



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Official Plan Amendment for Front Street West – Request for Direction

<b>Date:</b>	October 16, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Planning and Growth Management Committee
<b>From:</b>	Gary Wright, Chief Planner and Executive Director
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 14 – Parkdale-High Park and Wards 19 and 20 – Trinity-Spadina
<b>Reference Number:</b>	Pg080064

#### SUMMARY

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This report seeks direction from City Council to amend “Schedule 2: Planned but Unbuilt Roads” of the Official Plan by deleting the reference to Front Street West between Bathurst Street and the F. G. Gardiner Expressway. In addition, staff seek direction to undertake an Environmental Assessment (EA) to provide for a local street that does not connect to the expressway. The final recommendations of the EA with respect to the location of this street may require further changes to the Official Plan that would be reported on when the EA process is completed.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. Staff be directed to prepare a draft Official Plan amendment to delete the reference to Front Street West between Bathurst Street and the F. G. Gardiner Expressway from Schedule 2, to be considered at the January 8, 2009 public meeting of the Planning and Growth Management Committee and to instruct the City Solicitor to seek necessary modifications to the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan at the appropriate time to reflect the required changes;
2. Notice for the public meeting under the Planning Act be given according to the regulations under the Planning Act, and

3. Staff be directed to undertake an Environmental Assessment to secure planning approvals for the design and implementation of a local, east-west street north of the railway corridor in the Liberty Village area.

## **Financial Impact**

A request for funds necessary to undertake an Environmental Assessment in 2009 for the design and implementation of a local east-west street north of the railway corridor in the Liberty Village Area has been submitted by Transportation Services as part of their Engineering Studies program currently under review as part of the overall 2009 Capital Budget process.

The funds required for the land acquisition, construction costs and any other costs related to the east-west local street are not currently available and have not been included in the Transportation Services 2009 Capital Budget submission.

The cost for the local street, identified through the original EA study for the Front Street Extension Project was estimated at between \$40 million and \$50 million.

Should the construction of the east-west local street be required in the short term, in conjunction with or following the completion of the recommended environmental assessment study, the General Manager, Transportation Services would be required to report to the appropriate Committee(s) to outline total project costs, required cash flows and any other associated financial implications for consideration.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

In 2003, City Council approved the design for the Front Street Extension. The design included a local east-west street to serve the Liberty Village Employment Area and King-Liberty Neighbourhood, extending between Strachan Avenue and Dufferin Street on the north side of the Lakeshore rail corridor.

The report and decision document can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2003/agendas/council/cc030204/pof1rpt/cl004.pdf>

At its special meetings on February 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28 and March 1, 2005 City Council deferred consideration of the Front Street Extension Project pending future deliberation over the possible dismantling of the Gardiner Expressway.

The decision document can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc050221/cofa.pdf>

Toronto and East York Community Council, at its meeting on January 16, 2007 (Clause TE2.9 “Liberty Village Area Study”) requested among other things, a report from the General Manager of Transportation Services on the implementation of a local road (only) from Dufferin Street to Strachan Avenue as shown in the Front Street Extension Environmental Assessment. The report can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-694.pdf>

The Committee’s decision can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-693.pdf>

More recently, at its meeting on June 12, 2008 the Waterfront Toronto Board recommended that funds currently reserved for the Front Street Extension Project be reallocated to other approved waterfront public realm projects (Minute Item 2(g)).

City Council, at its meeting on July 15, 16 and 17, 2008, further requested that the Waterfront Project Director develop recommendations on how funds currently set aside for the Front Street Extension may be reallocated to other approved public realm initiatives within the Waterfront. The report can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-13984.pdf>

The decision document can be found at:

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

## **COMMENTS**

This report responds to the above actions and directives by seeking direction from City Council to amend “Schedule 2: Planned but Unbuilt Roads” of the Official Plan by deleting the reference to Front Street West between Bathurst Street and the F. G. Gardiner Expressway. In addition, this report proposes that an Environmental Assessment for the building of an east-west local street through the Liberty Village Area (that does not connect to the Gardiner Expressway) be undertaken and brought forward for Council’s consideration.

The Front Street Extension Project, including the proposed local street, has not received EA approval. A stand-alone project to construct the local street will therefore require the initiation of a new EA process, to address issues including (but not limited to) alignment, connections, impact to rail corridors and property. The final recommendations of the EA with respect to the location of this street may require further changes to the Official Plan that would be reported on when the EA process is completed.

In terms of other planning amendments, the proposed local street is currently shown on maps and Schedule “A” of the Council approved but not in-force Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan mapping also notionally illustrates the Front Street extension and ramps. Following completion of the local road EA, an amendment to the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan may be required to reflect the recommended alternative.

A new local east-west street will improve traffic circulation in the surrounding neighbourhood and has the potential to redistribute some of the existing traffic flow in the area. It also represents a significant City-building opportunity for the south portion of Liberty Village, by completing a grid network of streets and blocks which will improve access to the area and provide opportunities to animate the public realm.

Planning and design of the new local street will have to take into account findings from the current review of options for a grade separation at Strachan Avenue and the C.N.R. Newmarket rail corridor (serving the GO Transit Milton / Georgetown trains). City Planning and Transportation Services are reviewing several options for modifying Strachan Avenue which may impact the previous design direction for a new local street. This study is expected to be completed in the fall of 2008.

Waterfront Toronto representatives have advised that they consider the new local street to be a stand-alone City project and therefore they would not provide planning or funding support for this project. As a result, capital funding for this facility would be the sole responsibility of the City. The cost for the local street that was identified through the original EA study for the Front Street Extension Project was estimated at between \$40 million and \$50 million. This cost included property acquisition and the pre-building of works required for the Front Street extension and associated expressway ramps. The estimated cost to construct the local street as a stand-alone project would be updated in the proposed EA study.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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