



SIX POINTS INTERCHANGE RECONFIGURATION CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

Public Meeting and Open House #1
Tuesday, March 2, 2004

Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 210
3326 Bloor Street West
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

SUMMARY NOTES

1. INTRODUCTION

The first Public Meeting and Open House was held on Tuesday, March 2nd, 2004, at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 210 – 3326 Bloor Street West, in the City of Toronto. The purpose of the Open House was to (1) present an overview of the Six Points Reconfiguration study, (2) present the selected short list of proposed options, (3) present the preliminary criteria to be used to evaluate the options, and (4) outline the next steps for the project.

The format was a drop-in centre with display panels. A presentation and a question and answer period followed at 7:00 p.m. Approximately 230 participants attended the event.

There was an overwhelming interest from the community on this project. However, due to fire code regulations for the meeting room, the City could not accommodate all of the attendees. Attendees that were turn away were given information on how to receive the handout package. Packages, which included comment sheets, were mailed on March 4th to those who requested them.

The following representatives from the City of Toronto, and iTRANS Consulting were at the Open House to discuss details of the project and answer questions of the public:

City of Toronto: Penelope Palmer – Works and Emergency Services (WES),
Infrastructure Planning (Study Project Manager)
Mike Wehkind – Urban Development Services (UDS)
Transportation Planning
Walter Battelo- Facilities and Real Estate, Corporate Services
Richard Beck – UDS, Transportation Planning
Bill Kiru – UDS, City Planning
Lorna Day – UDS, City Planning - Urban Design
Anne Milchberg – Facilities and Real Estate, Corporate Services
Nancy Martins – Public Consultation & Community Outreach
Councillor Milczyn – Ward 5, Etobicoke Lakeshore
Al Smithies – WES, Transportation Services

iTRANS: Tyrone Gan, - President (Study Project Manager)
Liza Sheppard - Project Engineer / Project Co-ordinator

2. NOTIFICATION

A Notice was placed in the Etobicoke Guardian (south section) on February 18th and 25th informing the public of the study and of the Public Meeting. Beginning on February 18th , approximately 10,000 notices were dropped off, via Canada Post, to residents and businesses in the study area. Notification was also mailed to 120 people on the project contact list on February 16th.

3. INFORMATION MATERIALS

Upon arrival at the Open House, attendees were asked to sign-in and were given a handout package.

3.1 Display Panels

Display panels included textual information and drawings. The text panels included the following:

- purpose of the meeting
- the study area
- description of the study background and study purpose
- chart of the EA process
- description of the study consultation plan and schedule
- applicable City of Toronto Official Plan and Etobicoke Secondary Plan policies
- description of the needs and opportunities, and of the problem statement
- description of the “Long List” of Options
- “coarse screening” criteria for evaluation of the Long List of Options
- description of the “Short List” of Options
- criteria for evaluation of the “Short List” of options, and
- next steps and contact information

The graphics panels included the following:

- City of Toronto urban structure plan, Etobicoke Centre areas plan
- aerial photograph of the study area with pictures of the interchange
- the long list of options grouped in families and with reasons why they were screened out; the families included (1) ‘Do Nothing’, (2) Fully At-Grade, (3) Bloor-Dundas Connected with Grade Separation, (4) Bloor Connected with Grade Separation, (5) Bloor Not Connected with Grade Separation, (6) Roundabout and Ring Road
- the short list of options grouped in six families (1) ‘Do Nothing’, (2) Dundas Street Loop, (3) Bloor Street Loop, (4) Kipling Avenue Loop, (5) Dundas Street Underpass; (6) Kipling Avenue Underpass

3.2 Handout Package

The handout package consisted of duplicates of most of the text panels, and the “Short List” of options, a glossary of terms and a postage paid envelope. A comment sheet was also provided to attendees to comment on the project and on the “Short List” of options. Comments could be

provided to the City within a two-week period. The handout package can be accessed on the City of Toronto's website at www.toronto.ca/involved/projects

4. PRESENTATION

4.1 Welcome and Introductions

Nancy Martins (City of Toronto, Public Consultation and Community Outreach) opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. She noted that the agenda for the evening consisted of a formal presentation followed by a question and answer period. She explained that her job as the facilitator was to make sure that the people had a chance to ask questions and that the meeting stayed on topic. She introduced **Councillor Peter Milczyn** (Ward 5 Etobicoke Lakeshore), and noted that there were consultants from ITRANS in attendance who would be available to answer questions, along with City staff from Works and Emergency Services, Transportation, Facilities and Real Estate, and Urban Development Services. She explained the protocol for asking questions and noted that people should also use the yellow comment sheet to provide feedback on the project. Everyone was given a postage-paid envelope to send their comments to the City. The deadline for submitting comments is March 16.

4.2 Project Overview Presentation

For a copy of the presentation materials please see Appendix A (or visit the City website at www.toronto.ca/involved/projects)

4.3 Project Background

Mike Wehkind (Project Manager, Transportation Planning, Urban Development Services) provided an overview of context and scope of the study area. During his presentation the following key points were highlighted:

- Etobicoke Centre is one of 4 City centres within Toronto – the other centres are North York Centre, Scarborough Centre and Yonge-Eglinton Centre .
- Reconfiguration of the interchange has been a municipal objective for more than 2 decades.
- The former City of Etobicoke “City Centre Secondary Plan” approved in 1987, included a policy calling for the reconfiguration of the Six Points Interchange.
- Several studies were undertaken between 1983 and 1989 to identify and evaluate alternative interchange redesign options.
- Further study was put on hold in the mid 1990's due to discussions concerning the use of the Westwood Theatre lands, and amalgamation.
- A program was initiated in 1996 to reconstruct all bridges in the interchange. The work was completed in 2002.
- In November 2002 City Council approved the “Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan” which contains a policy addressing the need to reconfigure the Six Points Interchange”.
- The existing interchange takes up a lot of land that could be freed up for other uses.
- Reconfiguration of the interchange will provide an opportunity to knit together the Centre's 7 distinct sub-areas. The interchange presently acts as a barrier between existing and future development east and west of the interchange.
- Improving the road network will also achieve city planning objectives and policies.
- The Westwood Theatre lands total 19 acres, including the police station and has been identified as a potential location for a new municipal service centre for the City of Toronto's

West District (former City of Etobicoke, and portions of the former Cities of North York, York and Toronto). The land is bounded by Bloor Street, Kipling Avenue and the TTC corridor but is currently not easily accessible by car or by foot.

- The Islington subway station lands have also been identified as another potential location for a new West District municipal service centre.
- The City is looking at a variety of configuration options because earlier studies did not fully develop a preferred option.

4.4 Project Purpose, Options, Evaluation Criteria and Consultation Plan

Penelope Palmer (Project Manager, Transportation Services, Works and Emergency Services) provided an overview of project itself, including the purpose, needs and opportunities, short list of options, evaluation criteria, public consultation plan, and next steps. During her presentation the following key points were highlighted:

- The purpose of the study is to examine options for the reconfiguration of the Six Points Interchange and associated ramps and service roads.
 - The primary study area is the Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan area. A secondary area bounded by Royal York Road, Norseman Street, Shorncliff Road and Shaver Avenue, and Burnhamthorpe Road will be studied for potential traffic impacts.
 - In 1989 a fully at grade proposal was preferred. However, after further study it was found this option would compromise traffic flow. An alternative was proposed in 1990 but there was no agreement or funding worked out.
- The key benefits of the project should include:
 - a less land consumptive design, potentially releasing surplus lands for other uses;
 - improved aesthetics and compatibility of land uses, as well as a balance of the needs of the users within the corridor;
 - improved street and block pattern to better integrate land uses on either side of Kipling Avenue; and
 - improved pedestrian and bicycle connections and linkages to the Kipling subway station and adjacent areas.
- A Class “C” Environmental Assessment (EA) is required. The EA consists of 5 phases. The first phase defines the problem and identifies alternative solutions. Phase 2 identifies and evaluates alternative solutions and presents the alternatives to the public to obtain feedback. Phase 3 identifies and evaluates the alternatives design concepts for the preferred solution. As part of phase 3 there will be a second public meeting. In Phase 4 an Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be prepared and will go to Council for approval. The ESR will then be filed in the public record for a 30-day review period., Phase 5 is implementation of the preferred alternative. This Class Environmental Assessment will encompass the first four phases. It is anticipated that phase 3 will be completed this spring and the ESR will be filed in the public record this summer.
- Solutions are required to reconfigure the Six Points interchange to allow for a connected Etobicoke Centre, and to meet the objectives of the Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan.
- The interchange reconfiguration will address a variety of planning needs, as well as capacity and operational needs such as maintaining traffic flow, maintaining provision of surface transit operations, and improving pedestrian access.
- There were 33 design options that were considered. This long list of options included previous designs from the studies in the 1980’s, as well as designs from a 1999 design charette and those by the study team. The long list of options were grouped into 6 families, or categories, to facilitate evaluation:

- do nothing,
- at grade separation at Bloor,
- at grade separation at Dundas,
- Bloor connected with at grade separation,
- Bloor not connected with at grade separation, and
- a round-about or “ring road”.
- Each of the long list of options was then evaluated on the basis of their ability to meet the following criteria:
 - to make better use of surplus interchange lands, to “normalize” intersections i.e. keep at the same level, meet technical geometric design criteria i.e. try to get as close to right angle intersections as possible, and must be pedestrian and cycling accessibility,
 - arterial continuity i.e. ability to access adjacent areas
 - no above-grade grade separations, and
 - no significant impacts on any active applications in the study area
- 6 short list options resulted from the initial evaluation:
 - do nothing
 - fully at-grade, Dundas Street loop
 - fully at-grade, Bloor Street loop
 - fully at-grade, Kipling Avenue loop
 - Dundas Street underpass
 - Kipling Avenue underpass
- The next step will be to evaluate the six short listed options based on the following proposed criteria: land use and socio-economic impacts; city building impacts; transportation impacts; environmental impacts; implementation impacts; cost impacts; and an examination of return on investments. Public input on the criteria will be considered prior to evaluation.
- A technically preferred option with short-term and long-term changes will be identified and preliminary design for the preferred option will be prepared. This option will then be presented at a Public Meeting and Open House in the Spring of 2004.

5. Question and Answer Period

The following is a summary of the questions asked and responses provided during the question and answer period.

(Questions are in *italics*.)

Why were the structures in the interchange rebuilt three years ago? Why can't we work with what we have, for example, build a pedestrian walkway, since a lot of people walk to the subway? **Mike Wehkind** replied that the physical condition of the bridges had deteriorated beyond the point of simple repair. He explained that with amalgamation the momentum for developing a new Etobicoke Civic Centre and reconfiguration of the Six Points interchange ended. Because no EA work had been done and a preferred alternative had not been selected, the City had no choice but to rebuild and replace the bridges. Any proposal to reconfigure the interchange must consider opportunities to phase the implementation of the new plan over a long period of time, given the recent investment in the existing interchange. The City will be looking at pedestrian issues including access to Kipling station.

Will there eventually be a new bus station for Mississauga Transit at Kipling? If there is there may be impacts to traffic flow in the Six Points area. **Mike Wehkind** replied that relocation of Mississauga Transit to Kipling would be required in conjunction with any new development proposed over the Islington subway station. A feasibility study for accommodating all buses at

Kipling station is currently underway. Should the Bloor-Danforth subway be extended west of Kipling, it is likely that Mississauga Transit operations would also be relocated west of Kipling. The extension of the subway is part of the city's long term transportation plan; however, due to cost and other transit priorities, it remains a very long term option.

As a cyclist and a pedestrian I have never had any problems crossing the Six Points Interchange. I am concerned about pollution from cars stopping at traffic lights at the at-grade intersections. **Penelope Palmer** replied that as part of the EA the consultant team will assess the potential environmental impacts, including air quality impacts of each option.

How intense will the land use be when the interchange is reconfigured? **Mike Wehkind** replied that a Secondary Plan, as well as a Zoning By-law, has been approved for Etobicoke Centre. Any freed up land could be used for a wide variety of uses (new development, parks, community facilities – it's up to City Council).. The Westwood Theatre lands have been rezoned for mixed use. City Council could put whatever restrictions they want on land use in the area. **Councillor Peter Milczyn** replied that the City may use 3 to 5 acres of the Westwood Theatre site for park space. He also noted that there may be an exchange of property with the Toronto District School Board in order for the TDSB to acquire a school site on the Westwood Theatre lands. The police station will stay where it is. Park space is being planned for an area adjacent to the Tridel property. If the ramps to the bridges disappear as part of the reconfiguration, then this park area would become bigger. Setbacks, height restrictions, and permit requirements in area will not change. The Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan will not be reconsidered for another 10 to 15 years.

Why are we going back to at-grade intersections? The traffic flows very well today with the flyovers. With new development the traffic condition will be worse. Vehicle use is a key component to the area. **Penelope Palmer** replied that impacts to traffic flow is definitely one of the criteria that will be examined in the next phase of the project. She noted that the do nothing option is also an alternative that will be considered. The preferred option that is selected will have to maintain acceptable traffic flow to reduce the potential for traffic diversion into adjacent neighbourhoods. She explained that there will be modeling done to assess potential traffic impacts on the whole area. She added that one of the reasons at-grade intersections are being examined is because they meet the objectives of the Secondary Plan. Reconfiguring the Six Points intersection will remove a substantial barrier between lands east and west of Kipling Avenue, and a major obstacle to pedestrians and cyclists.

I am concerned about traffic congestion at the Kipling Station due to construction, development, and potentially buses if the Mississauga Transit station is moved. **Penelope Palmer** replied that ITRANS will model the existing scenario and identify what the impacts of proposed changes might be.

How much money was spent rebuilding the overpasses? How much traffic would be alleviated if Mississauga Transit was relocated to Sherway Gardens or another location further west? Mississauga Transit is the cause of most of the traffic congestion in the area. Many people drive their cars to Islington station and then take the subway. **Mike Wehkind** replied that \$3.6 million was spent rebuilding the bridges between 1996 and 2002. He noted that it is difficult to know how much traffic congestion is due to the Mississauga Transit and TTC buses at Islington station.

Has a preferred alternative been identified? and if so what the pros and cons of this option were. **Penelope Palmer** replied that a preferred alternative has not been identified. All short listed

options will be evaluated and the comments from the public considered, and then a preferred solution will emerge.

Would any of the short listed options affect St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Beamish Drive that backs onto Bloor Street and fronts on Dundas Street? **Penelope Palmer** replied that the aim is to minimize impacts on existing developed lands. The Church would not be removed and impacts would try to be minimized.

How much extra surplus land can you squeeze out of this area? If high-rises are built in the area there will not be enough services and amenities for the public. **Councillor Peter Milczyn** replied that the City is discussing a land transfer with the Toronto District School Board. The City would consider putting amenities on any freed up land from the Six Points interchange reconfiguration. He explained that if there are lands freed up that are not needed by the City the land can be sold, and if there is something built on it tax revenue can be generated. The height restrictions in the Secondary Plan range depending on the street. If a proposed development does not comply with zoning restrictions then there would be an application for a zoning change and there would have to be a public meeting.

Have there been studies on collision data? **Penelope Palmer** replied that the consultant team has looked at traffic collision rates and information about this data will be presented at the next public meeting.

Previous estimates for reconfiguring the interchange were in the range of \$20 to \$30 million. Do we have a ball-park figure now? **Penelope Palmer** replied that none of the alternatives have been costed out yet. What we have are conceptual alternatives

Development will happen faster than the reconfiguration takes place so traffic congestion problems will arise. Can development in the area be delayed until the reconfiguration is complete? **Mike Wehkind** replied that at the moment the Westwood Theatre lands are all publicly owned and the largest undeveloped site in the area. The reconfiguration study will be completed before the City will decide whether part of the land should be sold for development.

Has any consideration been given to extending Auckland up to Burnhamthorpe? It would alleviate transit traffic. **Mike Wehkind** noted that this potential link is part of the long term plan for the area, but is outside of the scope of this study.

Will costs and information about the duration of construction impacts be provided at the next meeting? **Tyrone Gan** (iTRANS) replied that costs would be provided at the next meeting along with information about the staging of implementation. He noted that it would be premature to try to specify how long the entire implementation would take.

Will the reconfiguration have an impact on whether or not Mississauga Transit moves to Kipling station? **Mike Wehkind** replied that the move is tied to any future development proposed over Islington station, not the reconfiguration of the interchange. Study of the interchange will, however, take into consideration the potential future relocation of Mississauga Transit operations to Kipling station. There is no time frame that has yet been specified for moving the Mississauga Transit Station.

Are there better ways for the City to get money besides selling land? **Councillor Peter Milczyn** replied that the City wants to reduce the number of sites where there are City staff working. The plan is to have 4 campuses for City staff on a subway line or very near by. The West District Study is a study that has been initiated to determine a potential site for a New City Centre. The Westwood

Theatre lands is one of these sites, so the objective is not just to sell lands. However, if the best business case is to leave the Westwood Theatre lands as is, and sell some of it, then that will be the option. Parks, transit, maintaining the road network, all need funding that can be acquired through sale of the Westwood Theatre lands.

Please supply the residents with the handout information prior to the public meeting. **Nancy Martins** replied that the request would be considered.

Will the traffic study be done in the primary or secondary study area? Will it include an examination of parking availability? **Mike Wehkind** replied that the traffic study would initially be done for the primary area. If it is determined that there are impacts beyond the primary study area, the study area will be expanded to the secondary study area.. The study will not address local neighbourhood parking issues.

What is meant by "improved block pattern"? **Mike Wehkind** replied that this means providing a street and block plan that integrates new and future development with existing development in a manner that improves opportunities for improved circulation for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as vehicular circulation, and provides opportunities for new public roads across large undeveloped parcels.

Why does the study area extend north to Burnhamthorpe? What possible impacts would there be to the residential area? **Mike Wehkind** replied that the area up to Burnhamthorpe was included to show that the traffic impacts along the Kipling corridor would be studied. It is not meant to suggest that the land use along that corridor will change.

6. CLOSING

Nancy Martins thanked participants for attending. She explained that a notification will be mailed out to those on the project contact list regarding the next public meeting. In addition she noted that information from tonight's meeting would be posted on the City's website (www.toronto.ca/involved/projects) for those who could not attend. She reminded participants that the deadline for submitting comments was March 16. Participants were invited to once again view the display panels and speak with staff until 9 p.m. The meeting portion of this event ended at 8:30 p.m.

Appendix A – Presentation Materials

