



December 6, 2023

Councillor Josh Matlow  
Members of Toronto & East York Community Council  
100 Queen St. West  
Toronto, ON  
M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Matlow and Members of Toronto & East York Community Council,

***RE: bike lane closure in front of 1404-1428 Yonge Street (TE9.45)***

**We oppose the proposed three-year closure of the Yonge Street bike lanes** as outlined in TE9.45 for a building construction project at 1404-1428 Yonge Street. We believe that the proposal unacceptably disregards cyclists' right to safe passage in the city -- and serves as another troubling example of the disregard for those city residents who contribute to a healthy, safe, climate-friendly city consistent with city policies and the declaration of a climate emergency. This closure also undermines city objectives to increase cycling trips as outlined in the TransformTO plan.

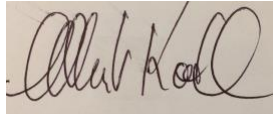
The city has an unfortunate history of inequitable treatment when it comes to construction projects that affect people on bikes, a pattern that is hopefully behind us given the city's adoption of a Complete Streets approach, and which in fact underlies the recent installation of the Yonge Street bike lanes. Unfortunately, bicycle lanes are still too often the first to be compromised, eliminated, or literally used for [toilet placement](#), forcing cyclists into unsafe and precarious situations. With regard to the TE9.45 proposal, the bike lanes in question are essential pathways that ensure the safety and mobility of numerous city residents each day. Their proposed closure for three years sends a disheartening message about the city's uneven commitment to sustainable and inclusive transportation – and will clearly deter new riders and other cycling residents who only feel comfortable riding under safe cycling conditions.

We are no strangers to the complexities and necessities of urban development and construction in this city. However, the health, safety, and convenience of cyclists should not and cannot be secondary considerations. We know from experience that when this city *wants* to accommodate cyclists, it can. We therefore urge you to create safe accommodation for cyclists in this case while construction is ongoing, and it must be more than the effectively-useless “single file” signs which are especially prejudicial to all but the most confident cyclists.

Toronto prides itself on being a progressive and forward-thinking city. It's time that our approach to urban development and transportation demonstrates these values by prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable road users, including cyclists.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We trust that you will take our concerns seriously.

Sincerely,



Albert Koehl, Community Bikeways Coordinator



Mary Ann Neary, Community Bikeways Coordinator



Marc Z. Goldgrub, Richmond Niagara Neighbourhood Association Coordinator

*Community Bikeways (est'd 2020) is a volunteer-led coalition that holds Toronto City Hall to account for its road safety, cycling, and climate plans and policies, while helping to amplify the voices of grassroots groups and emphasizing the integral (clean, and enjoyable) place of the bicycle in our transportation system.*

*The Richmond Niagara Neighbourhood Association (est'd 2021) is a grassroots community organization that represents the interests and concerns of residents in the area surrounding the intersection of Richmond Street and Niagara Street in downtown Toronto.*

cc: Mayor Olivia Chow  
Becky Katz, Cycling and Pedestrian Projects  
Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services  
Roger Browne, Director, Traffic Management