"People Drive Automobiles": Esther Shiner, the Silent Majority, and the Popular Case for the Spadina Expressway, 1971–1987

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ABSTRACT: This article examines pro-expressway politics in Metro Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s. It focuses on Esther Shiner, a North York housewife and later councilor who led a 16-year battle to revive the Spadina Expressway after it was canceled by premier Bill Davis in 1971. Shiner founded an advocacy group, Go Spadina, and became a beacon for what one journalist called the "Spadina revivalists"—groups of (mostly) suburbanites, inside and outside municipal government, who articulated a popular rather than a technical case for building the expressway. I argue that Shiner's campaign was an early example of the "auto populism" now common in Toronto politics and also one expression of a much broader "silent majority" politics in the 1970s and 1980s. Although Shiner's campaign was ultimately a failure—the expressway was never completed—her Spadina revivalism should be understood by historians as one early example of a deep and popular impulse in suburban politics.

Keywords: Esther Shiner, silent majority, Toronto, North York, expressways, Spadina Expressway, suburban politics

RÉSUMÉ : Cet article examine les politiques pro-voie express du Grand Toronto dans les années 1970 et 1980. Il met l'accent sur Esther Shiner, une femme au foyer de North York, puis conseillère municipale, qui a mené une lutte de 16 ans pour faire revivre la Spadina Expressway après que la voie eut été annulée par le premier ministre ontarien Bill Davis en 1971. Shiner a fondé un groupe de défense d'intérêts, Go Spadina, et est devenue un phare pour ce qu'un journaliste a nommé les « Spadina revivalists » — des groupes de (surtout) banlieusards, tant au sein du gouvernement municipal qu'à l'extérieur, qui ont présenté un argument populaire au lieu de technique pour le développement de la voie express. Je soutiens que la campagne de Shiner était un exemple précoce de « l'auto-populisme » qui est maintenant courant dans les politiques torontoises ainsi qu'une expression de politiques plus larges de la « majorité silencieuse » des années 1970 et 1980. Bien que la campagne de Shiner se soit soldée par une défaite — la voie express n'a jamais été terminée —, son « Spadina revivalism » devrait être compris par les historiens comme étant un exemple précoce d'une impulsion profonde et populaire en politiques municipales.

Mots-clés : Esther Shiner, majorité silencieuse, Toronto, North York, voie express, Spadina Expressway, politiques des banlieues

UHR/RHU 49.1, Fall/*automne* 2021 p30–53 doi:10.3138/uhr-2020-0009

Only a few minutes into a call from a *Toronto Star* reporter, Esther Shiner was seething mad. A month earlier, Ontario premier William Davis had announced the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway, a half-built link meant to connect Toronto's downtown with its burgeoning northwest suburbs. The announcement was hailed by urban activists, transit supporters, and downtown neighborhood groups, and has since become an iconic moment in Toronto's history. Exhibits, web pages, and popular articles all celebrate the anti-Spadina movement and the drama of Davis's surprise announcement. Near the end of the proposed route at Bloor Street, a Toronto Heritage plaque celebrates the anti-Spadina events. "The cancellation of the Spadina Expressway project was a landmark in the development of the City of Toronto," it reads. "It signaled the end to plans for the other expressways which were to be cut through existing neighbourhoods. The Stop Spadina movement also helped give a voice to citizens in the planning of their neighbourhoods." Scholarly literature agrees that this was an important moment.[1] The end of the Spadina plan stands as a progressive development in city planning and a moment of political nostalgia.

The Davis announcement went over somewhat differently in Shiner's neighborhood. She lived on Wenderly Drive, a middle-class street in the southern section of suburban North York. Since 1966, when the Spadina opened to nearby Lawrence Avenue, traffic had poured into the neighborhood, seeking routes to and from the expressway. Along Marlee Avenue, a mixed residential and commercial street that paralleled the expressway and intersected Wenderly just a few houses east of Shiner's address, the daily traffic volume by 1971 rivaled that of Yonge Street, the main thoroughfare into the city's downtown.[2] Residents grumbled but never organized, figuring the completion of the expressway would resolve the problem. Shiner felt betrayed by the Davis announcement, so when a *Star* reporter called her that July for an opinion, she vented her anger. Her "beautiful, quiet neighborhood" had been transformed into a "nightmare" where mothers were "terrified" for their children's safety. "It kept getting worse," she claimed, "but we knew the Spadina was being built and in a few years it would take all this traffic away and the neighborhood would have peace and quiet again." Argument mixed with anger. "It's sickening," she told the *Star*. "My family are all disillusioned that politicians can do something like this."[3] The interview launched her on a career in municipal politics and on a 16-year battle to complete the expressway.

Shiner's long campaign brings a different perspective to the Spadina story. The usual one pits people power against a technocratic project slicing through vibrant urban neighborhoods. Downtown activists are the heroes, Jane Jacobs plays a supporting role, and Bill Davis provides the climactic and triumphant moment. In this tale, highway supporters are mostly insensitive Metro planners and old-guard suburban politicians more interested in cars than people. Shiner did see the expressway from its suburban end, but her activism cuts across the people-versus-planner binary and disrupts the convenient Spadina timeline. Shiner was no technocrat. Like the urban reformers she battled, Shiner spoke about transportation in terms of people, neighborhoods, and the city. Her activism also suggests a history of expressway politics that stretches beyond the Davis announcement and past the familiar cast of planners and urban reformers. Shiner was new to politics in 1971,

and her activism continued into the 1980s. The Davis announcement was the end of expressway building in Toronto, but not of expressway politics.

More conceptually, Shiner's Spadina campaign is a laboratory for understanding the character of suburban mobilization after 1971. "The war on the car is over," Rob Ford declared on his first day as mayor of Toronto in 2010. While Ford's victory had many causes, politics in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) continues to be influenced by an "auto populism" that rails against bike-riding downtown elites and calls for more roads as the solution to traffic problems. Associated particularly with the suburbs and with neoliberal and conservative politics, this auto populism has attracted little serious historical analysis. From this perspective, Shiner might be described as patient zero of Ford Nation in the GTA.[4] Her manners were much better than Ford's, but she became a Spadina activist at a time when pro-road Torontonians perceived themselves as a marginalized group. She deployed her considerable talents to translate technical arguments into plain language, anger into program, and pro-expressway sentiment into focused political strategies. She was the best known of many expressway advocates—dubbed the "Spadina revivalists" by one reporter[5]—who consciously spoke for a "silent majority" that aimed to restore "common sense" to transportation thinking, yet she was strongly motivated by frustration and anger. As much as the Davis announcement signaled the triumph of downtown "people politics" over rationalized highway planning, it also marked the beginning of another kind of popular agitation, an auto populism now powerful in politics across the GTA.

Shiner's auto populism also represents a local and municipal version of a larger political story. Conservatives across North America were louder, angrier, and more organized by the early 1970s. In the United States, politics from small towns to the national stage felt the backlash against civil rights, activist liberalism, and New Left organizing. Such sentiments took different forms in Canada, from hostility to bilingualism to revolts against tax reform. These movements had different strategies and levels of success, but historians have nonetheless added more subtlety to the well-known image of left organizing. Shiner's pro-expressway campaign was not exclusively conservative, but her political posture, angry tone, and opposition to progressive urbanism fit well within this broader moment of populist backlash, as her frequent use of the term *silent majority* made clear. The local context mattered, but Shiner's Spadina activism was one part of larger political developments.[6]

I. Toronto's Northwest Passage[7]

In one way, Shiner did fit the standard Spadina narrative, since she was an almost stereotypical member of the postwar suburban boom that the expressway was meant to serve. Born Esther Levenstein in 1924 in the downtown, heavily Jewish area around Bathurst and College, as an adult Shiner joined the migration to Metro's growing postwar suburbs. She attended the University of Toronto before marrying Sol Shiner in 1947. Over the following four decades, the couple built a downtown fur-cleaning and storage business and raised four children in the center of Toronto's suburban boom. In 1962, they moved to North York, by then the largest and fastest-growing suburb in the area. Nonetheless, the Shiners' suburban lives

remained connected to the city in important ways. The family business operated in the King and Spadina area, just west of the central business district, so work and home occurred at opposite ends of the proposed Spadina route.[8]

If the expressway was planned for families like the Shiners, it was also a creature of institutional change. In 1953, the provincial government set up a new form of municipal federalism in the Toronto area. Development had stretched across municipal jurisdictions for years, but efforts at institutional amalgamation had floundered in the face of local rivalries. The new provincial law left intact the existing 13 municipalities but created a new Metro-wide government to handle regional services. Under its first dynamic chair, Frederick Gardiner, Metro pushed forward on many infrastructure projects, including a transportation network combining expressways and subways. By the time the Shiners arrived in North York, Metro was already near completion of an east-west link along the lakeshore (christened the Gardiner Expressway in 1957) and a north-south parkway in the Don Valley. Next on the list was the Spadina, which would connect the northwest suburbs to downtown, intersecting with the provincial Highway 401, running southward in a trench to Eglinton Avenue, along ravine lands until it emerged at Davenport Road, and then straight south to just below Bloor Street. From 1961 to 1964, Metro council passed various approvals for the project, and by 1966, the trench was complete to Eglinton and the roadway was paved to Lawrence, a short distance from the Shiners' house on Wenderly Drive. Metro planned to finish the expressway to downtown by 1974 (Figures 1 and 2).[9]

While Shiner looked forward to completion of these plans, some downtown residents had other ideas. By late 1969, opposition to the Spadina project was spreading across the old city, bringing together an eclectic mix of middle-class downtowners, University of Toronto faculty and students, and urban thinkers, who combined activist anger, intellectual expertise, and political spectacle.[10] Their case was one part of a full-scale attack on brute force modernism, focused on human scale, participatory planning, and radical rhetoric. "Toronto is a living organism," one group declared on "The City Is for People Day" in 1970. "It is more than just concrete and steel; it is a community of people of many different origins, who have come together to form what we think of as 'Toronto.'"[11] Spadina activists marshaled considerable anti-expert, pro-people sentiments, a rhetoric that often ignored their own highly educated backgrounds. There was also a strategic side to the Spadina movement, sometimes bleeding over to the more colorful activists and sometimes embarrassed by them. Anti-Spadina was a diverse coalition, the kind that accepted both economists and mimes.[12]

Expressway advocates seemed ill-equipped to face such determined opposition. A few planners stepped out from behind their technical plans to attempt a public defense of the project. Metro chair Ab Campbell gave speeches to civic groups to defend the expressway, while former Metro planner Hans Blumenfeld contributed op-eds to the cause. Frederick Gardiner came out of retirement to promote the Spadina. "Successive councils and successive experts... have indicated that the Spadina is necessary," he declared. Some pro-expressway citizens wrote letters to the editor.[13] But the pro-expressway case was led mostly by government officials rather than citizens, and from a publicity point of view, their efforts paled beside the energetic

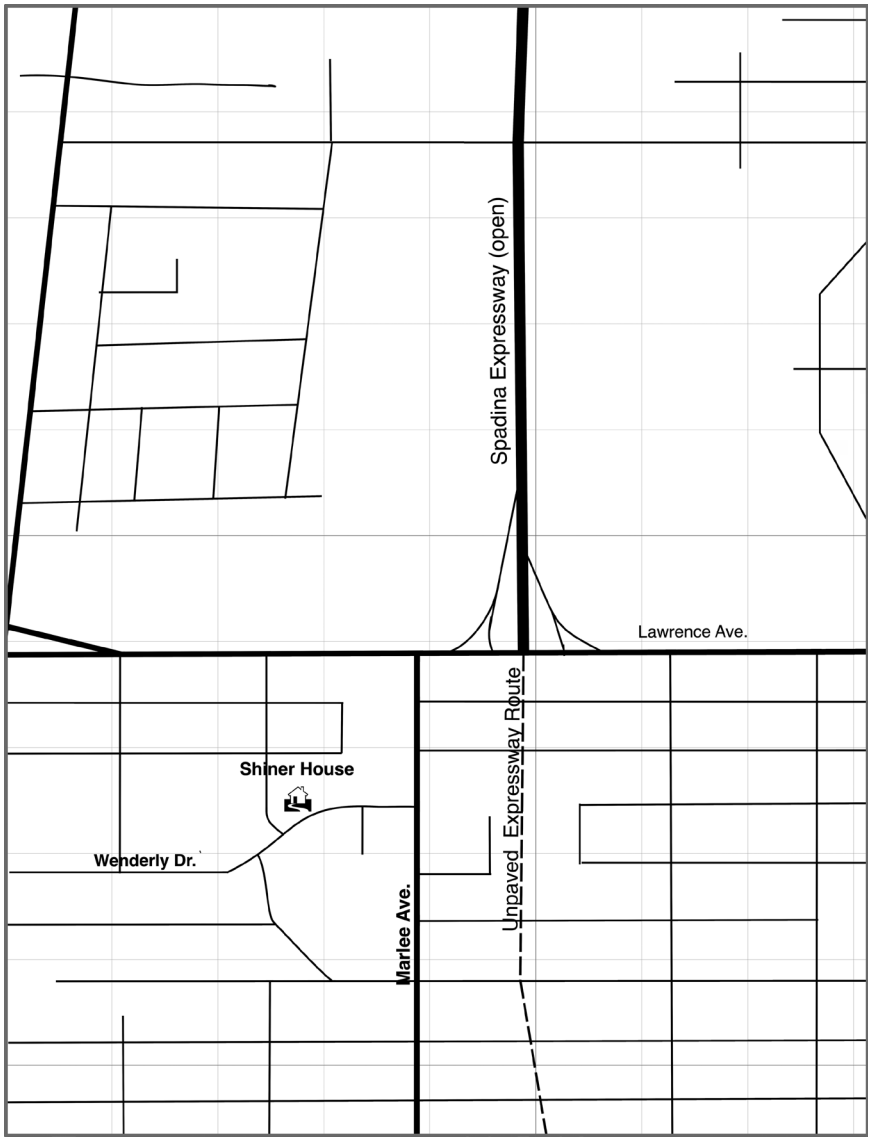

Figure 1: Esther Shiner's neighborhood. Map by author.

activism of Spadina foes. Indeed, anti-Spadina forces could not have found a better villain than Sam Cass, the longtime head of the Metro traffic department. Trained as an engineer, Cass had little appreciation for the neighborhood emotionalism of the anti-expressway activists, and indeed often held Los Angeles up as the freeway city that Toronto should emulate.[14] Similarly, outspoken North York councilor Irving Paisley fit nicely into downtown stereotypes of old-guard suburban politicians. First elected in 1955, Paisley stood in the mainstream of pro-expressway opinion in the

Figure 2: Metropolitan Toronto, built and proposed expressways, 1966. Map by author.

borough. He was also opinionated and aggressive in debate: at Metro Council, he got into heated arguments with anti-expressway activists. "You don't care about anything," he barked during one exchange with Jane Jacobs in 1970.[15]

For her part, Shiner followed the Spadina debate with little concern. "We thought these citizen groups opposed to Spadina were kooks," she told a *Globe and Mail* reporter in late 1971, "and that our elected representatives would be upheld by the cabinet." She had faith in the power of representative democracy to reflect the will of the people and in the logic of Metro's plan in terms of the voluminous evidence of growing car use.[16] Shiner would later regret her silence and would spin that early posture into a narrative of political awakening. Recounting her entry into politics in several public talks over the 1970s, Shiner always emphasized her tentativeness ("I was scared stiff") and her use of social and neighborhood connections (her first Spadina demonstration "gathered up my family and a few close friends and neighbours"). There is no reason to doubt her early insecurity. She grew up in a left Zionist family, and as an adult was involved in Jewish voluntary organizations like Hadassah, but her papers do not suggest much political activism before 1971. Nevertheless, Shiner was savvy, and knew enough to call newspapers and television stations to publicize her first foray into Spadina activism.[17]

While Shiner rested on her faith in planning logic and representative democracy, the anti-Spadina movement was gaining force. In early 1971, some activists took their objections to the Ontario Municipal Board, a quasi-judicial body charged with reviewing key municipal decisions. The Board approved the Spadina, but activists appealed the ruling to the provincial cabinet.[18] To the joy of Spadina foes and the chagrin of Esther Shiner, the premier emerged on 3 June to declare the Spadina project dead. It was a brilliant political move. Davis had served as minister of education since 1962 but had become Progressive Conservative leader and premier only three months before. Though conservative by any measure, Davis was a so-called Red Tory, whose rhetoric was notably moderate and restrained (later in his career, he became famous for the line "Bland works"). Yet he had also mastered the art of making dramatic progressive gestures, like the Spadina announcement, to great political advantage. In one stroke, Davis had set himself apart from the previous administration, earned a reputation as a leader who could make tough decisions, undercut the rival New Democratic Party (NDP)—which stood consistently against the Spadina—and established his modern and progressive image.[19] Indeed, the premier famously aped the language of anti-expressway activists, drawing on their cars-versus-people rhetoric at several points: "If we are building a transportation system to serve the automobile," he announced, "the Spadina Expressway would be a good place to start. But if we are building a transportation system to serve people, the Spadina Expressway is a good place to stop." This kind of rhetoric went over poorly up on Wenderly Drive. Beside this passage on her own copy of Davis's announcement, Shiner scrawled, "People drive automobiles."[20]

II. Go Spadina!

The evening after her first *Toronto Star* interview was published, Shiner attended a social function, where friends wondered what she planned to do about the Spadina

issue. "I don't do anything without money," she joked. Calling her bluff, a hat was passed to raise the princely sum of $16. In October, Shiner bought some Bristol board, made signs, and threw together a crowd of friends, family, and neighbors to march to the half-built Spadina ditch. They tentatively stepped onto the ramps and spoke with motorists. Traffic stopped for miles, but the media loved it. All three major newspapers covered the demonstration and featured Shiner prominently, reporting that most drivers were supportive.[21]

Over the next 16 years, Shiner focused on the long-term goal of completing the expressway and several short-term campaigns to protect the route. The immediate issue was the extension of the expressway to Eglinton Avenue along the unpaved trench, famously dubbed the Davis Ditch (Figure 3).[22] Another key issue was the route of the University-Spadina subway, whose northern section would run down the middle of the expressway. After the Davis announcement, urban reformers argued for a route under nearby Bathurst Avenue, a better fit with the existing city fabric than the Ditch (which was less accessible from nearby neighborhoods). Shiner fought hard to protect the original subway plan precisely because it would preserve the expressway route.[23] Not that she needed a specific issue to push her agenda. Traffic jams, transit strikes, downtown stadiums, and miscellaneous development proposals all became a chance to proselytize for the expressway. She was nothing if not persistent. When Davis announced his retirement in 1984, Shiner took the chance to renew her commitment to the Spadina. "Have a ball," she wrote to Davis. "I'll be talking to whoever fills your shoes to complete the most urgently needed road in Ontario, the Spadina Expressway."[24]

Shiner mobilized aggressively. Early on, she parlayed her media fame into a pro-expressway organization, which eventually came to be called Go Spadina. The group advertised, demonstrated, circulated petitions, knocked on doors, courted the press, and lobbied politicians, all under the energetic leadership of Shiner. In 1972, they set up a table in Yorkdale Mall and collected 40,000 signatures on a pro-expressway petition, which they presented to the government with newspaper photographers at the ready. In 1974, Go Spadina billboards poked fun at the premier: "Traffic Jam courtesy of Bill Davis." Shiner wrote dozens of letters to politicians and newspapers, did interviews with print and electronic media, and gave talks to community groups. She often debated urban reformers on television and radio.[25] She even offered traffic tours of her neighborhood. In late 1971, a *Star* columnist took a slow drive up Marlee Avenue; three years later, Shiner famously drove around the neighborhood in the premier's limousine.[26] The most important site of Shiner's Spadina campaign soon became North York's municipal government. In December 1972, she was elected to municipal council by a mere five votes. Subsequent elections were never so close. She served on council until her death in 1987, including stints on the Board of Control and the Metro Council after 1978 and as deputy mayor of North York after 1984.

Shiner attracted many fellow travelers. Spadina revivalists included several North York ratepayers' associations and key institutions like the Ontario Motor League.[27] The expressway got editorial backing from the populist *Toronto Sun* and somewhat more ambivalent support from the *Toronto Star*, as well as positive coverage in trade

Figure 3: The "Davis Ditch" looking south from Lawrence Avenue, 1974. City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 124, File 8, Item 53.

journals like *Canadian Motorist* and *Canadian Engineer*.[28] Shiner also had ongoing official support. North York Council had always been behind the expressway and, after the Davis announcement, formed a Special Committee to "aid and coordinate the efforts of all interested citizens' groups, ratepayers' organizations and individuals who desire to have an expressway and subway built."[29] Individual North York councilors did their own mobilizing, particularly Irving Paisley (a longtime advocate of the Spadina) and Murray Chusid (who served on North York Council from 1963 to 1970 and signed some of Go Spadina's briefs after he left government).[30] Metro planners became another base of official support. After Spadina was canceled, Sam Cass lectured to university classes and community groups and gave spirited interviews to various media outlets; he also kept up a lively correspondence with

pro-Spadina activists. Yet his public engagement was quite different than Shiner's. Cass presented himself as an expert, not an activist; his most potent weapon in public debate was his mastery of technical detail. "[The] difference between layman and trained professional," Cass told one engineering convention, "[is that a] Layman knows he is right without need of confirming evidence [and a] Professional must qualify his position by confirming evidence either gleaned by himself or from accepted and responsible sources."[31]

Go Spadina was never a mass movement, but it did attract wide support. Shiner and a small committee (six to eight people) did most of the sustained, day-to-day work. The group's demonstrations could be impressive, but they were never enormous, generally in the range of one to a few hundred people, depending on which newspaper stories are believed—decent but hardly overwhelming numbers.[32] Evidence of wider if less active support comes from the 40,000 signatures on the Yorkdale petition and the hundreds of contacts in Shiner's Go Spadina notebooks: donors, volunteers, supporters, people asking for bumper stickers and flyers, or just those offering their compliments on a job well done. Contacts and well-wishers were, not surprisingly, concentrated in North York, but Go Spadina also received support from residents of other suburbs and even from the old city.[33] Perhaps the greatest testimony to the popularity of Shiner's campaign was her ongoing political success. Shiner won huge victories at the polls and seemed unstoppable on the level of retail politics. "If she ran for the Communist Party, we would vote for her," declared one enthusiastic supporter in 1976.[34] After all, for many people, the Davis announcement was no cause for celebration. In letters and petitions, and on bumper stickers, they signaled their frustration with the growing congestion in the northwest of the city. For her part, Shiner channeled this anger into political claims, over time constructing a popular case for expressways that relied on fairly consistent principles of city building, neighborhood preservation, and democratic legitimacy. Shiner and her revivalist allies formed a pro-expressway discourse and political posture that drew on old and new arguments, broader political ideas, and local context. As an activist and later councilor, Shiner became a conduit for the combative common sense that propelled revivalists into the public sphere.

III. "Dump Davis on His Big Fat A Period, S Period, S Period"

Shiner started with the idea that the car was an inevitable and even desirable part of urban transportation. "The car is here to stay," she argued. "We must not only learn to live with it, but try to accommodate it as best we can."[35] Not only did many Torontonians need to drive—public transit did not reach everyone, tradesmen needed to carry tools, cargo needed to be moved, and so on—but people simply liked cars for their comfort and convenience. "Have you ever had the frustrating experience of waiting for a St. Clair street car during rush hour on a cold bitter day?" Shiner asked during a transportation hearing in 1972. "The wait can be endless. Shouldn't it be my privilege to travel in a nice warm car, if I so desire?"[36] In this sense, planning against the car would require an impossibly vast project of social engineering. "The theorists insist that they are going to drag people out of

their cars (steel monsters, etc.) and stuff them into public transit," Shiner ally Tom Brown argued. "And people just refuse to be stuffed."[37] For revivalists, this was less a "pro-car" argument than an appeal for balance. Shiner insisted that Go Spadina had never been against public transit—the group's original name was SERT (Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit)—but that expressways and roads needed to be one part of a balanced system.[38]

For revivalists, planning for the car was a pro-people argument. They absolutely rejected the car-versus-people rhetoric at the center of the anti-expressway movement. "Cars serve people," the *Sun* editorialized in 1974. "If you don't serve their cars, you don't serve the people."[39] Revivalists also saw expressways as a way to protect neighborhoods. Indeed, this was the start of Shiner's activism, and over time she continued to hammer home the point that halting expressways simply shifted traffic to local streets. "Are you aware that one lane of expressway will carry the traffic of at least 3 arterial roads?" asked one Go Spadina flyer. "Unless the Spadina Expressway is completed, roads in York and North York will have to be WIDENED."[40] The key function of an expressway was not simply to move cars quickly, but to divert long-distance traffic into limited-access channels, minimizing noise and pollution on local streets and keeping them safe for families and children.[41] Expressways were also a form a city building, since they kept downtowns vibrant. "With no quick access to the downtown area of this city people will simply go elsewhere," argued North York mayoral candidate Paul Hunt. "We will end up with a city core which is inactive after working hours, drab and perhaps decaying, as so many other large cities in North America have discovered before us."[42]

Most of Shiner's arguments were novel in form rather than content. Metro transportation plans had been calling for "balance" for years: the 1959 Official Plan envisioned a network of subways and expressways serving complementary functions, a logic that revivalists thought had been overturned by the Davis announcement. "Metro planned a balanced system—both subway and expressway," the *Toronto Sun* argued. "Davis destroyed the balance." Similarly, Shiner's desire to protect local streets from through traffic resonated with Metro's plan for a functional hierarchy of roads: expressways, arterials, collectors, and local streets, each serving a particular kind of traffic and forming an interrelated system. Downtown accessibility had also been a longstanding justification for urban expressways.[43] Nevertheless, revivalists were hardly speaking the language of planners. Shiner did sometimes deploy statistics—she seemed to become more comfortable with technical details over time—but her most potent arguments came from looking out her front window and driving around her neighborhood. She had faith in the technical knowledge of experts, but her political language relied less on planning abstraction than on lived experience. "The facts and arguments presented above are those that we, as laymen, can see," Go Spadina claimed in 1972. "The technical facts which we cannot see are what led our transportation planners to decide on the combined expressway and rapid transit route after several years of careful study."[44]

Revivalist ideas were dynamic, forged in an ongoing debate with anti-expressway activists. When anti-Spadina activists placed ecology at the heart of their case—warning that the automobiles would "choke the human race with their junk and

poisonous gasses"[45]—revivalists responded with environmental arguments of their own. They insisted that expressways would reduce rather than increase exhaust by controlling congestion and decreasing idling in stop-and-go traffic.[46] Technically speaking, a car at speed released more of some pollutants and less of others, but few people on either side took the time to do the complex math, since this was less an argument about evidence than a war of position. The 1973 energy crisis flowed into the expressway debate in a similar way. While some urban reformers argued that fuel shortages suggested the inevitable decline of driving, revivalists argued that stop-and-go traffic wasted gasoline. "I am sure you are aware of the fact that when a car runs 50 mph non-stop," one North York resident asserted, "it consumes less gas and causes less pollution than in a stop and go situation."[47]

Shiner and her allies deployed evidence and talked of common sense, but Spadina revivalism was not primarily a reasonable movement.[48] Revivalist keywords included *frustrated*, *fed up*, and *exasperated*. They described their urban reform opponents as kooks, pinkos, "deformers," and "anti-car crazies." They used sarcasm and denunciation and practiced the politics of refusal. "We're going to demonstrate at Queen's Park December 15," Shiner promised a *Toronto Star* reporter in 1971. "We're going to have signs saying 'Dump Davis on His Big Fat A period, S period, S period'... his big fat Anti-Spadina Statements."[49] One of Shiner's correspondents denounced Davis as a "small town country bumpkin lawyer" with a "cream puff mouthy cabinet" acting in "brazen defiance of the expressed will of the citizens of Metro."[50] A former Progressive Conservative from Weston hoped Go Spadina could "wipe the stupid grin off [Davis's] face and ask him if he thinks the silly curl he wore for the election got him the adolescent votes?"[51] Fueled by resentment, revivalists put a premium on action: "The residents in our community demand ACTION right now. We are fed up with issues that are being 'studied to death.'"[52]

Deploying emotional keywords was not just a matter of individual rhetoric. Feelings circulated through the whole revivalist discourse, appearing in both internal correspondence and public statements, and served time and again to make connections and build solidarity.[53] "Best wishes on your Go Spadina Campaign," one supporter wrote to Shiner in 1972. "This fellow Davis needs a jolt in the rear end to make him realize that nobody can legislate people out of cars." Anger could be raw: "Those CITY bastards... screwed me on Spadina Expressway and I want those bastards to bleed every damn drop that I can get out of them!"[54] Even Metro traffic commissioner Sam Cass, by far the most technically minded of the revivalists, dipped into emotional appeals on occasion. He dropped references to pedestrian deaths into his mostly technical speeches, while in one particularly odd analogy, he explained hostility to expressways as the result of urban overcrowding: "Experiments with mice have shown that they will be relatively passive until you keep adding mice population to a given area, to the point where they will suddenly turn ferocious and fight for their little piece of ground."[55]

It is tempting to suggest that revivalists started with anger and moved to argument. Shiner's first foray into the public sphere was certainly motivated by a visceral reaction to cars on her street. No doubt the views of many other revivalists had similar origins; they squeezed the steering wheel or slammed

the brakes well before they marshaled coherent arguments for expressways. At the same time, in revivalist discourse, emotion and evidence constantly mixed and intertwined. Shiner's favorite strategy—the tour of the Marlee neighborhood—was meant to show reporters the traffic mess but also to have them experience it in a visceral way. Earl McRae's 1971 report in the *Star* noted the volume of traffic and gave figures on his slow progress up Marlee Avenue: "Time Elapsed: 12 minutes. Distance travelled: six tenths of a mile." But it was the sensory experience that provided the narrative heft: "As far as the eye can see there are two lanes of tail-lights and two lanes of oncoming headlights.... A bus is in front of us. The smell is sickening. The windshield is smeared with mud. We inch forward.... It's hot in the car. I open the window to let some air in. Fumes comes in with the rain. The line of traffic stops again. Horns blare." These sensations framed the article's disappointing climax, in which Bill Davis declined to visit the area.[56]

At another level, the neighborhood tour signified Shiner's entire political posture. To drive up Marlee was to see how it *really* was, to understand and experience the actual conditions that drivers and residents suffered on a daily basis. Shiner's posture was often one of truth teller, ready to speak of uncomfortable realities. Though based on presenting evidence, truth telling was itself an emotional posture. Revivalists were not simply arguing for rational planning but begging—desperately—for common sense. "Ninety-five percent of us have cars," wrote G. Ridler. "We demand the right to use them. They're the only sensible way most of us can get from where we are to where we are going; and any person exercising ordinary common sense must know this. It's William Davis, remember, who tells us we can sit, and sit, in endless traffic jams, and fret and fume while his image glows."[57]

Shiner's truth telling channeled much larger developments, particularly the continent-wide politics of the silent majority. The idea has a long history but was popularized by Richard Nixon in a 1969 speech about Vietnam and then claimed by several grassroots conservative movements in the 1970s. In the United States, the idea took on particular potency in the angry backlash against integrationist policies like bussing, but it was a flexible language that pitted ordinary people against a host of liberal elites, disruptive demonstrators, and out-of-touch intellectuals. "In the past, it has been the organizers, protestors, and demonstrators who have achieved the most, I say it's the silent majority's turn," argued Emily Beckham of the Concerned Parents Association in Charlotte, North Carolina, a quotation that could have come straight from a Go Spadina flyer. Across Canada, similar language orbited around opposition to many new government programs, especially bilingualism, multiculturalism, tax reform, and the metric system. The silent majority idea spread in somewhat viral fashion, often without well-established networks or conscious coordination. It was more a posture or a mood, a sense that ordinary people were victims of social experiments foisted on them by political elites, growing from a popular liberalism that emphasized everyday freedoms, personal choice, and opposition to various forms of progressive change, from speaking French to riding public transit.[58]

The silent majority idea proved popular in Toronto transportation debates. In fact, pro-Spadina advocates had taken it up as early as 1970. North York alderman Robert Yuill told Metro Transportation Committee hearings in April 1970 that dramatic protests gave the wrong idea and that "the silent majority" was behind the plan.[59] A month after the Davis announcement, five North York ratepayers' associations formed a joint committee "to make the silent majority [into] the vocal majority."[60] Over the following decade, the idea became the key political touchstone for pro-expressway forces. In one letter to the *Globe and Mail*, I.H. Nixon drew together all the elements from the broader vocabulary of the silent majority across North America: the influence of irrational minorities, the political awakening of ordinary people, the need to mobilize to assert the democratic will. "The Cabinet's decision was an emotional political one, devoid of any semblance of logic or rationality," he argued. "It was stimulated by the noisy campaign of a small group of self-styled do-gooders, aimed at imposing their own narrow self-interest on the rest of us, regardless of its effect on the city as a whole.... The Spadina is dead for good unless the silent majority gets off its hands and establishes that it votes too. This is where the 'will of the people' really rests, as the vocal pressure groups claiming to present it know full well."[61] Ten years later, Scarborough controller Brian Harrison struck the same tone: "When all the residential neighborhoods are plugged with cars, when there's chaos, or a little kid is hit by a car that had to go down some residential street because there's no room on the arterial roads, then the silent majority will sit up and scream, and Davis will listen".[62]

Certain they represented majority opinion, Spadina revivalists put democracy at the center of their arguments. They questioned the democratic legitimacy of people power activists, suggesting that formal attendance records at public meetings would indicate audiences packed with professional protestors. "Most of us are too busy trying to provide our governments with the multitude of taxes and unfortunately have little time to participate in civic affairs," George Tambakis of Don Mills claimed, "[while] groups who sometimes live on grants have all the time they need to create havoc."[63] Revivalists also argued that the premier's interventions in Metro planning lacked democratic legitimacy. Not only had his 1971 announcement overturned the democratic will of the people—expressed through their elected representatives[64]—but his ongoing interventions tossed aside the customary division of powers. No one doubted that Davis had the legal power to cancel the expressway—in Canada, cities have no constitutional status, and the Spadina ultimately depended on provincial funding—but political legitimacy remained the key issue. "I feel that the Davis Government acted in a very autocratic and dictatorial way in cancelling the Spadina Expressway over the recommendations of Metro Toronto's *elected* authorities," E.A. Wall told a transportation hearing.[65] Indeed, revivalists often called for a plebiscite on the highway. North York Council floated the idea in 1972, although complicated jurisdictional issues derailed the plan; as late as 1985, Shiner was still pushing the idea in council. "If we had a plebiscite today," she argued, "I could guarantee that 75 per cent of the citizens of Metro would support the extension of the expressway."[66] The plebiscite was a strategic suggestion. Shiner was not committed to plebiscitary democracy as an overall approach to politics, nor was she particularly enamored

Figure 4: Esther Shiner shares a laugh with Premier Bill Davis, with Davis Ditch in background, 1974.
Source: Photo by Reg Innell/Toronto Star via Getty Images.

of urban reform's idea of more participatory planning mechanisms. Instead, she embraced the Spadina plebiscite as a way to restore representative democracy.

Spadina revivalists were a mixed political bag. Unlike many municipal candidates, Shiner did not advertise her party affiliations. She was courted to run for the provincial Progressive Conservatives in the mid 1970s but decided to stick to the municipal stage. It was a good decision: despite her cordial (even friendly) relations with the premier, she probably would have been out of place in the urbane Red Toryism of the Big Blue Machine under Davis (Figure 4).[67] She drew many of her council votes from the basic playbook of conservative populism in the 1970s and 1980s. She criticized excessive government spending and opposed higher salaries for councilors. She took up moral issues like a higher drinking age and the repression of pornography.[68] She was the lone woman on the pro-expressway side of the debate—by contrast, several women were prominent anti-expressway activists—but she was hardly a feminist. She was proud to be one of the first women on North York Council, yet she often played on her domesticity to shore up her populist credibility, claiming on a number of occasions to be a simple housewife thrust into politics. "I even continued to iron my husband's shirts," she told the *Canadian Jewish News* in 1974.[69] Often, Shiner's positions were more localist than strictly ideological, as when she opposed a motion by councilor Robert Yuill to award the Mayor's Medal to American Moral Majority activist Anita Bryant (in town as part of her crusade against gays and lesbians) because the issue had nothing to do with North York.[70]

Shiner's revivalist allies came from all the major political parties. Several prominent Spadina supporters—Paul Godfrey, Irving Paisley, Mel Lastman—were Conservatives, but in North York the Spadina was not a strictly partisan issue. Murray Chusid, a core member of Go Spadina, ran for the provincial NDP on several occasions. Chusid was a colorful, old-style New Democrat who had little in common

with the New Left activists drifting into the party at the time.[71] He was also given to strong opinions and wild rhetoric. At one point, he suggested a blockade of the Don Valley Parkway to draw attention to the congestion in the west end. "[I am] fed up with talking and talking about it, having everybody listening, but nobody doing anything," he announced.[72] The blockade was never implemented, but Chusid was not alone in breaking party lines. Liberal Vernon Singer represented Downsview at Queen's Park and served as deputy party leader. The provincial Liberals initially favored the expressway and criticized the Davis decision, but over time, party leadership drifted to a more ambiguous position, a trend deplored by Singer, who remained a key Go Spadina ally. The Progressive Conservative candidate in Downsview also supported the Spadina during the election of 1971, despite the premier's announcement to the contrary. Though many revivalists were conservative, partisan identity was unpredictable, and cranky auto populism could be a more powerful influence.[73]

If Shiner saw herself as a spokesperson for the silent majority, the idea needed some translation for the transportation issue and for the Toronto context. Race was central to silent majority politics in the United States, for example, but peripheral to pro-expressway activism. Racism was hardly unknown in Metro, but its social geography mapped imperfectly onto transportation politics—unlike in the United States, where the city-suburb divide was often a racial one.[74] Even some racially charged anti-urban statements in the United States could be translated into ostensibly de-racialized points about transportation in Toronto. When one pro-Spadina activist complained that "no one goes south of Eglinton anymore," it was less a point about race and inner-city decline than a straight-up statement about travel time and congestion. Shiner did mobilize ethnic networks. She lived in heavily Jewish neighborhood, and her initial neighborhood activism reflected that social base, while over time she reached out to the growing population of Italian-Canadian voters settling further to the west of the Spadina route.[75] She courted the editors of two major Italian-language newspapers, *Corriere Canadese* and *La Voce*, by doing interviews and placing advertisements. She clearly understood that the numbers and location of the Italian community made it a key constituency for the Spadina project, although her efforts to reach out sometimes seemed forced and awkward. "When Mrs. Shiner heard about Premier Davis' plans to visit Italy," one letter to *Corriere Canadese* read, "she brought to his attention that there are 350,000 people living in Toronto of Italian origin and perhaps he could win their favour by completing the Spadina Expressway."[76]

If ethnicity and race played little explicit part in her campaign, identity politics remained central to the revivalist movement. Shiner spoke for the ordinary driver, the beleaguered commuter who suffered the daily indignities of a poorly planned system. This was, theoretically, a universal category, but it also took its power from opposition to out-of-touch elites. "Perhaps because you are privileged with a limousine complete with driver," Shiner wrote to several party leaders, "you are unable to truly realize the hassles and nightmares facing the less fortunate who are forced to drive in stop-and-go traffic day in and day out."[77] Populist identity politics also stood behind the particular blend of reason and emotion in revivalist discourse. The starting

point of the pro-expressway argument, after all, was the traffic jam, so her expressway revivalism often meant evidence with an exclamation mark and argument in ALL CAPS. "The situation is getting worse.... IS THIS THE WAY YOU WANT TO LIVE?" a Go Spadina flyer read. "NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE YOURSELF HEARD."[78]

Ultimately, the identity politics of the silent majority was sustained by failure, which fueled Shiner's sense of outsider grievance. Congestion kept getting worse, yet small victories—preserving the original subway route or paving the Ditch down to Eglinton—paled in the face of bigger setbacks. The expressway was never completed to Bloor, and indeed by the mid 1980s, it seemed it never would be. In 1975, Davis promised to deed a strip of land just south of Eglinton to the city, which would block the route and prevent the expressway from ever being extended. The promise dragged on for nine years, tied up in complicated jurisdictional negotiations.[79] When, in 1983, it looked like the strip transfer would come to pass, Shiner brought out her usual arguments about democracy and legitimacy. "We believe that Toronto City Council's opposition to the continuation of the roadway does not truly reflect the views of all the citizens of Toronto," she wrote to Davis, "and that we feel could be demonstrated through a referendum." She failed again: the transfer of the strip went ahead in 1984. There was another failure too, one that Shiner was less prone to recognize. The premier never delivered on his transit promises, beyond the already-planned subway and a failed experiment with Dial-A-Bus, so there remained few alternatives to driving, even in higher-density parts of North York. Eventually, Shiner simply decided to wait Davis out, but her high hopes for the new Progressive Conservative leader, Frank Miller, were dashed when his government was defeated after only three months.[80] Shiner was further disappointed in 1985, when the new Liberal premier, David Peterson, rejected an expressway extension.[81]

IV. The Cultural Politics of Congestion

Shiner died of cancer in 1987. There is no Go Spadina heritage plaque along Marlee Avenue, though Shiner's name graces a North York stadium and, perhaps fittingly, a suburban street. Nonetheless, her campaign for the Spadina remains an important part of Toronto's postwar history. She never succeeded in getting the expressway completed, but she built an impressive network of revivalist allies. She borrowed ideas from Metro planners and wider political developments, but Shiner's power flowed from her ability to serve as a lightning rod for a popular, not technocratic, case for expressways. Her forte was not planning but petitioning; her weapons were letters, billboards, and bumper stickers rather than the official plan; her authority derived from her personality and persistence, not from a claim to technical expertise. Mixing anger and reason, she translated abstract ideas into practical, on-the-ground arguments that spoke to the daily experience of commuters. A talented organizer and a straightforward speaker, Shiner became a central figure in a pro-Spadina coalition, a sort of Jane Jacobs for expressways, a citizen-advocate who began with everyday experience of the street and moved upward and outward to a consistent set of principles about city building. In doing so, she became a beacon and symbol of a broader popular case for expressways—"the Mayor of Spadina," as one journalist put it.[82]

Shiner's campaign also suggests an alternative reading of Davis's 1971 Spadina announcement. Urban reformers did not own the words *democracy*, *neighborhood*, and *city*, even if Shiner used these terms differently than her opponents. There were people on both sides of the expressway issue, and the cancellation of the Spadina was as much a symbolic starting point of auto-populist organizing as it was the end of technocratic metropolitan planning. Most of the common tropes of 21st-century war-on-the-car rhetoric orbited around Shiner and her revivalist allies. The notion that out-of-touch elites were forcing ordinary folks, who needed and loved their cars, into traffic jams and endless congestion—this was a central part of suburban mobilizing in the post-Davis years. The premier's famous announcement hardly ended the highway dream. If anything, the Spadina cancellation made expressway advocates more aggressive and more committed to mobilization and publicity, as they perceived their common-sense case for expressways to be marginalized and suppressed. We need not agree with Shiner's arguments to understand the appeal of her Go Spadina cause, nor to see that auto populism hardly disappeared when she died in 1987, although it lacked as effective a spokesperson until Rob Ford was elected councilor in 2000 and mayor in 2010. In a city paralyzed by transportation debates, we should pay attention to the deep history of auto populism.

And if its local power attracts attention, we can also consider Go Spadina as a Toronto example of the combative common-sense and silent majority populism that was finding outlets across Canada in this period—one foundation of a conservative attack on aspects of the progressive state. It is notable, in this sense, how often neoliberal and neoconservative projects succeeded politically by binding themselves to folksy populists given to impulsive popular liberalism rather than coherent intellectual philosophies.[83] As historians, we need to spend more time with these attitudes, more time with figures like Shiner, and more time with their particular mix of anger and common sense, putting "People drive automobiles" beside progressive movements, iconic speeches, and heritage plaques.

Acknowledgments

For general thoughts and helpful comments on earlier versions of this article, I would like to thank Dimitry Anastakis, Michelle Fu, Sean Mills, James Muir, Shirley Tillotson, Simon Vickers, and the anonymous readers for the *UHR*.

Notes

1. The Spadina issue is well served by scholarly histories. See Danielle Robinson, "Modernism at the Crossroad: The Spadina Controversy in Toronto, Ontario, ca. 1960–1971," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (2011): 295–322; Ian Milligan, "This Board Has a Duty to Intervene: Challenging the Spadina Expressway through the Ontario Municipal Board, 1963–71," *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* (*UHR*) 39, no. 2 (2011); 25–39; and Richard White, *Planning Toronto: The Planners, the Plans, Their Legacies, 1940–1980* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016). The Toronto Heritage plaques can be viewed at "Spadina Expressway," Read the Plaque, accessed 4 August 2021, https://readtheplaque.com/plaque/spadina-expressway.
2. Commissioner of Roads and Traffic, Report to Transportation Committee, Municipality of Metro Toronto, 19 November 1971, re: "Closure of Ramps from Highway 401 to

Dufferin Street and the W.R. Allen Expressway," City of Toronto Archives (CTA), Esther Shiner Fonds (SF), Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 21: Spadina Expressway—1971.

3. "Stopping Spadina Has Made Quiet Street a 'Nightmare,'" *Toronto Star* (*TS*), 10 July 1971, 9.
4. On recent auto populism, see Alan Walks, "Stopping the 'War on the Car': Neoliberalism, Fordism, and the Politics of Automobility in Toronto," *Mobilities* 10, no. 3 (2015): 402–422.
5. Val Sears, "Spadina Revivalists: An Expressway – One Way or Another," *TS*, 29 March 1972, 6.
6. On populist-conservative organizing in the United States, see Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); and Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). The literature on Canada is less developed, but see Shirley Tillotson, *Give and Take: The Citizen-Taxpayer and the Rise of Canadian Democracy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017), 276–305; and Matthew Hayday, *So They Want Us to Learn French: Promoting and Opposing Bilingualism in English-Speaking Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2015), 76–87, 106–114. Toronto historians have thankfully been broadening studies of postwar organizing beyond the usual New Left and urban reform suspects. See Gilberto Fernandes, "Beyond the 'Politics of Toil': Collective Mobilization and Individual Activism in Toronto's Portuguese Community, 1950s–1990s," *UHR* 39, no. 1 (2010): 59–72; and Simon Vickers, "Trefann Court Revisited: The Activist Afterlives of John Sewell and Edna Dixon," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 53, no. 108 (2020): 351–371.
7. Ontario Motor League, Toronto Club, "Transportation in the Metropolitan Toronto Area: A Brief to the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto," October 1975, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, File 3: Spadina Expressway, 1975, 6.
8. North York's population increased almost ten times between 1945 and 1962. See White, *Planning Toronto*. Shiner's biography is compiled from various sources in CTA, SF, Series 4: Scrapbooks.
9. The capital budget for transportation envisioned 40 percent for expressways, 35 percent for rapid transit, and 25 percent for arterial roads, although the expressway network would be much longer in miles. See White, *Planning Toronto*; Jennifer Bonnell, *Reclaiming the Don: An Environmental History of Toronto's Don River Valley* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 139–172; and Robinson, "Modernism."
10. Robinson, "Modernism"; Milligan, "This Board"; and Christopher Leo, *The Politics of Urban Development: Canadian Urban Expressway Disputes* (Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1977).
11. Stop Spadina Save our City Coordinating Committee, cited in Milligan, "This Board," 28.
12. Robinson, "Modernism"; and Milligan, "This Board."
13. "Build Expressways or City Will Die, Campbell Says," *GM*, 24 February 1970, 5; James Lorimer, "Campbell's Defense of the Spadina Expressway," *GM*, 9 March 1970, 7; Hans Blumenfeld, "Spadina Expressway/Yes," *TS*, 19 January 1970, 7; Frederick Gardiner, "We Must Finish the Expressway," *TS*, 1 November 1969, 9; John Howarth, "Saving Lives," letter to the editor, *TS*, 4 February 1970, p. 7; and Roman Dudziak, "Expressways Are Important as Wartime Escape Routes," letter to the editor, *TS*, 15 April 1970, 7.
14. Cass serves as a villain in the key Spadina text, David Nowlan and Nadine Nowlan, *The Bad Trip: The Untold Story of the Spadina Expressway* (Toronto: New Press/House of Anansi, 1970). On emotion in urban activism in this period, see Jenny Gregory and Jill

Grant, "The Role of Emotions in Protests against Modernist Urban Redevelopment in Perth and Halifax," *UHR* 42, no. 2 (2014): 44–58.

15. "Candidates for Controller," *Globe and Mail* (*GM*), 2 December 1966, 12; and "Committee Turning Spadina Hearings into Charade, Urbanologist Charges," *GM*, 7 April 1970, 5.
16. "Davis in a Bind on Spadina, Housewives Say after Meeting," *GM*, 16 December 1971, 5.
17. Untitled speech, hand-labeled "ca. 1975," CTA, SF, Series 1: General Correspondence, Box 46983, File 16: Speeches: Shiner, Esther (various dates). It is not clear why the *Toronto Star* reporter contacted Shiner for that first interview in July 1971—he may simply have been calling around the neighbourhood—but even there, Shiner emphasized her political naiveite, later remarking that she was surprised and embarrassed when the paper printed so much of her angry rant.
18. Milligan, "This Board."
19. Claire Hoy, *Bill Davis: A Biography* (Toronto: Mehtuen, 1985).
20. "Statement by the Honorable William Davis, Prime Minister of Ontario, on the Future of the Spadina Expressway in the Legislature, Thursday June 3rd, 1971," CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Correspondence, Box 46983, File: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 3.
21. "Spadina Backers Stop Traffic but Drivers Cheer Them On," *TS*, 8 October 1971, 35; and Shiner, untitled speech, ca. 1975, CTA, SF, Series 1: General Correspondence, Box 46983, File 16: Speeches: Shiner, Esther (various dates).
22. "High-Rise Proposals for the Spadina 'Incomprehensible' Says Campbell," *TS*, 22 October 1971, 8; and "City Has Plan for Huge Garage to Block Spadina," *TS*, 28 April 1976, B1.
23. Jay Young, "Searching for a Better Way: Subway Life and Metropolitan Growth in Toronto, 1942–1978" (PhD diss., York University, 2012); and Shiner, "The Spadina Expressway—Is It Really Dead?," CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, File 19: Spadina Expressway, Miscellaneous, 2.
24. Shiner to Davis, 3 October 1984, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 18: Spadina Expressway: Correspondence to Premier and Provincial Party Leaders.
25. "40,000 Sign 'Go Spadina' Petition," *TS*, 13 June 1972; "Best Wishes—or Is It – to Davis from Go Spadina," *Toronto Sun*, 12 December 1973; and CTA, SF, Series 9: Audio Tapes; Series 10: Video Tapes.
26. Earl McRae, "A Street Jammed with Traffic Where They Cry: Go Spadina!," *TS*, 11 December 1971, 21; and "Esther Meets Charmer," *GM*, 12 June 1974, 5. Davis and Shiner corresponded frequently about the expressway. See CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File: Spadina Expressway, Correspondence to Premier and to Provincial Party Leaders.
27. Bathurst-Glen Area Residents' Association to Irving Paisley, 21 January 1972, CTA, SF, Box 46985, File 16: "Go Spadina" Correspondence, 1971–1972; and C. Robinson, Sec-Treasurer, Federate Eleven to North York Board of Control, 4 August 1971, CTA, SF, Box 46985, File 16: "Go Spadina" Correspondence, 1971–1972.
28. The *Star* favoured the Spadina in the run up to 1971, but soon flowed with the mainstream trend to public transit: "Take Another Look at Spadina," *TS*, 21 June 1972, 6.
29. "North York Mayor Vows to Fight for Expressway," *TS*, 6 January 1970, 29; and Memo to North York Council, from secretary, board of control, re: establishment of a committee of council to promote the building of the William R. Allan (Spadina) Expressway, 13 September 1972, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987.

30. Ray Barton, "Expressways," *GM*, 4 May 1970, 6, letter to the editor; and "Knock Down, Drag-It-Out Fight Seen for Downsview," *TS*, 21 September 1971, 5.

31. Sam Cass, "Traffic Engineer's Role with the Public and Public Officials" (talk to First Annual Conference of ITE Canada Ottawa, 31 May 1976), CTA, Sam Cass Fonds, Fonds 474, Series 2290, Box 653583, 4. Cass's earlier public talks focused on the Metro traffic computer and his beloved crosswalks. See, for example, "Address to Women's Section—Pedestrian Safety Committee," 1959, CTA, Sam Cass Fonds, Box 653583, File 32.

32. Newspaper estimates of the first demonstration in October 1971 range from 80 to 300. The *Star* suggested that "many of them [are] mothers who live on nearby residential streets," although several men can be spotted in photographs ("Spadina Backers Stop Traffic"), while the *Telegram* estimated "over 100" ("Spadina Supporters Protest 37,000-Car Traffic Flow," *Toronto Telegram*, 1 October 1971). In December 1971, Go Spadina bussed 45 people (judging by photographs, all women) to Queens Park for a demonstration; a small group met with Davis: "Davis in a Bind on Spadina."

33. "40,000 Sign 'Go Spadina' Petition"; and CTA, SF, Series 2: Go Spadina and SERT, Box 46985, File 19: Go Spadina Volunteers and Supporters—Registers.

34. "Shiner Thanked for Spadina Stance," *TS*, 16 September 1976, B2.

35. Untitled speech, CTA, SF, Series 1: General Correspondence, Box 46981, File 6: Traffic/Transportation—Metro, 400 Extension.

36. Shiner to editor of *Don Mills Mirror*, 4 September 1974, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, File 2: Spadina Expressway, 1974; and Shiner, Brief to Joint Technical Transportation Planning Committee (JTTPC), 15 March 1972, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 22: Spadina Expressway, 1972, 3.

37. Tom Brown, "The Spadina Expressway Is Still Alive," CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 19: Spadina Expressway, Miscellaneous, 2.

38. Shiner, Brief to JTTPC, 15 March 1972, 3.

39. "Spadina Sits and People Wait, and Wait," *Toronto Sun*, 5 June 1974, 6 (editorial).

40. "Go Spadina," flyer, [ca. 1973], CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 21: Spadina Expressway—Miscellaneous.

41. Go Spadina Committee to JTTPC, 13 March 1972, Submission 101, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 21: Spadina Expressway—Miscellaneous.

42. "The Spadina Expressway: Yes," *TS*, 30 November 1972, 8.

43. *Toronto Sun*, 5 June 1974, 6; *Official Plan of the Metropolitan Planning Area* (Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, 1959); and *Report on the Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Plan* (Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, 1964).

44. Go Spadina Committee to JTTPC, 13 March 1972, Submission 101, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 21: Spadina Rapid Transit Alignment Study, Transportation Committee Meeting, April 1972 (continued)—Public Sessions (vol. 2).

45. Toronto resident to Premier John Robarts, 16 March 1970, cited in Robinson, "Modernism," 314.

46. "Go Spadina," flyer, n.d. [likely 1973 or 1974], CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 21: Spadina Expressway—Miscellaneous.

47. G.B. to David Schatsky, host, CBC Metro Morning (cc'd to Shiner), re: Colin Vaughan and Esther Shiner on-air debate, 21 October 1976, CTA, SF, Box 46984, File 4: Spadina Expressway, 1976. Note that when citing private correspondence, I have followed common scholarly practice by suppressing names.
48. On emotion in political mobilization, see Paul Hoggett and Simon Thompson, *Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies* (New York: Continuum, 2012); James Jasper, *The Emotions of Protest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); Deborah Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and Tillotson, *Give and Take*, chap. 10.
49. Shiner, cited in McRae, "Jammed with Traffic."
50. McRae, "Jammed with Traffic"; J.B. to Shiner, 15 June 1972, CTA, SF, Go Spadina Correspondence, 1971–1972; and D.W.D to Go Spadina, 15 June 1972, CTA, SF, Go Spadina Correspondence, 1971–1972.
51. Weston resident to "Gentlemen" at Go Spadina, CTA, SF, Go Spadina Correspondence, 1971–1972.
52. Marlee Community and Ratepayers' Association to Godfrey, 15 May 1974, CTA, SF, File 2: Spadina Expressway, 1974.
53. On circulation and affect/emotion as a binding mechanism in politics, see Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (2004): 117–139.
54. I.S. to Godfrey, cc'd to Shiner, 14 June 1974, CTA, SF, File 2: Spadina Expressway, 1974. The subject of the letter was actually the removal of residents from Toronto Island, which he suggested could serve as revenge for the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway.
55. Sam Cass, "Transportation—What Is in Store for Us?," CTA, Sam Cass Fonds, File 42: Beth Am Men's Club, Downsview, 6 January 1974, 5–7.
56. McRae, "Jammed with Traffic."
57. G. Ridler, Toronto, letter to editor, *TS*, 21 September 1971, 7.
58. Emily Beckham (an anti-bussing activist), 1970, cited in Lassiter, *Silent Majority*, 148; and Hayday, *So They Want Us to Learn French*, 157–160. For an interesting discussion of the backlash against the metric system, see Godefroy Desrosiers-Lauzon, "De rationalité technologique à resistance linguistique: la conversion métrique au Canada, 1960–1985," *Scientia Canadensis* 30, no. 1 (2007): 31–51. For her part, Shiner collected clippings on expressway disputes across North America, but there is no evidence that she established an ongoing correspondence with silent majority activists outside Toronto.
59. Robert Yuill, cited in Robinson "Modernism," 318.
60. "Citizens Form Group to Fight Spadina Verdict," *GM*, 15 July 1971, 5.
61. I.H. Nixon, Toronto, "Spadina Expressway," letter to editor, *GM*, 17 July 1971, 6.
62. "Davis Insistent Spadina Dead but Metro Says No," *TS*, 11 March 1981, A3.
63. George Tambakis (Don Mills), Submission 59 to JTTPC, 13 March 1972, CTA, SF, File 21.
64. Although, at the time, Metro councillors were not elected directly; they were the local councillors who got the most votes in their borough elections.
65. E.A. Wall, Submission 56 to JTTPC, 10 March 1972, CTA, SF, File 21, 2 (emphasis in original).
66. Several local municipalities, including Toronto, investigated the plebiscite idea. See "Metro Wants Province to Legalize Spadina Vote," *TS*, 20 September 1972; "City Seeks a Way

to Hold Plebiscite on Spadina Route," *TS*, 5 October 1973, 73; "North York's Godfrey to Ask 6 Municipalities to Hold Spadina Vote," *TS*, 15 September 1972; and "Committee Seeks Nov. 12 Vote on Spadina Extension," *TS*, 18 July 1985, A15.

67. "Shiner Won't Seek Tory Nomination," *TS*, 15 August 1975, A3. More populist, small-government conservatives, a minority in the Davis government, would later coalesce around Frank Miller, who won the Progressive Conservative leadership after Davis retired in 1984: Hoy, *Bill Davis*.

68. "Loss Leaders," *GM*, 29 September 1980, 6; and "Raise Legal Age for Drinking, Borough Asks," *GM*, 25 November 1975, 2.

69. "Toronto Has Seen Esther Shiner Blossom," *Canadian Jewish News*, 12 July 1974, 6.

70. *TS*, 4 January 1978, 1. On Anita Bryant's Canadian visit, see Julia Pyryeskina, "'A Remarkably Dense Historical Political Juncture': Anita Bryant, *The Body Politic*, and the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Community in January 1978," *Canadian Journal of History* 53, no. 1 (2018): 57–85.

71. In 1970, Chusid faced a challenge for the NDP nomination in Downsview by a representative of young, Waffle-supporting "radicals": "Downsview NDP Nominates Chusid," *TS*, 16 November 1970, 31. Chusid claimed to have broken with the NDP in 1972.

72. "Rush Hour Blockade of Parkway Wanted to Show Spadina Need," *GM*, 12 October 1972, 5.

73. "Pro-Spadina Bonfire Bombs," *GM*, 18 October 1971, 5; and "Knock Down, Drag It Out Fight Seen for Downsview," *TS*, 21 September 1971, 5.

74. Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

75. Wenderly was in Census Tract 210, which was 52.7 percent Jewish in 1961. By 1971, Jewish people represented 14.4 percent of the North York population: Statistics Canada, *Population, Ethnic Groups*, Cat. 92-723, vol. 1, part 3 (Bulletin 1.3–2), October 1973, Table 7: Population by Ethnic Group and Sex for Census Metropolitan Areas with Components, 1971, 7–18.

76. Shiner to Sergio Tagliavini, *Corriere Canadese*, 2 October 1974, CTA, SF, Box 46984, File 2: Spadina Expressway, 1974; and Shiner to Claire Wescott at Queen's Park, 22 July 1974, CTA, SF, Box 46984, File 2: Spadina Expressway, 1974. In 1971, 73,495 people of Italian origin lived in North York, about 14.5 percent of the borough's population: Statistics Canada, *Population, Ethnic Groups*, Cat. 92-723, vol. 1, part 3 (Bulletin 1.3–2), October 1973, Table 7: Population by Ethnic Group and Sex for Census Metropolitan Areas with Components, 1971, 7–18.

77. CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, File 18: Spadina Expressway: Correspondence to Premier and Provincial Party Leaders.

78. Go Spadina flyer, CTA, SF, Series 2: Go Spadina and SERT, Box 46985, File 19: Go Spadina—Volunteers and Supporters. Shirley Tillotson offered perceptive comments on ALL CAPS politics in "Anatomy of a Pile-On: The Centre and the Extremes in Tax Reform, 1963–73" (paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Vancouver, 2019).

79. Andrew Szende, "Davis Says Spadina to Extend to Eglinton and 400 to St. Clair," *TS*, 9 August 1975, A1, A2.

80. "Miller to Push for More Expressways," *TS*, 12 December 1984, A8; "A Fresh Look at Embattled Spadina Expressway?," *TS*, 3 February 1985, F6; Shiner to Davis, draft of telegram, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 18: Spadina Expressway, Correspondence to Premier and Provincial Party

Leaders; and "Davis Resignation Sparks Revival of Expressway Issue," *TS*, 6 November 1984, 3WEST.

81. Peterson to Shiner, CTA, SF, Series 1.1: Spadina Expressway and Rapid Transit Line, 1971–1987, Box 46983, File 18: Spadina Expressway, Correspondence to Premier and Provincial Party Leaders.

82. "Esther Shiner, Mayor of Spadina?," *NY Mirror*, n.d., CTA, SF, Series [Clippings], Box 46986, File 18: Shiner, Esther.

83. Take examples like Mike Harris and Doug Ford in Ontario, Bill Vander Zalm in British Columbia, Ralph Klein in Alberta, and others.

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