

June 21, 2006

To: Toronto Pedestrian Committee

From: Dylan Reid, Urban Design and Streetscaping - Working Group

Re: Toronto Pedestrian Committee response to proposed reconfiguration of South Kingsway and The Queensway interchange.

The Toronto Pedestrian Committee is pleased to hear that the City is planning to reconfigure the South Kingsway and The Queensway interchange. The interchange in its current state is extremely unfavourable to pedestrians.

Key pedestrian goals for this reconfiguration:

- (1) Making the TTC streetcar stop easily and safely accessible, in an environment that is visible, feels safe, and is not unpleasant. It should be barrier-free in accordance with the City's Accessibility Design Guidelines.

The TTC stop should be a prime pedestrian destination, but at the moment it is very difficult to get to, with significant barriers to accessibility, and it feels unsafe and unpleasant.

- (2) Creating a pleasant, at-grade traffic-controlled intersection for crossing the Queensway at or near where it meets South Kingsway. Accessing this intersection from residential areas should not require the crossing of any free-flow ramps or other unsafe crossings.
- (3) Improving direct and comfortable pedestrian access between various destinations in the area, including the neighbourhood to the north, the new developments, the Humber Valley, and the waterfront.

Currently, walking between these areas requires multiple unsafe crossings and following indirect routes.

If any of the existing ramps are kept, they should be made more friendly to pedestrians by measures that would slow traffic speed.

Assessment of options:

The "**At Grade Intersection**" option would fulfill all of these goals. It would also greatly improve the aesthetic appearance of the area, bringing benefits to adjacent residential areas new and old.

The "**Link Road**" option would fulfill the most important of these goals (1 and 2). It would make the TTC stop pleasant and accessible, and it would provide an at-grade intersection that is accessible from the North and from the new developments without crossing any free-flow ramps. It also has the potential to somewhat improve access to other nearby destinations.

The "**Link Road modified**" option would also fulfill the most important goals, though it might be slightly less effective for goal 3. The ramp that is retained in this option should be redesigned to slow traffic so as to make it more pedestrian-friendly.

The "**Diamond Interchange**" option would provide some limited improvements for pedestrians.

The "**Roundabout**" option would have no benefits to pedestrians, and may in fact make pedestrian accessibility even worse. It is not acceptable.

The "**Do Nothing**" option is equally unacceptable. The existing interchange is extremely pedestrian-unfriendly. The intersection of two arterial roads in a residential area in the midst of the City should not create these kinds of dangers and barriers.

Doing nothing would violate the spirit of the Official Plan (with its emphasis on improving the pedestrian realm), the Pedestrian Charter, and the City's Accessibility Design Guidelines.

Conclusion: the "**At Grade Intersection**" and the two "**Link Road**" options would create significant improvements in the pedestrian realm. From a pedestrian point of view, these are the only options that should be considered.

Once an option has been chosen:

Once an option has been chosen and more detailed planning is underway, this planning should include a pedestrian assessment, which maps out all potential pedestrian routes and destinations, in an effort to incorporate possible improvements to these routes in the reconfiguration work.

This planning should include the currently unpaved path to the Humber, south of the Queensway.

It should also take account of the new developments, with the possibility of improving pedestrian access between the new community and the reconfigured interchange.