

Proposed Southbound Bicycle / Pedestrian Path York Street Viaduct, West Side (Downtown)

(City Council on November 23, 24 and 25, 1999, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Toronto Community Council recommends that:

- (1) the following report (October 26, 1999) from the Director, Transportation Services, District 1 be adopted; and**
- (2) the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services consider installing handicap electric door openings for the doors to the teamway.**

The Toronto Community Council submits the following report (October 26, 1999) from the Director, Transportation Services, District 1:

Purpose:

To establish a shared path for the use of cyclists and pedestrians through the west side of the York Street Viaduct, located between Front Street West and Lake Shore Boulevard.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The implementation cost of proposal is approximately \$5,000.00, funds for which are available in the Transportation Services 1999 Operating Budget.

Recommendations:

- (1) That the westerly most sidewalk on York Street, within the York Street Viaduct, be designated as a bicycle path, for the exclusive use of southbound cyclists, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. on one day to 2:00 a.m. the next following day, daily;
- (2) That the westerly most sidewalk on York Street, within the York Street Viaduct, be designated as a shared bicycle path (for southbound cyclists)/foot path, between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., daily; and
- (3) That the appropriate City Officials be requested to take whatever action is necessary to give effect to the foregoing, including the introduction in Council of any Bills that are required.

Background:

The Gardiner/Lake Shore Task Force, at its meeting of August 14, 1996, requested appropriate City staff to report on a review of options to accommodate southbound bicycle flow on the west sidewalk of the York Street viaduct between Front Street West and Lake Shore Boulevard. This

request was made in recognition of work underway at that time to upgrade and re-instate the “West Teamway”, a previously closed corridor located adjacent and to parallel the existing west sidewalk, for exclusive pedestrian use. The reopening of certain Teamways in and around Union Station is a component of the Union Station Masterplan, and is contained in agreements made in the mid 1990’s between the former City of Toronto and Marathon Realty, respecting the redevelopment of the Railway Lands.

Comments:

Transportation Services’ staff reviewed a number of options put forward by the Gardiner/Lake Shore Task Force respecting the feasibility of implementing a bicycle path by making use of the sidewalk and the York Street Teamway, in order to physically separate bicycle traffic from motor vehicle traffic under the York Street Viaduct. The Teamway is situated immediately to the west of the sidewalk on the west side of the York Street Underpass.

The Task Force was interested in determining the feasibility of providing a southbound bicycle facility on the west sidewalk within the York Street viaduct for two reasons: firstly, because the existing width within the viaduct, which is essentially fixed by centre piers and support columns, is insufficient to accommodate a bicycle facility on the roadway; and secondly, because pedestrians will, for the most part, be able to use the West Teamway as a substitute for the west sidewalk. It is important to note that the Teamway is open for only 20 hours each day, consistent with the operating hours of the TTC subway and Union Station, and that it is closed during the period of 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., daily. As a result, pedestrians who might otherwise use the West Teamway during these times, must be accommodated on the west sidewalk.

Staff reviewed the feasibility of implementing a bicycle lane on the roadway portion of the York Street viaduct. However, as the roadway width for southbound traffic under the viaduct is only 6.8 m, there is insufficient road space to maintain two lanes of traffic and a bicycle lane. The implementation of an on-street bicycle lane would therefore necessitate the removal of one lane of traffic. As traffic operation within the underpass is currently at capacity during the peak periods, it is neither feasible nor recommended that this approach be taken.

Accordingly, staff would concur with the preferred option of the Gardiner/Lake Shore Task Force. Specifically, this would involve allowing southbound bicycles on the west sidewalk and pedestrians in the West Teamway for twenty hours of the day (i.e. a part-time bicycle lane situated on the west sidewalk), and permit *shared* pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the west sidewalk during the period of 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., daily, when the Teamway is closed. It should be noted that the west sidewalk is only 2.45 m wide, and does not permit delineation of separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that volumes of both users are likely to be quite small during these hours and could be accommodated as long as caution is exercised. Cyclists, of course, may also elect to remain on the road at these times given that traffic volumes are relatively light compared to daytime conditions.

The City Solicitor was previously consulted with respect to this issue and by letter dated February 3, 1997, advised, in part, the following:

While allowing pedestrians and bicycles to share the path during this period (2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.) does arguably raise the risk of collisions resulting in damage or injury, the reduced amount of traffic during these hours combined with sufficient warning signs would, in my opinion, reduce any potential liability to an acceptable level. Care should be taken to ensure that warning signs are posted and that the sidewalk is well lighted so as to provide maximum visibility for bicyclists and pedestrians.

I advise for your Council's information that shared use of sidewalk space by cyclists and pedestrians had at one time been implemented in the former City of Toronto, in response to a similar situation of there being insufficient road space through an underpass to accommodate cyclists on the roadway, while maintaining two lanes of traffic for each direction. This involved allowing cyclists to share the sidewalk space on both sides of the Davenport Road Underpass, under the CPR tracks, located between Dupont Street and MacPherson Avenue, which was authorised by By-law No. 411-75, enacted by the Council of the former City of Toronto on October 15, 1975. This arrangement was in effect for nearly 20 years until a variety of traffic operations changes in the area freed up capacity for an on-street bicycle lane.

Staff will ensure that lighting levels, pavement markings and appropriate signage are provided to ensure that cyclists are aware of where they may travel and to provide for the safe separation of cyclists and pedestrians. Curb cuts will be installed immediately to the north and to the south of the viaduct to assist cyclists in making the transition from travelling on the roadway to the west sidewalk and thence back to the roadway once they have travelled through the underpass.

It is noted that the construction work within the underpass is not yet completed and that at this time, the westerly sidewalk is barricaded at the south end of the viaduct, rendering the sidewalk impassable. Accordingly, installation of this proposal will not commence until such time as the construction work has been completed.

Conclusion:

With the opening of the York West Teamway which accommodates pedestrian travel through the York Street Viaduct twenty hours per day, it is feasible to allow cyclists to use the west sidewalk in order to enhance their safety.

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