



James  Pasternak
Councillor | York Centre - Downsview

Toronto City Hall

City Hall, 100 Queen St. West, 2nd Floor, A22
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

June 26, 2024

**Toronto Infrastructure and Environment Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2**

Re: Building a Permanent Safety Barrier Along the Leaside Bridge to Prevent Suicide Attempts

On June 16, 2024, a man fell from the Leaside Bridge and landed on an oncoming vehicle on the Don Valley Parkway resulting in a tragic accident, a passenger and the person who fell both succumbed to their injuries. The incident is currently under investigation by Toronto Police Service. Two lives were lost during this event that could have been mitigated by a protective barrier or railing along the bridge. Sadly, there are records of several similar suicide cases that have taken place at this bridge.

In 2003, the City of Toronto originally erected barriers along the Bloor Viaduct, an unfortunately common site for suicide attempts. This action proved to be highly effective at discouraging and preventing people from jumping off the Bloor Viaduct. A study published in 2017 by Toronto Sunnybrook Hospital stated that between 2004 – 2014, only 1 person died after managing to circumvent the Bloor Viaduct barrier.

In 2016, Toronto City Council adopted item MM18.4, which requested “the City Manager, in collaboration with the Medical Officer of Health, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the Toronto Police Services Board and mental health experts, to explore the effectiveness and feasibility of options to prevent suicide deaths from bridges in Toronto and to report back to the Executive Committee in 2017.”

In 2018, Toronto Executive Committee received a report from the Medical Officer of Health which stated that “Transportation Services is planning to review the feasibility of implementing barriers and/or other interventions on priority bridge locations.”

Further study on the Leaside Bridge and its surrounding infrastructure is necessary as a measure to improve public safety and mitigate further tragedies.

Recommendations:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services to report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on the feasibility of implementing a permanent barrier on the Leaside Bridge to improve public safety and mitigate suicide attempts.

Sincerely,

James Pasternak
Councillor, Ward 6
Chair, North York Community Council