



Safe streets
Healthy city
Vibrant voice

401 Richmond St W, Suite 215
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8
416-644-7188 | cycleto.ca

June 21, 2023

Chair Perks and Toronto East York Community Council (TEYCC)
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: TE6.54 - Kensington Market Safe Streets Implementation: Prioritizing Pedestrians

Dear Chair Perks and members of TEYCC,

Cycle Toronto is writing to express concern that the staff recommendations for prioritizing pedestrians in Kensington Market doesn't include any permanent car-free zones. The removal of proposed pedestrian only zones from the proposed project design is a lost opportunity to support TransformTO's target of having 75% of all trips under 5 km taken by biking, walking or taking transit by 2030. It begs the question, **if a thriving and economically diverse area that hinges on local foot traffic like Kensington Market isn't deemed appropriate for being car-free, what hope does Toronto have in shedding its car centric culture of status quo?**

It is very disappointing that, despite overwhelming support (94% of survey respondents) for permanent car-free streets in Kensington Market, the staff recommendations for the Kensington Market Safe Streets project do not include dedicated pedestrian only spaces, and instead propose a pilot that will include more consultations in 2024. **While New York City, Paris, London, Barcelona and Montreal are known for their open streets, vibrant urban spaces and cycling routes, Toronto is becoming known as the city of pilot projects.**

We urge you to support finding a path to making Kensington Market a permanently pedestrianized environment, which is what large globally competitive cities are doing. They have found ways to accommodate deliveries so that businesses can continue to operate. The small geographical area of the market makes it ideal for managing deliveries with loading zones which will be in close proximity to manually wheel their goods, which is an existing common practice.

We applaud the work city staff have put towards this project over the past few years and recognize that finding consensus among the various stakeholders is a difficult task and will likely never be achieved. It is important that the small local businesses and residents are supported to safeguard the diversity and uniqueness of the market. This includes accommodating the high volumes (and majority) of people who get to the market on foot or bike to shop, dine and socialize. Vehicular traffic represents a small minority of visitors yet takes up an inordinate amount of public space.

It is our view that Kensington Market is a great example of how a walkable and bikeable area can bring economic and culturally diverse vibrancy to the city. **More needs to be done toward finding an immediate solution to bringing permanent car-free spaces to Kensington.**

The recommended removal of all on-street parking and 16 permit parking spaces, as well as the addition of two additional Bike Share Toronto stations are a good beginning. This said, to help support local residents in their efforts to reduce car use, we would like to see some permit parking spaces replaced with [bike pods](#) or more secure bike parking so that local residents have a safe place to store their bikes and e-bikes. Instead of prioritizing garage orphans that don't have a place to park their cars and SUV's, we would like to see an increase in safe bike storage to remove a barrier for many to invest in a bike, and to replace their cars with e-bikes.

The city is losing the perfect opportunity to deliver an innovative pedestrian only public space. **We expected to see an innovative model that could have served as a best practice to create more car-free spaces across the city.**

We urge you to revisit the proposal and find an immediate solution to implementing car-free zones in Kensington Market.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Alison Stewart
Director, Advocacy and Public Policy
Cycle Toronto

Cycle Toronto is a member-supported charity that works to make Toronto a safe, healthy, and vibrant cycling city for all.