



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Boulevard Parking - Islington Avenue

Date:	August 31, 2009
To:	Etobicoke York Community Council
From:	Director, Transportation Services - Etobicoke York District
Wards:	Ward 7 - York West
Reference Number:	P:\2009\Cluster B \TRA\EtobicokeYork\eycc090123-tp

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise Etobicoke York Community Council on the progress made toward legalising commercial boulevard parking along Islington Avenue, between Steeles Avenue West and Finch Avenue West, including the potential for landscaping improvements at selected locations.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications for Transportation Services resulting from considering this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of October 7, 2008, Etobicoke York Community Council directed Transportation Services, Etobicoke York District, and Municipal Licensing and Standards, Etobicoke York District, to take appropriate action to “recapture” the municipal boulevards along both sides of Islington Avenue, between Finch Avenue West and Steeles Avenue West, by December 31, 2008.

A court challenge to Council’s initiative, initiated by a number of adjoining property owners, delayed implementation; however, negotiations with property owners, particularly a number of owners in the *Italian Gardens* plaza at 2965 Islington Avenue, followed the City’s successful defence against the action. In considering a staff report on the Court’s decision in favour of the City’s actions at its meeting of March 26, 2009, Etobicoke York Community Council passed the following motion:

- “1. Directed the Director, Transportation Services, Etobicoke York District, to work with the Ward Councillor and the owners of 2965 Islington Avenue, as well as any other interested commercial property owners in the corridor, on a plaza by plaza basis and a case by case basis, to introduce commercial boulevard parking and appropriate landscaping improvements to the boulevards adjoining their property, and that consideration be given to providing streetscape improvements or other boulevard beautification to the satisfaction of staff and the Ward Councillor at the expense of the benefiting property owners and in lieu of commercial parking fees.
2. Directed the Director, Transportation Services, Etobicoke York Community Council, to report to Etobicoke York Community Council by December 31, 2009, on the progress of these discussions, and that Transportation Services suspend its efforts to ‘recapture’ the boulevards until December 31, 2009, for any commercial property owner in active negotiation with staff and the Ward Councillor.”

ISSUE BACKGROUND

A number of business owners in *Italian Gardens* plaza had previously approached the Ward Councillor regarding a conceptual landscape plan for the Islington Avenue frontage of the property prepared by the Emery Village Business Improvement Association. In April 2009, Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti presented this conceptual landscaping and boulevard parking plan to a meeting of *Italian Gardens* property owners. Attachments 1 and 2 are copies of the BIA’s (Business Improvement Association) concept plan.

At that time, Councillor Mammoliti advised the owners that the Emery Village BIA’s concept plan is the type of infrastructure improvement that the area needs to both revitalise the existing businesses and encourage future investment in the neighbourhood.

The cost of these suggested improvements is not insignificant, and the property owners attending the meeting were encouraged to consider creating their own business improvement area as a means of increasing the pool of funds available for capital improvement projects, and to cost share these projects with the City.

But property owners were advised that the *status quo* is no longer acceptable, and that to justify the property owner’s request to waive boulevard parking fees, any landscaping proposal made by *Italian Gardens* or any other commercial property owner in the area must be substantial from a cost perspective. Simply placing a number of planter boxes in the boulevard will not qualify as “. . . landscaping in lieu of boulevard parking fees.”

The property owners appeared favourably impressed with the Emery Village BIA proposal, subject to further discussions both internally and with the Ward Councillor. Subsequent to this meeting and as a sign of ‘good faith’, Transportation Services staff relocated the pre-cast concrete curb stones to their original location at the back edge of the sidewalk on the east side of Islington Avenue, allowing parking to continue within the municipal boulevard.

Early in August 2009, a number of *Italian Gardens* business owners indicated to Councillor Mammoliti that a tentative agreement with the City could be reached. These owners express an interest in joining the Emery Village BIA, subject to the approval process required by the Economic Development Division. Joining the Emery Village BIA would allow the BIA to implement the landscaping improvements on a cost share basis with the City. But should this not occur, the business owners advised Councillor Mammoliti that they are prepared to enter into an agreement with the City to implement a boulevard improvement plan phased in over a number of years and constructed at no cost to the City.

Either of these options will ultimately require Etobicoke York Community Council approval, but there are a number of outstanding issues that need to be resolved by the Ward Councillor, *Italian Gardens* business owners, and staff from both Transportation Services and City Legal before an agreement can be submitted to Community Council, including:

- payment of \$15,000.00 in outstanding court costs, plus interest, owed to the City by a number of *Italian Gardens* business owners;
- the number of property owners actually prepared to participate in any agreement with the City, especially if consent to participate is not unanimous among the 14 existing property owners;
- how a ‘phased’ agreement can be successfully implemented and enforced, specifically to ensure that there is no cost to the City if any of the participating properties change ownership, and if participation in such an agreement is limited to just a few property owners; and,
- the value of any proposed landscaping improvements relative to the loss of boulevard parking revenue for the City if landscaping is accepted in lieu of annual fees.

To date, the remaining properties on this section of Islington Avenue have declined Councillor Mammoliti’s invitation to participate in these discussions. Pursuant to Community Council’s directive, pre-cast concrete curb stones will be installed along the Islington Avenue frontages of these properties to preclude unauthorised commercial boulevard parking.

We emphasise that should we be unable to reach an agreement with *Italian Gardens* by December 31, 2009, we will relocate the pre-cast concrete curb stones to the street line as originally directed by Etobicoke York Community Council.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

John Niedra, P.Eng
Director, Transportation Services - Etobicoke York District

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Preliminary Streetscape Plan
Attachment 2: Artist's Perspective