



**STAFF REPORT  
ACTION REQUIRED**

**South Kingsway and The Queensway Interchange –  
Transit, Cycling, Pedestrian and Urban Design  
Enhancements**

<b>Date:</b>	June 16, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Etobicoke York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Director, Transportation Services – Etobicoke York District
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 13, Parkdale – High Park
<b>Reference Number:</b>	p:\2008\Cluster B\TRA\EtobicokeYork\eycc080045-to

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to recommend improvements to the South Kingsway and The Queensway interchange to enhance the safety of transit, cycling and pedestrian users and improve the emerging urban environment.

These improvements are being advanced to respond to changing travel demands in and through the immediate area and to acknowledge the changes of adjacent land use by improving the public realm. The changes can be made without significantly compromising the integrity and level of service of the ramp connections. Generally, they involve relocating the transit platforms to a more amenable and accessible location, the installation of pedestrian activated traffic control signals, the realignment, augmentation and enhancement of the local sidewalk network, the provision of enhanced street and pedestrian scale lighting and the provision of inclusion of urban design and landscaping features, heritage elements and new trees.

As the Toronto Transit Commission operates The Queensway exclusive streetcar service through this area, TTC staff participated in the development and refinement of the proposed improvements and are in agreement with the plans.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Transportation Services recommends that Toronto City Council approve:

1. The re-configuration of the ramps in the north-east quadrant of the interchange, generally as shown on Drawing No. P-2603-041:

2. The relocation and widening of the eastbound and westbound streetcar loading platforms on The Queensway in the vicinity of the South Kingsway generally as shown on Drawing No. P-2603-041;
3. The installation of new pedestrian activated traffic control signals to accommodate transit riders and to safety facilitate crossing of The Queensway as shown on Drawing No. P-2603-041.
4. The installation of stop signs at the intersections of the ramps in the north-west and south-west quadrants, as shown on Drawing No. P-2603-041; and
5. The introduction of the necessary bills to authorize the alterations, signals and signs described in this report.

### **Financial Impact**

Funds to cover the cost of the overall Queensway rehabilitation project from Claude Avenue to the South Kingsway were included in the Transportation Services 2005 and 2006 Capital Budgets and the bulk of the work on the eastbound and westbound lanes has been completed. The planned work for the final phase at The Queensway/South Kingsway intersection has been deferred since 2006 pending the finalization of the design.

The Budget Committee, at its meeting of June 17, 2008, recommended without amendment, a report from the General Manager of Transportation Services, to reallocate amongst others, funds for the road and sidewalk components of the work. City Council will be considering this reallocation at its meeting of July 15 and 16, 2008.

Funds to cover the cost of the various components of the project relating to streetscaping, tree planting, landscaping and historical elements are available in City Planning Account Nos. CUR042-01-01 and CUR055-01-01.

### **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The Queensway between Claude Avenue and the South Kingsway was constructed in 1956. Although the road received a number of preventive maintenance interventions since that time, the road reached the end of its useful life almost ten years ago and was initially programmed for reconstruction in 2002 and 2003. In recognition of the amount of redevelopment activity emerging in the area at that time, particularly on the former Stelco site, work was deferred to 2005/06 pending the finalization of redevelopment plans. The eastbound lanes were reconstructed in 2005 and the westbound lanes in 2006. The work included pavement and sidewalk reconstruction, median landscaping, tree planting, and new lighting among other things, in keeping with the substantial streetscape improvements secured in the area through the development process.

Also considered in 2006 were a number of significant changes to the configuration of The Queensway/South Kingsway interchange. However, when the changes were presented to the local community, there were significant different opinions expressed

relative to the extent, desirability and nature of the changes and impacts on service levels for all modes of travel. Staff have been undertaking considerable consultation and re-design since that time. This report summarizes the discussions to date and recommends a go forward plan.

At its meeting held on October 4, 2007, the Planning and Growth Management Committee, in considering a request from the Toronto Pedestrian Committee, requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning, and the General Manager of Transportation Services to report to the Committee, as soon as possible, on the ability to implement urban design improvements to this section of South Kingsway and The Queensway, as it relates to new adjacent developments. This report should address the bulk of the issues related to this request. The Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning, and the General Manager of Transportation Services can report further to the Planning and Growth Management Committee if required.

## **COMMENTS**

The Queensway between St. Joseph's Hospital and the Humber River was due for reconstruction almost 10 years ago. During the detailed design stage of the project, the entire segment and especially the interchange between South Kingsway and The Queensway was identified as an area of potential reconfiguration given the changing nature of the surrounding neighbourhood. The reconstruction project provided an opportunity to improve vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian movements, as well as the pedestrian realm and safety in the immediate area.

In 2006, local interest in the interchange component grew considerably. As a result, staff commenced a detailed review of the options. More specifically, the process undertaken to review the reconfiguration of the South Kingsway interchange styled ramps was a Schedule B project under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA).

### **Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Status**

The EA study is a legislated process undertaken when proposing major modifications to a municipal road network. This process includes the identification of a problem or opportunity, the identification of alternative solutions to address the problem or opportunity, the evaluations of the alternatives and the recommendation of a technically preferred alternative. Throughout the process public participation is an integral part of the study and as such two public meetings were held during the course of the EA study for the South Kingsway and The Queensway project.

The EA study identified the need to change this ramp configuration to provide better access for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users using this interchange. A review of the current conditions identified several areas where safety could be improved for these road users.

The EA study identified 7 alternatives to reconfigure the interchange including the "Do Nothing" which is required to be carried forward as a basis for comparison. During the

course of the study two public meetings were held. The first public meeting was held on May 2, 2006 in the Swansea Town Hall Community Centre and was attended by 80 residents. The second public meeting was held on June 6, 2007 at the Swansea Community Recreation Centre and was attended by 105 residents.

The technically preferred alternative, a connecting link road between South Kingsway and The Queensway, was presented to the residents and general public at the second public meeting. There was an overwhelming response at the meeting, and following the meeting with comments sent to staff, the residents preferred the “Do Nothing” alternative with the connecting ramps remaining in place and keeping the status quo.

A number of safety issues and opportunities for improvement were identified during the course of the study. Staff, in consultation with the Ward Councillor, undertook a further review of these issues in an effort to develop a plan of minor modifications to the interchange with due regard to both the community’s concerns and the need to improve the pedestrian, cycling and transit environment.

This review yielded a number of incremental improvements that begin to address local deficiencies for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. These modifications fall into the classification of pre-approved Schedule A projects. Consequently, the project schedule was downgraded to Schedule A resulting in no requirements to complete the original Schedule B project.

### Improvement Plan

South Kingsway is a north-south minor arterial road connecting Bloor Street in the north and the F. G. Gardiner Expressway in the south. The intersection of the South Kingsway and The Queensway is located immediately north of the Gardiner Expressway. The intersection is grade separated with The Queensway under South Kingsway and connected via an interchange style ramp configuration built in the 1950’s. The area surrounding the South Kingsway has been and remains residential; however the area to the south of The Queensway has been slowly transforming over the past few years from an industrial area to a residential neighbourhood. The 501 Queen Streetcar runs along this section of The Queensway in an exclusive right of way. It is anticipated that transit demand along this line and particularly through this area will grow.

The key components of the improvement plan are as follows:

#### i) Ramp Configuration

Under the current plan, the existing ramp configurations in the north-west, the south-west and the south-east quadrants of the interchange will remain and be resurfaced. Adjustments to their terminals at the Queensway as well as stop controls are recommended to improve sightlines, decrease crossing distances and enhance safety.

The ramp configuration in the north-east quadrant should be realigned to eliminate the existing slip lane condition as shown on Drawing No. P-2603-041. This has the benefits of reducing vehicle speeds of westbound to right turning vehicles, enhancing the safety of eastbound cyclists and pedestrians and provides for better sidewalk linkages in this quadrant. It also aligns with the relocated streetcar islands.

ii) Streetcar Loading Platforms

The streetcar stop in this vicinity is currently located below the South Kingsway bridge and is accessible only via stairs from the bridge. Its current configuration does not provide for a hospitable or inviting waiting or alighting environment.

It is recommended that the stop and islands be relocated easterly as shown on Drawing No. P-2603-041 to align with the relocated ramp. The islands would be widened and fitted with guide rails, consistent with those recently constructed east at Windermere Avenue.

Once the platforms and stops have been relocated, the stairs will be closed and, if technically feasible, removed in the absence of any major bridge work.

iii) Pedestrian Signals

The installation of pedestrian activated traffic control signals at the relocated transit stop is being recommended to assist transit riders and persons wishing to cross The Queensway through a protected device.

iv) Other Amenities

The project includes landscaped medians with street trees and improved pedestrian and cycling connections from South Kingsway and The Queensway to the multi-use Humber River Trail. There will also be opportunities created for additional tree planting through the retention and creation of soft landscaped areas. Other key elements include improved linkages and interpretive areas along the Toronto Carrying Place Trail along the Humber River.

It should be noted that the Humber River has been designated as a Canadian Heritage River by Parks Canada and a staff group has been established to develop an improved trail system. The improvements planned for interchange are consistent with these objectives.

v) Bike Lanes

The improvements recommended in this report will provide for improved passage through and use of this area by cyclists. Transportation staff will be reporting on the details and extent of the bike lanes in this vicinity to the September meeting of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee.

## Conclusion

The recommended improvements generally maintain the integrity of the interchange and address the emerging needs of pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. More importantly, they incorporate the policies envisioned in the City's Official Plan and attempt to urbanize the interchange to make it more amenable within a changing local environment.

Staff of Transportation, TTC, City Planning; Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Technical Services have participated in the development of the current plan and have been consulted on the preparation of this report.

## CONTACT

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## SIGNATURE

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## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1      Map