



## **Royal York Road Reconstruction and Rehabilitation From Mimico Creek to Ashley Road**

### ***Public Meeting***

**February 16, 2005  
Etobicoke Collegiate Institute, Cafeteria  
86 Montgomery Road  
6:45 – 10:00 p.m.**

#### ***1.0 Welcoming Remarks and Overview***

**David Nagler** (Public Consultation Unit) opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. He introduced **Mr. Peter Milczyn** (Councillor for Ward 5), **Tom Ellerbusch** (Manager of Design and Construction), **Eric Leon** (Senior Project Engineer), **Dan Egan** (Manager of Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure), **Phillip Van Wassenaer** (Urban Forest Innovations), and **Gary Stevenson** (Regional Manager, UMA Engineering Ltd.).

**Tom Ellerbusch** noted that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain feedback and input on the seven road cross-sections that are being considered. He assured residents that the engineering team would review all comments that are received.

**Councillor Peter Milczyn** added that the design options being considered are all two lanes wide but vary in terms of width. He stated that no decisions on the final road design have been made yet, however, he will support the narrowest road that is safely possible so as to protect the greatest number of trees. On March 29 there will be another Public Meeting so that staff can present the recommended design option. The Etobicoke Community Council meets the following day and members of the public, should they so desire, may make deputations to the Council regarding the recommended design option.

**Eric Leon** provided an overview of the need for the project and provided background information. He noted that Royal York Road is an arterial road that services 20,000 to 25,000 vehicles per day. He explained that the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Royal York Road from Mimico Creek to Ashley Road represents phases 4, 5, and 6 of the project. He reviewed the scope of work and timing for each phase, as well as, the underground construction, storm water management and other design considerations that will be taken into account during the project. In addition, he summarized the potential impacts to services and residents' property during construction. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the presentation handouts.

## 2.0 Presentations

**Dan Eagan** provided a brief history of bicycle lanes on Royal York Road and community comments regarding bicycle lanes. He noted that although City Council has adopted the Toronto Bike Plan technical feasibility studies and public consultation still occurs before bike lanes are put in place. The Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI) is used to qualitatively measure cyclists' perceptions of comfort for different levels of service (LOS). The factor with the largest effect on the BCI is the presence/absence of a bicycle lane. To obtain the desired BCI of C on Royal York Road, a 1.5 m bike lane and a 3.3 m travel zone is needed, resulting in a 4.8 m wide road. Please see Appendix B for a copy of the presentation handouts.

**Phillip Van Wassenaer** presented a summary of tree inventory that was conducted on Royal York Road. The inventory examined the trunk integrity, crown structure, crown vigour, and diameter at breast height (DBH) of each tree. He explained what is meant by "weak trees", and the reasons for tree removal. Of the 277 trees inventoried, 9 were recommended for removal, irregardless of construction, and 12 trees are particularly weak or stressed and may not survive construction activities. These trees should not be retained if they are in conflict with proposed construction activities.. New trees must be planted to replace any tree that is removed. In the next few weeks, root excavations will be undertaken to explore the extent of some root systems of vulnerable trees. When the final design is available, tree impacts will be assessed and recommendations will be made to minimize the damage to as many trees as possible. However, no matter what design is chosen, or which construction techniques are employed, some impacts to trees are inevitable and unavoidable due to the location of some trees. Please see Appendix C for a copy of the presentation handouts.

**Gary Stevenson** explained that UMA Engineering Ltd. has been retained by the City to complete the detailed design for the project. He summarized the list of issues that were considered in the development of the seven different cross-section alternatives. Six of the alternatives include a curb and gutter, and one includes ditches.

- Type A Section has an 8.5 m pavement width with curb and gutter, 1.5 m wide sidewalks on both sides, but no bike lanes.
- Type B Section has a 9.4 m pavement width with curb and gutter, 1.5 m wide sidewalks on both sides, but no bike lanes.
- Type C Section has a 9.6 m pavement width that includes 1.5 m wide bike lanes on each side, curbs and gutters, and 1.5 m wide sidewalks on both sides.
- Type D Section has a 10.2 m pavement width that includes 1.8 m wide bike lanes on each side, curbs and gutters, and 1.5 m wide sidewalks on both sides.
- Type E Section 10.6 m pavement width with curb and gutter, 1.5 m wide sidewalks on both sides, but no designated bike lanes.
- Type F Section has a 12.3 m pavement width with curb and gutter, and 1.5 m wide sidewalks, but no bike lanes.
- Type G Section has an 8.5 m pavement width plus a 1.0 paved shoulder area on each side, 1.5 m wide sidewalks on both sides, but no bike lanes.

A Cross Section Evaluation Matrix was used to evaluate the different alternatives. The evaluation criteria included: traffic safety, cyclist safety, pedestrian safety, preservation of existing trees, traffic operations, emergency vehicle access, transit operations, adjacent property impact. According to the matrix used, the highest rated cross-section alternative was Type C. Please see Appendix D for a copy of the presentation handouts.

### 3.0 Comments, Concerns and Questions

| Right Hand Passing   | Response   |
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| <p>A Kingsway Ratepayers Board member noted that the current driving width of Royal York Road is 7.5 m. Alternative C is 9.6 m wide and is therefore not the same width as the current cross-section as claimed in the presentation, but rather wider. She also noted that the safety report stated that speeding and cars passing on the right are both issues of concern. A narrow road will calm traffic and prevent passing on the right. She commented that 2500 residents have signed a petition in support of alternative A. She added that neighbourhood preference should have been listed as a criterion in the evaluation matrix.</p> | <p><b>Gary Stevenson</b> replied that with the paved shoulders on either side of the road, the current width of Royal York Road is 9.6 meters in total. With a wider road vehicles will be farther away from the pedestrians thereby improving pedestrian safety. Both options B and C include a bike lane which essentially reduces the width of the driving lanes and thereby reduces vehicle speed. The presence of a curb and gutter will prevent right side passing. Neighbourhood preference is not a technical criteria so it was not be included in the evaluation matrix.</p> <p><b>Peter Milczyn</b> commented that the purpose of the meeting is to obtain input and find out what the neighbourhood preference is.</p> |
| <p>A resident on Royal York Road south of Bloor, and former police officer, felt that right hand passes would not happen with option C because the road would not be sufficiently wide enough.</p>   | <p>Comment noted.</p>  |

| Emergency Vehicles   | Response  |
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| <p>A resident on Royal York Road, who is also a fire fighter, suggested that the City needs to educate people regarding what to do when an emergency vehicle comes by. The road width is not the problem, 28 feet is more than enough if people pull over.</p> | <p>Comment noted.</p>   |
| <p>A resident asked if the fire department has told the City that 28 feet is too narrow for a road. He felt that there is a slim possibility that an emergency vehicle would need to pass between two parked cars.</p>   | <p><b>Gary Stevenson</b> replied that UMA has asked the fire department what they would like to see in terms of clearance. They have not said that 28 feet is too narrow, but we need to build in flexibility for real life situations when people don't pull over.</p> |

| <b>Bike Lane Issues and Concerns</b>   | <b>Response</b>   |
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| A resident on Princeton Road asked what the BCI on Prince Edward Drive is.   | <b>Dan Egan</b> replied that Prince Edward Drive has a BCI of D because it is very wide. The current BCI on Royal York Road is not better.  |
| A resident on Royal York Road noted that there are minor and major arterial road designations. He noted that according to the City of Toronto Bike Plan (pages 4 to 6) major arterial roads can be widened to accommodate bikes, however on minor arterial roads bike lanes are to be put in within the existing road width. | <b>Dan Egan</b> replied that the City does not generally just go out and widen lanes. However, when there is reconstruction project taking place the potential for widening is examined. The policy in the Toronto Bike Plan does not preclude this.    |
| Royal York is a commuter bike route. There are bike lanes at the north and the south, but they need to be connected. 1.5 m is a standard bike lane width.  | Comment noted.  |
| A resident who is a cyclist stated his preference for option C.  | Comment noted.  |
| A resident complained that the City never cleans up bike lanes.  | Comment noted.  |
| A resident on Royal York Road suggested putting a curb at the edge of the driving lanes and making the bike lanes on the other side of the curbs. A white line means nothing – people will just drive over it. Curbs will protect cyclists, prevent drivers from passing on the right, and will slow traffic down.           | <b>Dan Egan</b> replied that the problem with using a curb to create a separate bike lane is that driveways still need access.<br><b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> noted that curbs would also pose a maintenance problem in terms of street cleaning and plowing. |
| Mary Campbell, President of the Kingsway Ratepayers Association, who lives on Meadowvale asked why the 28 foot wide road option is getting such a bad rap from cyclists when they City’s cycling website says that a 28 foot wide street is fine for biking on.  | <b>Dan Egan</b> replied that the City’s website suggests 4 to 4.3 feet is sufficient for a bike lane. There are a lot of places where this width is not bike friendly - it depends on traffic speed and traffic volume.                                 |
| A resident on La Rose Avenue commented that cyclists are not opposed to a 28 foot wide road. He noted that he was disheartened by the Councillor’s response that he would choose trees over cyclists.  | <b>Councillor Peter Milczyn</b> clarified that he would choose narrower bike lanes in an effort to protect trees.   |

| Pedestrian Safety  | Response   |
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| A resident on Wilgar Road felt that pedestrian crossing safety should be considered. She did not agree that a wider street would improve pedestrian safety.  | <b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that the City is looking at putting in signalized PXO's at some crossings to improve safety. He clarified that the width of the road in option C would be 4.8 m (including the bike lane) in each direction and it would be hard for motorists to pass on the right at this width. |
| A resident on Royal York Road noted that there is an elementary school on Government street but the cross-walk is at Kingsgrove. She asked if it was possible to put a crossing at Usher so that the children can cross more safely. | <b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that Transportation staff is looking at the possibility of a crosswalk in this area. Recommendations will be presented on March 29.  |

| Impacts to Trees  | Response  |
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| A resident commented that the trees are weak because the City has paved over their roots. He felt that the tree audit was a waste of taxpayers' money.  | Comment noted.  |
| A resident on Strath Avenue asked if the trees that are removed would be replaced.  | <b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> guaranteed that all removed trees will be replaced and where ever possible two trees instead of one will be planted.  |
| A resident noted that trees provide shade and cool temperatures for pedestrians and cyclists. It is hard to believe that trees will be replanted when their services are not fully reflected in the evaluation matrix.                      | <b>Dan Egan</b> replied that from a cyclist and pedestrian point of view trees are desirable. <b>Eric Leon</b> noted that the City definitely wants to preserve trees and reassured residents that tree impact was considered in the evaluation matrix.   |
| A resident who lives on Edgemore Drive close to Prince Edward Drive noted that she would like to see safeguards put in place to ensure that trees are replanted at an appropriate time of the year and are regularly watered and cared for. | <b>Regina Gudelis</b> (Supervisor of Forestry Planning) for the City replied that the same species of tree that was removed would be replanted. The plantings will be farther away from roadway and hydro wires. The plantings will not occur in summer and the contractor will be required to water the trees 5 to 7 times per year for two years. Notices will be delivered to homeowners so they know how to water the trees. \$80,000 is budgeted for streetscaping and tree plantings. |
| Mary Campbell, President of the Kingsway Ratepayers Association, who lives on Meadowvale Drive asked if Option C will sustain old and new trees, and a boulevard.   | <b>Gary Stevenson</b> replied that the proposed sidewalks would remain at the present locations. There will be more room for green grass than there is now.   |

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| <p>A resident who grew up on Royal York road commented that curbs stop cars and prevent accidents not lines. He asked how boulevards would be affected north and south of Bloor Street.</p>  | <p><b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that the final width of the boulevard depends upon the detailed design, but essentially the width of the road will determine the width of the boulevard. The standard boulevard width is 1.5 meters, however the City wants to build 1.8 meter wide sidewalks in order to accommodate people with disabilities. South of Bloor street the sidewalks will not be widened by extending the sidewalk toward the road but rather toward the houses. No matter which design option is chosen there will be impacts on trees and property. He agreed that having a curb will prevent right hand passes because there will not be enough room to maneuver.</p>   |
| <p>How many of the 277 trees will be affected by each of the different options?</p>  | <p><b>Philip Van Wassenaer</b> replied that it is hard to know exact numbers, but less construction around the trees will reduce the impact. The difference between a 28 foot wide and a 32 foot wide road will not make a significant difference to the trees. It is the construction impact beyond the side of the road that really affects the trees.</p>   |
| <p>A resident on Willingdon Blvd asked if there could there be a treatment plan for the sensitive trees on Royal York Road. He asked if additional information about the trees could be brought to the next meeting, and further, if there could be a walking tour to get to know the 64 trees that are weak. He suggested that perhaps a tree adoption program could be started. Lastly, he asked if Philip Van Wassenaer was going to be retained during the construction phase.</p> | <p><b>Philip Van Wassenaer</b> replied that he will be providing the City with recommendations that outline the best things that can be done to protect the trees and how to minimize root damage from excavation through the use of sensitive techniques. For instance, not all of the water should be drained away from the tree roots, and exfiltration should be used so that water can get back out into soil for the tree roots. He noted that he has been retained by the City to look at construction activities as they occur. He stressed that it is important to remember that old big trees are more susceptible to impacts from construction because they are no longer growing. Everyone loves the big trees but these are hard to protect because they are approaching the end of their life. It may be better to replace some of them. Many trees are the same age and we don't want the trees to all die at the same time. If some trees are replanted now there will be species diversity and age diversity.</p> |

| <b>Evaluation of Options</b>   | <b>Response</b>   |
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| <p>A resident of Princeton Road asked why some criteria are given more importance than others are. He felt that traffic safety should be weighted higher than bike safety.</p>                                       | <p><b>Gary Stevenson</b> explained that weightings were not used because they are subjective. The evaluation is meant to be objective. The score for each category took into consideration a number of factors.</p>   |
| <p>A resident on Humbervale Blvd. asked why option A received a rating of 4 instead of 3 for EMS. She also asked if bus-bays or pull out areas have these not been considered.</p>                                   | <p><b>Gary Stevenson</b> replied that Option A had a rating of 4 because the road width is less than 9.4 m. The 9.4 m threshold was developed from discussions with emergency management staff who stated that they need a 4m clearance.</p> <p><b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that the design options do not include bus-bays because the TTC does not support their use. If the bus stops it pulls over to the side and people are now required by law to stop behind the bus then allow it to pull back out.</p>  |
| <p>A resident on Royal York Road suggested that there should be different weightings used for each category of evaluation criteria. He also expressed concern that public input will not be taken seriously.</p>     | <p><b>Councillor Peter Milczyn</b> replied that it would be ideal if bike lanes could be accommodated while protecting trees. However, if a choice had to be made he would prefer trees to bikes. He noted that there is a wide range of issues to consider over the next month, including buses, traffic lights at Glenroy, and narrowing Royal York Road at the Dundas Street underpass to reduce excessive speeding. There has been some consultation with the BIA regarding the subway station. In addition, there will also be other consultation on localized issues with potentially affected people.</p>  |
| <p>A resident on Royal York Road asked how a decision would be made regarding the preferred design option. He asked what would happen if a majority of residents support option A but C is recommended by staff.</p> | <p><b>Peter Milczyn</b> replied that the purpose of this meeting is to obtain feedback from residents. It is understood that residents want the narrowest possible road, however safety has to be kept in mind. There are also other issues that have to be addressed so there may be some tradeoffs. In terms of decision making, staff makes a recommendation and he as a Councillor has input. If he is very dissatisfied with the recommendation he will bring the issue before Community Council on March 30 and ask for changes. The March 30 meeting is also an opportunity for members of the public to make their views known. The Community Council makes recommendations that go to the Works Committee and then City of Toronto Council. If the Community Council</p> |

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|  | was to make a recommendation it would cause delays to construction. |
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| <b>Volume of Traffic</b>   | <b>Response</b>   |
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| A resident on Princeton Road asked what was being done to reduce the number of vehicles on Royal York Road.  | <b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that Royal York Road is an arterial road. It is not the City's intent to shift traffic from one road to another.  |
| A resident on Willingdon Blvd. suggested that the community needs to outlaw fossil fuel vehicles. He asked what the City is doing to limit fossil fuel automobiles in the City.  | Councillor Peter Milczyn replied that the City is improving public transit with the limited resources it has. The City is looking at buying new hybrid buses for the TTC. A few members of Council are also looking at the possibility of designating car free zones in the downtown. Individual citizens need to start making responsible choices. |
| A resident on the Kingsway expressed concern that during construction neighbouring streets will become arterial roads and the grid lock south to Bloor and Dundas streets will be worse. If Royal York road is narrower the flow of cars will be impacted because they can't pass on the right. Then cars will turn to using other neighbouring streets. | <b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that Royal York Road will remain a 2 lane road. It will remain over capacity. There is a continuous string of traffic so the City will have to look at putting in signalized intersections to help control flow. He agreed that traffic moves like water and will go to other streets.                                |

| <b>Other Comments and Concerns</b>  | <b>Response</b>   |
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| I hope the people who pave Royal York Road are not the same ones who put the bumps on Prince Edward Drive.  | Comment noted.  |
| A resident noted that the current road width is sufficient for all road users.  | Comment noted.  |
| A resident noted that people currently do not drive on the paved shoulder but buses, garbage trucks, cyclists, etc use it. Because it is not possible to zigzag between vehicles, cyclists and drivers feel safer. The current width is fine. | Comment noted.  |
| A resident asked about the possibility of burying the hydro lines.  | <b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that it would cost between \$6 million and \$8 million to bury the hydro lines. The Transportation Dept. does not have room in the budget to do this. The total budget for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Royal York Road is \$8 million. |

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| Is there a road you could refer us to that would match the conditions of Royal York Road?  | <p><b>Tom Ellerbusch</b> replied that one example that is slightly wider is Martingrove south of Eglinton. There are less than 25,000 vehicles on the street and no bus space. An example of a road that is the width of option C is Rathburn between Kipling and Eglinton, it has busses, but again it has less volume than Royal York Road.</p> <p>A resident in attendance responded that Spadina Road is comparable.</p> |
| A resident on La Rose Avenue asked if Councillor Peter Milczyn had voted for the widening of the bridge over the creek.  | <b>Councillor Peter Milczyn</b> replied that he had not voted in favour of the bridge widening.  |
| A resident who lives off of Prince Edward Drive south of Bloor asked if staff has looked at collisions on Prince Edward prior to the summer of 2000. She asked if the road reconstruction has resulted in less collisions. She noted that Prince Edward Drive is not cyclist friendly. She expressed support for Option C because it meets the needs of all users. | <b>Eric Leon</b> noted that Transportation staff would need to look at this and respond later.   |
| It was noted that a petition was being circulated for people to sign to indicate their support for Option A, a 28 foot wide road.  |  |

#### **4.0 Closing Remarks**

**David Nagler** asked those in attendance to complete a comment sheet so that it could be forwarded to the project team for review. The next Open House/Public Meeting will also be held at Etobicoke Collegiate Institute on March 29, 2005, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

The meeting ended at 10:00 p.m.

