

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

## Stakeholder Meeting # 3 Summary

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 from 2-4 p.m.

**Host:** City of Toronto, WebEx

### Councillors and Staff:

Councillor Matlow and Councillor Layton  
Aviva Coopersmith, Advisor to Councillor Layton  
Angela Surdi, Senior Advisor Constituency and Planning to Councillor Layton  
Slavisa Mijatovic, Policy Advisor, Transportation and Planning to Councillor Matlow

### Business Improvement Areas:

Bloor Yorkville BIA  
Midtown Yonge BIA  
Rosedale Main Street BIA  
Yonge + St. Clair BIA

### Residents' Associations:

Avenue-Bay Cottingham (ABC) Ratepayers' Association  
Cottingham Square Community Association  
Deer Park Residents Group  
Governor's Bridge Ratepayers' Association  
Oriole Park Residents' Association  
Quantum Owners & Residents' Association  
South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Association  
South Rosedale Residents' Association  
Summerhill Residents' Association

### Site Specific:

York International School (and Jr. Campus)  
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

### Organizations:

Cycle Toronto  
Mid-town Ravine Group  
Toronto Youth Cabinet  
Walk Toronto

### Project Team:

Jacquelyn Howard, Director, Project Design & Delivery  
David Dunn, Senior Project Manager, Cycling & Pedestrian Projects  
Karina Fortin, Senior Project Manager, Cycling & Pedestrian Projects  
Daniel Samson, Project Engineer, Cycling & Pedestrian Projects  
Hao Wu, Cycling & Pedestrian Projects  
Maogsha Pyjor, Stakeholder and Public Consultation  
Danielle Davis, BIA Office  
Jonathan Lam, Public Consultation Coordinator  
Alexander Takarabe, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)

### IBI Group:

Zibby Petch  
Vikram Hardatt

### Dillon Consulting Limited:

Daniel Hoang  
Simmy Saini

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

## Meeting Purpose

This was the third key stakeholder meeting for the ActiveTO Midtown Complete Street Pilot. The purpose of the meeting was to provide project updates share results from the virtual public meeting held on April 27, 2021, and share the preliminary results from the online public feedback form. The main focus of the meeting was to provide a block-by-block overview of the draft design plan for the pilot project, and gather stakeholder feedback using an interactive Miro board to record input.

The meeting was facilitated by Dillon Consulting (Dillon) and began with Councillor Remarks and a First Nations land acknowledgement. There were 27 stakeholders in attendance.

The following is a summary of what we heard from stakeholders:

- **Motor vehicle speed/speeding** along Yonge Street continues to be identified as a key issue and suggestion to add **traffic calming measures** and enforcement as part of the pilot
- Concern about the additional **traffic infiltration and circulation** as a result of the pilot and how the project will address these challenges
- **Greater road safety concerns and accessibility** for all road users, particularly the separation of uses and the additional proposed road safety measures and features
- Desire to **extend the pilot north of Davisville** reiterated
- BIA inquiry as to how their **sidewalk planters** would be accessed and maintained throughout the pilot
- Discussion about **parking, loading and servicing challenges** for businesses

Since Stakeholder Meeting #2 on April 9, 2021, the City has completed: BIA site walks; website launch; business needs and loading survey launch and close; virtual public meeting; meeting with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT); and online public feedback form launch and close.

Virtual Public Meeting April 27: The meeting was attended by over 260 participants. The City provided an overview of the key themes that were heard from the public meeting, which included:

- Support for project with interest in further expansion north
- Concerns about increase of traffic volumes and mobility of local drivers
- Reliability of movement for TTC and emergency vehicles
- Mutual benefits for cyclists and businesses acknowledged
- Importance of road and sideway safety for all users
- Interest in adding planters and artistic curb extensions

A summary of questions and responses provided at the meeting is available on the project website.

The City shared the preliminary results from the public feedback form. Approximately 337 forms were submitted and indicated a majority in support for the project.

A separate Business Needs and Loading Survey was completed by 90 businesses along the study

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

area to help determine the needs and concerns of these establishments.

IBI Group used Miro (a virtual whiteboard) as an interactive method to gather and record feedback on the draft design with a block-by-block run through of the roll plan from Davisville Avenue to Bloor Street. In particular, parking, loading, roadway, transit and cycling elements were illustrated, and street changes were highlighted.

The City reviewed draft plans for the following segments (north to south):

- Segment 1: Davisville Ave to Glen Elm Ave (includes Midtown Yonge BIA)
- Segment 2: Glen Elm Ave to Woodlawn Ave (includes Yonge & St. Clair BIA)
- Segment 3: Woodlawn Ave to Crescent Rd (includes Rosedale Main St. BIA)
- Segment 4: Crescent Road to Bloor St (includes Bloor-Yorkville BIA)

Comments on each segment of the plan were recorded directly on the plan to be considered by the project team.

In Segment 1, comments included:

- Desire to extend the project north of Davisville Avenue
- Providing enhanced protection at intersections, particularly at Davisville Avenue and Yonge Street, and Merton Street and Yonge Street
- Providing a safe mechanism for cyclists to get to the south bound bike lanes from the exit/entrance of Mount Pleasant Cemetery
- Addition of a bikeshare station close to the cemetery
- Consideration for widening bike lanes at certain stretches to accommodate uphill/downhill slopes

In Segment 2, comments included:

- Consideration for using additional sidewalk space for a protected cycle track or wider bike lanes
- Certain stretches were identified as busy and fast moving, and there was a desire to see physical barriers or enforcement to protect cyclists along these fast moving stretches
- Consideration for the placement of left turn lanes at Heath Street to better manage the heavy left turn demand
- Recommendation to use back lanes for loading and servicing to provide more loading options

In Segment 3, comments included:

- Concerns for access in/out of communities for EMS and Fire Services
- Consideration for the adjustment of traffic lights at certain intersections
- Additional bike parking at Ramsden Park
- Desire to make the underpass safer for cyclists through the use of barriers and wide cycling facilities

In Segment 4, comments included:

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

- Consideration for the inclusion of left turn bike boxes at certain intersections
- Requests for the installation of eastbound advance signal lights at Yorkville
- Concern for the removal of left turn lane at Yorkville Avenue
- Consideration for raised bike/bus platforms at busy bus loading spots
- Desire for more protection at the Yonge Street and Bloor Street intersection

- Bid Award Committee (Supply, Install and Maintenance Contract)
- Kick-off meeting with contractor
- Internal stakeholders to review draft design work
- Finalize pavement markings plan
- Finalize draft public realm plan and signage plan
- Finalize traffic model
- Coordinate with Window 1 CaféTO businesses for Complete Street installation
- June-July installation
- Post-implementation monitoring and adjustments

The following is a record of the comments, questions and answers collected during the meeting.

**Q = Question    A = Answer    C = Comment**

## **Segment 1: Davisville Avenue to Glen Elm Avenue (includes Midtown Yonge BIA)**

**C:** It is important to us that residents on east-west have connection and are connected safely. We would like to see the project go up to Merton Street but Millwood Road also works. We would like to see connections further north of the project area.

**Q:** There is a lot of room for parking, but not a lot of cars use this space – we can make the bike lane wider here as there may be less demand for parking through this stretch. Could cycling facilities be widened through this stretch for passing?

**A:** Trying to provide passing opportunities along the protected bike lanes wherever possible. Where parking is provided we cannot compromise the buffer width (door zone), so widening is dependent on removing parking.

**C:** Parking along the frontage of the Cemetery was noted as very important to several stakeholders without opportunity to remove / reduce the parking supply in response to the request.

**C:** There is an opportunity to make a connection at Davisville Avenue work better. The transition should go further north as there is desire to extend the connection further north rather than stop at Davisville Avenue.

**Q:** Is there anything that can be done about speeding and traffic calming? Will the curb lane be owned by the TTC?

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

**A:** The second southbound lane is primarily a result of TTC's request. We are introducing barriers along the bikeway, which will help with some traffic calming.

**Q:** Will there be two general travel lanes for cars?

**A:** Per this design yes, but it is still under review.

**Q:** Since this is a pilot, can we try a more creative approach, such as a transit-only lane to reduce this space as a general purpose space?

**A:** One of the considerations we had was bus-only lane. However, the need for a bus-only lane is only merited during a subway closure. We think sharing the lane will have greater benefits most of the time, when the subway is up and running.

**Q:** Can we consider two northbound lanes approaching Merton Street and two southbound lanes approaching Heath Street? i.e., develop the second land on the intersection approaches.

**A:** Good idea. We will consider this.

**C:** Traffic piles up at Merton and Heath. We should reduce speeding through this stretch.

**C:** Request to indicate the bike share station in the parklet across from 1639 Yonge St (and all of them along this strip) just to indicate the opportunity to enjoy ActiveTO even if you do not have a bike.

**C:** The north side of Balliol Street is used for loading and unloading – it could become a packed area since we are losing spaces on Yonge for parking and loading. The parking area is heavily used – it may be used as overflow parking for business areas to the north.

**C:** The stretch along the cemetery is heavily used. I would hesitate to remove parking spaces here.

**C:** North of Davisville Avenue, there is a bike rack shortage on this stretch, and generally along the corridor.

## **Segment 2: Glen Elm Avenue to Woodlawn Avenue (incl. Yonge & St. Clair BIA)**

**Q:** There is a lot of hatching and roadway spaces being taken away which is creating a situation where there is not a lot of parking; when CaféTO comes in, there won't be much parking. Can on-street design be revised to accommodate on-street parking and loading needs?

**A:** Loading (passenger and commercial) is a priority. Any additional space will accommodate parking. Where hatching is provided it is generally based on the requirements of turning vehicles or buses at intersections.

**Q:** Is there any space to provide additional parking on this block (near Pleasant Boulevard)?

**A:** Pleasant Boulevard is a TTC shuttle route and needs to accommodate right and left turning articulated buses, which prohibits the addition of parking in this block.

**Q:** Trucks come in to water sidewalk planters for BIAs. How will we be able to water planters with

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

bike lanes coming in?

**A:** This is something that will be discussed offline with the BIAs.

**Q:** At Heath Street and Yonge Street, there are southbound turn lanes but there is not one northbound. There is a lot of demand to turn left on Heath Street. Can we get a northbound left turn lane here or at Delisle Avenue?

**A:** There is a challenge at Heath Street, geometrically, with left turning lanes providing interlocking left turns. It is a problematic intersection. There is an existing turn restriction during the PM peak period. We are constrained at Delisle Avenue because we have to provide minimum clearance, and provide shadow for left turn lane. We will look into this again but there is not much we can do.

**Q:** Is there an opportunity for off-street parking and loading?

**A:** We are reviewing loading survey requests and opportunities.

**C:** A bike share station at the southwest corner of Farnham and Yonge would be welcomed.

**Q:** Bikes begin picking up speed heading southbound through this stretch. How will enforcement happen? What strategies are envisioned to slow cyclists?

**A:** We are looking at creative design opportunities. We will work with Toronto Police Service. Transportation Services will focus on education around this as we do not have any enforcement authority. We do education programs for all users and we do a lot of messaging on buses and social media. This is our realm, whereas direct enforcement lies with Toronto Police Services. Some design elements we are looking at include signage to yield to pedestrians; clear pavement markings (custom pavement markings that say "SLOW" or have horizontal striping) and signage particularly approaching accessible loading zones; and curb extensions to control speeds of both drivers and cyclists. There will be monitoring post-installation to identify where these types of interventions would be most needed.

**C:** Many of the streets south of St. Clair Avenue to Bloor Street are landlocked: Jackes Avenue, Woodlawn Avenue East, Summerhill Avenue, Shaftesbury Avenue, Price Street, Alcorn Avenue, Marlborough Avenue, Birch Avenue, and some of Roxborough Street West. This is a huge issue for residents.

**Q:** Have the schools in the neighbourhood been asked for feedback?

**A:** Yes, York International School and the Junior Campus are on the stakeholder list and on this call today.

**Q:** Can we consider a pilot to the end of October and not the entire year with all the construction, snow removal, and landlocked streets?

**A:** The pilot has been approved until April 2022. Staff will report back to Council in early 2022.

**C:** It should be noted that public surveys for Danforth and Bloor showed increased support for the

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

projects after the ActiveTO/Complete Street projects were installed.

**C:** Our community is multimodal, heavily transit-dependent, and uses a variety of means to get around.

## **Segment 3: Woodlawn Avenue to Crescent Road (incl. Rosedale Main St. BIA)**

**Q:** We are a landlocked community with a dead-end street. We are concerned about access to our street as well as access into and out of the community, especially for seniors who use Wheel Trans.

**A:** We have engaged with Wheel-Trans and accessibility committees for advice (Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee for Accessible Transit) and when safe to do so, we will provide site visits with community members who have mobility issues.

**C:** We are concerned with left turns at various intersections. There will be back-ups when there are left-turning vehicles.

**C:** We are concerned about construction sites at Scrivener Square and trucks causing a backup here and how will traffic be affected when we are down to two lanes.

**Q:** We are concerned about sidewalk planter maintenance and access for watering – how will this occur?

**A:** This will be discussed with the BIAs offline.

**Q:** When parking was allowed in the past, Price Street and Yonge Street was a major concern. Is it actually workable to have a single lane in each direction? Can an interim assessment be made before the pilot is completed (e.g., traffic volumes increase as pandemic restrictions ease)?

**A:** We only have approval through April of 2022, so it was anticipated that we would be in lockdown for some time, then be able to assess when we return to normalcy in the Fall – Winter. We are responsible to report to Council in early 2022, and then a decision will be made about the temporary project.

## **Segment 4: Crescent Road to Bloor St (incl. Bloor-Yorkville BIA)**

**Q:** Has the left turn been taken away at Yorkville?

**A:** Yes, we do not have a left turn lane but will reassess.

**Q:** How will we be able to access sidewalk planters that require daily watering?

**A:** We will reach out to BIAs to discuss daily watering for planters.

**C:** This is an area where we need to nail traffic management. We need smart left turn lanes to prevent constant back up. We need barriers between bikes and cars. There is a lot happening in this zone, so as a biker, I would want to feel extra protected.

**Q:** What has happened with the Avenue Road safety/biking program?

# ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Street Pilot Project

**A:** A feasibility study of Avenue Road from Bloor Street to St. Clair Avenue is scheduled to begin in 2021. The study will explore the feasibility of a range of opportunities to improve safety and comfort for all users of Avenue Road.

**Q:** On behalf of Deer Park Residents Group, we support the project because we have seen similar projects succeed in other parts of the city, but we are also curious to see how the project unfolds in this area. What kind of metric and data gathering are you doing? For example, impacts on improving road safety – does the project result in speed reductions? Reduced crashes and collisions? Does it have economic impacts? Does it impact businesses? How does the project change traffic patterns on surrounding streets? What are impacts of loading on accessibility?

**A:** We are looking at: multi-modal volumes and volumes on parallel corridors; travel times for motor vehicles; and safety analyses with data on reported collisions. We also plan to do intercept surveys (on the ground responses from people utilizing the street, should public health restrictions allow), as well as examining metrics such as volumes, travel times, public perception, further consultation with stakeholders, and a before and after study.

**Q:** How will Wheel Trans be managed?

**A:** Wheel Trans has been engaged and has provided us with the key locations that require accommodation, and these have been incorporated into the design, including accessible loading platforms at key locations.

**Q:** Where do motorized vehicles (non-car) go? For example, motorized wheel chairs, electric scooters, skateboarders, etc.?

**A:** Wheelchair users will use the sidewalk, pedestrians use the sidewalk, some e-bikes will go down the bike lane, and scooters would use the cycle tracks.

**Q:** Are there opportunities to upgrade crosswalks as part of the pilot, so that pedestrians are safe? Getting north of Davisville Avenue will be important for the success of this project, to better connect those north.

**A:** Crosswalks are part of this project. Any crosswalk that needs an upgrade is being looked at. All pavement marking will be refreshed as well – this is all within our scope.

**Q:** How does a Wheel Trans vehicle access a side street to pick up a passenger if streets are gridlocked?

**A:** Wheel-Trans vehicles can travel and legally load anywhere (including in the bike lane), but of course they are impacted by traffic congestion. We will be monitoring post-implementation to identify strategies to reduce and ease congestion along the corridor.

**Q:** Will snow plows remove snow or push onto bike lanes or sidewalks? The rendering shows snow on the sidewalk.

**A:** The cycle tracks and sidewalks will be plowed.