



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

St. Clair Avenue West – Request to Remove/Amend Signs within the Corso Italia BIA (Just west of Lansdowne Avenue to Westmount Avenue)

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| Date: | February 16, 2010 |
| To: | Etobicoke York Community Council |
| From: | Director, Transportation Services - Etobicoke York District |
| Wards: | Ward 17 – Davenport |
| Report Number: | p:\2010\Cluster B\TRA\EtobicokeYork\eycc100047-to |

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to comment on a number of requests from Councillor Palacio relating to the existing signs posted on St. Clair Avenue West, between Lansdowne Avenue and Westmount Avenue.

Transportation Services staff met in January 2010 with Councillor Palacio and a representative from the Corso Italia Business Improvement Area (BIA) to discuss their concerns with a proliferation of existing traffic control signs installed within the BIA, including turn prohibitions, loading zones, “Do Not Enter” and oversized street name signs. The possibility of identifying parking stalls with pavement markings in the Pay and Display area was also discussed.

As a result of this meeting, staff did amend and remove a number of redundant signs and agreed to review other sign locations and comment in future correspondence. Following our initial review, Councillor Palacio asked that this issue be addressed in a report to Etobicoke York Community Council.

Since the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) operates a transit service on St. Clair Avenue West, City Council approval of this report is required. TTC staff has been consulted on the amendments to the existing signage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Services recommends that City Council approve:

1. Maintaining the existing “No U-Turn” and “No Left Turn” signs on St. Clair Avenue between Lansdowne Avenue and Westmount Avenue.
2. A staff review of the existing “Left Turn Signal, U-Turns Permitted” signs posted on St. Clair Avenue West at the Earls court Avenue intersection to address concerns with conspicuity and message comprehension.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of June 23 and 24, 2008, approved the Road Alterations and Traffic Regulations for the St. Clair West Avenue West Transit Improvement Project, for the section between the Caledonia Road/Caledonia Park Road intersection and Vaughan Road (the section between Caledonia Road/Caledonia Park Road and Winona Drive, being in the Etobicoke York Community Council District). This includes the area between Lansdowne Avenue and Westmount Avenue (Corso Italia BIA).

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The approved St. Clair Avenue West Transit Improvement Environmental Assessment incorporates a Preferred Design Concept, the principal elements of which are as follows:

- two centre lanes reserved for exclusive use by streetcars and emergency vehicles protected by raised barrier curb.
- during peak periods, two general purpose traffic lanes in each direction, located on either side of the streetcar tracks, providing sufficient capacity to accommodate all current peak period traffic volumes on St. Clair Avenue West;
- during off-peak periods and weekends, one general purpose traffic lane and one parking lane in each direction providing sufficient capacity to accommodate all current off-peak and weekend traffic volumes;
- left-turn lanes at signalized intersections that permit left-turns and U-turns on their own exclusive signal phase (also referred to as “protected” phasing);
- on-street parking on both sides of the street during off-peak times on weekdays and at all times on weekends allowed in the majority of the curb lanes, and new off-street parking, resulting in a net increase in the parking supply along St. Clair Avenue West; and
- enhanced streetscape, urban design, streetcar shelters and platforms, public art and safety features in the overall design and implementation of the transit improvements project.

Also contained within the approved recommendations was a recommendation that “approval be granted in principle for the traffic by-laws required to implement this project....”

COMMENTS

In June 2008, City Council adopted proposed traffic regulations for the section of St. Clair Avenue West, between the Caledonia Road/Caledonia Park Road intersection and Winona Drive. Many of the regulatory signs, including turn prohibition and U-turn prohibition signs were installed on the section within the Corso Italia BIA in December 2009.

The Preferred Design Concept approved by City Council for the St. Clair Avenue West light rail transit (LRT) project includes two centre lanes reserved for exclusive use by streetcars and emergency vehicles protected by a raised, mountable, by emergency service vehicles, track bed. Since turning or through movements across the streetcar tracks is only possible at signalized intersections, where the track bed is flush with the road, it was necessary to prohibit left turn and through movements from all side streets, alleys and driveways that intersect St. Clair Avenue West but are not controlled by traffic control signals. Due to the LRTS continuous centre median, U-turns are prohibited in both directions on St. Clair Avenue West between all signalized intersections. This turn prohibitions are consistent throughout the St. Clair West Avenue West Transit Improvement Project.

As a result of a meeting between staff, Councillor Palacio and a representative of the Corso Italia BIA, the following requests were received:

- 1. Remove all “U-Turn and Left Turn” signs posted on both sides of St. Clair Avenue West (Photo 1 and Photo 2).**

The concern expressed to Transportation Services staff is that these signs, especially the “No U-Turns”, may be confusing to motorists. Although the signs are posted mid-block, between signalised intersections, and are intended to deter motorists from crossing over the LRT trackbed, some motorists may feel that the U-turns also apply at the next signalized intersection despite that the “U-turn Permitted” signs are posted at the signalized intersections where u-turns are allowed. Staff was questioned on the need for these mid-block “No U-turn” signs as the road is divided by a continuous raised concrete curb that separates the LRT right of way from the road. The Councillor and the BIA also had concern with apparent proliferation of signage that they perceive as unnecessary.

Transportation Services staff reviewed both the number and location of existing “No U-Turn and No Left Turn” signs. As both are regulatory signs described in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in the Highway Traffic Act and the Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM), signing standards must be maintained to achieve driver compliance and to limit the City’s liability.

City Legal confirms that without the “No U-Turns” and “No Left turn signs, motorists could turn across the streetcar right-of-way; consequently, the signs and by-laws are required to allow for police enforcement. This being the case, staff recommends that the turn prohibition signs remain and that the area be monitored for compliance. It should be noted that while the majority of the streetcar right-of-way contains continuous poured raised concrete curb, there are sections where the curb is depressed to allow for limited movements across the right-of-way. In addition, as the curb may not always be visible, especially during inclement weather, these signs are necessary to deter motorists from mounting the curb.

2. Replace minor street name signs with “Corso Italia and Street Name” between Westmount Avenue to just west of Lansdowne Avenue.

On this issue, discussions are in progress with Signs and Markings staff and the BIA.

3. Replace all “U-Turns Permitted Tab” signs and “Left Turn Signal” signs with one unified sign (Photo 3)

These signs were designed by the Environmental Assessment Team for the St. Clair Avenue West Transit Improvement Project. Nonetheless, to address the concerns about motorists’ confusion with where U-turns can be made, staff will be reviewing the appropriateness of these signs that exist at certain signalized intersections and responding in a memo to Councillor Palacio.

4. Install “Courtesy Stop Bar” pavement markings across St. Clair Avenue West, prior to intersections of the streets that are one-way southbound or northbound and have an existing “Do Not Block Intersection” sign (Photo 4).

Currently, "Courtesy Stop Bar" pavement markings and “Do Not Block Intersection” signs exist on St. Clair Avenue West, east of Harvie Avenue. Transportation Services will be installing a similar treatment on St. Clair Avenue West, east of St. Clair Gardens, when weather permits. These “Courtesy Stop Bars” are supplemented with a “Do Not Block Intersection” sign and encourage motorist to leave a gap for vehicles exiting from the side streets.

5. Individually mark “Pay & Display” parking stalls to maximize the number of on street stalls.

It is not the current practice of the Toronto Parking Authority to individually mark “Pay & Display” parking stalls. Marking each parking stall is predicated on typical design vehicle dimensions that are larger than the vehicle fleet. This reduces the number of on-street parking stalls available for use by the public.

6. Remove a number of the “No U-Turns,” “No Left Turns”, “Do Not Enter” and one-way arrow (southbound) signs posted on St. Clair Avenue West and Earls court Avenue.

Staff has arranged to remove two "No Left Turns," two "Do Not Enter" signs and two of the one-way arrows that are considered redundant at the intersection of St. Clair Avenue West/ Earls court Avenue. We cannot remove the "No U-Turns" signs as they are required under Book 5 of the Ontario Traffic Manual. In addition, the "No Right Turn" signs cannot be removed.

7. Remove the large (oversized) "Earls court Avenue" street name signs (Photo 5).

Oversized street name signs are, or will be posted at every signalized intersection in the City as per the oversized signing policy. This includes areas where BIA signs are posted. The signs at the intersection of St. Clair Avenue West/ Earls court Avenue are not recommended for removal as they are a way finding aid especially conspicuous to older drivers and in low light conditions.

8. Remove the existing "Pay & Display" sign and "No Stopping, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Mon.-Fri." sign on the south side of St. Clair Avenue West, fronting the existing Loading Zone opposite St. Clarens Avenue.

The "Pay & Display" sign and "No Stopping 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Mon.-Fri." signs have been removed as they were redundant.

Although many of the issues were addressed to the area Councillor in a previous memo, staff continues to recommend that the existing "No U-Turn" and "No-Left Turns" signs remain along St. Clair Avenue West. These signs are located in compliance with the

MUTCD, OTM and other applicable standards and are necessary to provide effective enforcement of the current bylaws.

Staff will examine the appropriateness of the existing “U-turn permitted” signs posted at certain signalized intersections to determine if the signing can be improved and respond back to the area Councillor.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachments 1 – 5 Photos
Attachment 6 Map