



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Roadway Alteration and Parking Amendments – Roncesvalles Avenue – City Council

Date:	June 4, 2010
To:	Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Director, Transportation Services Toronto East York District
Wards:	Ward 14, Parkdale-High Park
Reference Number:	Ts10097te.top.doc

SUMMARY

Transportation Services is requesting approval from Toronto and East York Community Council to narrow Roncesvalles Avenue at various locations and amend the parking regulations, in accordance with Item PW24.5, containing a staff report (April 20, 2009) entitled “Roncesvalles Avenue Streetscape Improvements – Class Environmental Assessment Study” from the General Manager, Transportation Services, that was adopted by City Council at its meeting held on May 25, 26 and 27, 2009.

These changes coupled with amendments to parking regulations on the west side of Roncesvalles Avenue, between The Queensway/Queen Street West and Dundas Street West are intended to provide improved access to public transportation, improved parking opportunities and enhance the public realm to promote and enrich the business community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the regulatory amendments listed in Appendix “A” and “B” attached to the report dated May 14, 2010 entitled, “Roadway Alteration and Parking Amendments – Roncesvalles Avenue”, from the Director, Transportation Services Toronto and East York District, that will:

- a) Extend the hours of on-street parking by rescinding the current “No Parking, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Monday to Friday” regulation on the west side of Roncesvalles Avenue, from The Queensway to Dundas Street West;
 - b) Prohibit stopping in front of the proposed TTC streetcar loading platforms, on the east and west sides of Roncesvalles Avenue, from The Queensway/Queen Street West to Dundas Street West; and
 - c) Extend the length of the commercial loading zones on Roncesvalles Avenue, to apply from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday.
2. City Council approve the narrowing of Roncesvalles Avenue as listed in Appendix “C”, by providing built-out TTC passenger loading platforms on either the east or the west side of the street at the following locations and generally as shown on Drawing Nos. 421G-0036, 421G-0037, 421G-0038, 421G-0039, 421G-0040, 421G-0042, 421G-0043, dated May 2010, attached to the report dated May 14, 2010 entitled, “Roadway Alteration and Parking Amendments – Roncesvalles Avenue”, from the Director, Transportation Services Toronto and East York District.
 3. City Council approve the narrowing Roncesvalles Avenue as listed in Appendix “D”, by widening the sidewalk on either the east or the west side to improve the pedestrian environment at the following locations and generally as shown on Drawing Nos. 421G-0036, 421G-0038, 421G-0039, 421G-0040, 421G-0041, 421G-0044, dated May 2010, attached to the report dated May 14, 2010 entitled, “Roadway Alteration and Parking Amendments – Roncesvalles Avenue”, from the Director, Transportation Services Toronto and East York District.

Financial Impact

The estimated cost of the roadway alterations outlined in this report is \$1,700,000.00. Funds for this project are available within the 2010 Capital Budget (Roncesvalles Avenue Road and Sidewalk Works – 10EY-08RD).

COMMENTS

Operational Background

Roncesvalles Avenue, between The Queensway/Queen Street West and Dundas Street West is a north-south minor arterial road, with a four lane cross-section. The street is about 1.8 kilometres in length. The daily two-way traffic volume is about 17,000 vehicles and the speed limit is 50 km/h. Four intersections along Roncesvalles Avenue are controlled by traffic signals. In addition, there are six pedestrian crossovers (PXO) located along the street. The “504-King Street” streetcar operates on a shared right-of-way with general traffic. The streetcar service carries about 58,000 passengers on a typical weekday and operates with a 3-minute headway during the peak periods. The traffic signals on Roncesvalles Avenue provide the transit priority feature, which extends the green signal indication to assist streetcars in clearing the signalized intersections.

Parking on Roncesvalles Avenue is controlled by parking machines. Parking is allowed at all times on the east side of the street. Parking on the west side it is prohibited from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Monday to Friday and allowed at all other times/days. There are a total of approximately 236 potential parking spaces on Roncesvalles Avenue, between The Queensway/Queen Street West and Dundas Street West.

Curb-side loading/unloading is facilitated along Roncesvalles Avenue within the pay-and-display parking areas, provided that space is available and within several locations designated as “Commercial Loading Zones” that operate between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday. Heavy trucks are prohibited from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. daily on Roncesvalles Avenue. The exemption for vehicles making a delivery or collection on the street applies.

Roncesvalles Avenue is currently being used by cyclists for local trips to/from businesses and residences in the area and is a preferred north-south connection between well travelled routes on Dundas Street West, The Queensway/Queen Street West and King Street West.

Overview – Roncesvalles Revitalization Project

A Technical Advisory Committee comprised of staff from Transportation Services, Technical Services, Toronto Water, Economic Development, Urban Forestry and the Toronto Transit Commission, in consultation with Councillor Gord Perks, was established to develop and evaluate alternative design concepts for Roncesvalles Avenue that would promote public transit, strengthen the Village Business District, and improve pedestrian infrastructure.

After an extensive evaluation of alternative solutions, which included consultation with the public and review agencies, the following design was accepted and recommended:

- The removal of one travel lane in each direction, to provide one 4.3 metre traffic lane and a 2.0 metre parking lay-by on the east and west sides of Roncesvalles Avenue;
- The provision of transit platforms as an extension of the sidewalk to allow level boarding of new TTC transit vehicles;
- The widening of the sidewalk/boulevard in certain areas to increase public space and reduce crossing distances; and
- The redesign of the sidewalk/boulevard at locations where there is currently a tiered sidewalk.

Transit Improvements

Improving and promoting surface transit service along Roncesvalles Avenue is recognised as a long-term sustainable transportation initiative. The Toronto Transit Commission in acknowledging the mobility needs of their passengers and their pending

replacement of conventional streetcars with low floor transit vehicles sought improvements to transit stops along this route. To achieve this goal a functional design was developed, which extended the sidewalk to the edge of the track, creating a transit platform that would provide direct level boarding. Unlike the current streetcar stops on Roncesvalles Avenue that require passengers to step off the curb/streetcar into a live traffic lane when getting on/off a streetcar, this proposed platform is an extension of the sidewalk. At no time does a person have to step onto the roadway when getting on/off a streetcar.

Cyclists' Safety

During the review process, the Pedestrian and Cycling Committee requested that bicycle lanes be considered as part of the design concept for Roncesvalles Avenue. This was considered in an alternative design but could only be accomplished by eliminating parking entirely on the west side of the street. The loss of parking was viewed by the business community as a severe detriment to attracting and sustaining both local and suburban shoppers/patrons. This concern is often stressed in Toronto's ethnic retail communities that attract patrons from suburban areas/other municipalities in the GTA.

In balancing the cycling and parking desires and to ensure the proposal provided an operationally safe environment for cyclists, a functional design was developed that provided a shared traffic lane having a width of 4.3 metres in each direction to facilitate cycling. However, safe passage for cyclists had to be accommodated at the track-edge passenger loading platforms. Therefore, the design of the passenger loading platform was modified to include a dedicated 2 metre wide cycling path over the platform. Roncesvalles Avenue will be the first practical application of this joint passenger loading platform/cycling path concept in Toronto. Similar concepts have been implemented in other municipalities in the United States such as Portland, OR with success. Cyclists mounting a loading platform when a streetcar is stopped at the platform and passengers are in the process of getting on/off the streetcar will be advised (by signage) to stop if necessary and yield the right-of-way to passengers/pedestrians.

Pedestrian Realm Improvements

Another goal of the proposal that was supported by local businesses and residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods was expanding the pedestrian infrastructure/public realm to encourage and promote walking within the community. The Roncesvalles community has many residents who prefer to walk or cycle when shopping in the area. It is suggested that by enhancing the streetscape along Roncesvalles Avenue, this will attract more visitors and local residents to the area and firmly establish Roncesvalles Avenue as a vibrant business community where people want to shop and socialize.

The design proposes widening boulevards in select areas, providing gateways that will promote the street as a local amenity and a regional destination, realign corners/intersections to provide greater safety for pedestrians by reducing their exposure to vehicular traffic, greening the area with new treed/landscaped areas, and provide new opportunities for street furniture.

On-Street Parking

On-street parking is stressed by local business communities along arterial roadways as an integral component in maintaining a successful and vibrant business venture. A common view held by the business community on Roncesvalles Avenue was that the current parking supply in the area was insufficient to accommodate the needs of their clients.

Transportation Service undertook parking surveys on a block-by-block basis at different times of day to assess the demand for parking on Roncesvalles Avenue. The peak demand for parking was 192 vehicles, about 80 per cent of capacity. The proposed functional design includes a 2-metre wide lay-by on both sides of Roncesvalles Avenue. An estimated 225 on-street parking spaces will be retained under the scope of the project, which will meet the peak parking demands while achieving the goals of an improved public realm and improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists, transit passengers.

Expected impacts

The streetscape proposal along Roncesvalles Avenue will require an increase in the level of winter maintenance provided, particularly where the passenger loading platforms are located. Transportation Services acknowledges this and will ensure winter maintenance occurs within the service guidelines.

CONCLUSION

The road modifications planned as part of the reconstruction project for Roncesvalles Avenue, between The Queensway/Queen Street West and Dundas Street West through the construction of new streetcar loading platforms, the provision of gateway features, landscape improvements, wider sidewalks, and other public realm improvements are intended to enhance the growth and vitality of this community and potentially serve as a model for future improvements to other mixed residential and business communities in the central area of Toronto serviced by streetcar lines.

CONTACT

Stephen C. Brown, Traffic Engineer/Planner
Toronto and East York District, West Area
Transportation Services
Phone: 416-392-5202
Fax: 416-392-1920
E-mail: sbrown1@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Peter Noehammer, P.Eng
Director Transportation Services, Toronto East York District

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- (1) Appendix "A", Regulations to be Rescinded on Roncesvalles Avenue, between The Queensway/Queen Street West and Dundas Street West
- (2) Appendix "B", Regulations to be Implemented on Roncesvalles Avenue, between The Queensway/Queen Street West and Dundas Street West
- (3) Appendix "C", Narrowing Roncesvalles Avenue, by providing built-out TTC passenger platforms
- (4) Appendix "D", Narrowing Roncesvalles Avenue, by widening the sidewalk
- (5) Drawing No. 421G-0036, dated May 2010
- (6) Drawing No. 421G-0037, dated May 2010
- (7) Drawing No. 421G-0038, dated May 2010
- (8) Drawing No. 421G-0039, dated May 2010
- (9) Drawing No. 421G-0040, dated May 2010
- (10) Drawing No. 421G-0041, dated May 2010
- (11) Drawing No. 421G-0042, dated May 2010
- (12) Drawing No. 421G-0043, dated May 2010
- (13) Drawing No. 421G-0044, dated May 2010

P:\2010\Cluster B\TRA\Toronto and East York District\TOP\ts10097te.top.doc - acb