



June 24, 2024

Avenue Road Study

Re: TE14.38 Avenue Road Study - Interim Update and Proposed Site-Specific Road Safety Improvements

Dear Mayor and City Councillors,

GYRA (Greater Yorkville Residents' Association) represents well over 10,000 residents living within our 53-member multi-residential buildings. Our boundary is Yonge St., Avenue Rd., Charles St. and Pears Ave./Ramsden Park Rd.

Avenue Rd. from Bloor St. to Davenport Rd: We strongly oppose the proposed installation of cycle tracks between Bloor and Davenport **at this time**.

GYRA supports cycle tracks where they make sense and recognizes their importance. While cycle tracks may offer protection for cyclists under normal conditions, this particular 700-metre stretch of Avenue Rd. currently has 2 significant developments under construction, with another 4 scheduled to begin probably within the year on both sides of Avenue Rd. This will create multiple points of conflict at these development sites where bike lanes would be weaving around major construction sites and all the safety uncertainties associated with major truck and ongoing construction equipment frequently entering and exiting the development sites. Especially in light of the recent tragic incident on Avenue Rd., we want to prevent heightened tensions between cyclists and motorists near construction zones. This concern is also consistent with the May 2020 Council resolution. Instead of relying solely on private traffic wardens, we encourage Transportation staff to revisit the May 2020 Council resolution which directed Transportation Services to assess the feasibility of installing cycle tracks on Avenue Road north of Bloor Street **once development construction lane occupancies have been cleared.**

Reducing lanes in this area such as what is being proposed at Avenue Rd. and Davenport Rd as well as Avenue Rd. and Bloor St. will add considerable congestion. As you know, Toronto has the unenviable achievement as already being the most congested city in Canada and ranked 3rd in the world! In addition to lost time, congestion contributes enormously to air pollution. Just look at Bloor St. from Avenue Rd. to Church St.

One other obstacle identified by Transportation Staff to implementing this proposal is the reduction of paid on-street parking spots. GYRA recognizes the need to maintain the current level of on street parking and loading areas to support the numerous Avenue Rd. businesses, which is what makes the Yorkville Area so attractive for local residents, residents from across the city, and tourists. We therefore strongly support the Toronto Parking Authority's resistance to remove parking in this area.

On Thursday May 9th, 2024, a recorded Webex meeting was hosted by Councillor Saxe. It was unfortunate that more than 3 days notice wasn't given in advance of the meeting to view the Avenue Rd. proposal by City Staff. However, notwithstanding, about 100 participants attended. It should be noted that by a rough calculation, about 80-85% of area residents who attended the meeting expressed their opposition to this plan, either verbally or through the chat room. **Will our elected officials listen to the wishes of its residents or not? We hope so.**

There is a concern by many that reducing traffic lanes on Avenue Rd. will increase congestion as it has done on Yonge St. To those many residents who try to use Yonge St., the staff reporting that the lane reductions on Yonge St. only add 1 minute of travel time is laughable and this was clearly expressed by numerous attendees at the recent Webex meeting, unless it's an emergency vehicle using their siren. And with Bathurst St. already congested, Avenue Rd. is the only north/south road in our immediate area that allows a reasonable flow of traffic, except of course during the rush hours. Many of our residents have suggested that the City just has to look at the section on Avenue Rd. at Balmoral to see the traffic congestion that already exists, especially during rush hour. The lanes have been reduced to 2 in each direction due to the construction at the south east corner. This is what we can look forward to.

From St. Clair to Bloor St: It is our understanding that instead of using Avenue Rd., from St. Clair to Davenport, cyclists will use Poplar Plains Rd. and Russell Hill Rd., to the Davenport Rd./Dupont St. intersection, both of which are well-suited for this purpose due to the relatively light vehicular traffic and the existing bicycle lanes.

From the Davenport Rd. down to Bloor St: As an alternative solution to what is being proposed in this report at this time, we continue to advocate for cycle lanes from the Davenport Rd./Dupont St. intersection, on Bedford Rd. and/or St. George St. (where bicycle lanes already exist). On both of these streets, there is far less vehicular traffic to contend with than on Avenue Rd. If St. George is used, cyclists can even travel further south than Bloor St.

The speed limit on Avenue Rd. has recently been reduced from 50 to 40 kmh. Traffic has definitely slowed down. We agree that speed cameras should be installed on this section of Avenue Rd. to re-enforce the speed limit reduction. We also suggest that a number of speed warning signs indicating the speed at which vehicles are travelling should be installed. And finally, for the protection of pedestrians, additional metal barriers that already exist on some sections of Avenue Rd. and are still being installed in a number of areas of the City, should be added to Avenue Rd.

We firmly believe that the staff's proposal needs much more work and in no way should be implemented at this time.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Yours truly,



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President
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