



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Installation of Traffic Control Signals – Gerrard Street East/St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street

Date:	March 2, 2012
To:	City Council
From:	Acting General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	Toronto-Danforth, Ward 30
Reference Number:	Cc2012072te.top.docx

SUMMARY

This report addresses a request from Toronto and East York Community Council at its February 14, 2012 meeting that the Director of Transportation Services report directly to City Council for its March 5, 2012 meeting on issues surrounding the redesign of the Gerrard Street East/St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street intersection in connection with the signalization of the intersection.

Bridgepoint Hospital redevelopment will result in significant changes to the look and feel of Gerrard Street East, between the Don Valley and Broadview Avenue. The replacement of the pedestrian crossover with traffic control signals, closure of Don Jail Roadway, and new streetscaping and a park on the north side of the street should improve the pedestrian environment and encourage motorists to proceed through the area at slower speeds. Given these changes, the speed limit can be maintained at 40 km/hour on Gerrard Street East.

After consultation with Councillor Fletcher and staff of Transportation Services, Traffic Operations, Public Realm and Cycling Infrastructure Management, Community Planning, Urban Design, and Technical Services, it has been concluded that the proposed design of the intersection of Gerrard Street East and St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists adequately, given the constraints of the bridge structure and offset nature of the north and south roadways. Transportation Services staff will continue to work with Councillor Fletcher to ensure that transit stops and shelters are located appropriately and that all unnecessary signs are removed from Gerrard Street East.

Financial Impact

This report has no financial implications.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto and East York Community Council at its February 14, 2012 meeting in considering Item TE13.83, entitled "Installation of Traffic Control Signals – Gerrard Street East/St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street", requested the Director of Transportation Services Toronto and East York District, to report directly to the March 5, 2012 meeting of City Council on the associated issues from Item TE8.64, entitled "Speed Limit Increase – Gerrard Street East, Between River Street and Broadview Avenue" in regard to the proposed traffic control signals at Gerrard Street East/St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street, as well as the gateway aspect of these new signals on the east side of the Gerrard Street bridge; and on the design for the new intersection created by the new signals that maximizes pedestrian and cycling safety.

Toronto and East York Community Council at its June 22, 2011 meeting in considering Item TE8.64 requested the following:

1. The Acting Director of Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District to:
 - (a) review the recommendation in the report dated May 26, 2011 from the Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, in light of the signalized intersection that is due to be installed at Gerrard Street and Blackburn in 2011 and the intersection safety study for Broadview Avenue and Gerrard Street; and
 - (b) meet with Toronto Police Service 54 and 55 Divisions to establish if there are frequent speeding violations on the Gerrard Street bridge, what steps the Toronto Police Service has taken to reduce speeding, and what steps remain to be taken to slow traffic down, and submit a report to the Toronto and East York Community Council.
2. Staff of Urban Design and Transportation Services to work with the Ward Councillors and interested members of the public on road design changes for traffic calming which would also create a gateway to Regent Park/Cabbagetown and East China Town/Bridgepoint.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Transportation Services had recommended that the 40km/h maximum speed limit on Gerrard Street East between River Street and Broadview Avenue be raised to 50 km/h. An assessment of the current vehicle operating speeds, collision history, and streetscape characteristics, along that section of Gerrard Street East had indicated that consideration could be given to raising the maximum speed limit. The recommendation was not approved and the maximum speed limit remains at 40 km/h.

As directed by Toronto and East York Community Council, Transportation Services has reviewed the recommendation to increase the maximum 40 km/h speed limit in light of the proposed traffic signal installation at Gerrard Street East/St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street, and also the significant changes that will take place along the north side of Gerrard Street East with the redevelopment of Bridgepoint Hospital and the surrounding lands. We have met with Councillor Fletcher to ensure that her concerns have been addressed. We have also reviewed the proposed design of the intersection in consultation with staff of Public Realm and Cycling Infrastructure Management within Transportation Services, Community Planning, Urban Design, and Technical Services.

COMMENTS

Speed Limit

The review found that the proposed signal installation could reduce overall vehicle operating speeds through the intersection, primarily as a result of approaching motorists having to slow down and stop for a red signal. Retaining the existing 40 km/h maximum speed limit would be prudent in light of the new signal installation and the creation of a new park along the north side of the street.

Transportation Services contacted a representative from Toronto Police Service 55 Division to discuss speed limit enforcement issues on the Gerrard Street East bridge. Toronto Police conduct radar enforcement of the 40 km/h speed limit approximately twice a week, primarily for eastbound traffic. Approximately 15 speeding violation tickets are issued weekly and typically the violations are for travelling 10-15 km/h over the speed limit. Violations for travelling more than 15 km/h over the speed limit are less frequent.

Intersection of Gerrard Street East/St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street

Transportation Services staff has met with Ward 30 Councillor Paula Fletcher, the contractor for Bridgepoint Health (PCL), along with staff from Community Planning, Urban Design, and Cycling Infrastructure, to discuss the Councillor's concerns with the design of the Gerrard Street East/St. Matthews Road/Blackburn Street intersection as well as other issues relating to safety and streetscaping along the Gerrard Street East corridor fronting the Bridgepoint Health project.

The offset nature of the existing intersection coupled with the physical constraints of the intersection such as the proximity to the bridge and ravine, along with private property issues, limit the geometric improvements that can be made to the redesign of the intersection. This intersection will be the sole access for large tractor-trailers to access the new hospital building. The alignment of the curb turning radii proposed for the northeast and northwest corners of the intersection are required to accommodate the size of trucks that will be serving the new hospital building.

The pedestrian crosswalks within the intersection will be enhanced with "zebra stripe" pavement markings and they will be aligned to minimize the pedestrian crossing distances on all approaches.

The Bridgepoint Health redevelopment project provides for the creation of a multi-use recreational path that will extend along the west side of St. Matthews Road, north of Gerrard Street East. Transportation Services, Cycling Infrastructure Management staff have reviewed the connection of this multi-use path to Gerrard Street East and the bike lanes that currently cross the bridge on Gerrard Street East, west of this intersection. They are satisfied that cyclists are being accommodated.

Gerrard Street East corridor between bridge and Broadview Avenue

Currently transit stops for the Gerrard streetcar are located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Gerrard Street East and Blackburn Street (eastbound) and on the north side, approximately 30 metres east of the intersection (westbound). Transportation Services will further consult with Toronto Transit Commission and Councillor Fletcher on the future location of this stop and transit shelter to ensure that it is safe, serves hospital visitors appropriately, and fits into the new streetscape on the north side of Gerrard Street East.

Transportation Services staff will review all existing signage on Gerrard Street East between the new intersection and Broadview Avenue with a view to removing any unnecessary signs.

CONTACT

Jacqueline White, P.Eng.
Acting Director, Transportation Services
Toronto and East York District

SIGNATURE

Andrew Koropeski, P.Eng.
Acting General Manager
Transportation Services

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