

Summerhill Residents Association

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VIA EMAIL: teycc@toronto.ca

Toronto and East York Community Council
Attention: Cathrine Regan
100 Queen Street West
Toronto Ontario M5H 2N2

TE14.38 Avenue Road Study – Interim Update and Site-Specific Road Safety Improvements

Dear Chair Moise and Councillors:

The *Summerhill Residents Association* (“SRA”) represents the area bounded by Yonge Street to the west, the old Iroquois Shoreline escarpment to the north, the Vale of Avoca ravine to the east, and the CPR railway tracks to the south.

While the SRA agrees that the 2.1 km stretch of Avenue Road from Bloor Street to St. Clair Avenue West is unsafe for many road users and supports its transformation to a properly planned complete street with enhanced surface transit and cycling infrastructure, it finds that both the long-term vision and the near-term actions fail to address essential city-wide planning issues.

The *Phase 2 Public Consultation Report* acknowledges the poor public support for the proposals since only 48% of respondents agreed with the long-term vision and only 46% with the proposed near-term actions. This entirely unsatisfactory public reception is the result of a flawed planning process that ignored the complex nature of the section of Avenue Road to be transformed in its larger context:

1. In an odd reversal of typical planning processes - without considering long-term visions, measurable objectives, intelligent options, selection criteria, or public input - this current report proposes a blockade at Roxborough in the form of a 45 m long concrete barrier as median in a major artery to block left-turn movements at Dupont. In the 21st century, surely, more enlightened traffic management strategies achieve efficient traffic flows and increased safety with camera-controlled digital signalization of complex intersections. Given the importance of this east-west traffic corridor – including also for the residents the SRA represents – the signalization needs to include Roxborough, in addition to Avenue Road and Dupont, in a seamless integrated system
2. The Avenue Road Study, at least so far, has Minimized Avenue Road’s role as a major north-south corridor that connects the Downtown Growth Centre with many parts of the GTA. Following the lane reductions, the City’s traffic modelling predicts a reduction of the existing vehicular traffic flow of 30-40% and a 10% increase on Yonge Street which already is dysfunctional. Worse, no suggestions have been made where the remaining eliminated traffic flow and any future travel demands are to be re-routed or how they are to be replaced with alternate travel modes. In the absence of a clear plan, the predictable result will be traffic chaos, congestion, and increased GHG-emissions:

3. According to the City's online material the "*rest of the volume would be distributed throughout various alternate routes.*" This means that drivers stuck in gridlock will attempt to escape Avenue Road by infiltrating adjacent residential areas, for example through Farnham or Balmoral, putting even more strain on the already congested Yonge Street corridor.
4. No consideration has been given to future travel demands arising from the massive projected growth, as summarized in a recent Staff Report (EX12.5 - Prioritization of Planned Higher-Order Transit Projects): "*Toronto is mandated by the Province to plan for roughly 30% growth between 2016 and 2051 but may exceed this target. A growing population may reinforce existing challenges and further increase the need for more space-efficient transportation such as transit. The current auto and transit transportation infrastructure will not adequately support the anticipated population growth ... To address a climate emergency, Council committed to reaching net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Toronto by 2040. A large shift to more people taking trips using transit and active modes of transportation is essential to meet this target.*"
5. No consideration has been given to the necessary climate change adaptation and the need to drastically increase Toronto's transit mode share. On Avenue Road this can only be achieved with priority bus lanes that are called for both by the City's own climate adaptation strategy *TransformTO Net Zero Strategy* and Metrolinx's *Yonge Relief Network Study*. Since the road reconstruction is not planned to occur before 2045, according to the study terms of reference, and Toronto's net zero target date is 2040, it is imperative that the near-term actions include the exclusive bus lanes required on all arterials.
6. The recent study on the prioritization of planned higher-order transit projects was confined to corridors identified on Map 4 of the Official Plan and, although planned, did not yet include the study of Avenue Road or Yonge Street.
7. The City's *Cycling Network Plan*, recently amended to introduce cycling infrastructure on Avenue Road but limiting it to the stretch from Bloor to Davenport, fails to respond to the need for the required shift to active transportation with safe cycling infrastructure needed for the entire length of the study area.

It is hard to comprehend how such an inadequate blockade proposal could pass the professional checks at City Hall. The SRA urges you to recommend to Council that the site-specific safety improvement proposal be withdrawn and replaced with a solution that reflects a long-term vision commensurate with the city-wide role of Avenue Road, both now and in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Summerhill Residents Association



Deborah Briggs
President

Copies:

Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of City Council

Paul Johnson, City Manager

Will Johnston, Deputy City Manager