



April 17, 2020

TO: Mayor and City Council

RE: Temporary infrastructure measures while implementing safe physical distancing during COVID-19

This is to lend our support to the chorus of calls asking that the City implement safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to protect pedestrians and cyclists as we seek to practice safe physical distancing.

The reality is that at this time the **public** use of the Right of Way which is normally devoted to private vehicles and public transit buses has been transformed. Vehicles now are few and pedestrians (and cyclists) are more numerous, and they *require much more space*, due to the two-metre social distancing rule. Because many sidewalks – even on busy arterials – provide less than two metres width, many pedestrians are opting to take to the roadway. Meanwhile, barriers, such as poles, construction scaffolding and fencing, and transit shelters, leave little room to manoeuvre.

Other cities in Canada, including Vancouver, Montreal, and Kitchener, have implemented or announced solutions to improve pedestrian safety during the pandemic, including closing streets to motor traffic, creating temporary sidewalk extensions, changing traffic signal length, or disabling “beg buttons,” so that walk signals appear automatically.

During this difficult time, we strongly believe that we need well-considered measures, to protect pedestrians and cyclists in congested urban areas. We suggest that a balanced approach is possible; the goal of physical distancing can be facilitated by a network of lane closures in high density parts of the city. This need not entail complete closure of streets. We would NOT support one alternative approach suggested for pedestrians; implementing one- way sidewalks; we believe this would be unsafe for those who are most vulnerable.

The City needs to adopt a creative and flexible mindset, to make the best of the situation we find ourselves in, while abiding by public health guidelines.

Thank you for your leadership at this difficult time.

Yours truly,

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FoNTRA Resident Associations
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The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.