

Emery Village Transportation Master Plan and Official Plan Amendment for Proposed New Infrastructure – Request for Direction

Date:	May 20, 2009
To:	Planning Growth and Management Committee
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward 7 – York West
Reference Number:	p:\2009\ClusterB\tra\tim\pg09007tim

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council’s approval of the Emery Village Transportation Master Plan and authorization for the preparation of City-initiated Official Plan Amendment to protect the infrastructure elements identified therein.

A Transportation Master Plan Study for the Emery Village Secondary Plan (EVSP) area was undertaken to develop a long range plan that identifies the required transportation infrastructure to support existing and future development in Emery Village. The Emery Village Transportation Master Plan (Master Plan) followed the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process for Master Plans. The evaluation of a reasonable number of alternative solutions, which included consultation with the public and review agencies, resulted in a recommended Transportation Network, shown on Attachment 3, which includes the following main components:

1. A new road connecting Toryork Drive with Finch Avenue West;
2. A new road connecting Weston Road to Arrow Road;
3. A new road connecting Rivalda Road to Deerhide Crescent;
4. Pedestrian and Cycling Connections including 2 Pedestrian Bridges; and
5. Improved pedestrian connections from Finch Avenue West to Emery Collegiate Institute

Following Council approval of the Recommended Transportation Network identified in the Master Plan, an Official Plan Amendment will be required to provide for the future implementation of the revised network.

Further EA studies and approvals will be required for the road links and the pedestrian bridges identified in the Master Plan at such a time that it is determined that those facilities are required. These further studies will define the exact alignment, lane arrangements, ultimate rights-of-way and other technical aspects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Transportation Services and City Planning Divisions recommend that:

1. City Council approve in principle the recommended plan for the transportation network for Emery Village as proposed in the Emery Village Transportation Master Plan Study, and shown in Attachment 3 of this report;
2. The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, be directed to prepare an Official Plan Amendment that would provide for the approved transportation network, to be considered at a statutory public meeting to be held as part of a Fall 2009 meeting of Planning and Growth Management Committee;
3. Notice for the statutory public meeting under the Planning Act be given according to the regulations under the Planning Act; and
4. Staff be directed to schedule a Public Information Centre, together with the Ward Councillor, to present the draft Official Plan Amendment prior to the statutory public meeting under the Planning Act.

Financial Impact

There is no immediate financial impact resulting from the recommendations contained in this report. The estimated total 2008 construction cost of all elements of the Recommended Transportation Network is \$22,285,000. Currently no funds are provided for these works in the 10-year Capital Plan and Forecast for Transportation Services. The costs of individual projects will be further refined during the course of securing further required Environmental Assessment (EA) approvals. Funding sources and schedules for implementation will be included as part of future year Capital Budgets for Transportation Services.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Emery Village is centered on the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Weston Road, and is bounded by the Canadian Pacific Rail line to the north and east, Lanyard Road to the south, and Jayzel Drive to the west.

In November 2002, City of Toronto Council approved the Emery Village Secondary Plan (EVSP). The Secondary Plan was subsequently revised as part of the New Official Plan, approved by City Council in June 2006. The EVSP includes those lands in the immediate vicinity of the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection. The goal of the EVSP is to provide for mixed use development in the area and encourage a “village-like” oriented pattern of development. The primary emphasis is on the development of commercial and residential uses to achieve a defined and improved streetscape, provide a connected street system for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians and ultimately reduce automobile dependency.

The majority of the lands in the EVSP area are designated ‘Mixed Use Areas and Apartment Neighbourhoods.’ This designation permits and encourages street-related retail, service commercial and residential uses along the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road frontages. This designation applies to the lands in the north-west, south-west and south-east quadrants of the Finch Avenue and Weston Road intersection. The north-east quadrant of the intersection remains designated Employment as do those lands on the south side of Toryork Drive that are owned by the City that are currently used for City Yards and Emergency Service Facilities. Those lands that surround Emery Creek have been designated Parks and Open Space Areas and Natural Areas.

It was anticipated that a network of new and existing roads, pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes would provide access through the EVSP area. The EVSP identifies a proposed transportation network configuration, shown on Map 26-2 Structure Plan in the Official Plan, and is attached to this report as Attachment 1.

Detailed technical analyses of the proposed transportation network were not undertaken during the development of the EVSP. In June of 2002, City Council approved undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study that would investigate the feasibility of the following transportation improvements:

- Rerouting or diverting north-south traffic around the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection;
- Closing the south leg of the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection;
- Extending Rivalda Road north to connect with Weston Road via an overpass across Finch Avenue; and
- Establishing a ‘traffic roundabout’ at the Finch Avenue/Weston Road intersection, which would replace the existing signals.

In 2006, the Transportation Services Division initiated a Transportation Master Plan Study for the EVSP area following the procedures for Master Plans under the Municipal Class EA. The objective of the Master Plan was to identify the transportation infrastructure solution and implementation plan required to support development in Emery Village.

COMMENTS

The EVSP Transportation Master Plan has been completed in accordance with the requirements for Master Planning process Approach No. 1, as described in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document. This approach involves undertaking Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class EA process, whereupon a Master Plan document would be prepared. Further, more detailed investigations will be required for the specific Schedule 'B' and 'C' projects identified in the Master Plan at such a time that it is determined that those facilities need to be constructed.

The Master Plan describes in detail the first two phases of the five-phase environmental planning process set out in by the Class EA:

Phase 1 – identification of the problem or opportunity; and

Phase 2 – identification and evaluation of alternative solutions.

Schedule 'B' projects identified in the Master Plan will require the development of the recommended solution in more detail, and the issuance of a Notice of Completion to complete Phase 2 and obtain EA approval for each project.

Schedule 'C' projects are required to complete Phases 1 through 4 of the Municipal Class EA process. Phases 1 and 2 requirements are being satisfied through the EVSP Transportation Master Plan. As such, when the specific road links are required, Phases 3 and 4 will still need to be completed for each link. These phases are as follows:

Phase 3 – identification and evaluation of alternative design concepts for the preferred solution; and

Phase 4 – preparation of an Environmental Study Report (ESR) and issuance of Notice of Completion

The Master Plan was carried out with the assistance of technical consultants and supported by a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of staff from Transportation Services, City Planning, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Facilities and Real Estate, Toronto Water, and Technical Services.

Public Consultation

Public involvement is an integral and ongoing part of the study process for the Emery Village Transportation Master Plan. Prior to the implementation of any of the road links and Pedestrian Bridges identified in the Master Plan, there will be additional public consultation during the completion of Phase 2 of the Municipal Class EA process for the Schedule B projects and completion of Phases 3 and 4 for Schedule 'C' projects.

One Public Meeting, as well as individual meetings with the Emery Village Business Improvement Area (BIA), Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and the Toronto District School Board were conducted during the course of the study.

At the study initiation phase, and for the Public Meeting, approximately 9,200 notices were distributed by Canada Post to residences and businesses in the area bounded by Steeles Avenue West, Sheppard Avenue West, Highway 400 and Islington Avenue. The notice was also mailed to the local BIA, and other local stakeholders and review agencies.

The Public Meeting was held on March 7, 2007 to review the problem statement, the alternatives developed, the evaluation criteria, and the preliminary preferred alternative solution. Approximately 84 members of the public attended this meeting, and in general, were supportive of the project.

Additional consultation is planned to occur with stakeholders east of the CP Rail line, to address modifications to the Master Plan that were developed subsequent to the public meeting. The results of this consultation, and any implications thereof, will be reported for consideration at the statutory meeting for the Official Plan Amendment to be prepared by the City Planning Division.

A full description of the public consultation program can be found in Section 6 of the Master Plan.

Master Plan Findings

(1) Identification of the Problem or Opportunity

The Master Plan study area is the area identified in the EVSP, and is generally bounded by Toryork to the north, Arrow road to the east, Lanyard Road to the south, and Milvan Drive to the west.

An additional (broader) study area was considered to assist in the analysis of future transportation conditions. The additional study area was used to determine the need for transportation improvements based on available reserve capacity and potential for traffic diversion within the broader transportation network. The additional study area is

generally bounded by Steeles Avenue West to the north, Highway 400 to the east, Sheppard Avenue to the south, and Islington Avenue to the west. An illustration of both the Master Plan study area and the additional study area is found in Attachment 2.

An analysis of the existing and projected future conditions and access concerns in the EVSP area has determined that improvements to the existing transportation infrastructure are needed to support redevelopment and revitalization of the Emery Village area, and to meet the objectives of the Emery Village Secondary Plan.

A full description of the analysis of the existing and projected future conditions and access concerns in the EVSP area can be found in Chapter 3 of the Master Plan. The main areas of concern addressed included:

1. New street connections that provide alternatives to travel through the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection;
2. Access improvements for existing and future developments;
3. New/improved pedestrian crossing opportunities on Finch Avenue West, both east and west of Weston Road, and on Weston Road south of Finch Avenue West;
4. Provision of improved cycling facilities in-keeping with the Toronto Bike Plan; and
5. Accommodation of an LRT transit facility along Finch Avenue and/or the Hydro corridor, and potential GO Rail service on the CP Rail line.

(2) Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

To address the problem and opportunity statement, a wide range of transportation system alternatives were considered. The alternatives were grouped into “families” to facilitate analysis, as described below:

1. Do Nothing

This alternative represents the continuation of existing conditions, and involves no changes or improvements to the existing transportation network. This option provides a baseline for comparison purposes for each family of options, as required under the Municipal Class EA process.

2. Alternative Roads Around Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection

This alternative includes new road links that, in-whole or in-part, provide alternative routes to travelling through the Finch Avenue & Weston Road intersection. Road link options are considered in each quadrant to connect Finch Avenue, Weston Road, Lanyard Road, Toryork Drive, and Arrow Road.

3. Rivalda Road Extension

This alternative considers the extension of Rivalda Road into the EVSP area, with potential connections to the north and/or east with Finch Avenue West, Toryork Drive, and Arrow Road.

4. Non-auto related solutions including new Pedestrian/Cyclist connections

This alternative includes consideration of non-vehicular modes. Options considered to improve the connectivity of the pedestrian and cyclist networks included protected crossings (i.e., traffic signal, overpass, or underpass) and on and off-road facilities, such as boulevard enhancements.

5. Access improvements and local links

This alternative involves options to improve localized circulation and access to land parcels in Emery Village on three quadrants around the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Weston Road.

6. Finch Avenue West / Weston Road intersection improvements

This alternative includes options for reconfiguring the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Weston Road, such as closure of the south leg of the intersection, conversion to a roundabout, and operational improvements.

In all 30 options/sub-options were developed among the six families of alternative solutions. These are found in Section 5.1 of the Master Plan. The criteria used to evaluate these alternatives consisted of the following broad categories:

- Land Use and Socio-Economic Environment;
- Transportation;
- Natural Environment;
- City Building;
- Implementation; and
- Costs.

The specific measures and indicators associated with each category are listed in Section 5.2 of the Master Plan.

A full description of the alternatives and the results of the evaluation are provided in Section 5 of the Master Plan. The evaluation included consideration of public and agency comments that were provided throughout the study process.

The recommended components of the Master Plan are described in the following section. Two key exclusions from the Recommended Transportation Network were identified through the detailed evaluation as described below:

- No major changes to the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Weston Road are recommended. All types of potential modifications analyzed, for instance a roundabout or a closure of the southern leg of the intersection, were found to result in a significant potential for traffic infiltration into residential neighbourhoods, impact on emergency service vehicles and impact on transit opportunities.
- No roads are recommended in the southwest quadrant through Lindylou Park, due to the impact such roads would have on the use, enjoyment and access to the park. However, opportunities to improve local access and circulation between land parcels should be evaluated and protected as new development and/or redevelopment occurs.

(3) Recommended Alternative Solution

The result of the evaluation is a combination of recommended improvement options and sub-options from the six families of solutions, which represents the preliminary preferred solution, and meets the objectives of the Problem Statement by:

1. Meeting the transportation requirements identified in the Emery Village Secondary Plan for future development and existing land uses
2. Providing a network of streets and non-vehicular connections to divide larger sites into smaller blocks for development, and promoting a pedestrian-oriented development
3. Providing flexibility to improve the streetscape along Finch Avenue and Weston Road, and provide high quality pedestrian and cycling facilities within Emery Village
4. Increasing accessibility to parks and open spaces, while minimizing the impact to those valuable resources
5. Promoting a reduction in personal vehicle use and an increase to other modes such as transit, walking, and cycling
6. Minimizing environmental impacts

The Transportation Master Plan components are still conceptual and will require further study as the project specific studies proceed. The Recommended Alternative, illustrated in Attachment 3, and on Exhibit 21 of the Master Plan, includes the following elements:

- A new road connecting Toryork Drive to Finch Avenue West to provide an alternate route to the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection.
- A new road connecting Weston Road to Arrow Road to provide an alternate route to the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection as well as a potential access route to a potential GO station and associated ancillary station facilities.

- A new road connecting Rivalda Road to Deerhide Crescent to provide a more direct route for industrial traffic going to, or coming from, the Finch Avenue corridor and/or Highway 400 interchange at Finch Avenue West.
- Non-auto related solutions including new Pedestrian/Cyclist connections including two pedestrian bridges, one crossing Finch Avenue West and one crossing Weston Road.
- Improving pedestrian access from Finch Avenue West to Emery Collegiate Institute
- Intersection improvements and transit priority at the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection.

Further Work

1. Road Link 2C4

In consultation with the Emery Village BIA, road link 2C4 was developed and included in the Master Plan to complete the connection from Weston Road to Arrow Road. This would provide access for future pedestrian, cycling and vehicular routes to higher order transit, a potential GO Station, as well as providing an alternative route to access the Finch Avenue West and Highway 400 corridor, by-passing the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection. This road link was not presented as part of the Road Network at the public meeting on March 7, 2007. This road link will require the acquisition of private property and as a result consultation with the affected property owners is required. The consultation will be completed by September 2009, prior to the statutory meeting required for the Official Plan Amendment.

2. Road Link in Southwest Quadrant of Finch Avenue West and Weston Road

Three new road options were evaluated in the south-west quadrant through Lindylou Park, which provided an alternative to travelling through the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection.

The Master Plan does not recommend new roads through Lindylou Park, due to the impact such roads would have on the use, enjoyment and access to the park. Furthermore, the alternatives investigated do not appear to be required from strictly a road capacity perspective. However, the need for improved local access and circulation within the south-west quadrant will be an issue should any significant development or redevelopment be proposed in the future within the quadrant. Staff will pursue opportunities to introduce new public roads through the quadrant, outside of Lindylou Park, in conjunction with future development proposals.

3. Environmental Assessment Approvals Required Prior to Construction

More detailed investigations for the road links and the pedestrian bridges identified in the Master Plan will be required as part of the specific Schedule 'B' and 'C' EA studies to be completed at such a time that it is determined that those facilities are required. These

further studies will define the exact alignment, lane arrangements, ultimate rights-of-way and the other technical aspects of the roads and bridges.

Project Costs

The estimated 2008 construction cost of the extension of proposed road network is approximately \$18.1 million, and the estimated cost of the two (2) pedestrian bridges is \$4.2 million. These cost estimates are preliminary, and will be refined when final EA approvals are sought.

Property acquisition will be required for some of the roads proposed, however, the extent and resultant cost estimate will be determined at such a time that it is determined that those road links are required and their Schedule “B” or “C” EAs are completed.

Following approval of the Official Plan Amendment, it is recommended that the City protect and acquire property for the roads in the Master Plan through the redevelopment process.

Public / Agency Concerns

The primary concerns identified through the consultation process and our responses are summarized below.

1. Need for GO Train service, and particularly a GO Train Station in Emery Village.

GO Transit is currently undertaking a feasibility study for rail service from Union Station to Bolton, including the introduction of a GO Station in the vicinity of Emery Village, in the context of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan. Proposed road links 2C1, 2C2 and 2C4 would support the implementation of a GO Station in the vicinity of Finch Avenue West, including ancillary station facilities south of Finch Avenue West within the Hydro corridor.

2. Concerns with the future traffic volumes resulting when development occurs in the Emery Village area.

To assess the required road infrastructure needs and evaluate alternatives for the EVSP road network, future traffic conditions were projected for the build-out of current proposed developments within the EVSP area to the 2011 timeframe. In addition, traffic resulting from the full build-out of all potential developments based on the EVSP zoning was also assessed. The analysis indicates that if no road network modifications are implemented, the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection will reach capacity resulting in longer traffic queues in each direction. The roads identified in the Master Plan will provide alternative travel routes around the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection.

3. Concern regarding possible increase in traffic infiltration into residential neighbourhoods from proposed new road network.

Traffic infiltration was part of the evaluation criteria used to evaluate the various alternatives that were developed. This was one of the reasons that the traffic circle or roundabout options were not carried forward as it was determined that it would result in queuing, which has the potential to redirect traffic into the residential neighbourhood around Lindylou Park. With the implementation of the Master Plan road components that divert traffic away from the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road intersection, traffic infiltration is not expected to be a significant concern. However, the City has a process for addressing traffic infiltration and the City will work with the residents to develop appropriate mitigation measures should issues arise in the future. Possible mitigation measures include introduction of entrance prohibitions and traffic calming measures.

4. Concern Regarding the location of the road connecting Toryork Drive to Finch Avenue West

When considering the EVSP in November 2002, City Council adopted a motion to locate the road connecting Toryork Drive to Finch Avenue West through the City's Emery Yard. The motion read as follows:

“(1) in conjunction with the review of application TB CMB 2002 0012 By Centrillium with lands at 15-19, 21, and 23 Toryork Drive and 2340 & 2350 Finch Avenue West, Works and Emergency Services staff initiate design of the proposed portion of the ring road section between Finch Avenue and Toryork Drive, passing through Emery Parks Yard lands”.

This road was evaluated in the Master Plan and was determined to be beneficial from a number of perspectives including:

- provides new opportunity for street oriented buildings
- provides a new right-of-way for enhanced pedestrian streetscape
- increases vehicular access for future development in this quadrant
- will result in a reduction in queue lengths on Finch Avenue West, west of Weston Road;
- will result in a reduction in queue lengths on Weston Road north of Finch Avenue West; and
- provides buffering and separation between employment and residential uses.

As part of its Yard Consolidation Study, the Facilities and Real Estate Division identified that if the road connecting Toryork Drive to Finch Avenue West were to pass through the Emery Yard, it would seriously impact the activities of various City Divisions that use the Emery Yard. Parks, Forestry and Recreation use the yard for Parks programs, Forestry programs, Parks Development and Infrastructure Management programs, and the Asian Long Horn Beetle program. The yard also accommodates the Solid Waste

Division's yard waste collection program for residents, and a site for Transportation Services' winter operations, which is one of their major hubs.

To mitigate the impact of the road connecting Toryork Drive and Finch Avenue West on the operations of the Emery Yard, it is recommended that when this road is required and the Project Specific EA for it is being undertaken, the following alternative alignments also be assessed:

- locating this road partially on the Emery Yard and partially on the adjacent privately owned lands that are subject to a redevelopment proposal; and
- locating this road entirely on the adjacent redevelopment site noted above.

Continued consultation with all impacted City Divisions, the public, stakeholders, and impacted land owners will be undertaken during this process.

Next Steps

Following approval of this report by City Council, an Official Plan Amendment will be required to replace the road network that currently exists in the Emery Village Secondary Plan with that in the Emery Village Transportation Master Plan. Consultation with affected property owners is required for some sections of the new roads and this will be completed prior to the Public Information Centre for the Official Plan Amendment. Following the approval of the Official Plan Amendment, and as development occurs in Emery Village such that various road links are required, the project specific EAs for the various road links will be completed.

CONTACT

John P. Kelly, P.Eng.
Manager, Infrastructure Planning
Tel: (416) 392-8340
Fax: (416) 392-4808
E-mail: jkelly@toronto.ca

Richard Beck
Senior Planner, City Planning
Tel: (416) 394-8235
Fax: (416) 394-6063
E-mail: rbeck@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gary Welsh, P. Eng.
General Manager, Transportation Services

Gary Wright
Chief Planner & Executive Director,
City Planning

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Existing Emery Village Secondary Plan Transportation Network
2. Emery Village Transportation Master Plan Study Area
3. Proposed Emery Village Transportation Network
4. Emery Village Transportation Master Plan Report