

TEAR DOWN THE GARDINER TO RECLAIM PUBLIC SPACE AND FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE



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The Gardiner Expressway has long been a feature of Toronto's transportation horror-scape. It blocks Torontonians from enjoying easy access to Lake Ontario and has become a blight on the waterfront. Its very construction was an environmental assault on then-existing parkland. It was a project first built in segments from 1955 until 1964 by the Metropolitan Toronto government to connect the city by expressway along the lake shore. The plan incorporated an elevated portion that obstructed public access to the city's eastern port lands.

Kiri Vadivelu, the Municipal Socialist Alliance candidate for mayor, says "it is time to tear down this blight and construct a pedestrian and bike friendly boulevard -- instead of investing billions more dollars to repair the Gardiner Expressway. We can follow the example of leading European cities. Toronto needs to reduce its emissions from vehicular traffic and to increase greenspace to fight climate change."

Sunk costs are said to be \$550 million dollars according to a recent staff report. The total construction bill to rebuild sections of the Gardiner Expressway is \$1.89 billion according to the report.

Even Dillon Consulting, which prepared the report on the Gardiner options regarding hybrid rebuild or teardown, favors the removal option. Dillon favours the latter because it "allows the full development of an urban district introduced by a tree canopied urban boulevard". A teardown also gives "lower green house gas emissions and greater opportunity to create new natural habitat." Finally, a teardown has greater economic feasibility as it has a lower net 100-year lifecycle cost.

The only viable option that embodies livability, park space, environmental sustainability and economic feasibility is the teardown of the Gardiner Expressway. Kiri Vadivelu, 37, the first Tamil-Canadian to run for Toronto mayor, is committed to building a city that is livable and one in which infrastructure development is seen through dual lenses – what is best for the working class of the city, and the need to reduce emissions to fight catastrophic climate change already a threat to life as we know it.

