



SOUTH
ROSEDALE
RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

January 26, 2023

RE: BIKE LANES ON YONGE

We are writing to you on behalf of the SRRA, (South Rosedale Residents Association), the members and the Board of Directors.

The problem

Many concerns have been brought to our attention regarding the Bike Lanes Pilot Project on Yonge Street between Bloor Street and St Clair Avenue. It is clear and obvious that the traffic flow has become blocked and safety issues have arisen. This is a fact that any regular commuter of this main thruway can confirm.

What we know

The SRRA met with ActiveTO on October 6, 2022 at 11:30 am for an hour. This was organized by Stephanie Gris Bringras Supervisor, Public Consultation Unit Policy, Planning, Finance & Administration through former Councillor Mike Layton's office. We walked Yonge Street between Crescent Road and Price Street and in that hour we witnessed GRIDLOCK on Yonge street, VERY few bikes and an ambulance DELAYED in the northbound lane due to the heavy congestion. There have been studies to indicate that the suggested added commute is only 90 seconds. This has not been our residents experience and it certainly wasn't our experience with the Senior Project Managers from Transportation Services on October 6.

Julia Clubb and another resident met several members of the Fire Department on Yorkville Avenue in October 2022. The Fire Department personnel were very critical of the bike lanes and complained that they are not able to get to 50% of their calls on a timely basis due to the heavy traffic on Yonge Street. They told us that we should speak to the fire department on Balmoral Avenue, local paramedics, police and sanitation workers as they are all experiencing frustration with the gridlock on Yonge Street. One experienced fireman said "it is going to take someone dying for this to be changed". It is concerning that the safety and well-being of the residents of Toronto are being compromised in favour of underutilized bike lanes. The City and its Councilors are exposing themselves to potential liability due to the fact that they are turning a blind eye to numerous concerns by residents and voting in favour of these bike lanes knowing they are impacting emergency service response time.

The once flowing traffic is now idling for long periods of time creating unnecessary pollution. Toronto now has the distinction of ranking the 3rd most congested city in North America and 7th in the world. Due to the gridlock on Yonge St some traffic has been diverted to Mount Pleasant which also runs through South Rosedale and this street is now backed up from Bloor Street to Moore Avenue in the late afternoons. We questioned the project managers on October 6 to see if they had looked at the impact of these bike lanes on surrounding streets and they had not. Why not?

There are 4 large scale Development/Construction projects planned or already in progress between Roxborough Street and Price Street, a short 3 block section of Yonge Street. These new buildings are part of a much larger 28 approved or proposed projects between Bloor Street and Heath Street that will be under construction over the next decade. There is also a 2-year water main project as well as 2 subway stations (Rosedale and Summerhill) undergoing 2-year renovations to make them more accessible. Where are the trucks, cyclists and pedestrians going to go? Again, when asked, the Project Managers from Transportation on October 6 couldn't answer this.

The City of Toronto has a goal to be an accessible City and we commend the TTC for the work being done on making the Rosedale subway station accessible to everyone. Many of our residents just don't have the ability to bike, jog, or even walk for great distances. Unfortunately, the excessive infrastructure of these bike lanes has added barriers and obstacles that prevent many of our residents from moving freely and with dignity in their own neighbourhood and City. They have difficulty accessing medical services, or just the simple enjoyment of a lunch or dinner out as they can no longer be dropped off due to the single lane. In conversation with Wheel-Trans the estimated amount of time to offload a person, help them to the door and back into their vehicle, will take approximately 5 minutes. This is 5 minutes of stalled traffic on Yonge Street due to the single lanes. Mayor Tory, this City should be inclusive of everyone, yet these bike lanes are discriminating against those with mobility issues. ActiveTO is necessary but not at the expense of excluding those who are not able to be as active as they would like to be. The shops and services on Yonge Street play an integral part in the neighbourhood but unfortunately these bike lanes have made them inaccessible to many longtime residents. A broader question, are these added bike lanes consistent with both The City of Toronto's Human Rights Policies and the provincial Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)?

Our Opinion

It is our opinion Avenue Road would be a more logical location for these lanes. They will line up with the bike lanes on University, the 6 lane road is obviously much wider, it doesn't have all the proposed construction/housing development and more importantly many of the safety concerns and increased emergency response times could be eliminated. If the City truly wants to be forward thinking, put bus lanes on Yonge Street during peak hours and add some ZEB buses (zero emission). It would take pressure off the Yonge line which is already at capacity and more importantly EMS vehicles can access the lanes if needed.

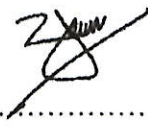
Conclusion

The Board of Directors of the SRRA (South Rosedale Residents Association) on behalf of our members are **fully in support of bike lanes BUT NOT on Yonge Street**. Our concerns regarding safety and accessibility have been highlighted and we vote in favour of moving them to Avenue Road.

Your very truly,



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Julia Clubb
Director SRRA



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Umesh Jain
Co-President SRRA