



Avenue Road Safety Coalition

Working for Safe Sidewalks on Avenue Road between Bloor St. & St. Clair Ave.

Toronto East York Community Council
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Monday, June 3, 2024

Dear Members of the Toronto East York Community Council,

ARSC Plan to Make Avenue Road Sidewalks Safe: Response to TE14.38 - Avenue Road Study - Interim Update and Proposed Site-Specific Road Safety Improvements

The Avenue Road Safety Coalition (ARSC), established seven years ago, is dedicated to enhancing pedestrian safety on Avenue Road by advocating for reduced speeds and wider, safer, and more accessible sidewalks. We commend Councillor Saxe and City Council members for recognizing the need for site-specific road safety improvements along the 2.1 km stretch of Avenue Road. ARSC fully supports the recommendation to reduce Avenue Road from Davenport to Dupont to four lanes and to install a signalized crosswalk at the entrance to Ramsden Park. This milestone will significantly improve safety for all users.

However, Avenue Road north of Davenport remains one of the most dangerous and intimidating stretches of sidewalk in the old City of Toronto.

Critical Issues:

- The staff recommendations do not address the dangerously narrow sidewalks that fail to meet minimum city safety guidelines or basic accessibility standards.
- The current design overly relies on TPA-paid parking to provide a buffer for pedestrians, without adequately addressing the existing narrow and unsafe pedestrian spaces.
- There is no proposal to increase pedestrian space, leaving it inadequate for wheelchair users and those with baby strollers.

Proposed Solution:

In partnership with the ABC Residents Association and the Annex Residents Association, ARSC offers a simple, cost-effective alternative plan that prioritizes people and accessibility over parking. Our plan strikes a balance between parking availability and significantly improving accessibility and safety for the hundreds of pedestrians using these sidewalks daily, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Request for Action:

- We urge the Toronto and East York Community Council to review the attached plan prepared by the Planning Partnership, which aims to balance local business needs with safe and accessible pedestrian spaces.

- **Amend Recommendation #5** to direct staff to refine designs in Appendix 3. This should include the reduction of 12 Pay-and-Display Parking spots to widen pedestrian spaces for safety and accessibility. Consultation should involve the Ward 11 Councillor, Avenue Road Safety Coalition, and The Planning Partnership.

Rationale:

- The city's current intent to maintain all 34 Pay-and-Display parking spaces and convert them to full-time operation is more of a parking plan than a safety plan. It is neither desirable nor necessary.
- Parking should primarily serve local businesses' needs and not be provided long-term at the expense of pedestrian safety and accessibility.
- The ARSC's attached plan focuses on community needs, ensuring a safe and accessible environment for all.
- Using a more realistic parking utilization metric, such as the "Average Daily Peak Occupancy Rate," and considering alternative parking options, can meet local business needs while ensuring pedestrian safety.
- The city's Transform TO policy aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by limiting parking growth. Aligning with this policy direction, especially in areas well-served by public transportation, is crucial.
- Given the planned demolition of buildings for Ramsden Park expansion and the availability of private and laneway parking for some businesses, several on-street parking spaces will no longer be necessary.
- Extending parking hours will accommodate local businesses while ensuring clear sight lines at the crosswalk for pedestrian safety.

Conclusion:

Please review the attached plan prepared by the Planning Partnership. Reducing parking spots to create wider, safer, and more accessible sidewalks is essential for pedestrian safety. By repurposing curb lanes freed up by reduced parking, we can create a safer and more equitable community using jersey barriers, similar to CafeTO.

David Leinster from the Planning Partnership will be available to answer any questions at the committee meeting.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ian Carmichael, ABCRA
Henry Wiercinski, ARA
Mary Helen Spence, ARSC
Arlene Desjardin, ARSC

Let's make Avenue Road from Bloor Street to St. Clair a more people-friendly, climate-friendly, and inclusive transportation corridor that is safe for everyone!

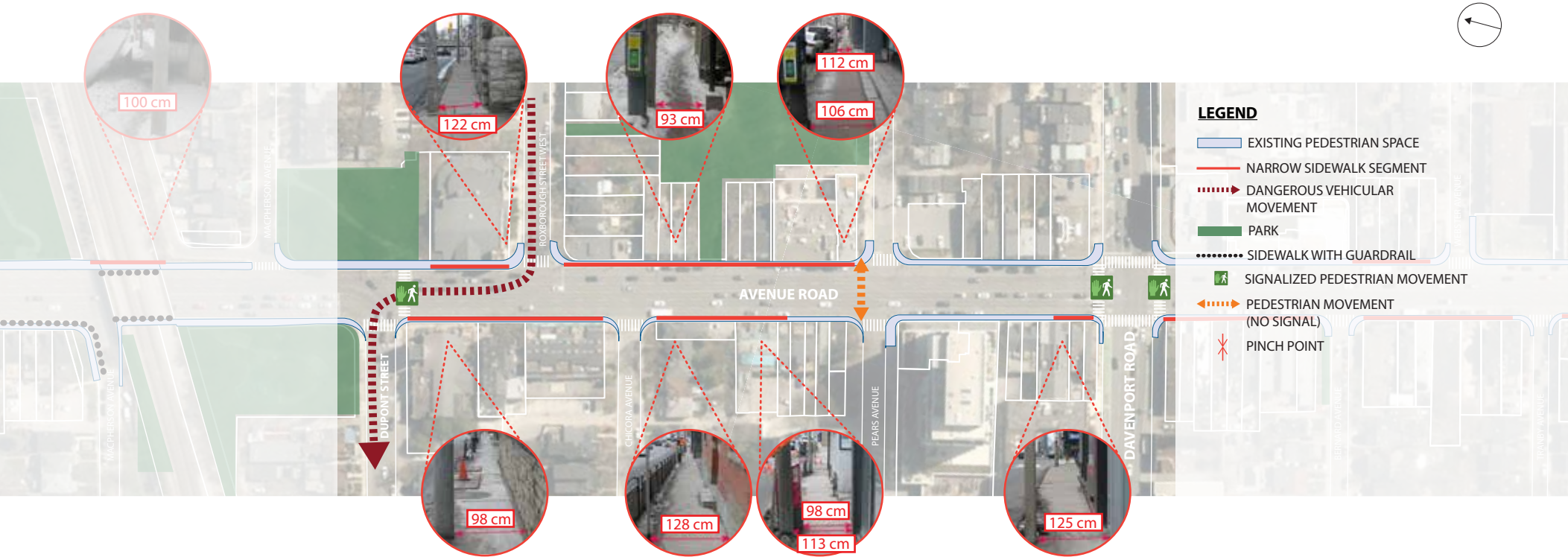
Avenue Road Improvements

June 06, 2024

Interim Streetscape Improvement Strategies *DuPont - Davenport*



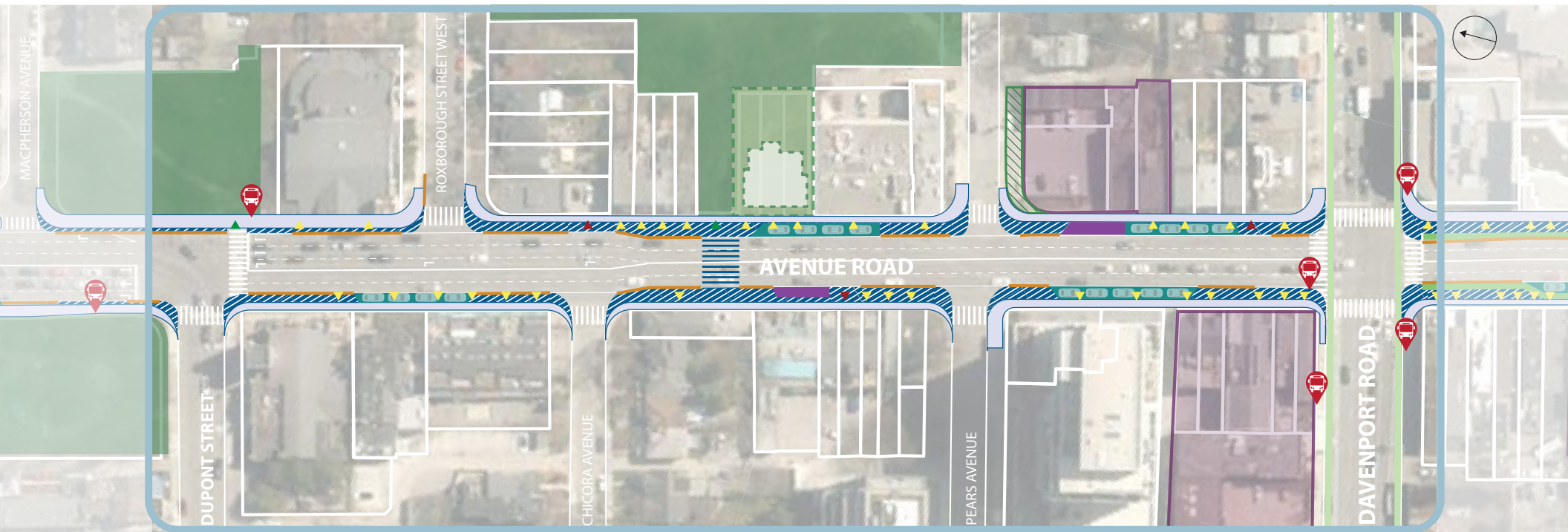
DUPONT - DAVENPORT: PEDESTRIAN CONFLICTS



Avenue Road currently falls short of being an accessible and inclusive thoroughfare for individuals of all abilities. It is not currently compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The narrow sidewalks pose challenges for mobility, limiting the overall accessibility of the area. Coupled with increased vehicular traffic and pedestrian crossings that lack user-friendly design, Avenue Road fails to provide an environment that accommodates diverse abilities. Addressing these shortcomings is essential to align the street with AODA standards, ensuring a more inclusive and accessible experience for all residents and visitors.

Pedestrian safety is compromised by the lack of barriers, heavy vehicular movement, narrow sidewalks, minimal pedestrian crossings, and obstructed walkways. The absence of mediators and limited space exacerbates the risk for pedestrians, creating a hazardous environment. Pedestrian safety is crucial as it ensures the well-being of individuals, promotes inclusive urban environments, and reduces the risk of accidents, fostering a safer and more accessible community for everyone.

DUPONT - DAVENPORT: PEDESTRIAN REALM STRATEGY



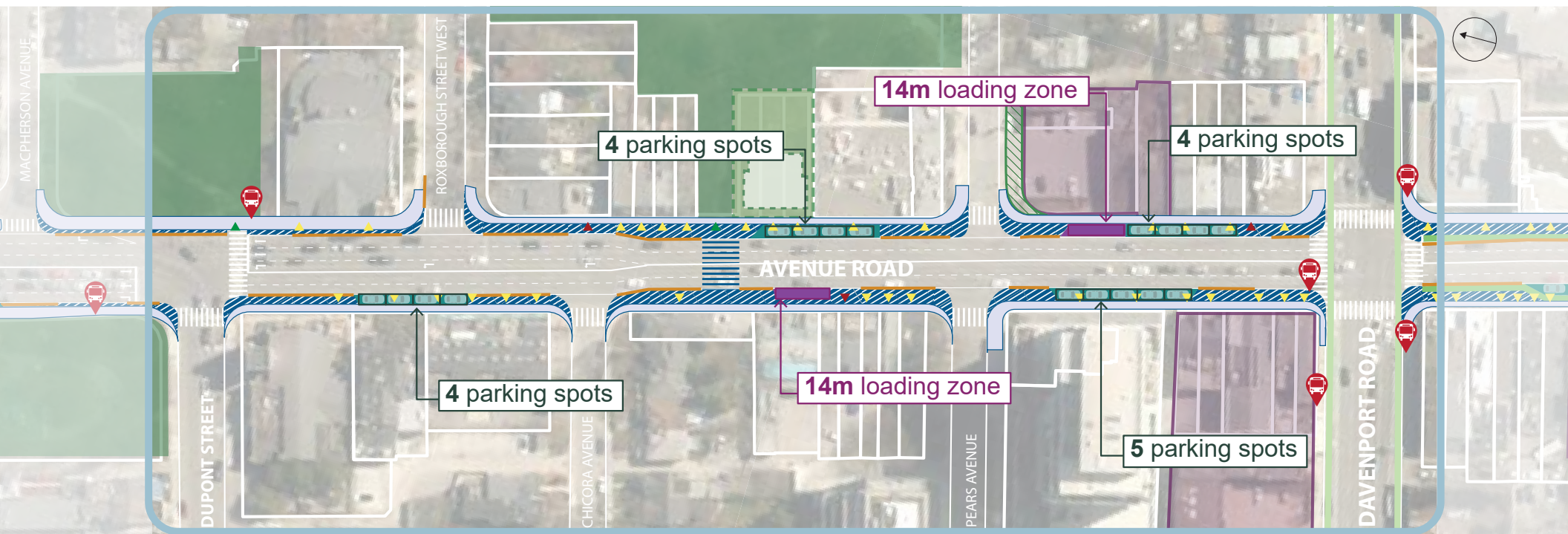
This portion of Avenue Road makes notable improvements with a dedicated focus on widening the pedestrian space, addressing the ongoing challenges posed by narrow and obstructed sidewalks along this stretch. This initiative enhances pedestrian safety while also creating a more accessible environment for all.

Proposed parking and loading zones are strategically placed in areas where they primarily serve the needs of local businesses, without compromising pedestrian accessibility. By prioritizing wider pedestrian spaces over parking, this plan aims to significantly improve safety for the people who use these sidewalks on a daily basis.

LEGEND

EXISTING PEDESTRIAN SPACE	EXISTING BIKE LANE	EXTENDED PEDESTRIAN SPACE
EXISTING PARK	BUS STOP	PARKING ZONE
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	BUILDING ENTRANCE	LOADING ZONE
PARK DEVELOPMENT *	PARK ENTRANCE	PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
PROPOSED PARK SPACE	VEHICULAR ENTRANCE	JERSEY BARRIER

DUPONT - DAVENPORT: PEDESTRIAN REALM STRATEGY



LEGEND

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|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| EXISTING PEDESTRIAN SPACE | EXISTING BIKE LANE | EXTENDED PEDESTRIAN SPACE |
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| PARK DEVELOPMENT * | PARK ENTRANCE | PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING |
| PROPOSED PARK SPACE | VEHICULAR ENTRANCE | JERSEY BARRIER |