



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Bathurst Street, south of Queens Quay West – Sidewalk Design and Cost Estimate

Date:	April 17, 2007
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Transportation Services Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Trinity-Spadina, Ward 20
Reference Number:	Ts07112te.top.doc

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter which Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision.

Transportation Services staff, in consultation with Emergency Medical Services, Toronto Fire Services, the Waterfront Secretariat and Legal Services, has evaluated a request to estimate the costs to construct a sidewalk on the west side of Bathurst Street between Queens Quay West and a point approximately 150 metres south thereof. Design considerations, cost and other impacts of this option, as well as an alternative approach, are described in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Services, Emergency Medical Services, Toronto Fire Services, the Waterfront Secretariat and Legal Services recommend that Toronto and East York Community Council:

1. approve the construction of a sidewalk on the west side of Bathurst Street, in an alternative configuration that addresses access safety concerns raised by the City's Transportation, Emergency and Fire Services officials, immediately west of lands leased to the Toronto Port Authority (TPA), from Queens Quay West to a point approximately 150 metres south thereof, including associated pavement narrowing, generally as shown on the attached Drawing No. 421F-8776, dated April 2007 (Attachment 3).

Financial Impact

The Toronto Port Authority has agreed, in principle, to pay for the costs of constructing a sidewalk on the west side of Bathurst Street and associated landscaping in the alternative configuration recommended above and illustrated in Attachment 3. However, if Community Council determines that it is appropriate to construct the sidewalk immediately adjacent to the Bathurst Street pavement, on the east side of the leased lands (Attachment 2), the cost to narrow the pavement, construct the sidewalk and provide associated landscaping is estimated to be \$160,000. The Transportation Services Division 2007 Capital Budget includes funding in the amount of \$2 million dollars for new sidewalk construction. These funds have already been allocated to previously approved projects. If Transportation Services is directed to proceed with the construction, other Capital improvements would have to be delayed.

DECISION BACKGROUND

Toronto and East York Community Council, at its meeting of February 13, 2007, in considering a communication (February 13, 2007) from Councillor Adam Vaughan (reference Report TE3.76), requested that the Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District report back to Community Council on:

1. the cost of building a sidewalk on the west side of Bathurst Street from Queens Quay to the end of the road, which would result in the sidewalk being constructed square to the southwest corner of Queens Quay West and Bathurst Street and eliminating the parks bay located in the northeast corner of Little Norway Park; and
2. the cost of landscaping the lower corner so as to extend the park to the northeast corner of the intersection.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The area of Bathurst Street, south of Queens Quay West, has been subject to a significant amount of discussion and study regarding the operation of the Toronto Port Authority (TPA) ferry passenger transfer facility located at the south end/foot of Bathurst Street. This facility collects passengers and vehicles and ferries them across the water to the Toronto City Centre Airport (TCCA).

Area residents have expressed concerns over the TCCA and ferry terminal and would like to minimize or eliminate the impacts associated with its operation.

The construction of a sidewalk in the configuration contemplated in the Toronto and East York Community Council direction raises a number of safety, operational and legal concerns, which are outlined in this report.

COMMENTS

Existing Conditions:

Bathurst Street, south of Queens Quay West, is classified as a minor arterial roadway, which terminates approximately 175 metres south of Queens Quay West. Throughout this length, the roadway is generally nine metres wide, accommodating one traffic lane in each direction. However, immediately south of the Queens Quay West intersection, the pavement is approximately 20 metres wide and marked to accommodate two northbound lanes (exclusive northbound left-turn lane and shared through/right-turn lane), as well as a southbound through lane and wide lay-by area. TTC service is not provided on this section of the street.

Parking is presently prohibited at all times on the west side of Bathurst Street. On the east side of the street, parking is prohibited between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday and allowed for a maximum duration of three hours at all other times. Pick-up and drop-off activity related to the school generally occurs within this area.

A sidewalk is located on the east side of Bathurst Street, which generally extends from Queens Quay West to the southern end of street. There currently is no sidewalk on the west side.

Land uses on the east side of the street consist of a combined school/community center and daycare facility (Harbourfront Community Centre). A City Parks, Forestry and Recreation yard is located close to the southern end of the street.

A ferry terminal building is located at the foot of Bathurst Street, which collects passengers and vehicles and ferries them across the water to the TCCA. This area has recently been reconstructed by the TPA in an effort to improve its passenger and vehicular operations. Part of the reconstruction included providing a parking area for patrons, as well as a loading area for taxis and buses. Additional parking is also available two blocks west at the south end of Stadium Road.

The TPA leases a parcel of land from the City immediately adjacent to the west side of Bathurst Street in accordance with the terms of a longstanding legal agreement. This area is paved and presently marked with queuing lanes for cars, taxis and buses. Curb stones are installed along the length of the street, which physically prevent access to this area from the north part of Bathurst Street, and which prevents the use of this space for queuing purposes. This area was previously marked to accommodate parking for approximately 36 vehicles. The lease between the City and TPA allows this land to be used for the purposes of parking and access requirements of the TCCA. Little Norway Park is located immediately west of this paved area, and extends north to Queens Quay West.

A plan of the existing situation is illustrated in Attachment 1.

Traffic and Pedestrian Operations:

Transportation Services staff conducted observations of traffic and pedestrian operations on this section of Bathurst Street. During flight arrival/departure times, traffic flow was occasionally restricted to one lane because vehicles, primarily taxis, waiting to pick up ferry passengers, parked/queued on both sides of the street. During these times, taxis often had to make three point turns in order to exit/proceed northbound on Bathurst Street. However, these manoeuvres were generally conducted safely and did not pose a significant safety or operational concern on this section of Bathurst Street, primarily because non-taxi vehicle through volumes and pedestrian volumes were nominal. Pick-up and drop-off activities related to the school generally did not coincide with peak flight arrival and departure times and, therefore, were not negatively impacted by any taxi queuing activity. This situation may change should flight schedules or volumes be amended.

A review of operations at the intersection of Bathurst Street and Queens Quay West revealed that the intersection is operating within capacity during all periods, specifically during the morning and afternoon peak periods. Moreover, the collision history at this intersection is not indicative of a safety problem at this time. Past investigations regarding pedestrian walk times revealed that sufficient time is provided for pedestrians to safely cross Queens Quay West and Bathurst Street within the allotted times.

Sidewalk and Landscaping Configuration and Cost

Staff has evaluated the request to construct a continuous sidewalk on the west side of Bathurst Street (within City lands between the existing Bathurst Street pavement and east boundary of leased lands), including narrowing the pavement at the southwest corner of the intersection of Queens Quay West and Bathurst Street to extend Little Norway Park. Attachment 2 illustrates this option. The estimated cost to construct a 1.7 metre sidewalk in this configuration, including the associated pavement narrowing and landscaping, is \$160,000.

It should be noted that the segment of sidewalk involving a pavement narrowing at the intersection of Bathurst Street and Queens Quay West was also previously considered by City and TPA staff. This aspect of the subject request is considered feasible as it will not adversely impact intersection capacity or operations. It will, in fact, improve pedestrian safety as it will not take pedestrians as long to cross the south leg of Bathurst Street.

Immediately south of the above-noted area, the sidewalk is proposed to extend south towards the south end of Bathurst Street and would be constructed within the Bathurst Street right-of-way, on City lands, parallel to the exiting queuing lanes.

However, there are a number of negative impacts, which must be seriously considered. Accordingly, in view of these impacts, this design is not recommended. These negative impacts are described in more detail below.

Impacts of Configuration:

We understand that as an element of this option, there is a desire to have the TPA revert the leased lands back to parking and abandon the proposed queuing operation.

Despite the fact that the City has not yet authorized removal of the current barrier, which would accommodate access from Bathurst Street at the north end of the leased lands, the City cannot unilaterally demand that the TPA change its proposed configuration. As noted later on in this report, the TPA's transportation consultant recommended the current queuing configuration with the addition of a new sidewalk, as shown in Attachment 3.

As long as the access to the leased lands is blocked, and/or in the event the area is reverted back to parking, taxi and other vehicle queuing on Bathurst Street will be prevalent and likely increase significantly. Several City Divisions have expressed considerable concern about the safety implications, which would result from the reduction in pavement width caused by taxis and other vehicles queuing on Bathurst Street in this manner. The consequences would be:

- Frequent queuing of vehicles on both sides of Bathurst Street, which will not permit two-way traffic flow. This will, in turn, hinder emergency vehicle access and cause traffic operational and safety problems;
- A reduction of available parking for pick-up/drop-off activities related to the school/community center; and
- Insufficient space to manoeuvre emergency vehicles and apparatus.

It should be noted that if this sidewalk configuration is approved by Community Council, the TPA would still be entitled to apply for a curb cut at the north end of the leased lands to enable the use of these lands for queuing purposes. Staff has delegated approval authority for such matters and would have to evaluate the feasibility of such an application in accordance with its merits and the safety issues addressed above.

Furthermore, if the sidewalk was to be constructed in the manner proposed and the queuing operation on the leased lands does ultimately become operational, the sidewalk would essentially become isolated between two lanes of "live" traffic. This situation would not be a particularly safe or inviting pedestrian environment.

Moreover, given where the sidewalk would terminate at the south end, this would leave pedestrians to cross against a number of competing traffic movements including taxis exiting from the queuing lanes, and traffic exiting from the ferry and parking area at the foot of Bathurst Street.

In addition to the above, the City would have to pay for all costs associated with constructing the sidewalk and boulevard landscaping.

Legal Services advises that it is quite possible, given the length of time the City has been dealing with the TPA's proposal, and with the TPA agreeing to various City staff

changes, that the TPA may allege the City has not been acting in good faith towards it on this matter.

It should also be noted that the TPA has advised the City that if it creates barriers to the TPA's operation, that the TPA would view the City as being in breach of the Tripartite Agreement that governs the TCCA. Specifically, Section 50 of the Tripartite Agreement provides that the City shall not do or permit to be done, "anything which would interfere with the safe use and operation of the Toronto City Centre Airport". Furthermore, the TPA has reminded the City, that it could, if it was forced to do so, assert its rights over an easement it has over Little Norway Park (which is to the immediate west of the leased lands). The easement covers a 100 foot right of way that would severely cut into the park.

In view of the foregoing, Emergency Medical Services, Toronto Fire Services, Legal Services, Transportation Services and the Waterfront Secretariat do not recommend that a sidewalk along the west side of Bathurst Street, adjacent to the east limit of the leased lands, be constructed and, instead, recommend that Community Council approve the alternative configuration described below.

Alternative Sidewalk Configuration

It is important to note that prior to making changes to the configuration of the ferry terminal facility lands, the TPA commissioned an Environmental Assessment study, which was conducted by its transportation consultant, Dillon Consulting. The study recommended, among other things, that the parking and circulation area at the foot of Bathurst Street be reconfigured (now implemented), and that the queuing arrangement on the leased lands be implemented (now implemented but not operational as noted above). The recommendations also included a plan for providing a sidewalk on the west side of Bathurst Street, west of the leased lands.

Under the TPA proposal, which is illustrated in Attachment 3, the expansion of Little Norway Park, by means of narrowing the pavement of Bathurst Street at the southwest corner of the intersection of Bathurst Street and Queens Quay West, would still be provided as per the previously discussed option. However, the southerly continuation of the sidewalk would be constructed further to the west, adjacent to the west limit of the leased lands. Other City Divisions have previously evaluated this configuration and are satisfied that it addresses the safety and operational issues identified above. It should be noted that the TPA have agreed, in principle, to pay for these improvements in conjunction with the overall plan.

The Chiefs of Emergency Medical Services and Toronto Fire Services, the Director of the Waterfront Secretariat and the City Solicitor have reviewed this report and concur with its contents and recommendation.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Location Plan - Existing Conditions
Attachment 2 – Sidewalk and Landscape Plan
Attachment 3 – Alternative Sidewalk Configuration/TPA Proposal

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