

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

December 30, 2002

To: Works Committee

From: Commissioner, Works and Emergency Services

Subject: Front Street Extension Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study
Addendum Report

(Parkdale-High Park, Trinity-Spadina)

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to summarize the environmental assessment and public consultation process leading to the findings and recommendations of the Front Street Extension Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study and to request authority to file the Addendum Report in the public record.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The estimated cost of the Front Street Extension, identified within this report as the Recommended Design, is \$235 million. The Front Street Extension Project has been identified as one of four Priority Waterfront Revitalization projects. As a result, all three levels of government are equally funding this project and the funding will be channelled through the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC). Currently, the TWRC has budgeted \$170 million for this project and, as a result, will have to seek approval from the three funding partners for the increase in cost. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Addendum Report, which proposes the extension of Front Street from Bathurst Street to a new interchange with the Gardiner Expressway and the construction of a new local street from Strachan Avenue to Jefferson Avenue, be approved;
- (2) authority be granted to the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services to file the Addendum Report for the Front Street Extension Class Environmental Assessment Study

with the City Clerk and to give notification of such filing in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process;

- (3) authority be granted to commence negotiations to acquire the property interests required for the construction of the Front Street Extension;
- (4) authority be granted to initiate the expropriation process for the property interests required for the Front Street Extension, with details of the required property interests to be reported to a future meeting of Council;
- (5) authority be granted to request the Lieutenant Governor in Council to issue an order pursuant to Section 6(3) of the Expropriations Act, directing that the expropriation proceed without the inquiry procedure set out in the Expropriations Act;
- (6) this report be forwarded to the Administration Committee for information purposes; and
- (7) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

An interchange between Front Street and the F.G. Gardiner Expressway has been identified as a necessary transportation improvement for nearly 20 years. The Metropolitan Roads Review Study - Phase I (1983) and the Central Waterfront Transportation Study (1983) both identified the need for a Front Street Extension/F.G. Gardiner Expressway interchange to accommodate existing and future development in the Central Business District. More recently, the need for the Front Street Extension has been reconfirmed in the Railway Lands Transportation Review and the Central Area Transportation Review completed in August 1995 and January 1996, respectively.

In 1985, the former Metro Council approved the undertaking of an Environmental Assessment and feasibility study for the extension of Front Street from Bathurst Street to a new interchange with the F.G. Gardiner Expressway. The product of this study, the Environmental Study Report for the Front Street Extension/F.G. Gardiner Expressway Interchange, was completed and subsequently approved by Metro Council on September 30, 1988. The project received approval under the Environmental Assessment Act on April 11, 1989.

Following approval of the project, some of the original constraints governing the development of the recommended design for the Front Street Extension changed. The most significant was the closure of the Inglis plant on Strachan Avenue. The avoidance of the Inglis plant had been one of the main objectives in developing the original Front Street Extension alignment. The closure of the plant allowed for the opportunity by the Niagara Neighbourhood Association and local developers to propose a relocation of the North West rail corridor through the Inglis site and a redesign of the Front Street Extension. The objective of the rail relocation was to open up land that is currently locked between the two rail corridors and provide a consolidated rail corridor under Strachan Avenue.

On June 5, 1991, in response to the former City of Toronto Council's February 25, 1991 request, Metro Council directed the Commissioner of Transportation to stop detailed design work on the Front Street Extension for a period of eight months so that the former City of Toronto could undertake a further study of alternatives to the approved Front Street Extension.

On September 14, 1992, the former City of Toronto Council adopted the recommendations of the study entitled "Feasibility Study: Strachan Avenue Rail Relocation and Modified Front Street West Extension". This study examined an alternative design to the approved Front Street Extension project which included consolidating the Lake Shore and North West rail corridors at Strachan Avenue as a single rail corridor. Metro Toronto staff identified a number of issues arising from the former City's proposal that required resolution prior to final consideration of the feasibility study by Metro Council. To expedite the resolution of these issues the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, an agency established in 1992 to address waterfront issues, agreed to examine the issues in the context of "The Garrison Common Implementation Plan".

On July 7, 1993, Metro Council adopted a staff report recommending that the Front Street alignment and rail relocation scheme as proposed in the Garrison Common Implementation Plan be accepted as the basis for the development of a financing plan, a cost-sharing agreement and a design acceptable to Metro Toronto. Metro Council subsequently authorized the preparation of an Addendum to the Environmental Assessment for the Front Street Extension based on the Garrison Common Implementation Plan.

Although the Garrison Common Implementation Plan addressed many of the original issues pertaining to the former City of Toronto's revised Front Street Extension design, it did not address the funding for the project. As a result, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust was charged with the responsibility of developing a financing plan. At that time, the Metro Transportation Department decided to defer the preparation of the Addendum until the Waterfront Regeneration Trust had completed the development of the financing plan.

On February 28, 1995 the Waterfront Regeneration Trust issued a report summarizing the work carried out on the development of a financing plan and on the outstanding issues regarding the design concept. They were unsuccessful in identifying a funding source for the rail relocation component of the former City of Toronto Front Street Extension scheme. Existing government programs were identified to fund the \$74 million road component of the project and the \$21 million GO Transit component; however, the Trust was unable to identify any funding source from either the public or private sectors for the \$61 million cost of the rail relocation component of the project. In view of this conclusion, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust developed a scheme that did not include rail relocation. This scheme is similar to the original Metro Toronto design but with a revised alignment west of Strachan Avenue to take advantage of the Inglis plant closure. Notwithstanding this conclusion, in the spring of 1995, the former City of Toronto Council directed their staff to keep the possibility of rail relocation open when developing the Garrison Common North Part II Plan.

By 1995 considerable time had elapsed since the development of the original alignment and the development of the former City of Toronto and Waterfront Regeneration Trust schemes, and new constraints had arisen in the area. In response to these concerns and the former City of Toronto Council position regarding rail relocation, Metro Transportation undertook a review that examined planning and engineering feasibility issues with respect to the Front Street Extension. The primary objective of this review was to determine, given the existing conditions, if there were feasible Front Street Extension alignments that could be implemented with or without rail relocation. As a result of this review, two feasible alignments for the Front Street Extension were identified: one that allowed for rail relocation; and one that did not. On May 8, 1996 Metro Council adopted Clause No. 3 of Report No. 6 of the Planning and Transportation Committee authorizing the Commissioner of Transportation to prepare an Addendum to the approved Environmental Study Report based on the two identified feasible alignments. One of the primary objectives behind preparing the Addendum was to identify property requirements for the Front Street Extension so that property could be protected as redevelopment along the rail corridor proceeded. On March 6, 1997, Metro Council approved the two Front Street Extension alignments (Clause No. 1, Report No. 4 of Planning and Transportation Committee). Environmental Assessment approval for these two alignments was received in September 1997.

In 2000, the City of Toronto approved the King-Liberty Village development application. This approval precluded the approved Front Street Extension with rail relocation option. In response to this decision the Front Street Extension Review Committee was created to consult with various stakeholders and review alternative alignments. The solution developed by the Committee was a four-lane underpass of the North West rail corridor as opposed to the overpass included in the previous Environmental Assessment approved alignment.

In 1999, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force was formed jointly by the City of Toronto, the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada with the mandate to develop a business plan and make recommendations for the redevelopment of the Toronto Waterfront. In 2000, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force presented their redevelopment plan for Toronto's waterfront area in their report *Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada*. This plan identified a further westerly extension of Front Street to Dufferin Street and beyond to connect to Lake Shore Boulevard West. This extension was intended to meet existing needs in the area and allow for future development as well as play a key role in removing vehicular traffic from the Gardiner/Lake Shore corridor to permit the downgrading of those facilities through the Central Waterfront Area.

Also in 2000, staff of Works and Emergency Services and Urban Development Services carried out a review of the Task Force's waterfront plan and proposed a number of refinements including not extending Front Street west of Dufferin Street. City Council approved the staff report *Our Toronto Waterfront: Building Momentum* in August 2000. One of the recommendations adopted by City Council was that the Commissioner of Urban Development Services prepare a Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. The Planning and Transportation Committee considered the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan – Making Waves, on December 12, 2002. This secondary plan includes the extension of Front Street.

In March 2001, the City of Toronto together with the Ontario and Federal Governments announced funding for Four Priority Waterfront Revitalization Projects. The Front Street Extension project was identified as one of the Four Priority projects. As a result, Transportation Services staff initiated the Front Street Extension Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study in April 2002 to obtain approval for the project under both the Provincial and Federal Environmental Assessment Acts.

This report summarizes and comments on the findings of the Front Street Extension Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study. Additional details on each component can be found in the attached Addendum Report.

Comments:

Study Process:

The Front Street Extension Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study was carried out in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (the Class EA). Since an Environmental Assessment Study has already been approved for the Front Street Extension, this study was carried out as an Addendum to the original Environmental Study Report.

If City Council endorses this project, the Addendum Report will be filed in the public record for a minimum of 30 days according to the requirements of the Class EA process. During this period, members of the public, interest groups and government agencies may request that a Part II Order be issued. A Part II Order, if granted by the Minister of Environment, elevates the status of the project from a Class EA Study to an Individual Environmental Assessment. If this occurs, the project cannot proceed until the proponent completes an Individual Environmental Assessment Study and receives approval from the Minister. If a Part II Order is not granted or if no requests or objections are received during the 30-day filing period, the project is approved under the Environmental Assessment Act and may proceed.

The Addendum Report outlines:

- (a) the proposed modifications to the project and overall property requirements;
- (b) the rationale for the modifications;
- (c) the effects of the modifications on the natural, social and economic environments;
- (d) the process that was used to develop the modifications to the proposal; and
- (e) the public consultation carried out as part of the process.

In addition to the above, the Addendum Report also restates the original need and justification for the project as detailed in the 1988 Environmental Study Report. The process to be undertaken to obtain approval for the project under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act is also set out in the Addendum Report.

The EA and Preliminary Design Study was carried out with the assistance of technical consultants and supported by an internal Project Team composed of staff from the City of Toronto's Corporate Services, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, Urban Development Services and Works and Emergency Services Departments.

Public Participation:

Public involvement has been an integral and ongoing part of the study process for the Front Street Extension EA Study. The public contact requirements of the Class EA were met and surpassed. Three Public Meeting and Open Houses were held. The first Public Meeting and Open House was held on Saturday, June 22, 2002 and was attended by approximately 90 stakeholders. The purpose of this meeting was to provide stakeholders with an understanding of the history of the project, the process to be followed in carrying out an Addendum to the original Environmental Study Report, and to present a concept plan for the Front Street Extension upon which to receive stakeholder comments.

On Wednesday, September 18, 2002 a second Public Meeting and Open House was held and was attended by approximately 110 stakeholders. The purpose of this meeting was to present and obtain comments on seven Front Street Extension alignment alternatives.

The evaluation of the alignment alternatives and the preliminary preferred design were presented at the third Public Meeting and Open House. This meeting was held on Tuesday, December 3, 2002 and was attended by approximately 160 stakeholders.

In addition to the Public Meeting and Open Houses, individual meetings were held with key stakeholders and interest groups in the area. The key stakeholders included CN Rail, Exhibition Place, the Friends of Fort York, GO Transit, Hydro One, Liberty Village BIA, the Task Force on the Gardiner – Lake Shore Corridor, the TTC and tenants and owners of 1 Atlantic Avenue, 7 Fraser Avenue, 25 Bathurst Street, 580 Front Street, 2 Tecumseth Street, 11 Ordnance Street, and 2 Fraser Avenue.

A full description of the public consultation program can be found in Section 2.6 of the Addendum Report.

Resolution of Public Concerns:

Throughout the public consultation process a wide variety of valuable comments were received from the general public and adjacent property owners which assisted in the development and evaluation of the alternatives. The primary concerns identified through the consultation process and the resolution of these concerns are summarized below:

(i) Need for Front Street Extension

The most frequently asked question from the public was regarding the need for the Front Street Extension Project. The Front Street Extension is a “city building” project. A basic premise of city building is the principle of connectivity, or ease of travel from one place to the next by all modes of transportation. An interconnected grid system of streets is the primary way of achieving this. The area in the vicinity of the proposed Front Street Extension is currently not well connected to the surrounding grid. This project will improve these links for all modes of transportation while limiting traffic infiltration into neighbourhoods. The Front Street Extension will provide an alternate access point to and from the downtown core and, by doing so, will provide the opportunity to reduce road congestion through Toronto’s Waterfront area. The Front Street Extension will also support development in the Liberty Village area, along the Waterfront and in the railway lands. Lastly, the Front Street Extension will promote a balanced transportation system by providing an integrated platform for new and additional pedestrian, cyclist, transit and vehicular traffic facilities.

(ii) Four-lane versus Six-lane Cross-section

The redevelopment plan proposed by the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force called for the provision of six lanes on Front Street to support the downgrading of the capacity of Lake Shore Boulevard and the Gardiner Expressway through the Waterfront Area. When this EA Study was initiated it was intended to obtain EA approval for a six-lane Front Street Extension, but only construct four lanes until such time as the Gardiner Expressway is reconfigured. Many residents expressed concern over the potential for a six-lane Front Street. In response to this concern the objective of the EA Study was changed to only obtain EA approval for a four-lane Front Street Extension. If the need for a six-lane Front Street ever arises, a separate Environmental Assessment Study will have to be conducted.

(iii) Traffic Infiltration into Parkdale

At the second Public Meeting and Open House, Parkdale residents expressed concerns that if Front Street ended at Dufferin Street, more traffic would be attracted to drive through their neighbourhood west of Dufferin Street along Springhurst Avenue. A separate meeting was held with Parkdale residents to explore different options to minimize the potential for traffic infiltration. Options that were considered included turn prohibitions and physically modifying the intersection of Dufferin Street and Springhurst Avenue to allow for right-in/right-out turns only. Both of these options would limit the ability for Parkdale residents to access their own neighbourhood. As a result, the most attractive option was to stop the local road component of Front Street at Jefferson Avenue. This option maintains the existing traffic connections between Parkdale and Liberty Village, limiting the potential for increased travel between these two areas, while still providing improved accessibility for the Liberty Village area to the east as well as a road connection to the Exhibition GO station.

(iv) Overpass at North West Rail Corridor

Throughout the history of the Front Street Extension project, the Niagara Neighbourhood Association, Fort York and the Friends of Fort York have been concerned with the potential that Front Street might require an overpass at the North West rail corridor. The overpass would impact view corridors of the lake and would result in Fort York being situated between two elevated roadways, namely Front Street and the F.G. Gardiner Expressway. The current recommended Front Street Extension design proposes an underpass at the North West rail corridor.

(v) City Street versus Expressway

Another concern that was frequently expressed was that Front Street would end up looking more like an expressway than a city street. The preferred design was chosen with the intention of building a city street. Elements that are to be incorporated into the design of Front Street include wide recreational paths to be used by both pedestrians and cyclists between Bathurst Street and Strachan Avenue, sidewalks along the local road component, on-street bicycle lanes for the entire length of Front Street, considerable tree planting, “belvederes” or look-outs overlooking Fort York, architectural treatment of retaining walls and the underpass structure, pedestrian-scale lighting, and distinctive railings along retaining walls.

(vi) Noise and Air Quality

Impacts to noise and air quality were also concerns expressed by a number of the neighbouring residents. As part of this Environmental Assessment Study, both noise and air quality analyses were conducted. Both of these analyses determined that the Front Street Extension corridor is dominated by the F.G. Gardiner Expressway and the rail corridor. With respect to noise levels, an increase of two to three decibels is considered to be just perceivable to the average person. Based on the noise modelling that was carried out as part of this project, noise levels were predicted to change by -0.5 to +1.6 decibels depending on the location. With respect to air quality, a qualitative assessment was undertaken using historical Ministry of the Environment ambient air quality monitoring measurements, relevant existing air quality studies and traffic and design data for Front Street and the surrounding road network. While the shifting of traffic from the F.G. Gardiner Expressway to the Front Street Extension will reduce the separation distance currently between this traffic and the residential areas to the north, the incremental air quality impacts are expected to be insignificant. More details on the noise and air quality assessments can be found in Section 4.3 of the Addendum Report.

(vii) Desire for “Land Bridge”

The Fort York and Garrison Common Parks and Open Space Design and Implementation Plan (May 2001) included a pedestrian and cycling link between Fort York and the Garrison Creek Park system. The link was envisioned to be a “land bridge” located between Bathurst Street and Strachan Avenue over the rail corridors and the Front Street Extension. A number of stakeholders expressed their desire that the link be included in the Front Street Extension Project. The TWRC has committed to carrying out an Environmental Assessment Study for the “land

bridge” and accordingly have allocated funds within their Business Plan. In addition, analyses were done to ensure that the proposed design for the Front Street Extension does not preclude the future provision of this pedestrian link.

(viii) Accommodation of Cyclists and Pedestrians

Another common concern expressed by stakeholders was the need to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians within the Front Street Extension right-of-way. Between Bathurst Street and Strachan Avenue, the recommended plan includes a wide recreational path in the north boulevard to be shared by both cyclists and pedestrians as well as eastbound and westbound on-street bicycle lanes. The local street component of the Front Street Extension, west of Strachan Avenue, provides a sidewalk in the north boulevard, a promenade overlooking the railway and Exhibition Place lands in the south boulevard, and on-street bicycle lanes.

(ix) Need for Transit Facilities

Provision of transit facilities was a concern that was commonly expressed through the public consultation program. Suggestions included transferring the Front Street Extension budget to transit projects, and constructing an exclusive transit right-of-way as part of the Front Street Extension. It is important to keep in mind that the Front Street Extension is one component of a much larger Waterfront revitalization plan as detailed in the proposed Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan includes an extensive transit network that is supported by the TWRC’s commitment of \$800 million for transit facilities within their Business Plan. The TTC also has plans to extend their 509 Harbourfront streetcar line from the current terminus within the Exhibition Place grounds to the Dufferin Street streetcar loop. With respect to the Front Street Extension in particular, the project provides opportunities for improving local surface transit services as well as intermodal connections between GO Transit and TTC at the Exhibition Place GO Station.

(x) Ongoing Community Involvement

The community expressed a desire to be included in the detailed design and construction process for the Front Street Extension. As part of the Addendum Report we have committed to establishing a Design and Construction Liaison Group for the Front Street Extension Project. This group would function in a similar manner to the Design and Construction Liaison Group established for the Gardiner East Dismantling Project. Group members would have the opportunity to review and provide input on plans as they are being developed as well as provide input on any construction-related impacts on the community.

Environmental Assessment Study Findings:

(1) The Need for the Front Street Extension:

The Front Street Extension has been seen to be a priority project since the mid – 1980’s. The reasons that support this project include:

- Front Street supports the concept of city building as it is identified in the City's Official Plan and in the proposed Central Waterfront Secondary Plan;
- it provides the opportunity to make better use of the existing road network by redistributing the existing traffic currently within the Gardiner/Lake Shore corridor. This redistribution of traffic allows for the reduction in road congestion on the Gardiner Expressway, Lake Shore Boulevard and the north-south roads that join the Waterfront area of Toronto to the downtown between Spadina Avenue and Jarvis Street;
- it supports development along the Waterfront and in the railway lands in the area of the Front Street Extension, including the King – Liberty Village development which is being constructed on the former Inglis lands, west of Strachan Avenue; and
- it promotes a balanced transportation system by providing new facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, transit and vehicular traffic.

Neither the current purpose nor the original purpose referenced improving road capacity beyond the immediate vicinity of Downtown Toronto. In other words, no additional capacity would be provided for vehicles to enter the downtown.

The project purpose as described above has expanded beyond the purpose described in the original 1988 Environmental Study Report (ESR).

(2) Identification and Evaluation of Alternative Alignments:

A total of seven distinct alternatives were developed and evaluated during the study. Three of these were for the section between Dufferin Street and Strachan Avenue, and are known as Alternatives A, B and D. The remaining four alternatives were for the section between Strachan Avenue and Bathurst Street, and are known as Alternatives E, F, G and H. Each of the east side alternatives could be paired with any of the west side alternatives.

West Section Alternatives (Strachan Avenue to Dufferin Street):

Alternatives A, B and D are presented in Exhibit 5-1 of the Addendum Report. The common elements of the west section alternatives include:

- a two-lane Front Street Extension extending east from Dufferin Street;
- a one-lane eastbound off-ramp from the Gardiner Expressway to Front Street;
- a one-lane westbound on-ramp from Front Street to the Gardiner Expressway; and
- Strachan Avenue and Front Street are grade-separated, with Strachan Avenue going over Front Street.

The differences among the alternatives arise in how these elements are configured as summarized below.

Alternative A:

- both the eastbound and westbound connections to and from the Gardiner Expressway cross under the rail corridor; and

- the local street component merges/diverges from the Gardiner Expressway connections on the outside (i.e. the outside lanes of Front Street connect to the local street, the inside lanes of Front Street connect to the Gardiner Expressway).

Alternative B:

- the westbound connection to the Gardiner Expressway crosses over the rail corridor, while the eastbound connection crosses under the Gardiner Expressway and the rail corridor; and
- the local street component of Front Street merges/diverges from the Gardiner Expressway connections on the inside (i.e. the outside lanes of Front Street connect to the Gardiner Expressway, the inside lanes of Front Street connect to the local street).

Alternative D:

- the westbound connection to the Gardiner Expressway crosses over the rail corridor, while the eastbound connection crosses under the Gardiner Expressway and the rail corridor; and
- the local street component of Front Street is independent of the connections to and from the Gardiner Expressway. The local street runs between Dufferin Street and Strachan Avenue on the north side of the connections to the Gardiner Expressway. At the east end the local street intersects with Strachan Avenue and connects with the “button-hook” connection to the portion of Front Street that continues to Bathurst Street.

A further variation was also developed for consideration. Alternative D1 was developed to reflect the features of Alternative D with respect to the local street configuration, and to also provide a westbound connection to the Gardiner Expressway that crosses under the rail corridor instead of over.

The four alternatives were evaluated using a number of criteria including: Socio-economic environment (e.g. effects on Fort York, impact on heritage features, effects on business and residential neighbourhoods, urban design objectives);

- Natural environment (e.g. water quality, vegetation and wildlife);
- Transportation (e.g. traffic operations, transportation safety and impacts during construction); and
- Cost.

A brief description of the evaluation of these alternatives follows. Full details of the evaluation can be found in Section 5.3 and Table 5.1 of the Addendum Report.

Under Alternatives A and D1, the distance between the new westbound connection from Front Street to the Gardiner and the Dunn Avenue/Jameson Avenue interchange would be insufficient to allow for the safe merging and diverging of traffic. Both alternatives also had high construction costs.

The configuration of the Gardiner Expressway connections on the outside of the local street under Alternative B is undesirable for pedestrians and cyclists. Alternative B also has significantly fewer urban design opportunities as compared to Alternatives D or D1.

Alternative D provides an adequate distance between the Front Street connection to the Gardiner Expressway and the Dunn Avenue/Jameson Avenue interchange. It also provides good urban design opportunities by providing a local street between Dufferin Street and Strachan Avenue free from ramp connections. The construction costs for this alternative are lower than the costs for the other alternatives.

Based on the above, Alternative D was selected as the technically preferred alternative for the west section.

East Section Alternatives (Bathurst Street to Strachan Avenue):

Alternatives E, F, G and H are presented in Exhibit 5-2 of the Addendum Report. The main element that distinguishes the four east alternatives is how Front Street crosses the North West rail corridor. Of the four alternatives one is an overpass (Alternative E) and the other three are underpasses at the North West rail corridor.

These four alternatives were evaluated using the same criteria used for the evaluation of the west section alternatives. A brief description of the evaluation of these alternatives follows. Full details of the evaluation can be found in Section 5.3 and Table 5.2 of the Addendum Report.

Alternative E, the overpass alternative, proposes a bridge over the North West rail corridor. It has no significant property impacts and does not require significant rail relocation. The primary concern with this alternative is from an urban design perspective. It impacts on view corridors of the lake and has a visual impact on Fort York.

Alternative F, an underpass alternative, has limited impacts on the adjacent properties, however, requires significant rail relocation which impacts on Fort York lands. It also has a high construction cost and a high construction complexity and risk.

Alternative G, an underpass alternative, has significant impacts on adjacent properties and as a result has the highest socio-economic impact on the community of the four alternatives considered. It is also the most costly of the four alternatives.

Alternative H, the third underpass alternative, has limited impacts on adjacent properties, however, requires significant rail relocation which impacts on Fort York lands. Of the four alternatives, it has the fewest overall socio-economic impacts.

Based on the above evaluation, Alternative H was selected as the technically preferred east section alternative.

(3) The Recommended Design:

Following the completion of the technical evaluation and the selection of Alternative D in the west section and Alternative H in the east section, follow-up consideration was given to the overall project, its cost and the concerns raised by the community and interest groups throughout

the study. Through this process of refining the technically preferred alternative, it was determined that select changes should be made. They included:

- providing for an ultimate four through lanes instead of six as was originally proposed as the ultimate configuration between Strachan Avenue and Bathurst Street;
- reducing the lane requirement at the intersection of Front Street and Bathurst Street to a maximum of five lanes including turning lanes;
- acquiring property for only four through lanes instead of for six lanes; and
- terminating the local street at Jefferson Avenue instead of at Dufferin Street.

In addition, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC) has committed to initiating an environmental assessment study for the “land bridge” pedestrian link over the rail corridors in the vicinity of Fort York as indicated in the Front Street Extension Addendum Report.

A summary of the features of the Recommended Design follows. A full description of the Recommended Design can be found in Section 6 of the Addendum Report. The Recommended Design is depicted in Figure 1 attached as well as in Exhibit 6-1 of the Addendum Report.

The following elements comprise the Front Street Extension Recommended Design:

- Two integrated transportation links:
 - A local two-lane/two-way street along the north side of the rail corridor between Strachan Avenue and Jefferson Avenue with connections to the community throughout; and
 - A four-lane extension of Front Street from its current terminus at Bathurst Street west to a connection with the Gardiner Expressway near Dufferin Street.
- an underpass at the North West rail corridor, north of Fort York;
- on-street bicycle lanes;
- sidewalks;
- urban design elements to integrate the new road into the surrounding community;
- extensive landscaping, similar to the recently completed Fort York Boulevard;
- “belvederes” or look-outs overlooking Fort York;
- opportunities for expansion of local transit services;
- opportunities for the construction of a “land bridge” linking the Garrison Creek park system to Fort York; and
- opportunities for additional pedestrian connections along the rail corridors at Fort York, and west from Jefferson Avenue toward Dufferin Street.

The overall estimated costs for the Recommended Design are summarized in the following table.

COMPONENT	ESTIMATED COST
Roadway Construction	\$ 103.5 Million
Property	\$ 53.5 Million
Soil Remediation	\$ 30 Million
Rail	\$ 48 Million
TOTAL	\$235 Million

Currently, the TWRC has a budget of \$170 million for the Front Street Extension project. Due to the projected increase in costs the TWRC will need to seek approval from the three funding partners for the additional funds required for the project.

(4) Commitments to Future Work:

During the course of the Addendum process several important issues were identified that will need to be addressed during detailed design and construction. To address these issues the following commitments have been made:

Fort York:

- an additional Heritage Impact Assessment Study will be conducted to better define the impacts that the rail relocation onto Fort York lands will have on the Fort. This study will be carried out during January 2003 and its results will be available for consideration by Council along with this Front Street Extension staff report;
- construction of “lookouts” at Bathurst Street and Strachan Avenue;
- stairs from Strachan Avenue to the Cemetery;
- protection of an access road to maintenance/storage facilities west of Strachan Avenue;
- a Stage II archaeological investigation will precede project excavation for road construction and rail relocation in the Garrison Creek valley and impacts mitigated; and
- a “land bridge” will not be precluded as a result of this project.

Exhibition Place:

- mitigation of impacts that result from the Front Street Extension will be provided, to include replacement of a storage building, relocation of the cleaning department compound, relocation of the Food Building loading docks and drive-through turn-around for the Horse Palace and the relocation of tractor trailer storage under the Gardiner Expressway;
- providing a fence along the east side of Dufferin Street within the Exhibition Place grounds similar to that around the Exhibition Place TTC loop; and
- constraints will be imposed on construction scheduling within the Exhibition Place grounds to minimize impacts on major events held at Exhibition Place. No construction will occur on Exhibition Place grounds in 2003 (the 125th Anniversary of the Canadian National Exhibition) or between June 1st and September 30th of any other year.

Toronto Transit Commission:

- Exhibition Place streetcar loop to remain in operation during and following construction of the eastbound roadway under the Gardiner Expressway.

Toronto Police Service:

- relocation of facilities located at 35 and 45 Strachan Avenue.

CN Rail/GO Transit:

- access to the Bathurst North Yard be maintained;
- safe pedestrian access to the Exhibition Place GO Station platforms be maintained during and following construction from both sides of the transportation corridor;
- provision will be made at Strachan Avenue structure for an ultimate six tracks;

- retaining walls to be designed to accommodate corridor drainage and railway loadings;
- maintenance access to rail corridors to be protected/incorporated; and
- sight lines to signals not to be diminished.

Ministry of the Environment, Central Region:

- a comprehensive soil management strategy will be provided during excavation for the project; and
- air quality monitoring will be provided during decommissioning of contaminated soils.

Stormwater Management:

The recommended design has a number of opportunities with which to address stormwater quality. Property is available within the proposed Front Street right-of-way for stormwater management measures. These measures will be further developed and explored during the detailed design phase of the project. The final selection of stormwater management measures will be in compliance with the City's Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan.

Next Steps:

Pending approval of this report by City Council, the Addendum Report will be filed in the public record for a minimum 30-day period. During this period, members of the public, interest groups or government agencies may request that a Part II Order be issued. Once Environmental Assessment approval is received, the construction of the recommended design can proceed.

Since the Front Street Extension project is one of four Waterfront Priority Projects, the City must also fulfil its obligations outlined in the Eligible Recipient Agreement with the TWRC. These obligations include the completion of all activities defined as Phase 1 of the project. In addition to the completion of an Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study, other Phase 1 activities include the preparation of a Project Implementation Plan. This plan is to outline the process and schedule of how the Front Street Extension project will be designed and constructed. The deadline for the completion of Phase 1 is March 31, 2003.

The Front Street Extension project includes a property acquisition and expropriation component. Given the current project schedule and statutory requirements for the balance of the EA process, it is advisable that authority be granted at this time to proceed with acquisition and expropriation in order that these processes may run in parallel. Of course, should any new or related issues arise, these could be reported out to the Works or Administration Committee as required.

Conclusions:

The Front Street Extension, one of four Waterfront Priority Projects, has been a fundamental component of the transportation plan for the central core of the City of Toronto for nearly 20 years. It provides city building opportunities, reduces congestion along the Waterfront, supports development along the Waterfront and in the railway lands and provides a balance of facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, transit and vehicles. In April 2002 the City of Toronto initiated an Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study to obtain Environmental Assessment

approval for the most recent vision of the Front Street Extension as shown in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan – Making Waves.

Through the course of the Study seven alternative alignments were identified and evaluated: three in the west end between Dufferin Street and Strachan Avenue; and four in the east end between Strachan Avenue and Bathurst Street. This resulted in the selection of a technically preferred alignment for both the west and east ends. This combined alternative was then further refined to address specific concerns that were raised by the public through the public consultation program. The recommended design is comprised of the following elements:

- two integrated transportation links:
 - a local two-lane/two-way street along the north side of the rail corridor between Strachan Avenue and Jefferson Avenue with connection to the community throughout; and
 - a four-lane extension of Front Street from its current terminus at Bathurst Street west to a connection with the Gardiner Expressway near Dufferin Street.
- an underpass at the North West rail corridor, north of Fort York;
- on-street bicycle lanes;
- sidewalks;
- urban design elements to integrate the new road into the surrounding community;
- extensive landscaping, similar to the recently completed Fort York Boulevard;
- “belvederes” or look-outs overlooking Fort York;
- opportunities for expansion of local transit services;
- opportunities for the construction of a “land bridge” linking the Garrison Creek park system to Fort York; and
- opportunities for additional pedestrian connections along the rail corridors at Fort York, and west from Jefferson Avenue toward Dufferin Street.

The estimated cost of the recommended design is \$235 million. The Front Street Extension is one of the Four Priority Projects of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation and an amount of \$170 million has been committed to the project to date.

The Front Street Extension will promote a balanced transportation system and will provide an opportunity to optimize use of the existing road network and redistribute traffic within the central area. This aspect could allow for modifications to the existing elevated section of the Gardiner Expressway (eg. removal or reconfiguration of the ramps at York Street and/or Spadina Avenue) to begin to mitigate some of the expressway’s barrier effect while improving local traffic circulation and maintaining existing road capacity.

It is recommended that the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services be authorized to proceed in obtaining environmental assessment approval for the Front Street Extension as the next step towards its implementation.

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List of Attachments:

Figure 1: The Recommended Design
Attachment 1: Front Street Extension – Addendum Report