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March 17, 2023
Toronto City Hall
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: IE2.5 Regarding the Gardiner East Project

To Councillors McKelvie, Colle, Burnside, Peruzza, Saxe, and Morley,

We are writing today to **support the motion for an updated review of the rebuilding of the Gardiner East Expressway.**

Friends and Families for Safe Streets (FFSS) is a group of people whose loved ones were senselessly killed in violent traffic crashes, and people who survived a preventable crash with severe, life altering injuries. All of the trauma, violence and loss that was inflicted on us, very suddenly and utterly against our will, could have been prevented with effective Vision Zero design changes to our streets. Those changes do not come for free, however, and require meaningful investment from city leadership.

Rebuilding the Gardiner Expressway is a very costly proposition which diverts much needed funds to support important city goals such as Vision Zero. The cost to rebuild the Gardiner is eating up 44% of the transportation capital budget. **That this amount is being spent on just 19 kilometres of roadway is shocking, especially in a city where road violence has been an ongoing crisis for decades**, with thousands of people killed over the years, and many tens if not hundreds of thousands more suffering and diminished by life-ruining injuries.

Adding together all Vision Zero spending, including 2023 (\$336.8M) and dividing by 2.8M residents, just \$120.29 on road safety initiatives have been invested per person, since 2017. Assuming a \$2 billion cost for the Gardiner (and it will almost certainly be more), the city will spend more than \$714.29 per person on road infrastructure that exclusively serves people with access to vehicles. On a per-capita basis, that's 6X more per resident that is being spent on a section of an expressway than is spent on keeping people alive and safe on our roads throughout our whole city. **FFSS would like to see a more equitable approach to how the city invests in road safety programs and initiatives versus building and maintaining infrastructure that supports speeding traffic and harmful emissions.**

Rebuilding the Gardiner was a bad idea in 2015, and it is an even worse idea today. **We are calling on City Council to display sustainable, financially responsible leadership and take an evidence-based approach toward building a city that works for the future**, instead of perpetuating the car-centric status quo of the 1950s.

There are lives at stake in this decision, because **every dollar that is spent on the Gardiner is a dollar not spent on saving lives through Vision Zero, instead allowing more and more people to be killed in road violence.** Every dollar spent on the Gardiner is a dollar not spent on saving lives by mitigating climate disaster or addressing the housing crisis, and not fully meeting other goals or commitments the city has made to its residents.

No world class city should prioritise convenience for a minority of motorists over building a city where everyone can be safe and thrive.

We urge you to imagine the unbearable heartbreak of all the future victims of road violence who could be saved by investing in Vision Zero, instead of an obsolete relic of car infrastructure from the 1950s. All of the sudden funerals, all of the families shattered, all of the fear, all of the anger, all of the anguish - all if it can be prevented. We urge you to also keep in mind the looming climate disaster, our severe housing crisis, the \$1.5 billion budget gap, and many other issues which are all much more pressing than saving a relative handful of motorists a few minutes. **Please vote to review the project, and ultimately to spend the billions of dollars more wisely on saving lives and building a safer, more equitable city.**

Sincerely,



Jessica Spieker, Spokesperson
Friends and Families for Safe Streets