areas – they are alert and want their voices heard.

The Councillor is correct when she says that Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park have been short-changed in recent decisions about the Ontario Line Maintenance Facility and the removal of the Ontario Science Centre. In our view, the Millwood Road Safety Improvements is an excellent proposal and any delay in its implementation would only serve to short-change us yet again.

Please vote in favour of the original staff recommendation and prioritize these safety improvements for our communities.

Thank you.

Najia Zewari, Founder, Women's Cycling Network
Resident of Thorncliffe Park

C.c. Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services
Jacquelyn Hayward, Director, Transportation Project Design & Management
Becky Katz, Manager, Cycling and Pedestrian Projects