



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects – Gould Street, Victoria Street, Willcocks Street and Devonshire Place – Community Council

Date:	August 8, 2010
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Transportation Services Toronto and East York District Director, Public Realm Section
Wards:	Trinity-Spadina, Ward 20 and Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 27
Reference Number:	p:\2010\ClusterB\tra\pr\te10002pr

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter for which the Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision.

At its meeting on September 15, 2009, Toronto and East York Community Council directed Transportation Services to consult with Ryerson University and University of Toronto on the feasibility of closing streets to vehicular traffic to implement pedestrian zone pilot projects and to report back on the results of the pilot projects in the third quarter of 2010. For a variety of reasons including proposed water main and on-campus construction projects, the pedestrian zone pilot projects have been delayed.

This report is seeking authority from Toronto and East York Community Council to close portions of Gould Street, Victoria Street, Willcocks Street and Devonshire Place to vehicular traffic, with the exception of emergency vehicles, for approximately 12 months to accommodate the Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects at Ryerson University and at the University of Toronto and to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council on the effectiveness of the pilot projects by the fourth quarter of 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Services recommends that Toronto and East York Community Council:

1. Close Gould Street to vehicular traffic in both directions between O’Keefe Lane and Bond Street from August 23, 2010 to September 30, 2011;
2. Close Victoria Street to vehicular traffic in both directions between Gould Street and a point approximately 64 metres south of Gould Street from August 23, 2010 to September 30, 2011;
3. Close Willcocks Street to vehicular traffic in both directions between Huron Street and St. George Street from August 23, 2010 to September 30, 2011;
4. Close Devonshire Place to vehicular traffic in both directions between Hoskin Avenue and a point approximately 125 metres north of Hoskin Avenue from August 23, 2010 to September 30, 2011;
5. Contingent upon the approval of Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4, approve the amendments to the traffic and parking regulations outlined in Appendix A to the report dated August 8, 2010 from the Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District and the Director, Public Realm Section; and
6. Request the General Manager of Transportation Services to evaluate the pilot pedestrian zones and report back to the Toronto and East York Community Council on the results in the fourth quarter of 2011.

Financial Impact

All costs associated with the installation of the Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects are included within the Transportation Services Division’s Capital Budget in Account CTP 709-09. Maintenance costs associated with the pilot project(s) will be absorbed by the universities.

The closure of Willcocks Street and Devonshire Place will result in the loss of “Pay and Display” parking spots for the duration of the University of Toronto pilot project. As the pilot project is a City Council mandated initiative, the University of Toronto will not have to pay for the lost revenue from these parking spaces to the Toronto Parking Authority. The closure of Gould Street and Victoria Street has no impact on parking revenue.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council adopted the Toronto Walking Strategy at the May 25, 26, and 27, 2009 meeting. At this meeting, City Council directed that the General Manager, Transportation Services, to work with Ryerson University and the University of Toronto to design and implement two pedestrian street projects by 2010.

At its meeting on September 15, 2009, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted by way of a motion Item TE27.59 and directed that, “The Director of Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, consult with Ryerson University and the local Ward Councillor to review the feasibility of closing all or part of Gould Street between Yonge Street and Church Streets to vehicular traffic in order to implement a pedestrian zone pilot project, and report back on the results of the pilot project in the third quarter of 2010.”

Toronto and East York Community Council also adopted Item TE27.166 on September 15, 2009 and directed “Transportation Services staff to consult with the University of Toronto, area residents and the local ward Councillor to review the feasibility of closing sections of Wilcox, Devonshire Place and St. George Streets to vehicular traffic in order to implement a pedestrian zone pilot project and report back on the results of the pilot project in the third quarter of 2010.”

ISSUE BACKGROUND:

Staff has consulted closely with representatives from Ryerson University and the University of Toronto on the proposed pedestrian zone pilot projects. Due to construction projects at both schools, as well as a Victoria Street water main project which was originally proposed to proceed in late spring/early summer on the Ryerson campus, it was mutually agreed that the pilot projects should be deferred until Frosh Week (late August/early September) in 2010 with a recommendation that they remain in place for one year in order to properly assess the impacts of the pilot. This report seeks approval to implement the projects as outlined below and to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council on the effectiveness of the projects in the fourth quarter of 2011.

COMMENTS

Ryerson Pedestrian Zone – Road Closures

To facilitate the creation of the Pedestrian Zone Pilot Project at Ryerson University, the following streets will be closed:

- Gould Street, both directions from O’Keefe Lane to Bond Street; and
- Victoria Street, both directions, from Gould Street to a point approximately 64 metres south (immediately north of the Toronto Life Square parking garage entrance).

These streets will be closed to vehicular traffic with the exception of emergency vehicles. The pedestrian zone will maintain a fire route through the closure. The fire route travel path is shown on Attachment 1.

Gould Street, between O’Keefe Lane and Bond Street, has an average segment width of 8.53 metres and operates two-way with one traffic lane in each direction. Parking is prohibited at all times on both sides of Gould Street, from Yonge Street to Bond Street. In addition, stopping is prohibited at all times on both sides from Bond Street to a point 55.1 metres west.

Victoria Street, between Gould Street and a point approximately 64 metres south has an average segment width of 8.53 metres and operates two-way with one traffic lane in each direction. Parking is prohibited at all times on the east side between Dundas Street East and Gould Street. Stopping is prohibited at all times on the west side between Dundas Street East and Gould Street.

The “No Parking Anytime” regulations on both sides of Gould Street, from Yonge Street to O’Keefe Lane and on the east side of Victoria Street, from Dundas Street East to a point 64 metres south of Gould Street, will be changed to a more stringent “No Stopping Anytime” regulation to deter parking, loading/unloading activity, and provide an unobstructed turn-around area for vehicles approaching the road closures.

The partial collapse of the building at 335 Gould Street has resulted in Gould Street from Yonge Street to O’Keefe Lane being closed to vehicular traffic in both directions. The sidewalk on the north side of Gould Street remains open to pedestrians. O’Keefe Lane operates one-way northbound from Gould Street to Gerrard Street East. The only way for delivery vehicles to access business properties abutting O’Keefe Lane at this time is by travelling northbound on Victoria Street from Dundas Street West to Gould Street, then westbound on Gould Street to O’Keefe Lane. Implementing the pedestrian zone pilot project will eliminate this access route. As a result, O’Keefe Lane must temporarily operate two-way, from Gerrard Street East to Gould Street until the section of Gould Street, from Yonge Street to O’Keefe Lane is reopened to vehicular traffic to allow vehicles to enter and exit the O’Keefe at Gerrard Street East. A “No Exit” sign will be posted at Gerrard Street East to advise motorists of the closure at Gould Street and the one-way signage will be temporarily covered.

There are no TTC routes on the portions of the streets to be closed.

University of Toronto Pedestrian Zone – Road Closures

To facilitate the creation of the University of Toronto Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects, the following streets need to be closed:

- Willcocks Street, both directions, from Huron Street to St. George Street; and
- Devonshire Place, both directions, from Hoskin Avenue to a point approximately 125 metres north.

These streets will be closed to vehicular traffic with the exception of emergency vehicles. The pedestrian zones will maintain a fire route through the closure. The fire route travel path for each street is shown on Attachments 2 and 3.

Willcocks Street, between St. George Street and Huron Street, has an average segment width of 7.38 metres and operates two-way with one traffic lane in each direction.

Devonshire Place, between Hoskin Avenue and a point approximately 125 metres north of Hoskin Avenue, has an average segment width of 9.18 metres and operates two-way with one traffic lane in each direction.

Both Willcocks Street and Devonshire Place have “Pay and Display” parking zones that will be temporarily eliminated to accommodate the University of Toronto pedestrian zone pilot projects. As the pilot project is a City Council mandated initiative, the University of Toronto will not be responsible for paying for the lost revenue from these parking spaces to the Toronto Parking Authority.

There are no TTC routes on the portions of the streets to be closed.

Conclusion

The implementation of Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects in locations with significant pedestrian activity, such as the busy downtown campuses of Ryerson University and the University of Toronto, is an important element identified in the City’s Walking Strategy. In partnership with the two universities, the pilot projects will create streets that are both destinations as well as travel routes. Maintenance of the pilot pedestrian zones will be the responsibility of the universities and an evaluation report will be prepared for Council’s consideration.

Staff from Corporate Finance – Insurance and Risk Management Section, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Services, Technical Services, Toronto Building, and Toronto Parking Authority has been consulted in the development of the pedestrian zones pilot projects. Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Staff from Ryerson University and the University of Toronto, as well as representatives from Councillor Rae and Councillor Vaughan's offices, the Downtown Yonge BIA and the University of Toronto Liaison Committee has also been consulted in the development of the pedestrian zones pilot project proposals.

CONTACT

Fiona Chapman
Manager, Pedestrian Projects
Public Realm Section
Transportation Services
Tel: 416-392-0828
Fax: 416-392-8805
E-mail: fchapma@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Peter Noehammer
Director, Transportation Services
Toronto and East York District

Elyse Parker
Director, Public Realm Section
Transportation Services

FC/jl

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Amendments to Traffic and Parking Regulations
Attachment 1 - Gould/Victoria Street – Pedestrian Pilot Project
Attachment 2 - Willcocks Street – Pedestrian Pilot Project
Attachment 3 - Devonshire Place – Pedestrian Pilot Project