



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Environmental Assessment for Changes to York and Bay Ramps of Gardiner Expressway – Supplemental Report

Date:	July 7, 2008
To:	City Council
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina Ward 28, Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number:	p:\2008\ClusterB\tra\tim\cc08015tim

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to a request by Executive Committee for a report to be submitted directly to City Council for its meeting on July 15, 2008 respecting the need for an Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for modifications to the York/Bay/Yonge Streets ramp of the Gardiner Expressway, opportunities to expedite the EA study, and the feasibility of terminating the EA study after it has been initiated.

Transportation Services staff have determined that, based on the project description to date, the proposed modifications to the ramp would qualify as a Schedule B project, requiring it to be planned using the first two phases of the Municipal Class EA process. If this study is endorsed by City Council, a detailed scope of work will be developed and designed to minimize the duration of the study. Consideration will also be given to the lesser Class EA requirements for Schedule B projects, when defining the project elements.

It is feasible to terminate an EA study if a decision is made to implement a project that is identified as pre-approved under the Class EA process. This decision can be made at the sole discretion of City Council.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact resulting from the receipt of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 26, 2008, Executive Committee, in considering Clause EX22.2, titled “Environmental Assessment for Changes to York and Bay Ramps of Gardiner Expressway,” directed the General Manager, Transportation Services, to report directly to Council, for its meeting to be held on July 15, 2008, on:

- i. the rationale for requiring an EA to shorten the York off-ramp;
- ii. opportunities for expediting the process should an EA be necessary; and
- iii. the process for termination of the EA, should the study determine it is no longer necessary.

The full clause can be viewed at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ex/decisions/2008-06-26-ex22-dd.pdf>

COMMENTS

Rationale for Requiring an EA

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process provides a standard procedure which can be used to obtain approval under the Provincial EA Act for certain types of municipal infrastructure projects. The types of projects eligible, and the specific requirements for each type of project, are described in the Municipal Class EA document and briefing summarized in the table in Attachment 1.

The concept of modifying the York/Bay/Yonge Streets eastbound off-ramp from the Gardiner Expressway includes the shortening of this ramp so that it would intersect the west side of York Street. To minimize the combined width of Harbour Street and the off-ramp at York Street, this project would likely require the reconstruction of Harbour Street from Simcoe Street to York Street to remove some of the lanes on Harbour Street.

This project falls under two categories in the Municipal Class EA. First, the shortening of the York/Bay/Yonge ramp, because it would maintain all the existing ramp functions but through a different design, is best described as a Localized Operational Improvement. These types of projects are Schedule A+ projects when costing less than \$2.2 million, and Schedule B projects when costing greater than \$2.2 million. Since the current estimate for the ramp project is in the order of \$25.0 to \$30.0 million, it would be classified as a Schedule B project, and therefore the first two phases of the Class EA process must be completed before proceeding to construction.

Second, the potential reconstruction of Harbour Street, including the removal of some lanes, would be classified as a Schedule B project if it costs less than \$2.2 million, or a Schedule C project if it costs more than \$2.2 million. Schedule C projects must complete all four phases of the Class EA process before proceeding to construction. At this time the extent of the reconstruction on Harbour Street, if any, has not been fully defined. However, it is staff's opinion that the total ramp project qualifies as at least a Schedule B project under the Municipal Class EA.

Opportunities for Expediting the EA Process

In the report that recommended initiating a Class EA study for the York/Bay/Yonge ramp, it was identified that the study could be completed in 12 to 18 months. The range of time reflects the fact that a detailed work-plan and schedule have not been produced, and also that the process should be flexible enough to expand or reduce the scope of analysis and design in response to public and review agency input.

Every effort will be made to expedite the study while complying with the requirements of the Class EA. At the outset of the process, a critical path of activities will be developed to identify which activities are time critical, and which activities can be completed concurrently. However, the potentially greatest time savings would come from the determination of whether the ramp project falls under Schedule B or C of the Class EA process. As stated above, Schedule B projects only require the completion of the first two phases of the Class EA process before proceeding to construction. Staff will consider this when defining the scope of the project in consultation with interested stakeholders.

Process for Termination of an EA

At every major decision point in the Class EA process there is an opportunity to review and confirm the choice of Schedule for the project being planned. The Schedule of a project (A, A+, B or C) under the Class EA determines the requirements for that project to comply with the EA Act. Depending on the decisions made during the course of a study, it is possible that the project being planned can change from a Schedule B or C project to a Schedule A or A+ project. Schedule A and A+ projects are pre-approved and may proceed to construction without completing a Class EA study.

Should Transportation Services staff decide to recommend a Schedule A or A+ project during the course of the York/Bay/Yonge Ramp EA, it would be feasible to cancel the EA study and begin detailed design. This process would likely involve a report to Committee/Council, followed by a notice to all stakeholders and review agencies who indicated an interest in the project. The decision to terminate the EA, and proceed with a Schedule A or A+ project would be at the sole discretion of City Council.

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Attach. 1: Municipal Class EA Process

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process

Basic Requirements for Each Project Schedule

Class EA Phase Project Schedule	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
	Identify Problem or Opportuni ty	Identify/Evalu ate Alternative Solutions for Problem	Identify/Evalu ate Alternative Designs for Preferred Solution	Prepare Environmen tal Study Report	Constructi on
Schedule A/A+	v				v
Schedule B	v	v			v
Schedule C	v	v	v	v	v
Public/Agen cy Consultatio n	Optional	Required	Required	Required	Optional