

MOTION

August 3, 2007

Strachan Avenue Grade Separation Design Concept Study

Moved by Deputy Mayor Pantalone

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Strachan Avenue Grade Separation Design Concept Study be undertaken under existing City Budgets and involve the City Planning Division (Community Planning and Urban Design), Transportation Services, the local Councillor, local communities and stakeholders; and
2. That the study be completed within six months and be used to inform the City of Toronto's submissions to the GO Transit Georgetown Service Expansion and Airport Transportation Link Environmental Assessment Study and for other similar purposes.

Background:

One of the busiest at grade rail crossings in the City of Toronto is situated on Strachan Avenue, at the CN/CP rail corridor, south of King Street West. This rail corridor services the busy GO Georgetown line that moves passengers to and from Union Station. In addition, Strachan Avenue itself is heavily traveled in both northbound and southbound directions by vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. In fact, a bike lane was introduced on Strachan Avenue in 2006 to provide a much needed connection for the neighbourhoods of Liberty Village and north of King Street West to the Martin Goodman Trail. For cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers, Strachan Avenue serves not only many of the oldest neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto of Trinity Bellwoods Park and Niagara Neighbourhood, but also serves the newly created neighbourhoods and employment districts (King - Liberty and Liberty Village). Furthermore, Strachan Avenue is a key route to historic Fort York, Exhibition Place, and Ontario Place.

GO Transit is proposing to upgrade and increase service on the Georgetown Line. In addition to this expansion to the GO Georgetown Service, GO Transit is examining alternatives for an Airport Transportation Link between Union Station and Pearson Airport. The Terms of Reference for the GO Transit Georgetown South Corridor Service Expansion and Airport Transportation Link EA Study was submitted to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) in 2006 for formal review. The upgrade and expansion will be difficult given the existing and proposed transportation network and building structures in the area that will present some challenging constraints that will affect the form of any necessary tunneling or bridging.

Transportation Services and the City Planning Division, including the Urban Design Section, local stakeholders and myself, recognize that the Strachan Avenue at grade rail crossing is a

complex problem that not only presents engineering challenges but also poses a problem from an urban design perspective. Furthermore, City staff and I have felt that a study of these complex problems is needed and that this study can be completed within six months. Such a study would engage City Staff, the local Councillor, members of the public and other stakeholders in the development of alternative design concepts: a design charette is being considered to solicit the input of the public and stakeholders.