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April 6, 2023

Toronto and East York Community Council

Re: Item TE4.66, Pedestrian Safety on Avenue Road, Bloor Street to St. Clair Avenue West

Dear Chair Perks and Members of Toronto and East York Community Council:

I am the Director of The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), a project of the registered charity Clean Air Partnership. TCAT's mission is to advance knowledge and evidence to build support for safe and inclusive streets for walking and cycling. On behalf of TCAT, I'm writing in support of recommendations 1 and 3-5 of Councillor Saxe's motion regarding increasing pedestrian safety on Avenue Road.

In 2016, Toronto City Council adopted a five-year plan with the goal of eliminating all traffic fatalities and serious injuries. In 2019, Toronto City Council adopted the Vision Zero 2.0 Road Safety Plan Update. The plan described a set of the most effective actions to prevent traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries that have been on the rise since 2012, particularly among vulnerable road users. One effective, low-cost safety feature adopted by the city since the creation of Vision Zero 2.0 is the rapid implementation of quick-build pilot projects. These initiatives, installed at locations across the city, have increased road safety for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users by utilizing quick-build materials to rapidly and cost-effectively install enhanced sidewalks, bulb outs, reduced curb radii, and various other tools contained in the City's Vision Zero toolkit. This approach has allowed the City to make meaningful safety improvements in a timely manner, while still allowing for evaluation and adjustments based on community input without the large price tags associated with altering permanent infrastructure.

Avenue Road between Bloor Street and St. Clair Avenue West has been identified as a roadway with high volumes of speeding cars, and insufficient sidewalk space for the neighborhood's many pedestrians. As a key north-south link between midtown and downtown Toronto, this vital transportation corridor must be made safe for all road users. Given the unsafe road conditions, the high volume of pedestrian traffic, and the support of the local community, Avenue Road is ideally situated for the type of rapid-implementation pilot project championed by the City on other key commercial corridors. We strongly support recommendations 1 and 3-5 in Councillor Saxe's motion that call for the reduction of speed limits and the creation of an active transportation-focused pilot for Avenue Road between Bloor Street and St. Clair Avenue West.

As an organization, TCAT does not support recommendation 2 in Councillor Saxe's motion, which calls for increased levels of policing and enforcement. Too often in our streets, increased levels of enforcement led to making streets much less safe for many equity-deserving groups. Toronto Police Service's own data indicates that they disproportionately target people of colour for stops and

questioning on our streets. Increased enforcement and police presence has at best a temporary effect on reducing the speed of vehicles. Infrastructure and design changes, like the Complete Streets and Vision Zero-based strategies contained in the rest of the motion, are the key initiatives that meaningfully reduce road violence in both the short term (with temporary quick build interventions) and the long term (with permanent installations). Enforcement and police involvement are not in any way necessary to creating safer streets. TCAT strongly encourages the members of Toronto and East York Community Council to remove recommendation 2, and move ahead with the other recommendations contained in Councillor Saxe's motion.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

David Simor

David Simor, Director
The Centre for Active Transportation,
Clean Air Partnership