



January 19, 2026

Budget Committee
c/o Matthew Green
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of the Budget Committee:

We are Open Streets Toronto; a campaign started in April 2025 calling on Toronto City Council to bring back open streets programs such as OpenStreetsTO and ActiveTO by 2026. These programs close streets to cars to allow for walking, cycling, and physical activity; starting with Bogota's Ciclovia in 1974 and now operating in cities around the world. OpenStreetsTO was held two Sundays per year from 2014 to 2019 – plus one Sunday in 2022 – along parts of Bloor and Yonge Streets with attendance reaching 100,000 in 2019. This was supplemented with ActiveTO major road closures during the COVID-19 pandemic including along Lake Shore West, Lake Shore East, and Bayview. Unfortunately, these open streets programs did not get held in Toronto since 2022.

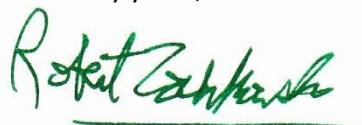
Successful open streets programs require dedicated and permanent funding, while the most successful ones are led by a city department and championed by the mayor's office. Unfortunately, this was not available for OpenStreetsTO which had to rely on external fundraising to cover the \$230,000 annual cost as of 2019. An amount which would likely approach \$300,000 this year to not only account for inflation, but also the need for additional measures the City of Toronto requires for hostile vehicle mitigation. Relying on external fundraising sources is not a sustainable approach over the long term; especially when 20% of the costs could be attributed to paid duty officers alone.

The benefits of open streets align with high scoring City budget priorities including climate action, public health, parks and recreation, and supporting local businesses. These programs were also very popular with over 90% of attendees for both OpenStreetsTO and ActiveTO wanting them to continue and/or be expanded.

While we understand this year's budget is more challenging to limit property tax increases ahead of this October's municipal election, we urge the members of this committee and city council to help fund open streets for this year. We also encourage those members of council who plan to seek re-election – and other candidates – to commit to funding open streets on a permanent basis from 2027 onwards.

We thank you for taking this matter into consideration and feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



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