



TEYCC, April 12, 2023

Pedestrian Safety on Avenue Road, Bloor to St. Clair

Councillor Dianne Saxe

I request reduction of the speed limit on Avenue Road, between Bloor Street and St. Clair Avenue West from 50km/h to 40km/h. This proposed measure responds to six years of respectful and urgent requests from the Avenue Road Safety Coalition, in consultation with residents and Transportation Services. Excessive speed, street racing and other forms of reckless driver behavior that endanger pedestrians are chronic features of this particular stretch of roadway, which has been the site of a multiple collisions causing death or serious injury.

While this 2.1 km segment of Avenue Road is designated a **Community Safety Zone**, it does not conform with the safe design objectives of Toronto's **Vision Zero Road Safety Plan**. Instead, it is a high-speed roadway that is unsafe, intimidating, and hostile to vulnerable road users and incompatible with the residential nature of the area. In the entire length of Avenue Road from Bloor Street to the 401, this is the only section with a speed limit in excess of 40 km/h.

A major contributing factor to reckless driver behaviour is that, while the rest of Avenue Road has four lanes, this section has six. As a result, most drivers travel over the speed limit. Right next to this speeding traffic are very narrow sidewalks which do not meet city standards for pedestrian safety. This is of particular concern where many people congregate, such as at the Church of the Messiah, 240 Avenue Rd., with its day care and food bank.

The existing curb lanes, both northbound and southbound, are frequently blocked for construction purposes, and for deliveries. These blockages slow traffic on the remaining lanes by forcing drivers to merge. Much additional construction is planned, and the curb lanes will therefore be frequently blocked. Thus, reallocating the curb lanes for pedestrian safety and for deliveries, (when not required for construction purposes), would not likely have a major impact on drivers' travel times.

For more than six years, the Avenue Road Safety Coalition has been asking the city for urgent action to improve pedestrian safety. Staff have conducted a number of studies and community surveys and plans further consultation this year. In the most recent survey, respondents identified the high speed of vehicular traffic and insufficient space on sidewalks as their top concerns, and indicated increased sidewalk widths and reduced vehicular speeding as their top priorities for change.

In the last six years, the city has not delivered either of these priorities. The only tangible changes have been:

- 1) Physical barriers (planters) now block the curb lane directly in front of Brown School, to keep speeding vehicles away from the children,
- 2) The intersections of Roxborough Street and Davenport Road have been somewhat improved, and
- 3) Automated Speed Enforcement cameras were installed once, in one location, for three months in 2021.

Long-term solutions, such as permanent sidewalk widening, require reconstruction of the road, which is at least a decade away. However, pedestrian safety is at risk now. The Avenue Road Safety Coalition and residents' associations rightfully ask that more should be done to protect their safety without further delay.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that:

1. City Council reduce the speed limit on Avenue Road, between Bloor Street and St. Clair Avenue West, from 50 kilometres an hour to 40 kilometres an hour.
2. City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board to ask the Toronto Police Service to consider enhanced speed enforcement on Avenue Road, between Bloor Street and Davenport Road, because of the prevalence of illegal speeding and the resulting risk to pedestrian safety.
3. City Council request Transportation Services to install physical barriers in the curb lane in front of the Church of the Messiah at 240 Avenue Road, to keep speeding vehicles away from people attending the church, including its daycare and food bank.
4. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, to report to the Toronto East York Community Council by Q4 2023, the results of its Avenue Road Study and public consultation, Phase 2, and to include in this public consultation and report:
 - a. options for improving pedestrian safety on Avenue Road between Bloor Street and St. Clair Avenue West that could begin by Q2 2024, including
 - b. an 18 month pedestrian safety pilot study that would be designed to materially improve pedestrian safety such as through a combination of speed management, physical barriers, signs, sidewalk extensions, on-street parking, dedicated delivery or construction zones, and other measures where appropriate.
5. City Council requests Transportation staff to report back to Toronto East York Community Council, on the impact and effectiveness of this pedestrian safety pilot study.