

LYTTON PARK RESIDENTS' ORGANIZATION INC.
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5 May 2020

VIA EMAIL:

Councillor_colle8@toronto.ca

Dear Councillor Colle:

Providing safe space for pedestrians and cyclists as part of Toronto's recovery plan

Much is being discussed recommending Toronto dedicate more of its road space to pedestrians and cyclists, including our letter sent to you on April 10 2020.

As we understand it, these recommendations have not been acted upon as there is a concern that providing more room for walking/cycling on our roads will "encourage congregation" contrary to the guidance of our medical officer to stay home and limit contact with others.

However Toronto must now be thinking about what are the next steps to be taken as these restrictions are lifted and the city reopens.

CurbTO will initially address major hot spots only, and will mainly address business concerns with reopening and not the general safety and mobility of the walking and cycling public.

We have serious concerns about the lack of adequate room for pedestrians to maintain safe social distancing on the existing sidewalk spaces on the major roads in our area - Yonge St, Lawrence Ave and Avenue Road.

As for cyclists there is virtually no safe space along these routes when normal traffic levels resume.

The Lytton Park Residents' Organization ("LPRO") is an incorporated non-profit association founded in 1987, representing member households from Lawrence Avenue West to Roselawn and Briar Hill Avenues, Yonge Street to Saguenay and Proudfoot Avenue.

<https://lpro.wordpress.com>

A quick survey of the stretch of Yonge Street between Roselawn Avenue and Blythwood Road revealed that:

1. it is not possible for people to maintain spacing beside the majority of the bus shelters.



2. construction scaffolding currently in place at site of Trull building demolition cannot be traversed and maintain spacing for 2 way pedestrian traffic.



3. large planters, signs and ramps outside of some of the businesses (most of which are totally closed currently) can obstruct access.



- restaurant patios that are installed on the sidewalks create major pinch points particularly where they are close to other obstructions such as garbage containers or bus shelters (Classico Pizzeria). We understand that some restaurants are suggesting that they expand patio areas upon reopening as a way to help provide safe seating arrangements which could further worsen this situation.



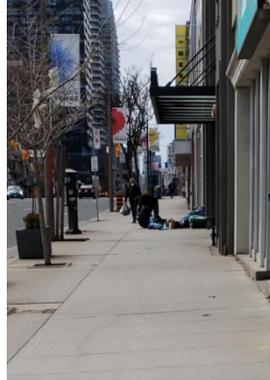
- businesses such as the small local fruit and vegetable stores regularly use the area of sidewalk in front of their stores to display their produce. It is not at all possible to safely get by these even with very low pedestrian traffic.



- one restaurant was operating a take-out window with customers queuing along the sidewalk. It is not possible for 2 way pedestrian traffic to get by these queues and still maintain spacing. As more businesses open along Yonge there will likely be such queues everywhere along the sidewalks and they will not be possible to get by.



7. coincidentally it turned out a homeless person had taken shelter in the doorway of the buildings next to the Best Buy. He has taken pretty much all of the sidewalk space. You couldn't get around him without going onto the road.



The intersection of Yonge and Lawrence is particularly challenging on the south-west corner, given

- a very narrow sidewalk area
- a bus stop
- major traffic crosswalks
- the entrance to a Starbucks

all within a few metres of each other.



Further we are also concerned that pedestrian areas near to Allenby Public School on Avenue Road and John Fisher Jr Public School on Yonge Street at Erskine will become dangerously congested once school resumes.

It is very likely many fewer people will be taking transit due to safe distancing concerns. We want these people to be walking or riding bicycles as much as possible - not adding to the already dangerously congested car traffic in our area. This won't happen if there is no safe alternative for them to do this. Dedicating one lane of Yonge Street in each direction from Eglinton and Lawrence Avenue for pedestrians and cyclists will greatly help to provide this safe alternative.

Additionally, our local businesses will benefit by making it practical for them to use the sidewalk space as some are already doing, possibly expand outdoor patio areas, and to allow customers to safely queue outside their premises.

It is of course essential to avoid premature "encouragement to congregate" by opening up this space too soon, but it is also important that the city implement these changes before there is a significant lifting of restrictions and while commuter traffic remains low.

We therefore request that the City's action plan includes converting these road lanes into bike and pedestrian space for people to use safely while these restrictions are still in place and to be adopted as the "new normal" for the ongoing recovery.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Robert Murray
Vice-President, Lytton Park Residents' Organization

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