



Mayor John Tory
City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Sent by email to: mayor_tory@toronto.ca

January 9, 2023

Dear Mayor Tory,

I am writing on behalf of the Steering Committee of Walk Toronto. We would like to thank you and members of City Council for approving implementation of the yearlong ActiveTO Midtown Yonge Complete Street pilot between Bloor Street and Davisville Avenue during 2022. It has proven to be a safe and sustainable design that is building a vibrant community for all residents and visitors. The bike lanes provide a buffer separating pedestrians on the sidewalk from vehicles on the road, in addition to offering a protected area for cyclists. We hope you and the City Council will ensure that it remains as permanent infrastructure.

Walk Toronto is a grassroots organization advocating on behalf of the city's residents to improve pedestrian safety and walking conditions. With the unprecedented development in the Midtown area of Toronto, we encourage a new vision of how the streets and sidewalks are used as this new growth is accommodated in affordable and space-efficient ways. Yonge is often referenced as Toronto's Main Street and its narrow right-of-way south of St. Clair Avenue is particularly in need of Complete Street ideas that encourage travel by public transit, cycling, and walking.

While we acknowledge that during this transition cars will remain a popular mode of travel, Walk Toronto emphasizes the fact that every trip, whether by car, public transit, or bicycle, begins and ends with walking. This is especially true along the Midtown Yonge Corridor that is home to vital local businesses. The Yonge Complete Street project is complemented by programs such as Bike Share and Easier Access (currently underway at Rosedale and Summerhill stations), which is improving accessibility at local subway stations. Together, they have the potential to make multimodal transportation easier, more accessible and more fluid on the corridor.

The ActiveTO Midtown Complete Street pilot has significantly increased pedestrian use and quality of life for everyone, including people using mobility devices. It should also be noted that Midtown has always had numerous white-collar residents who work from home, with the pandemic reinforcing this trend away from commuting. The pilot project helps to meet the local transportation, dining, and shopping needs of remote workers.

Increases in active transportation have been shown in data collected by the city staff. Since implementation of the Complete Street design, pedestrian use along Yonge Street has increased up to 142%, and bicycle use has increased by as much as 162%. The success of CafeTO is a strong economic indicator that the Yonge pilot has benefited most residents, visitors, and businesses. As you know, Toronto saw similarly positive results on Bloor Street and Danforth, both of which are now permanent installations that have increased streetscape vibrancy.

A project like the Midtown Yonge Complete Street provides a *better* quality of life and more options for people in Toronto. In addition, it supports important civic initiatives such as the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan and the TransformTO Climate Action Plan. Thank you again for your leadership in taking this transformational step. We ask you to continue your support — and to encourage councillors to give their support — for making the Midtown Yonge Complete Street Pilot permanent when it comes before Council.

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