

June 3, 2025

Re: Directional Change Macdonell Avenue between Fern Avenue and Rideau Avenue, Agenda Item 2025.TE23.49

CC: Jacquelyn Hayward Director, Planning, Design and Management, Transportation Services
Emily Dalphy, Senior Project Manager, Transportation Services
Sivahami Vijenthira Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, West Parkdale Cycling Connections
West Parkdale Cycling Connections Team
Gord Perks, City Councillor Ward 4, Parkdale-High Park
Peter Ngyuen, Policy Advisor, Transportation, Constituency and Stakeholder Relations

Contact:

Véronique Claassen
[REDACTED]
Toronto, Ontario
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To the Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council:

We, the **117 undersigned residents** of Macdonell Avenue, Rideau Avenue, Fern Avenue, Sorauren Avenue, Wright Avenue, Pearson Avenue, Luckow Terrace, Garden Avenue, Galley Avenue, and Lansdowne Avenue, and more, are writing to express **our strong opposition** to the proposal to convert the section of Macdonell Avenue between Rideau Avenue and Fern Avenue to one-way northbound as outlined in Agenda Item 2025.TE23.49.

The traffic data collected by city staff, as well as public consultation which showed the majority of community members that provided feedback are opposed, does not meet the city's own guidelines in recommending this change. There are a number of criteria that the City of Toronto uses when evaluating if changes to traffic flow are warranted, primarily traffic data, as well as community input. In this case, **neither the traffic data collected, nor the results of the public consultation, meet the city's own criteria thresholds requiring the proposed change.** This brings into question ethical and taxpayer waste concerns regarding city staff's decision-making process when both quantitative and qualitative evidence are ignored. In addition to ethical and taxpayer waste concerns, the proposed change will result in adverse effects to adjacent streets and intersections, particularly to safety and traffic volume.

We are asking the Toronto and East York Community Council to **reject this recommendation or postpone approving it until the decision-making process that led to the proposal, can be thoroughly reviewed and adverse effects to adjacent streets and intersections can be properly studied.**

We also intend to register formal complaints with the City of Toronto's Auditor General and Ombudsman.

***Please see the detailed background and evidence below, as well as our signatures at the end of this letter.**

Background and Evidence

1. Traffic Data Collected by City Staff Does Not Support Recommendation:

City staff are making this recommendation to reduce traffic volume on Fern Avenue between Macdonell Avenue and Sorauren Avenue, due to traffic infiltration from Lansdowne Avenue.

The City of Toronto's guidelines for daily traffic volume levels for a Local Road which Fern Avenue is designated as, is less than 2,500 vehicles per day with low traffic speed. Fern Avenue currently falls well below these guidelines.

The data collected by city staff in October 2024 shows that after the implementation of the West Parkdale Cycling Connections project in August 2024, traffic on Fern Avenue between Macdonell Avenue and Sorauren Avenue increased to 1,350 vehicles per day from 728 daily traffic volume prior to the project implementation, with a peak traffic volume of 145 vehicles, up from 82 vehicles at peak. Although this is an increase of more than 80% traffic volume, it is still well within the city's own guidelines for acceptable traffic volume of maximum 2,500 vehicles per day with an expected highest peak hour of about 10%. **The October 2024 traffic data report shows that the daily traffic volume of 1,350 vehicles is only at 54% of the upper threshold of 2,500 and highest peak hour volume is at just 10.7%, in line with what the city finds acceptable for a local road like Fern Avenue.**

<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/traffic-management/road-classification-system/about-the-road-classification-system/>

<https://open.toronto.ca/dataset/traffic-volumes-midblock-vehicle-speed-volume-and-classification-counts/>

As outlined in an email from **Sivahami Vijenthira** (Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit) dated June 11, 2024, in an exchange regarding the West Parkdale Cycling Connections project implementation with resident Véronique Claassen () and questions regarding acceptable traffic volume on Fern Avenue between Macdonell and Roncesvalles Avenue, **Ms. Vijenthira stated that daily volumes of below 2,500 vehicles per day, "fall within the City's Road Classification System local road guideline" and "There is no specific guideline on peak hour motor vehicle volumes for local roads, but the expectation is that about 10% of daily traffic occurs during the highest peak hour."**

There were concerns that traffic changes made in August 2024 due to the West Parkdale Cycling Connections project implementation would cause a significant increase to traffic volume on Fern Avenue past Fern Avenue Junior and Senior Public School between Sorauren Avenue and Roncesvalles Avenue. The most recent traffic study in October 2024 showed that there was no significant statistical increase to traffic volume past the school. Prior to the change, daily traffic volume past Fern Ave PS was 1106 or 44% of the max threshold, with a peak hour volume of 119 or 10.7%. In October 2024, daily traffic volume was 1161 or 46% of the max threshold, with a peak hour volume of 114 or 9.8%.

City staff **declined to recommend traffic calming measures** such as traffic humps on Fern Avenue between Macdonell Avenue and Sorauren Avenue because according to their traffic data collected in October 2024, **traffic speed fell below the threshold for the traffic calming warrant.**

From the West Parkdale Cycling Connections Virtual Public Meeting Report:

“The data that has been collected on every street has been reviewed and compared to the City’s Council endorsed 2023 Traffic Calming Policy, which outlines warrants for speed humps on local roadways. Based on the most recent traffic counts, Fern does not quite meet the minimum traffic speed warrant that determines eligibility for traffic calming, and we have not proposed speed humps yet. The increase in traffic may have an effect on speed. As we continue to monitor Fern Avenue, and especially if we make additional changes, we can continue to look at whether speed humps are warranted.”

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/8d4d-West-Parkdale-Cycling-Connections-Virtual-Public-Meeting-Feb-19-2025-AODA.pdf>

The October 2024 traffic studies and follow up reports from the West Parkdale Cycling Connections also looked at the results of the project implementation on the west side of Roncesvalles Avenue including the traffic volume on **Pearson Avenue between Sunnyside and Roncesvalles Avenue**. Their study found there was an increase of 50% traffic volume to Pearson Avenue which was a lower increase than to Fern Avenue, **but the daily traffic volume was actually much higher**. The daily volume was measured at **2,056 vehicles or 82% of the city’s guideline of 2,500 vehicles**, with a highest peak hour of 176, of 8.5%. **This is 28% more daily traffic volume than Fern Ave. The city is recommending a change to Macdonell Avenue to lessen traffic on Fern Avenue but is not recommending further changes to Sunnyside/Pearson.**

The **decision-making process is being unequally and unfairly applied**, as evidenced in the traffic studies of the impact of the West Parkdale Cycling Connections implementation and the resulting recommendation regarding Fern Avenue but not Pearson Avenue by city staff.

<https://open.toronto.ca/dataset/traffic-volumes-midblock-vehicle-speed-volume-and-classification-counts/>

Conclusion: The City of Toronto relies heavily on traffic data collection when making decisions regarding road changes, especially majorly disruptive ones such as directional changes. **The traffic data collected in October 2024 shows that current volume and speed on Fern Avenue between Macdonell Avenue and Sorauren Avenue is well within the city’s guidelines and does not support or require any further action at this time.**

2. Public Consultation Results Show Majority of Respondents/Feedback Against Changes:

In addition to traffic data studies, city staff also consulted the public in their decision-making process which included a virtual public meeting, online comment form, and comment tracking to address traffic concerns on both the west and east side of Roncesvalles Avenue as a result of the West Parkdale Cycling Connections project implementation

As per the West Parkdale Cycling Connections Consultation Report 2025, **city staff found that results of the public consultation showed the majority of respondents that provided feedback were against any further changes.**

“Overall, most residents and interest groups who provided feedback are **not supportive of any of the potential changes that were presented**, and a large proportion reiterated their opposition to the project as a whole. Some expressed support for the potential traffic volume reductions that some of the changes could bring to Fern Avenue, while the majority expressed concerns about further inconveniences to people who drive in the area, as well as the potential for noncompliance with signage changes.”

The high-level summary of comments received through all consultation activities showed that the majority of the public that provided feedback was against any of the six options that city staff proposed.

“Overall, of the comments received regarding the six proposed options for additional changes, most residents were opposed to any changes.”

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/96d1-2025-04-15-WestParkdaleConsultationReportAODA.pdf>

While there was a majority of the public against further changes on both the east and west sides of Roncesvalles Avenue, to Sunnyside/Pearson on the west side and Fern/Macdonell on the east side, **city staff decided to recommend a directional change to Macdonell Avenue between Fern Avenue and Rideau Avenue, while not recommending further changes to Sunnyside/Pearson**

The decision-making process is being unequally and unfairly applied as it relates to public consultation.

Conclusion: The public consultation process **did not warrant or require any further action or recommendations** for road changes to Macdonell Avenue.

3. Ethical Concerns – City Staff Recommending Changes Due to Pressure From Small Residents Group Despite Majority of Residents Opposed & Adverse Effects of Change to Safety of Adjacent Streets & Intersections:

A small group of Fern Avenue residents have been very vocal and pressuring city staff to make further changes to Macdonell Avenue and/or Rideau Avenue after the implementation of West Parkdale Cycling Connections project since August 2024.

In a summary of a meeting with this small group in August 2024 had with city staff (Emily Dalphy, Cycling and Pedestrian Projects, Sivahami Vijenthira, Public Consultation Unit, Clive Scott on behalf of Councillor Gord Perks, provided by **Ms. Vijenthira** to Véronique Classen ([REDACTED]) it is noted that residents at this time advocated for converting Rideau Avenue between Lansdowne Avenue and Macdonell Avenue to an eastbound one-way only.

“Converting Rideau Avenue to one-way eastbound would be a preferred way to reduce motor vehicle volumes on Macdonell Avenue and Fern Avenue while improving safety at the Rideau/Macdonell intersection.”

In an email dated August 17, 2024, to Ms. Claassen after the meeting, one of the residents that attended wrote:

“Only hope is that there is a new transportation planner (**Emily Dalphy**) at the helm who **does not agree with all that is being rolled out**. She is **more community oriented**. We discussed the possibility of **making Rideau one way eastbound** to stop the flow of non neighbourhood traffic from Landsdowne. **She**

thinks it is possible to do and without having to do traffic counts. I am hopeful with this new person, Emily, that we can make some changes.”

This is a gravely concerning statement as it **implies that from August 2024 onwards Emily Dalphy was working with this small group of residents to implement major changes to traffic flow and seemingly willing to do so without going through the correct process.** Although, the process was followed, the **results of the traffic data and public consultation showed that there were no changes warranted, and yet a major change to Macdonell Avenue has been recommended by Emily Dalphy,** (now Senior Project Manager, Transportation Services).

This small group of residents continued to pressure city staff to make changes to Rideau/Macdonell throughout the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025. City staff responded by doing a preliminary traffic study and the further public consultations specifically to address the concerns of this small group as evidenced in the Traffic Circulation Changes, Traffic Calming (Speed Humps), and Parking Amendments - West Parkdale Neighbourhood

“The primary purpose of this report is to address concerns raised by neighbourhood residents following the installation of the West Parkdale Cycling Connections project, namely increased traffic volumes on Fern Avenue between Macdonell Avenue and Sorauren Avenue. To evaluate these concerns, staff collected preliminary traffic volume and speed data in October 2024. A virtual public meeting was held in February 2025 to provide an update on observed traffic changes and public feedback received to date, discuss potential changes to address community concerns, and collect additional feedback.”

City staff had a further private meeting with this small group of 4 Fern Avenue residents on February 6, 2025. As outlined in the West Parkdale Cycling Connections Consultation Report 2025 the group advocated to:

“Extend northbound one-way on Macdonell Avenue between Fern Avenue and Rideau Avenue.”

Residents on Macdonell Avenue and Rideau Avenue, that would be most impacted by the changes proposed by the small group of Fern Avenue residents and city staff, have made numerous phone calls and emailed city staff to express their valid concerns about the impacts to the safety of their streets and intersections. In addition, a group of 21 residents at the intersections of Rideau/Wright/Macdonell Avenues provided a petition in February 2024 asking to be consulted about traffic issues they were experiencing and provided a video evidencing their concerns, asking to have them included in the West Parkdale Cycling Connections planning process. There was no response to this request. **Overwhelmingly, residents with equally valid concerns have received no response from city staff or their city councillor Gord Perks and were not invited to a private meeting similar to that of the small group of Fern Avenue residents.**

The consultation of the most impacted residents has been unequally applied, **favouring that of a small group of Fern Avenue residents over that of other equally impacted residents.**

Conclusion: City staff have allowed themselves to be **pressured by a very small but very vocal group of Fern Avenue residents** in their decision-making process, **over that of equally impacted residents,** particularly on Rideau Avenue and Macdonell Avenue, **despite the results of the traffic data and public consultation reports showing that no changes were warranted to Macdonell Avenue.**

4. Directional Change to Northbound on Macdonell Avenue Between Fern Avenue and Rideau Avenue Will Have Negative and Dangerous Impacts to Adjacent Streets and Intersections:

By extending the one way north on Macdonell Avenue from Fern Avenue to Rideau Avenue, adding to the northbound directional change on Macdonell Avenue from Garden Avenue that was made in August 2024, **the City is creating a cut through for non-local traffic heading north-east that doesn't currently exist.** Non-local cut-through traffic will now be able to travel from Garden/Sorauren Avenues to Macdonell Avenue, up to Rideau Avenue and out to Lansdowne Avenue. Residents at Rideau/Macdonell Avenues have long been concerned about the traffic volume and dangerous driving at this intersection which has been causing safety issues for pedestrians, cyclists and law-abiding drivers. So now in addition to traffic converging at Macdonell/Rideau Avenues, west from Lansdowne Avenue, east from Wright Avenue, and south from Wabash Avenue, there will also now be traffic coming up to it north from Garden Avenue along Macdonell Avenue.

Traffic volume heading west from Lansdowne/Rideau Avenues **will now be shifted from Fern Avenue** Macdonell Avenue north of Rideau Avenue, **to Wabash Avenue**, past Luckow Terrace, Charles G. Williams playground, Sorauren Town Square and Sorauren Field. This is particularly concerning during the school year at lunch time, after school, evenings when there are sports, weekends, and the farmer's market on Monday when there are a large volume of children, families, pedestrians and cyclists crossing Wabash, raising safety concerns. Macdonell Avenue north of Wright Avenue, will have adverse consequences to safety because the road is not wide enough for two cars to pass. This already results in northbound drivers mounting the east side sidewalk to bypass southbound cars. As the volume of traffic increases the frequency of curb-mounting incidents will increase, placing pedestrians at greater risk. The measures that city staff have proposed to mitigate this fall short of addressing it.

Unscrupulous drivers will see that Rideau Avenue south to Fern Avenue is a short block and **will intentionally travel at high speed the wrong way south to Fern Avenue to avoid circling** north-west up to Wabash/Sorauren Avenues and then south to Fern/Sorauren Avenues. This is currently happening multiple times a day on Macdonell Avenue between Fern Avenue and Garden Avenue since the directional change to northbound in August 2024 as part of the West Parkdale Cycling Connections project implementation. City staff and Gord Perks office have been contacted numerous times about the issue and police reports have been made. Although the further proposal to change Macdonell Avenue one way northbound from Fern Avenue to Rideau Avenue should mitigate this safety hazard somewhat, the problem will shift up to the block between Fern and Rideau Avenues, which is a much shorter block. There have been several near head-on collisions to both law-abiding drivers and cyclists, as well as pedestrians. This is an extremely dangerous consequence of the directional change and despite city staff having been informed they have not taken this into consideration in the decision-making process.

Residents on the south side of Wright Avenue between Macdonell Avenue and Sorauren Avenue can only access their laneway from Fern Avenue and when coming west from Lansdowne Avenue will now have to circle all the way around from Macdonell Avenue and Rideau Avenue north to Wabash Avenue, west to Sorauren Avenue, south to Garden Avenue, east to Macdonell Avenue, north to Fern Avenue, and will potentially cut through the laneway north parallel to Macdonell Avenue between Garden/Fern Avenues to snake across Fern Avenue and into the most eastward entry point of the laneway to avoid this. According to the traffic data collected by city staff in October 2024 there has already been an increase in traffic volume to this laneway due to the initial directional change to Macdonell Avenue back in August 2024, enough so

that they found it warranted speed humps. The increase of traffic volume is from both non-local and local traffic avoiding the circuitous route of having to travel from Macdonell Avenue, west to Fern Avenue to Sorauren Avenue, south to Garden Avenue, east to Macdonell Avenue, to continue south.

All residents that live between Lansdowne Avenue and Sorauren Avenue, Wright Avenue and Seaforth Avenue, will now only be able to access their laneways and homes from Garden Avenue at Sorauren Avenue. This will increase traffic volume on Garden Avenue.

There are further impacts that are too numerous to list here.

Conclusion: City staff have **not considered all of the safety implications of the proposed change**; they are responding to a small group of resident's concerns while **ignoring valid concerns** of an equally impacted group of residents. When making a major change that will have wide-ranging impacts, **a holistic study of the traffic circulation in the neighbourhood should have been conducted in order to identify safety and volume issues before making a decision or recommendation.**

5. Summary

There are serious concerns as to the decision-making process that led to the recommendation by city staff to make a directional change on Macdonell Avenue between Fern Avenue and Rideau Avenue. **The proposed change is unnecessary and not supported by the city's own guidelines and public consultation.** Furthermore, the recommendation will adversely impact adjacent streets and intersections. All of this brings up grave ethical and taxpayer waste concerns.

- **Traffic data collected by city staff in October 2024 does not support the proposal.**
- **Public Consultation feedback does not support the proposal.**
- **City staff chose to ignore equally impacted residents on adjacent streets valid concerns while favouring a small group of Fern Avenue residents due to long and steady pressure from August 2024 onwards. This brings up grave ethical concerns.**
- **City staff did not properly consider traffic volume and safety impacts to adjacent streets and intersections as a result of the proposed change.**