



TORONTO
SOCIETY OF
ARCHITECTS

June 2, 2015

Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St West, Suite A12
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Toronto City Council,

RE: the future of the Gardiner Expressway East

Established in 1887, the Toronto Society of Architects (TSA) is a non-profit volunteer-based organization comprised of architects, interns, students, urbanists, academics, retirees, and city-building enthusiasts. The TSA plays an advocacy role in the city and region, ensuring that architecture and design are key considerations in public discussions and in processes that have an impact on our built environment.

Today, we write to draw attention on an issue of critical importance, the future of the Gardiner Expressway East. We want to express our strong support of the 'remove' option as presented in the Environmental Assessment and Staff Report.

For many decades, Toronto's waterfront and downtown have been disconnected. The Gardiner Expressway East has acted as a barrier to effective and welcoming north-south connections taking place. The current and planned context for these areas is one of vibrant neighbourhoods, walkable streets, dynamic commercial and employment environments, and a robust public realm. All of this is hindered by the overpowering presence of the Gardiner Expressway East.

Toronto's dilemma is not unique. Cities across Canada and across the world are facing similar decisions – how to balance the needs of transportation, quality of life, and aging infrastructure. The most effective of them, invariably, are exploring solutions that reduce car-dependency, support active transportation and transit, and build more sustainable public infrastructure.

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Today, Toronto has an opportunity to seize the moment and make a generational decision. By removing the eastern portion of the Gardiner Expressway and providing an at-grade boulevard with a fully integrated transit strategy, we can reconnect existing and emerging neighbourhoods, support the quality of life of residents, increase the economic viability of local businesses, and stitch together a truly magnificent public realm to serve Torontonians and visitors alike. To be clear, we strongly believe that reducing single-occupant car-dependency can only be achieved by a parallel enhancement of public transit.

In supporting the 'remove' option we add our voice to that of the City of Toronto's Chief Planner, the Chief Medical Officer, and many of our community and political leaders, as well as to a majority of Toronto's residents from all age groups and from all neighbourhoods in the city (as recorded in a recent city-wide survey).

Acting as a forum for city- and region-wide conversations, at the TSA we have discussed and debated the future of the Gardiner Expressway East for many years. Today, we strongly believe that Council's decision has the potential to significantly impact the way we build our city, and the character and quality of our downtown and waterfront, for many decades to come.

We remain hopeful for a successful removal outcome.
Respectfully,

Jason Dobbin
Chair

Maria Denegri
Vice Chair

Toronto Society of Architects

CC: Mayor John Tory

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