



June 9, 2024

To: Toronto East York Community Council

From: Walk Toronto

Subject: TE14.38 - Avenue Road Study - Interim Update and Proposed Site-Specific Road Safety Improvements

Dear members of the Toronto East York Community Council,

Walk Toronto strongly supports the proposed changes to improve pedestrian safety on Avenue Road from Davenport to Dupont.

Walk Toronto is a grassroots, volunteer organization dedicated to making Toronto a better city for walking. We have long been supporters of the efforts of the Avenue Road Safety Coalition to transform Avenue Road between Bloor Street and St. Clair Avenue into a safer space for pedestrians.

Avenue Road from Davenport to Dupont is one of the most dangerous and intimidating stretches of sidewalk in the old City of Toronto. It consists of narrow sidewalks that are not wide enough to meet even the most basic accessibility standards, with fast-moving vehicle traffic immediately beside them. The narrowness is compounded by utility and lamp posts that further restrict passage.

In addition to the many current residents who rely on these sidewalks, many construction projects on this road are bringing new residents to the area, and they will need safe sidewalks to get to local amenities and destinations.

The plans to reduce Avenue Road to four lanes, with an additional turning lane in some places, will greatly improve the pedestrian experience on Avenue Road. We therefore strongly support the proposed changes. They will improve pedestrian comfort and safety by reducing speeding and by creating buffers between pedestrians and traffic. It is high time Avenue Road became a normal downtown street rather than a stub of highway in the middle of the city.

We also strongly support the proposed signalized pedestrian crossing to Ramsden Park. This is a heavily used desire line for residents to access the primary green space in the neighbourhood. We encourage its implementation as soon as possible. The proposed pedestrian zone in the curb lane on the east side is an excellent addition, but we note that the same should be implemented on the west side, although it is not in the plans as presented.



We believe this proposal for Avenue Road can be improved, however. Because no parking spaces are being removed, the sidewalks will remain extremely narrow for most of this section, continuing the current situation where they do not meet even the most basic accessibility standards. The study indicates that it is rare for all of the parking spaces to be in use. We encourage the removal of additional parking spaces to create additional pedestrian zones to achieve basic accessibility and improve pedestrian mobility and comfort. In particular, locations where the sidewalk is further restricted by poles could be targeted for expanding the pedestrian space into the curb lane.

As well, we note that those few pedestrian zones that are included are specified as “at grade (road level)”. This means that they do not fully create a wider accessible sidewalk (ramps down to the street are not very helpful). We request that the Committee and City staff include sidewalk-level platforms in curb lane pedestrian zones to create wider, more accessible sidewalk spaces. These could be similar to the parklets and CafeTO platforms currently in use in other curb lanes in Toronto.

We urge the committee and City Council to approve these plans, ideally with the proviso that staff have the power to allocate additional space from parking for pedestrian zones to mitigate the narrow sidewalks. We look forward to the rapid transformation of this part of Avenue Road into a safer and more attractive main street that is a place where residents and visitors will feel welcome while walking.

Thank you,

Dylan Reid

On behalf of Walk Toronto