



November 8, 2024

councilmeeting@toronto.ca

Ms. Sylwia Przechdzicki
Toronto City Hall,
100 Queen Street West, 2nd Floor, West Tower
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

To the Members of the City Council:

Re: Support for November 13-15, 2024 Meeting Item MM23.14 – Provincial Overreach and Toronto's Infrastructure

The Bay Cloverhill Community Association represents 18,000 individuals in the Yonge/College/Queen's Park/Charles neighbourhood in University Rosedale Ward 11 and Toronto Centre Ward 13. We are extremely concerned about many items in the proposed *Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024*, but specifically the addition of Section 195.2 to the Highway Traffic Act where the Ministry of Transportation is requiring approval for municipal bike lanes proposed on October 21, 2024 and the October 31, 2024 amendment mandating the removal of the bike lanes on Bloor Street, Yonge Street and University Avenue, converting them back into a vehicular traffic lane.

Traffic congestion is an everyday occurrence in our neighbourhood, as it is everywhere in the city. Construction projects, road maintenance and special events cause congestion, as does the volume of vehicles driving during rush hour. **The best way to reduce congestion is to lower the number of cars by encouraging residents to use public transit, ride a bicycle or walk.** The latter options are all more environmentally friendly and provide better social interactions to build a sense of community. Due to the increasing demand of online food apps by our residents, food delivery drivers on ebikes using the bike lanes or street are omnipresent. Bike lanes are a critical component of the Vision Zero road safety plan to reduce traffic related fatalities and serious injuries on Toronto streets.

Many residents use the TTC for commuting since we have two subway stations, two bus routes and a streetcar route in the area. Toronto and area residents will likely use more transit when the long delayed Eglinton LRT is finally completed. Once the 15.6 km Ontario Line subway is operational in 2031, commuters have the option to get out of their vehicles and use transit. However public transit is chronically underfunded and very crowded, especially during peak demand hours.

We believe that bike lanes help ease congestion, promote healthy physical activity and provide a greener, more efficient way to travel around the city. There were 5.7 million BikeShare trips in 2023, proving the popularity of this method of transportation. In 2019, a Nanos poll for the City of Toronto showed substantial increases in both recreational and utilitarian cyclists, with 70% of respondents identifying as cyclists. According to the 2021 census, 8.3% of University Rosedale residents commute by bicycle, which includes the Bloor Street, Yonge Street and University Avenue bike lanes located in University Rosedale.

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Bike lanes help protect vulnerable cyclists from the altogether too frequent collisions with motor vehicles or pedestrians. Toronto Police Service reported 34 cyclist collisions with 1 fatality and 33 major injuries in 2023. This is a decrease from the average 38 collisions over the last 10 years, and the increased availability of bike lanes is likely the main reason for the reduction. Separated cycle tracks are an even better solution. If there are no bike lanes, many cyclists will likely take to illegally riding on sidewalks. The Bay Cloverhill Community Association Sidewalk Safety Committee has been working with the Toronto Police Service, local restaurants and residents since 2022 to educate/enforce keeping sidewalks for pedestrians while cyclists use bike lanes. Councillor Saxe has encouraged large food delivery companies like Uber to educate their food delivery drivers not to ride their ebikes on sidewalks.

For many years, we have been working on a pedestrian walking route called the Clock Tower Trail in the Bay Cloverhill, Church Wellesley and McGill Granby neighbourhoods. The purpose is to provide structured path through the many art installations and parks in the area, encouraging physical activity and bonding with the community.

We strongly support Councillor Saxe's motion on Provincial overreach and Toronto's infrastructure. The priority for Bay Cloverhill residents is:

- 1) sidewalks for pedestrians
- 2) separated bicycle lanes for bikes and micromobility devices
- 3) one or two street lanes for vehicles

The municipality knows best what works for its residents, not the province. Bike lanes are an integral part of relieving traffic congestion and keeping cyclists and pedestrians safe in the densely populated urban environment in downtown Toronto.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bay Cloverhill Community Association Executive

Christine Dingemans, President
Marilyn Tait-McClellan, Treasurer

Cathy Carnevali, Secretary
Kathryn Holden, Ex-Officio

cc: Mayor Olivia Chow mayor_chow@toronto.ca
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