

March 26th, 2018

KING STREET MATTERS

Dear Mayor John Tory & Toronto City Councillors,

We write to you today as concerned small business owners on King Street impacted by the **King Street Transit Pilot Project**.

Your Pilot Objectives: Transit Efficiency, Economic Prosperity, Public Realm Improvements.

It's important to note the following: **WE SUPPORT YOUR OBJECTIVE FOR GREATER TRANSIT EFFICIENCY AND IMPROVEMENTS TO TTC SERVICE ON KING ST.**

But the King Street Transit Pilot (KSTP) continues to fail on its "Economic Prosperity" objective. You must have a fair and balanced approach that will not jeopardize our businesses and will restore vibrancy to our street.

Our proposed changes to the KSTP will not infringe on the "Transit Efficiency" objective of the Pilot as morning and evening rush hours would operate without change.

Our proposed changes will help balance this Pilot by:

- Removal of the traffic restrictions from 7PM – 7AM and removal of restrictions on weekends and holidays
- Allows taxis to move along King St. at all times
- No left turns at all times
- Improved accessibility with greater direct drop off and parking along King St.

March Council:

- We urgently ask that our proposed changes be brought forward and adopted at the March Council session.

- Additionally, we ask that Council assures us that the one year pilot end date is November 12, 2018 and that following the pilot end date we are included in a detailed consultation to ensure any long-term plans are fair and balanced.

Note: There is NO measurement for success of this Pilot. We would like Council to further address the fact that there is no measurement indicated to determine the success or failure of this pilot. **How will this Pilot be evaluated?**

THE DATA:

(PUBLICLY STATED FALSEHOODS AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY BY THE CITY)

The merchants of King St have engaged Dr. Murtaza Haider from Ryerson University to review the data provided by the City of Toronto and the TTC, who came to the following conclusion. "Based on the review of the data presented by the City, we conclude that the average transit travel time savings are modest at best". Professor Haider further observed that the average eastbound transit travel time (as reported by the City) in the morning peak hours was higher (not lower) since the Pilot has been implemented. A full copy of Dr. Haider's report is attached, along with an infographic that captures the City data which directly contradicts the publicly stated comments made by a few members of this Council.

RIDERSHIP:

Specifically, the City claims a 16 per cent increase in ridership since the Pilot project began, however, fails to mention they also increased passenger carrying capacity by 41 per cent *after* the project was implemented. To establish a causal relationship between the pilot and the increase in ridership, one would have to observe the impact of an increase in transit capacity *before* the Pilot project was implemented.

**MONERIS:
(Merchant Transaction Data)**

The City released the results of data provided by Moneris that showed customer spending increased by 21% from October 2017 to December 2017. This broad sweep data posting without any category breakdown is extremely reckless and irresponsible. We have asked for and been refused access to the raw data on which the conclusions were based which raises questions of intellectual honesty and transparency regarding the study. Specifically,

- It is unclear if the Moneris data includes revenue from the Mirvish Theatres. Theatre ticket sales would be in “high season” at the onset of the Pilot with tickets as popular gifts particularly for the up-and-coming huge hits such as “Come From Away”.
- It is unclear if the reported Moneris revenue figures also include data from eBay or Indigo, both of which have head offices in the Pilot project area. If revenue from these e-commerce sites were included, we submit that as an unfair comparison because that is the revenue that simply crossed the accounting books of those businesses and therefore was not impacted by the Pilot project.
- The Moneris data included revenue from the shops and restaurants found in the underground PATH system located between Metro Hall and the business towers as far east as Yonge St. Those PATH merchants benefit from **non-discretionary**, captured audiences of their office towers and would not therefore be impacted by the Pilot Project.
- Data provided by OpenTable (restaurant reservation system used by the majority of restaurants) shows 21% fewer restaurant reservations over the same period year over year and 28% lower than the City average. The OpenTable data also shows that there is a 5% higher cancellation rate on King West vs. the rest of the City.

OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD WAS DIRECTLY AND NEGATIVELY IMPACTED:

- Our businesses are located between Bathurst Street and University Avenue. We are most affected by the Pilot Project as many of us depend on customers arriving by cars or taxi. This is **discretionary business** and many patrons can easily choose to go to another neighbourhood with no or fewer traffic restrictions and easy access to parking and direct drop-off.
- The perception of “King St. is too complicated” is also the reality

We respectfully call on the City of Toronto to share both the raw data AND the methodology of the Moneris Study in order to provide us with information we can compare against our own data. Sharing raw data with those affected directly by the Pilot Project will build confidence and improve transparency. Should there be any concern about confidentiality of data, we will be willing to recommend data scientists to analyze data independently while maintaining confidentiality.

TRANSIT TRAVEL TIMES:

Based on data reported by the City of Toronto for the morning hours one does not see any meaningful change in average travel times because of the Pilot project. In fact, it showed a slight increase in travel times during morning peak hours from 15.3 to 15.5 minutes in January and 15.9 minutes in February.

For the afternoon peak period (4PM to 7 PM) City data claims that the corridor average travel times declined by fewer than 3 minutes. We submit that the complete elimination of on-street parking in the corridor, which was permitted for limited hours during the day prior to the implementation of the Pilot project is at least partially – and likely significantly – responsible for lower travel time savings during the afternoon peak periods. The lack of any significant difference in average transit travel times in the morning peak and the presence of higher travel time savings in the afternoon peak therefore logically concludes that the difference in travel times is influenced more by parking restrictions than by through traffic restrictions.

CONCLUSION

Respectfully, therefore we request the following actions on your part at the March Council session:

- Make a public appeal for the release of the data and methodology of the Moneris Study provide your constituents and Torontonians the ability to make a fair and reasonable apples-to-apples comparison.
- Reveal data collection sources and methodology for automobile travel times which are presenting counterintuitive findings such that an increase in traffic volumes on some east-west arterials are accompanied by a lower (and not higher) travel times. For instance, westbound traffic volume (PM) observed at Bay and Wellington streets increased by 250 vehicles but the average travel times reported a decline.
- Review the context of the data provided by the City of Toronto and the TTC with a critical eye and consider the Point of View of King St. merchants who are severely and adversely impacted by the King St. Pilot project.
- Provide us with the immediate relief we need to stay in business:
 - Removal of the traffic restrictions from 7PM – 7AM.
 - A 24-hour removal of restrictions on weekends and holidays
 - Allow Taxis to travel through intersections along King Street at all times
 - Maintain no left turns (at all times)
 - Accessibility: Greater direct drop off and parking along King St.

We appreciate your consideration of this important topic. We believe that some changes to the Pilot project will enable the City to meet their transit objectives while minimizing its economic and social impact to a vibrant community on King St. while allowing us to continue our support for this important initiative.

Yours truly,

King Street Matters

Representing 50++ businesses located between Bathurst and University, King Street Pilot Corridor

The undersigned supports greater public transit efficiency while taking a fair and balanced approach that won't jeopardize our businesses and will restore the culture and vibrancy back to King West.

We hereby ask that Council reconsider the following requests from the businesses in the community that have been adversely affected.

THE 50++ BUSINESSES BELOW AND THEIR OVER 1500 EMPLOYEES REQUEST AND SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:



NO LEFT TURNS 24/7
no exceptions



PILOT REMAIN AS IS
weekdays 7am - 7pm



NO THROUGH RESTRICTIONS
7pm - 7am weekdays
all day weekends & holidays
to help support local businesses



ALLOW TAXIS TO GO THROUGH
businesses NEED taxis on King West



ACCESSIBILITY
provide parking options on King West for persons with accessible parking permits



388 King St.



550 Wellington St W.



370 King St.



2600 Skymark Ave.



604 King St.



321 King St. W.



628 King St. W.

BLOKE

401 King St. W.



567 King St. W.



99 Blue Jays Way



321 Kint St. W.



291 King St. W.



469 King St. W.



587 King St. W.



325 King St. W.



624 King St. W.



225 King St. W.



603 King St. W.



580 King St. W.



276 King St. W.



609 King St. W.



602 King St. W.



522 King St. W.



15 Mercer St.



295 King St. W.



309 King St. W.



668 King St. W.



85 Portland St.



181 Bay St.



555 King St. W.



293 King St. W.



297 King St. W.



373 King St. W.



12 Brant St.



663 King St. W.



318 Wellington St. W.



469B King St. W.



309 King St. W.



37 King St. E.



319 King St. W.



485 King St. W.



214 King St. W.



303 King St. W.



545 King St. W.



229 Adelaide St. W.



212 King St. W.



461 King St. W.



529 King St. W.



212 King St. W.



633 King St. W.

Her majesty's pleasure.™

556 King St. W.



573 King St. W.



600 King St. W.

THE SPOKE CLUB

660 King St. W.