



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### York / Bay / Yonge Gardiner Interchange Reconfiguration Environmental Assessment Study – Proposed North-South Street East of York Street

<b>Date:</b>	May 28, 2012
<b>To:</b>	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
<b>From:</b>	Acting General Manager, Transportation Services
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 28 (Toronto Centre-Rosedale)
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2012\ClusterB\TRA\TIM\pw12011tim

#### SUMMARY

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City Council, at its meeting of August 25, 26 and 27, 2010, in considering the report titled "Gardiner Expressway York/Bay/Yonge Interchange Reconfiguration - Municipal Class Environmental Assessment" (PW25.12) approved the reconfiguration of the York/Bay/Yonge off-ramps from the eastbound Gardiner Expressway. In approving these modifications, City Council also directed staff to undertake further public consultation with respect to the proposed north-south street between Harbour Street and Queens Quay West, east of York Street, that had been identified in the report, and that the results be presented to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee.

Staff and the City's consultant developed and assessed several alternative configurations of this proposed street, and consulted with affected agencies, stakeholders, local interest groups, and the public. While such a street could provide some benefit in terms of traffic circulation, site access, and short-term parking opportunities, residents of the immediate area are generally opposed to the use of the subject land for anything other than public park space.

In consideration of the public response, it is recommended that the design, approval and implementation of this facility not be pursued further at this time. It is noted that this particular element is ancillary to the ramp reconfiguration in any event and has negligible impact on the overall plan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Acting General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:**

1. City Council authorize and direct the appropriate City officials to amend the York/ Bay/Yonge Interchange Reconfiguration Environmental Assessment Study to exclude the proposed north-south street between Queens Quay West and Harbour Street, east of York Street.

### Implementation Points

The planning and consultation process for the north-south street will be documented in a technical memorandum and appended to the York/Bay/Yonge Interchange Reconfiguration Environmental Study Report. The new street will not be included in the recommended plan for the York/Bay/Yonge Interchange EA study.

### Financial Impact

The recommendations contained herein have no financial impact to the City beyond those identified in the Financial Impact section contained in the previous report on this Environmental Assessment, which was approved by City Council.

## DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of August 25, 26 and 27, 2010, in considering the report titled "Gardiner Expressway York/Bay/Yonge Interchange Reconfiguration - Municipal Class Environmental Assessment" (PW25.12) approved the reconfiguration of the York/Bay/Yonge off-ramps from the eastbound Gardiner Expressway. In approving these modifications, City Council also directed staff to undertake further public consultation with respect to the proposed north-south street between Harbour Street and Queens Quay West, east of York Street, that had been identified in the report (see Figure 1: Location Plan) and that the results be presented to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

The idea of a new north-south street between Queens Quay and Harbour Street east of York Street was first identified in 2006, in the winning submission (by West8 and DTH) to Waterfront Toronto's *Central Waterfront Design Competition*. The north-south street was subsequently investigated as part of Waterfront Toronto's Queens Quay Environmental Assessment study as a potential traffic mitigation measure for changes proposed to other nearby intersections.

In 2008, the City initiated a Class Environmental Assessment Study to examine potential modifications to the York/Bay/Yonge eastbound off-ramps from the Gardiner Expressway. In the meantime, the north-south street was shown in the Queens Quay Environmental Assessment final report and recommended plan (December 2009) but was

not part of that study's scope; the Queens Quay report recommended that because the new street was predicated on the removal of the York Street loop ramp, it should be included in the York/Bay/Yonge Interchange EA.

Although the north-south street was shown at the York/Bay/Yonge study workshop in February 2009 it was not otherwise addressed in the first part of the EA study. It was, however, included in the York/Bay/Yonge Interchange study staff report recommendations when the study was submitted to Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on August 18, 2010.

## **COMMENTS**

A north-south street connecting Queens Quay West and Harbour Street, east of York Street, could potentially provide improved opportunities for traffic circulation, access and capacity; short-term on-street parking or passenger pick up/drop off opportunities; and animate the easterly edge of the park to be located immediately to the west on the site of the York Street loop ramp.

During the course of the study, six scenarios related to the north-south link concept were advanced. These ranged from the "do nothing" (i.e. no street, use as parkland) to various one and two-way configurations with and without parking.

### **Alternatives**

Each option was analyzed with respect to its effects on:

- Active Transportation Access (pedestrians and cyclists)
- Traffic Operations
- Parking
- Available Park Land
- Public Realm
- Construction Cost
- Adjacent Development

Of the new street options, a two-way link emerged as the alternative preferred over a one-way road, as there would be virtually no difference in road width (and hence impact on open space) but it would be superior in terms of access, operational flexibility, and traffic impact.

The comparison then became one of "new street" vs. "no street". A street would contribute to reinstating a fine street and block pattern along the waterfront, provide potential on street parking, and encourage the inclusion of a permeable and active facade for the adjacent development, among other textures.

On the other hand, a road alternative would occupy between 11% (Alt. 4) and 17% (Alt. 6) of the open space block. (The current loop ramp occupies approximately 23% of the block). The "no street" alternative clearly provides a different approach to the use of the space:

- Larger park, more design flexibility.
- With a potential future stormwater facility there would be more remaining area to establish large canopy trees.
- North-south pedestrian movements at the east end of the park could be accommodated by a path.
- Does not preclude enhancements to the adjacent development at grade.

### **Consultation**

Over the period from December 2010 to April 2011, staff met and/or corresponded with:

- Queens Quay Stakeholder Group
- Local Councillors
- Waterfront Toronto Bus Management Study team
- YQNA / Condominium Association representatives
- Waterfront Toronto
- Oxford Properties (Water Park Place / 85 Harbour Street development site)
- Affected City of Toronto Divisions

Staff also received input from the Queens Quay Business Improvement Association.

A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held on April 4, 2011. The background and analysis of the alternatives for a new street were presented, but no technically preferred alternative was identified.

The public were notified of the April 4 PIC by:

- 'Premium' admail to all addresses within the study area bounded by Bathurst Street to the west, King Street to the north, Jarvis and Lower Jarvis Streets to the east, and Lake Ontario to the south (19,336 flyers were delivered by Canada Post on March 18, 2011).
- Advertisement published in NOW magazine on March 24, 2011.
- Electronic mail and direct mail to all stakeholders who had previously registered on the project contact list.
- Online via the project website at [http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/yby\\_interchange](http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/yby_interchange).
- Meeting notices posted in most of the residential towers in the vicinity of the site.

Over one hundred members of the public signed in at the PIC. This attendance was greater than either of the first two PICs for the broader project, indicating the heightened

level of interest in this particular issue and the effective notification of the meeting. Close to 70 written comments were submitted.

The vast majority of the PIC attendees were local residents. Little input was garnered from existing or potential non-resident users of the street. The strong sentiment of the public was in favour of Alternative 1 (no new street). There was recognition by some (including the BIA) of the potential benefits of a new street but overall there was little support for the proposition that the new street offered more to the community than the equivalent amount of park space on that site.

## **Conclusions**

Staff completed the public consultation process for the proposed north-south street east of York Street. While there are some modest potential benefits associated with the new street concept, there is no compelling or overwhelming rationale for the street. The local transportation system can function adequately without the street. Meanwhile, public sentiment is strongly in favour of dedicating the subject land to public park use rather than to a new street.

Based on the input received as a result of the extensive public consultation process, there appears to be little merit in pursuing the new street as part of the York/Bay/Yonge Interchange Reconfiguration EA study.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Figure 1 – Location Plan

Figure 1: Location Plan



*Base photo courtesy of Google Maps*