



A Safer Yonge for Everyone

To: Mayor Olivia Chow, Councillors Dianne Saxe and Amber Morley, and Toronto City Council

November 12, 2024

Subject: Yonge4All Supports CC23.1 and MM23.14, defending the Midtown Yonge Complete Street against provincial overreach.

We're Yonge4All and we want to see the Midtown Yonge Complete Street kept in place. We strongly support motions [CC23.1](#) by Mayor Chow and [MM23.14](#) by Councillors Saxe and Morley, regarding the proposed Ontario Provincial Bill 212 and the proposed section 195.2 of the Highway Traffic Act. The City of Toronto should continue to have primacy to make decisions on local transportation policies, with direct accountability to local users and electors.

[Yonge4All](#) is a diverse group of residents who live, work and shop in midtown Toronto, representing people who walk, bike, ride the TTC and drive cars. In February 2023, we submitted a petition to City Council ([2023:RM3.5](#)) with the signatures of more than 8,700 residents asking that the Midtown Yonge Complete Street be made permanent. Council voted overwhelmingly – 22 to 4 – in favour of making the pilot project permanent.

We strongly believe that Yonge, Toronto's main street, is made more successful by a complete street design focused on safety for all Yonge Street users - including bike lanes, CafeTO patios, safer pedestrian infrastructure, and 24/7 parking and loading zones.

Midtown Yonge's Complete Street has always been about more than just bike lanes. Not only does the Yonge Complete Street serve local residents and business, increasing the economic vitality and foot traffic of the main street businesses in Midtown Toronto, it also creates a more vibrant and safer destination for visitors from across the city. It is about calmer traffic, better parking and loading, and streetside cafes and parkettes. It is about a more comfortable and safer environment for walking, cycling, taking transit and driving for people of all ages and

abilities. All of that would be lost if the Province's overreach proceeds.

The Midtown Yonge Complete Street was arrived at as the result of a years-long planning process including extensive research, quantitative and qualitative data-driven analysis, careful planning, and a deep and inclusive community consultation process. It has strong support from neighbouring community groups, including dozens of resident associations, property developers and businesses. The project continues to be tweaked to make it work better for the community, including adjustments to the streetscape design, signal timings, and turning movements. None of this thoughtful planning is present in the Province's rash decision to remove the Yonge bikeway.

The Midtown Yonge Complete Street project has [unequivocally and quantitatively demonstrated its success](#). By rebalancing the street to prioritize the safety and comfort of people who walk, take transit and bike, while maintaining automobile access and adding parking and loading zones, it has led to increased walking and cycling, fostered a more vibrant and inclusive public space, has not impacted emergency vehicle access times, and has not led to significant delays to automobile traffic. This aligns perfectly with the City of Toronto's commitment to sustainable and equitable urban development. The Province's decision is not planned, data-driven or quantitative in any way, and indeed contravenes the Province's own [Provincial Planning Statement](#) policies.

The proposed removal of bike lanes on Yonge Street, as outlined in Bill 212, would have a detrimental impact on the community. It would compromise the safety of vulnerable road users, discourage active transportation, and hinder economic growth. As Midtown Toronto continues to grow, with dozens of new development projects and thousands of new residents coming in, higher-efficiency modes of transportation will be needed to move all these people – walking, biking, and transit. There simply is not enough room on Yonge to be dedicated solely to cars.

Removing the Yonge Complete Street would send a negative message to residents and visitors alike. It would discourage people from walking and biking, leading to increased reliance on cars, worsen traffic congestion, and lead to more needless injuries and deaths. Suggestions to move the bike lanes to side streets fail to recognize the lack of connected north/south roads in the area and the fact that the destinations people want to reach are on Yonge Street.

Finally, the provincial government's insertion into municipal transportation planning represents

an egregious jurisdictional overreach into Canada's largest city and its economic engine. We elect our municipal government to make decisions on local matters, expecting that other levels of government focus on provincial and national issues. The Province's insertion into a municipal transportation concern is excessively wasteful and disrespectful to taxpayers.

We urge Council to consider the broader implications of the Province's overreach on all city decisionmaking. By supporting the Midtown Yonge Complete Street, Council can demonstrate its commitment to creating a more efficient, economically viable, affordable and sustainable city for all.

On behalf of Yonge4All,

Marjorie Nichol (M5M 0A2), Holly Reid (M4G 1N9), Tom Worrall (M4R 1L3)