



Palmerston Residents' Association

City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

November 12, 2024

Dear Mayor Chow and members of council,

Re: CC23.1 – Respecting Local Democracy and Cities

As members of the Palmerston Residents' Association, we represent the interests of residents residing in the area bounded by Grace and Bathurst Streets to the West and East and College and Bloor Streets to the South and North.

The city must stand up for local democracy

Our local democracy is under attack. Residents know that there are certain items within different jurisdictions, when voters elect city councillors and vote for mayor, they expect them to have responsibility for our streetscapes, transit operation and housing. We elected a council that can be responsive to residents and understand their concerns. We have helped consult on many of the bike lanes and housing projects in the area. Bill 212 poses a threat to any planning decision made by the city. Years of consultation and environmental studies are at threat if the province proves they can overrule local governance.

Bike lanes have helped our neighbourhood thrive

We have watched the neighbourhood become more vibrant with the addition of bike lanes on Bloor, Palmerston and College. Businesses on Bloor in our neighbourhood have reported a rise in sales, and support the bike lanes. We are also highly supportive of the city's TransformTO goals to encourage active and public transport for short trips. This will help ease congestion and meet the city's climate goals.

Our housing plan needs a safe active transportation network

Since the city repealed parking minimums on new developments, many housing projects have removed a majority of its car parking. This is great news as it allows more housing to be built for less, the average parking spot adds \$100,000 to a new development. Many proposed developments would not be feasible if every unit was allocated a parking spot. This means all these new residents will rely on either public or active transportation. With our public transit system now under high stress and capacity challenges, we need alternative transit options. Luckily, a connected active transportation network has allowed BikeShare to double its ridership in just 3 years, now expected to reach 7 million rides this year! Imagine what would happen if all these riders no longer felt safe to bike on our streets, not to mention all the residents moving into new developments.

Concluding Thoughts

If the city doesn't do everything in its power to fight Bill 212, all future decisions are under threat. If the province realizes it can get away with imposing its will on our local decision-making process, there is nothing stopping them from removing streetcar lanes, removing streetcar routes and blocking future housing decisions. We elected a council to stand up for our interests, and if there was ever a time to fight on behalf of the residents, it is now.

Regards,

Isaac Berman
Co-Chair
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