Avenue Road Study
Stage 1 Consultation Report

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Contents

Executive Summary

The City of Toronto is studying Avenue Road, between St. Clair Avenue West and Bloor Street West, to find opportunities to improve the street with emphasis on safety, mobility choices, and enhancing the streetscape.

This report details the activities and feedback received during the first phase of public consultation for the Avenue Road Study. The purpose of Phase 1 was to verify concerns and priorities previously raised, and to identify concerns and priorities not previously captured. Phase 1 involved gathering public input for the study area through an online survey. Responses from the survey will inform the development of potential improvement options for Avenue Road that best serve all road users with the space available.

A Public Notice was circulated to 38,519 households directing people to the on-line survey. The survey generated 1,307 responses. Eleven individuals reached out via email or telephone, and 2 surveys were posted via Canada Post in response to requests from community members.

Overall, public feedback received in Phase 1 affirms that safety improvements for all users along the Avenue Road corridor is a top priority.

The most common concerns identified by survey respondents are the high speed of traffic, insufficient space on sidewalks, lack of bikeways, and insufficient buffer space between pedestrians and vehicles, indicating an overall concern for safety. The most frequently identified changes that survey respondents would like to see are increased sidewalk widths, reduced vehicle speed limits, and the introduction of cycling facilities.

Feedback generated through the open text comment fields also included concerns that any changes to Avenue would impact travel on the road which acts as an arterial as well as a neighbourhood access point. Some respondents prefer that Avenue Road remain as a motor vehicle thoroughfare providing faster-flowing access between Highway 401 and the downtown core.

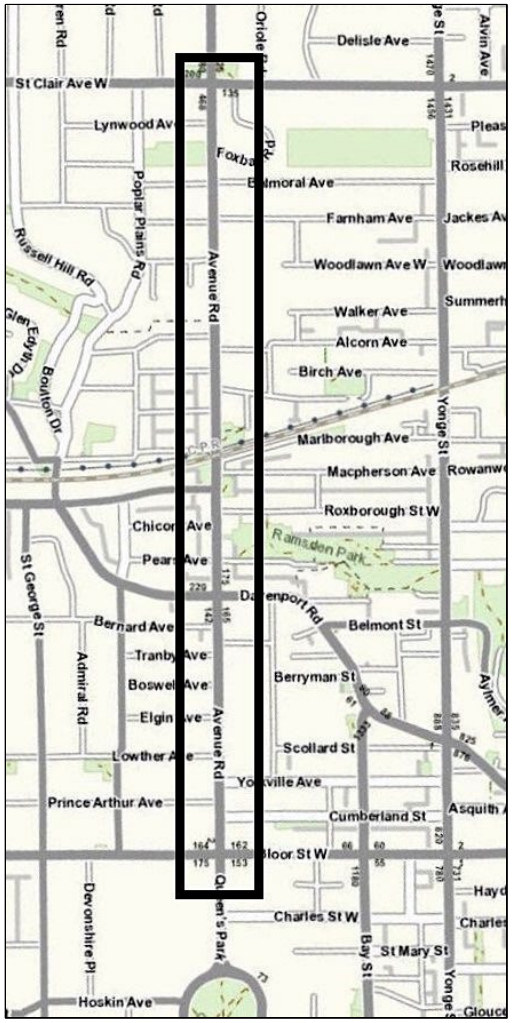
Other frequently mentioned concerns and priorities for the corridor include noise levels related to speeding, and concerns about impacts to the corridor and local neighbourhood streets if changes are implemented on both Avenue Road and Yonge Street.

Project Summary

The Avenue Road Study will look at options for using the space available to best serve all road users. The study takes into consideration the impact of potential changes on the city-wide road network and adjacent local streets. Through the study and in consultation with the community, the City will determine what changes can be implemented in the short to medium term, in advance of full reconstruction of the road.

With full reconstruction of Avenue Road currently forecasted to take place more than ten years from now, implementing improvements will allow the City to monitor changes and help inform a future study to determine major, permanent design changes.

This report summarizes consultation activities and feedback received during Phase 1 consultation, from May 9 to May 29, 2022.



Study Area

The study area is Avenue Road from Bloor Street West on the south to St. Clair Avenue West on the north.

Notification and Consultation Activities

- Project website www.toronto.ca/AvenueRoadStudy
- Notice of Public Consultation sent via Canada Post direct mail to 38,519 addresses in the study area

Online Survey

Phase 1 consultation was facilitated using on on-line survey open from May 9 – May 29 and accessible through the project web page. The survey included background information on the project. The questions included multi-choice or multi-select responses, in addition to open ended comment boxes, and optional demographic questions. Participation in the survey was anonymous.

Comment Tracking

Members of the public were invited to contact the City directly to provide input via phone, email, or written letter. A total of 11 comment submissions were received between May 9 and May 29, 2022. All comments were recorded and reviewed for consideration and response by the project team.

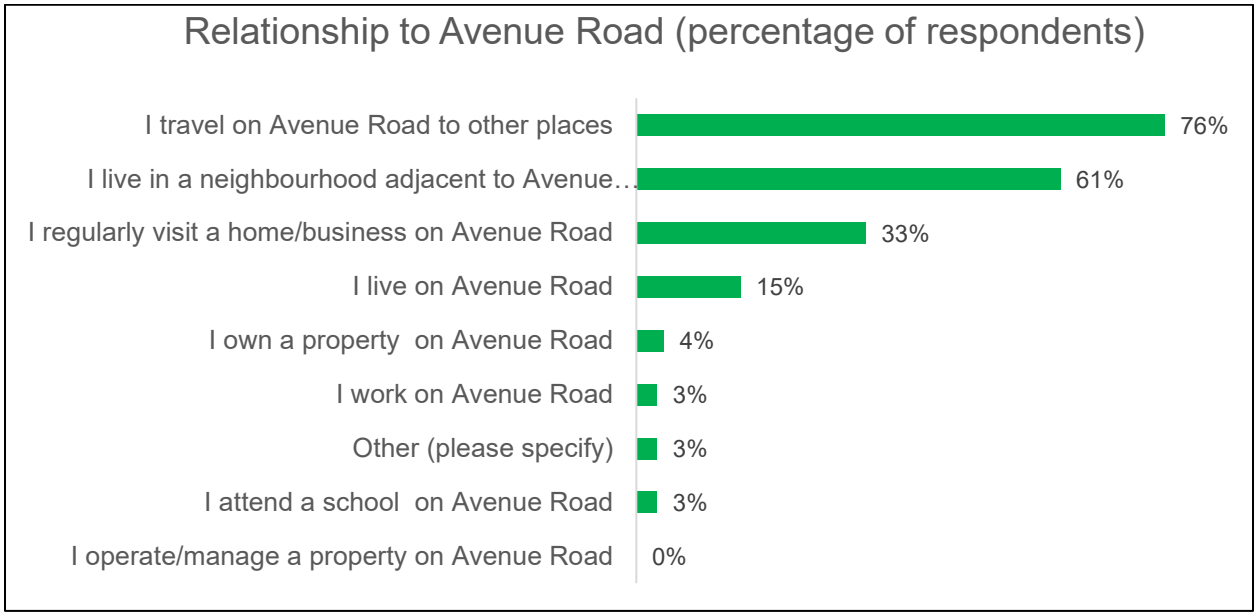
Feedback Summary

Online Survey

Responses received to each survey question are described in this section.

The first set of questions focuses on the survey respondents, to get an understanding of who participated.

Q. Which of these options best describes your relationship to the project area? [Select all that apply.]

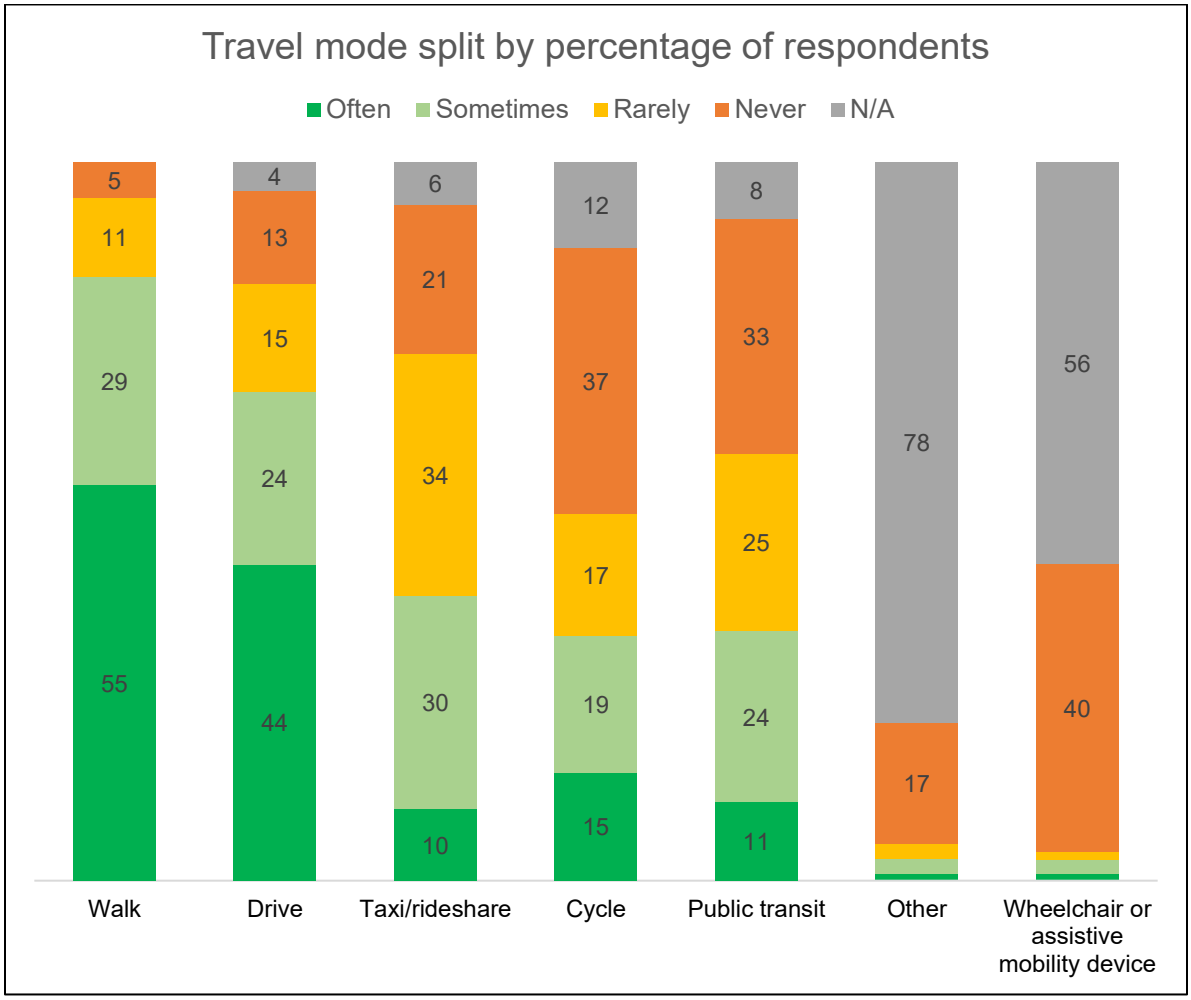


- 692 (53%) respondents either live on Avenue Road or in a neighbourhood adjacent to Avenue Road and travel on Avenue Road to other places

Q. What are the first 3 characters (letters and numbers) of your postal code?

Of the 1306 survey respondents who provided the first three characters of their postal code, 844 (66%) provided postal codes within the project area (M4V and M5R)

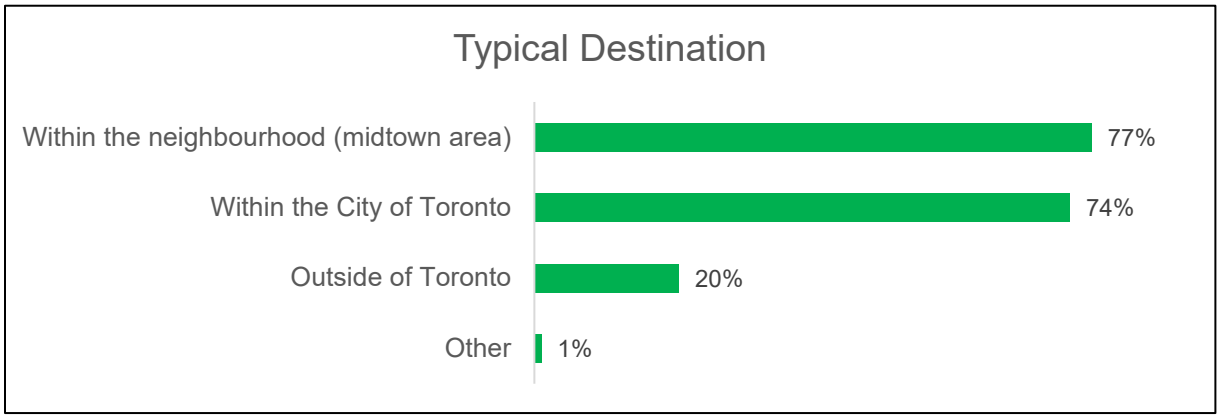
Q. What modes of travel do you use along Avenue Road?



Respondents' most common modes of transportation along Avenue Road are walking and driving. More respondents walk than drive. Few currently use Avenue Road for cycling.

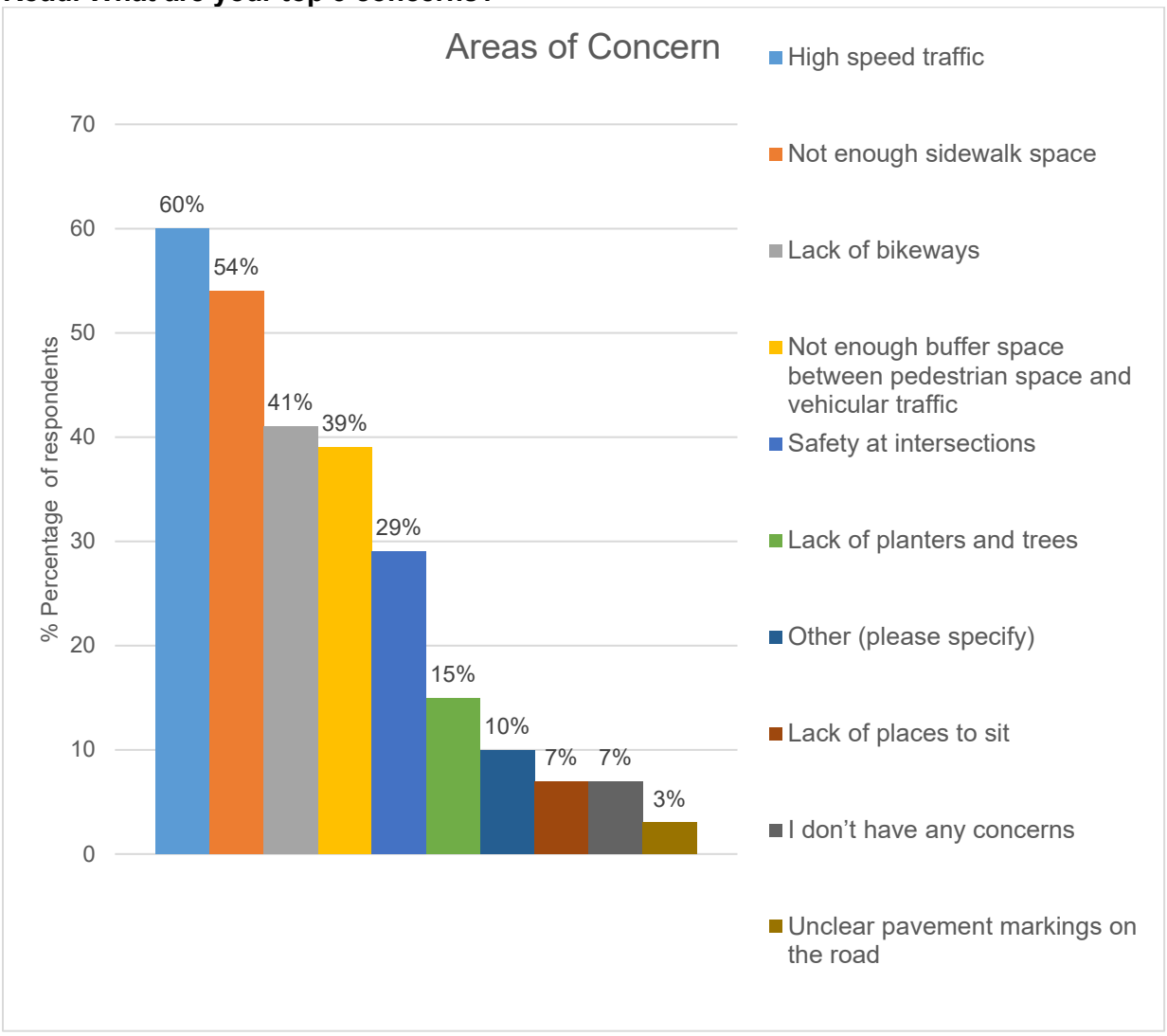
- Over 80% of respondents walk often or sometimes
- 68% drive often or sometimes
- 40% use taxis and rideshare often or sometimes
- 34% cycle as a regular mode travel, 54% rarely or never cycle
- 35% use public transit

Q. When travelling along Avenue Road, where is typically your destination? [Select all that apply.]



Survey respondents mostly travel on Avenue Road to destinations within the area and the city.

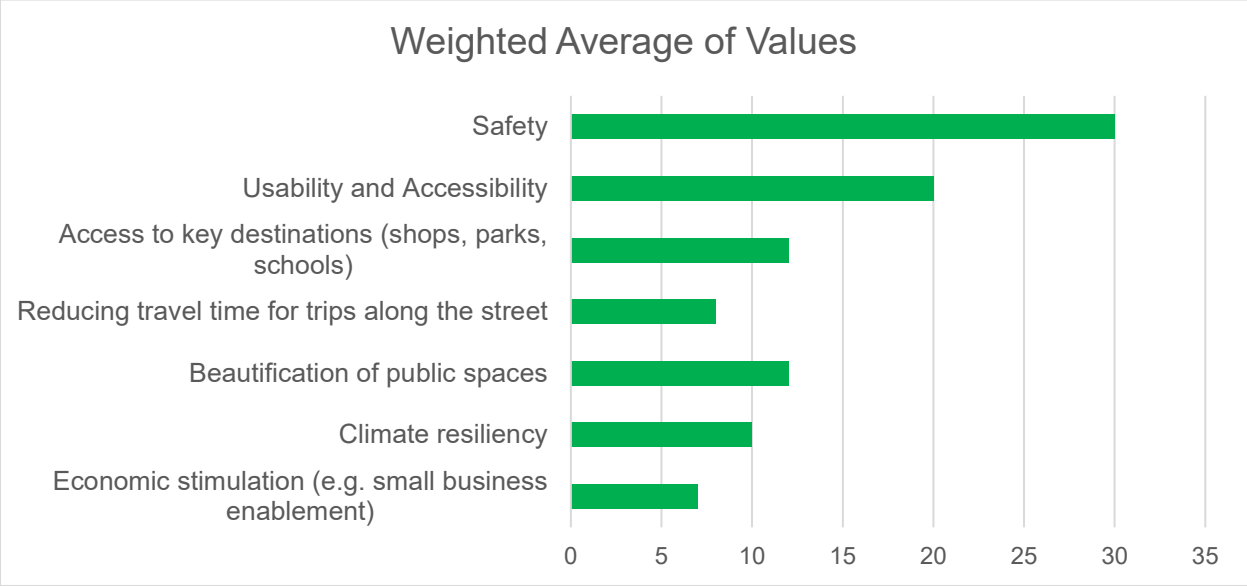
Q. Community members have raised concerns with the current condition of Avenue Road. What are your top 3 concerns?



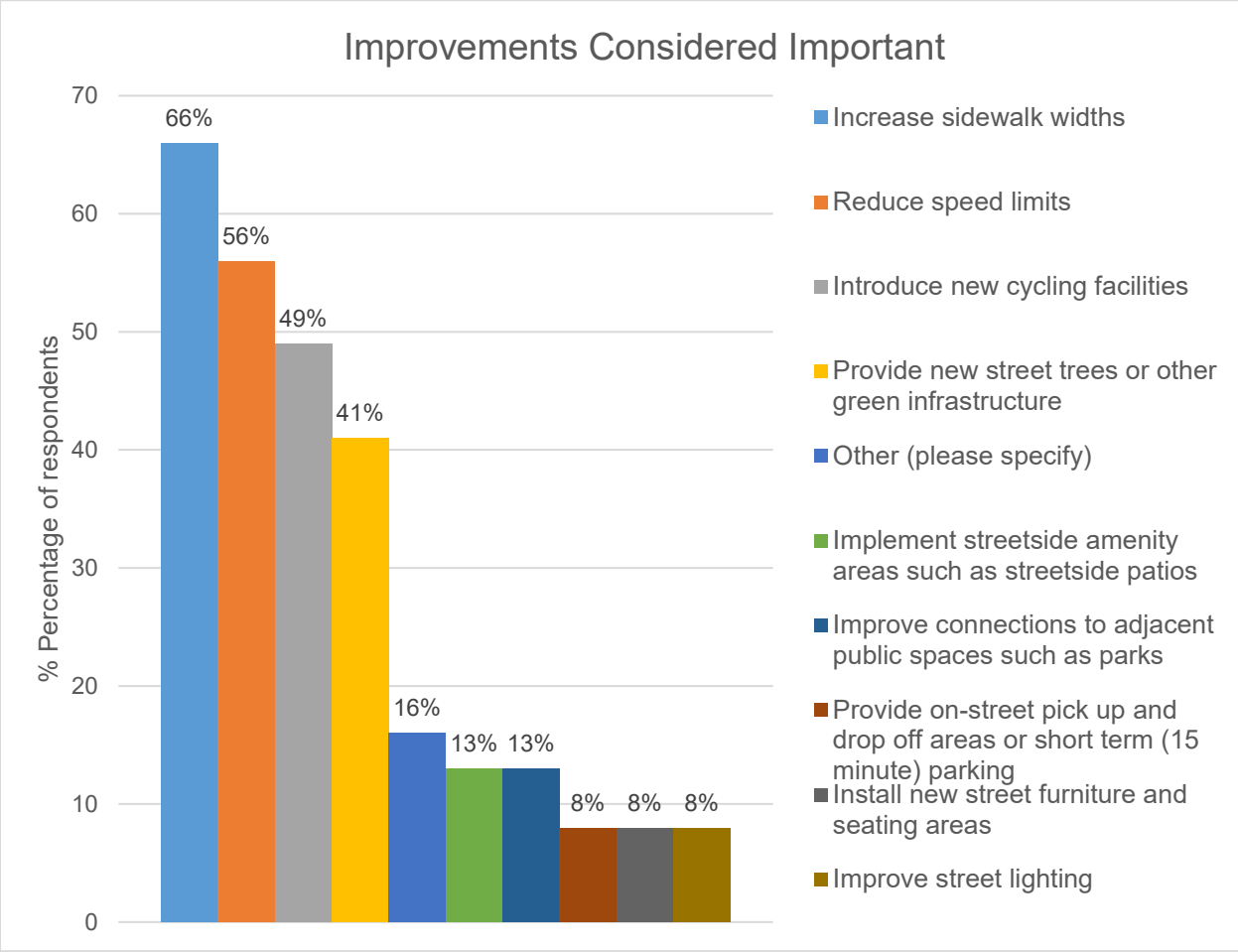
Of the respondents who selected 'Other', concerns included:

- Potential impacts of the Yonge Street pilot program on the vision for Avenue Road (impact on traffic, impacts on the opportunity for bike lanes)
- Construction disruption in the neighbourhood
- Impediments to neighbourhood access for emergency vehicles should there be reduced vehicle flow
- Lack of enforcement of people driving as well as people cycling
- Maintenance of the sidewalks and roads
- Too much noise
- Too much pollution
- Low frequency of public transit (TTC) service
- Traffic operations including traffic congestion, restricted or difficult left turns, poor signal timing and sequencing, neighbourhood infiltration

Q. What values do you consider most important in identifying future improvements to Avenue Road? Rank in order of importance.



Q. The following list includes examples of potential road use and safety improvements. What are the top three most important changes you would like to see on Avenue Road?



Of the respondents who selected ‘Other’, suggested improvements not identified in the graph above are summarized below.

- No changes* – Avenue Road should remain as a vehicle thoroughfare with multiple lanes and high speeds
- Enforcement for vehicles speeding, running red lights
- Improved traffic operations: increased vehicle lanes, increase traffic speed, dedicated turn lanes, and better timing for traffic signals, reduce neighbourhood traffic infiltration
- Intersection safety improvements
- Pedestrian safety improvements
- Improved maintenance
- Make short term parking available
- Improve public transit

*Approximately one third of respondents who selected ’Other’ identified a preference for no changes to Avenue Road or that the current vehicle capacity be maintained.

Q. Please provide any additional comments for the Project Team to consider at this phase of the project.

Open text comments received are summarized below:

Core function of Avenue Road	• Design the road to accommodate all road users
	  ○ Reduce number of vehicle lanes and reduce lane width
	  ○ Implement best practices and cycle- and pedestrian-friendly improvements
	  ○ Design the road for climate resiliency and a safer, more accessible pedestrian environment
	  ○ Ensure future design supports reduced reliance on vehicles
	  ○ Prioritize local users of Avenue Road over commuters
	  ○ Return the pedestrian realm that was removed decades ago
	  ○ Improvements cannot be made by only reducing speed
	  ○ Bikeways and wider sidewalks are a must, along with reduced speed, number of vehicular lanes, and speed enforcement
	  ○ Implementing changes to support the local economy
	• Maintain Avenue Road as a vehicle thoroughfare
	  ○ As an important north-south arterial road, used as a main throughway to downtown Toronto, traffic flow needs to be maintained
	  ○ As a result of changes on Yonge Street, Avenue Road is the only remaining north-south artery in the area from Dupont to St. Clair
	  ○ Concern for emergency vehicle access if number of vehicular lanes are reduced

City Policies and Planning	• Support for implementing Vision Zero and TransformTO is explicit • Support for Complete Streets elements is found throughout the comments • Area population growth will contribute to more traffic • Residential development increases the need for safe pedestrian realm improvements • Changes to Avenue Road would exacerbate existing complaints about construction in the area
Active Transportation and Transit	• People should be prioritised over cars • Include buffer space between the different users / modes • Widen sidewalks for pedestrians • Install bike lanes, many people on bike use the sidewalk • Improve public transit service and frequency, consider a dedicated traffic lane for transit

Avenue Road &Yonge Street	• Any changes to Avenue Road need to consider neighbourhood access on residential streets that run east-west between Avenue Road and Yonge Street
	• Traffic on Avenue Road has increased since Yonge Street installation; concern that potential future changes to Yonge Street will further reduce vehicle flow along Avenue Road
	• Changes on Yonge Street have restricted north–south access for vehicles to downtown
	• Increased traffic infiltration on residential streets as a result of changes on Yonge Street could get worse with changes made to Avenue Road
	• Increased traffic along Avenue Road impacts access to residential streets, noting the added limitation of one-way streets
	• Either Avenue Road or Yonge Street should have bike lanes, not both
	  ○ Yonge Street is a better choice than Avenue Road for people cycling, as it is already conducive for pedestrians and people on bike (more businesses)
	  ○ Move bike lanes from Yonge Street to Avenue Road
	  – Avenue Road is wider
	  – Avenue Road cycle tracks can connect to cycle tracks along University Avenue
	  – Yonge street is congested with patios and residents need access to the street
	• There should be bike lanes on both Avenue Road and Yonge Street – there are no other contiguous north south streets besides Yonge Street

Beautification, Greening and Amenities	• The street is currently very 'ugly', an example of neglect
	• Support for suggested improvements including:
	  ○ Public seating / benches
	  ○ More landscaping, street trees and green infrastructure
	  ○ Drinking water fountains
	• Install a landscaped boulevard in the middle, which also serves as traffic calming
	• Pedestrian realm improvements would be supportive of small businesses
	• Install Bike Share stations along the route
	• Build access to Ramsden Park
	• Benches and seating areas (in the shade)
	• More lighting

Bike Lanes	• Currently there is little space for people cycling; Cars drive very close to people cycling
	• Opposition to bike lanes
	  ○ Concern that adding bike lanes will result in reduced vehicle capacity
	  ○ Redirect bikes to Yonge Street, Poplar Plains and Russell Hill Road
	  ○ New bike lanes on Yonge Street are sufficient

	• Support for bike lanes
	  ○ Would be an important cycling route for commuters to the city
	  ○ Bike lanes are needed to improve the comfort and safety of people cycling including families with children
	  ○ Bike lanes are needed in addition to lanes already piloted on Yonge Street
	  ○ Need to ensure people don't use the sidewalk for cycling
	• Install fully separated bike lanes – suggested treatment:
	  ○ concrete low walls
	  ○ steel bollards
	  ○ green median with trees
	  ○ euro-style bike lanes e.g., Berlin, Amsterdam, Denmark road design, parts of Ottawa ON which have wide sidewalks with attached bike lanes isolated from the road by sidewalk
	• Install bike lanes in the middle to prevent vehicles from turning in front of people cycling
	• Bike lanes should connect to other bicycle corridors in the city:
	  ○ Queens Park / University (an extension)
	  ○ Bloor Street
	  ○ Davenport (via Dupont Street or another side street)
	  ○ The Beltline (outside of project area)
	• Proper crossing for bikes are needed at Cottingham Street, Pears Avenue (to access Crescent Road) and Dupont Street
	• Concern for the safety of people cycling downhill if bi-directional lanes are installed on the slope – the speed of those going downhill will be too fast
	• Bike lanes design should ensure cars can still turn safely
	• Prioritize pedestrians first and cyclists second as there are other cycling routes
	• Include Bike Share Stations along the route

Enforcement	• Enforcement is needed to manage
	  ○ Speed limits
	  ○ Red lights
	  ○ Left turn on red light
	• Suggested enforcement measures for vehicles
	  ○ Police presence
	  ○ Speed trap at the bottom of the hill
	• Education campaign needed for cyclists about pedestrian safety

Intersection improvements	• Intersection improvements needed for the following intersections: ○ St. Clair Avenue West raised intersection is very dangerous, vehicles encroach on the pedestrian crossing area, many students use this intersection

	○ Macpherson Avenue: cars do not see pedestrians when turning on to Macpherson Avenue, flashing lights will be helpful ○ Bloor Street: build a fully protected intersection ○ Cumberland Avenue: cars turn here to avoid Bloor, they go from high speed to slow and narrow ○ Davenport Road ○ Roxborough Street: a traffic light is needed, coordinate with light at Dupont Street ○ Pears Avenue ○ Area where Dupont Street, Macpherson Avenue, Marlborough Place and Avenue Road meet • Safety concerns at intersections: ○ Crossing to the streetcar transit stop feels dangerous ○ The traffic flow of left turning vehicles travelling westbound makes crossing the street dangerous ○ Vehicles turning right don't see pedestrians ○ The following intersections are impacted by traffic congestions, and vehicles turning left Balmoral Avenue ○ Dupont Street ○ Woodlawn Avenue ○ Macpherson Avenue ○ Roxborough Street ○ Davenport Road ○ St Clair Avenue West • Consider changes to improve traffic operations and safety: ○ Advance left turns ○ No right turns on red ○ Eliminate left turn onto Dupont Street ○ Left turn at Avenue Road on to St Clair Avenue West needs 2 lanes
Noise	• Noise was raised as a concern many times across the open text fields ("other" concerns / improvements as well as the open comments field) • Noise is associated with high speed of vehicles and car racing
Parking	• Remove parking as part of lane reductions • Implement short term parking for deliveries and drop off / pick up areas
Pedestrian & Sidewalk improvements	• Consider the high population of seniors and students in the area traveling along the corridor to schools and parks • More sidewalk space is needed: ○ Sidewalks are very narrow, in some areas 2 people cannot fit, having to take turns to walk along a stretch, or step in the road to pass other pedestrians ○ There is no space for wheelchairs, strollers or other mobility devices

	• Cars drive at fast speeds very close to pedestrians as the sidewalks are narrow and there is no buffer • Inclement weather like rain, snow and ice increases the danger of walking along the sidewalk – there is the risk of either pedestrian or car slipping o Install crosswalks o Relocate utility poles from the middle of the sidewalk o Install barriers and buffer space to separate road users
Public transit / TTC	• Install dedicated bus lanes • Create a bus service route from Highway 401 to Front Street
Remove lanes, reduce lane widths	• Remove 2 lanes of traffic; maintain at least 4 lanes of traffic with two lanes in each direction • Implement a left turn lane midblock and at intersections • Use a middle lane to carry the bulk of traffic during rush hour as with Jarvis Street • Install chicanes for speed reduction
Segments	• Different segments of the corridor should have different treatment o The north end is more residential o The south end has more commercial • Changes which could create congestion are best left to the section between Dupont Street and Bloor Street where it forms part of the Yorkville
Speeding, car racing, and need for traffic calming	• Speed limit is too high • Speeding is common • Enforcement is needed immediately for speeding vehicles, and car and motorcycle racing on weekends. Long term physical changes to the road are needed to reduce speeding by design, not just reduced speed limits

Feedback via Email and Phone

Comments received via phone/email from members of the public are summarized below:

Topic	Comment Summary
Beautification	• Avenue Road is an entrance to the City at Bloor Street / Queens Park and passes important institutions, more should be done to highlights this corridor • Beautification and landscaping are needed, especially at Bernard Parkette
Pedestrian improvements	• Pedestrians avoid Avenue Road detours routes include Poplar Plains or Yonge Street which add significant time to travel • Significantly widen sidewalks • Increase the distance between pedestrians and vehicles • improve streetscape and trees to support climate resiliency
Lane reductions	• There are too many unnecessary vehicle lanes

	• Aside from peak commute times, most of the day the lanes are underused by vehicles
Safety	• Cars on Avenue Road drive too fast • Concerns and account of safety issues, accidents and near misses
Traffic operations	• Make bigger signage and bolder paint markings on the road • Impact of changes could reduce traffic flow which will have adverse effect on the economy • Improve signal timing for vehicle flow and turning
Oppositions to change	• Changes not needed • Bike lanes not needed

Scope	• Request to extend the study
	  ○ North to Eglinton Avenue West
	  ○ North to Lawrence Avenue West

Age and Gender of Survey Respondents