

YONGE
LOVE

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY
& ACTION PLAN

DECEMBER 2015

DOWNTOWN



A DOWNTOWN YONGE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA PROJECT



A creative community consultation on the future of Downtown Yonge.

Why We Needed Yonge Love

In 2013, the City of Toronto announced a revitalization initiative along Yonge Street from the Waterfront to Davenport Road to effect long-overdue infrastructure improvements¹. We immediately recognized the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape the future of both Yonge Street and the wider Downtown Yonge neighbourhood by improving our streets and sidewalks at the same time.

Our vision is to create an enhanced street experience for Canada's most iconic street. It is the busiest pedestrian street in Toronto and in Canada, if not North America, and the face that Toronto shows the world.

The Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA) represents close to 2,000 property owners and businesses in the Downtown Yonge area of downtown Toronto, and a total of \$5 billion of commercial

property value. In addition, the DYBIA works closely with major stakeholders and community groups for the engagement, economic growth and social innovation of the neighbourhood as a whole.

With an employment cluster of more than 500,000 people daily; a university population of some 110,000 students and faculty a year; over 175,000 residents within easy walking distance; 26% of the city's downtown hotel rooms as well as some 42 million pedestrians on Yonge Street annually, the DYBIA has a unique perspective on the importance of the public realm.

We strive to be a catalyst for creating vibrant urban experiences in the heart of downtown Toronto and actively champion attractive public spaces, popular events, safety and cleanliness.

Yonge Love – A community consultation on the future of Downtown Yonge

Catalyzed by that 2013 announcement on Yonge Street revitalization, and within the context of the priorities mentioned above, DYBIA launched a creative and wide-ranging stakeholder consultation called **Yonge Love**, which ran for seven (7) months from July 2014 to January 2015².

With almost eight (8) million media impressions; more than 6,000 website visits; almost 1,700 online survey responses and more than 4,000 engagements at pop-

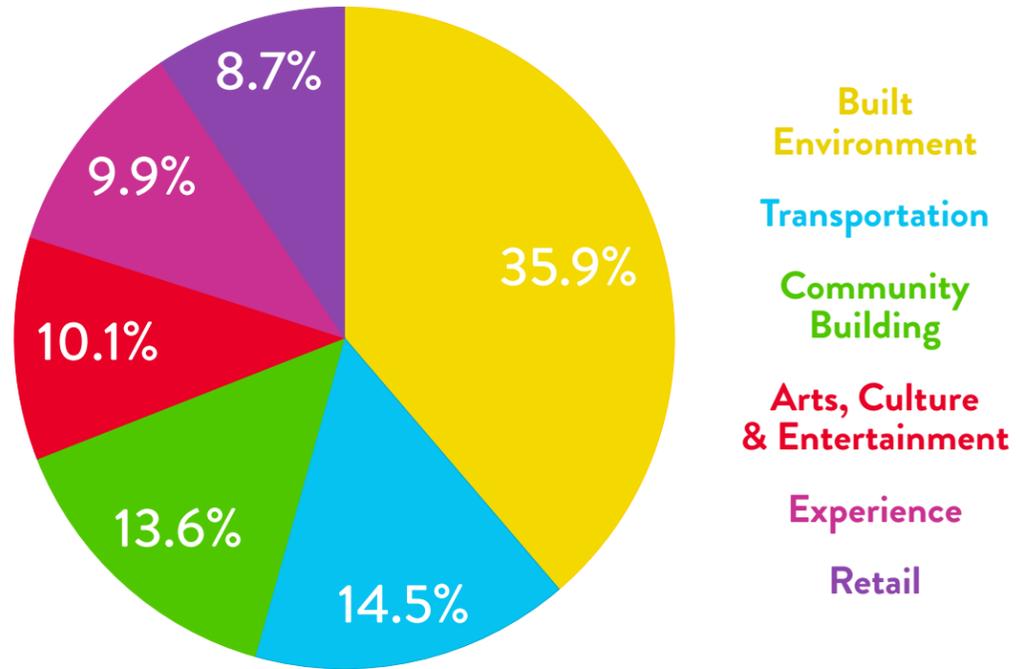
ups and events, the Yonge Love campaign reached out to the wider community for its views on Downtown Yonge.

In total, over 2,000 people contributed their views, opinions and ideas to the Yonge Love campaign – a total of more than 5,800 unique comments.

Through analysis, these comments were distilled into 3,500 ideas which were coded into six (6) key themes, as charted on the next page.

¹ Planning and Revitalizing Yonge Street: City Council referred Motion MM33.13 to the Toronto and East York Community Council on May 13, 2013.
² More information is available at www.yongelove.ca

This chart shows the key themes that made up the feedback received through Yonge Love, and their proportion of the overall conversation. Figures represent the percentage of total ideas shared that relate to that key theme.



Before us is the chance to shape the evolution of Canada's most iconic street, to revitalize a historic cultural centre, and show the world a neighbourhood that truly captures the spirit, vibrancy and lived experience of Toronto.

MARK GARNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHIEF STAFF OFFICER, DOWNTOWN YONGE BIA

Yonge Street Should Be...

Survey respondents were asked to select from the following sentiment keywords, and were allowed to make multiple selections. Therefore the total is not necessarily 100%. (Survey component sample size: 1,693)



If you could choose one big change on Yonge Street, what would it be?

Respondents were asked to select only one of the listed options, to indicate which was highest priority for them. (Survey component sample size: 1,693)



The next five years will lock down Yonge for the next generation. It's going to be a new world. Let's build a great Yonge Street.

BOB FABIAN

DOWNTOWN YONGE RESIDENT & RETAIL ADVOCATE

The Result? Our 5-point Action Plan for creating the Yonge Street of the future.

1 - Make Downtown Yonge a highly walkable neighbourhood.

- Widen sidewalks on Yonge Street.
- Decrease number of vehicle lanes on Yonge Street.
- Create 'tranquil' spaces with more benches, trees and seating areas.
- Improve linkages between laneways, parks, sidewalks and streets.
- Prioritize preservation of heritage spaces.

2 - Make Yonge Street a truly flexible street.

- Make sections of Yonge Street pedestrian-only.
- Prioritize operational flexibility (e.g. easy to access water, hydro, public spaces).
- Prioritize operational maintenance.
- Enable diverse programming of the public realm.

3 - Make Yonge Street a truly complete street.

- Advocate for better building form, design and quality in the public realm.
- Install bike lanes.
- Install bike parking.
- Implement best-practice accessibility standards.

4 - Make Downtown Yonge an always-vibrant neighbourhood.

- Prioritize arts and culture to activate public spaces.
- Advocate for diverse retail with a mixture of uses, footprints and ownership.
- Prioritize fine-grained, local, independent stores.
- Use heritage to create unique destinations.
- Activate and enliven the public realm year-round.

5 - Make Downtown Yonge a truly inclusive neighbourhood.

- Prioritize safe streets, laneways, parks and sidewalks.
- Work to provide increased social supports for under-served citizens.
- Actively support Streets to Homes' root cause approach to homelessness.
- Work with partner social agencies to address aggressive panhandling and other nuisance issues.
- Advocate for more local, community and arts and culture content on area signage.
- Increase the number and scope of community and charity events in the neighbourhood.
- Advocate for mixed-income housing options in area development.





For further information, please contact Mark Garner, Executive Director & CSO (416) 597-0255 x225 mgarner@downtownyonge.com

downtownyonge.com

