

Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvements Class Environmental Assessment Study

Date:	April 17, 2009
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	Ward 27 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number:	p:\2009\ClusterB\tra\tim\pw09004tim

SUMMARY

In 2001, the Culture Section completed a study entitled, “Canada’s Urban Waterfront – Waterfront Culture and Heritage Infrastructure Plan” that identified Jarvis Street as one of seven cultural corridors within the City of Toronto. In preparing a heritage plan for Jarvis Street, the Culture Section undertook a Streetscape Study that identified the need to narrow Jarvis Street to accommodate improvements to the public realm within the existing right-of-way. A Traffic Feasibility Study, completed by the Transportation Services Division in 2005, concluded that it was feasible to narrow Jarvis Street.

A Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) study has been undertaken to develop streetscape improvement plans in conjunction with lane arrangement modifications on Jarvis Street from Bloor Street East to Queen Street East. The EA study included the identification and evaluation of a reasonable range of alternatives in consultation with the public and review agencies. The resulting Recommended Design is to narrow Jarvis Street from five (5) lanes to four (4) lanes by removing the centre reversible lane and widening the east sidewalk and remaining four (4) lanes. This will enable improvements to the public realm along Jarvis Street.

A Notice of Study Completion must now be issued and the Environmental Study Report filed in the public record for a minimum 30-day review period in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that City Council:

1. Authority be granted to the General Manager of Transportation Services to issue a Notice of Study Completion and to file the Environmental Study Report for the Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvements Class Environmental Assessment Study in the public record for 30 days in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment; and
2. The appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

There is no immediate financial impact resulting from the recommendations contained in this report. The preliminary cost estimate for this project is \$6.35 million. The implementation of the redesign of Jarvis Street is not currently proposed to occur until the reconstruction of Jarvis Street is programmed. Jarvis Street is not currently identified for reconstruction or resurfacing in the 10-year Capital Budget Program.

The Jarvis Street Corridor Reserve Fund was created to collect funds for the beautification of Jarvis Street. Rogers Wireless Inc., as part of their Section 37 contributions for the site at Mount Pleasant Road and Jarvis Street, has contributed \$900,000 to this fund. City Planning staff are also investigating the contribution of additional monies to this fund in conjunction with other development applications along Jarvis Street. These monies will contribute to the implementation of the streetscape improvement plans. If additional funding contributions are made, the potential advancement of this project will be considered at that time.

In addition, construction in Focus Areas which are located outside of the proposed limits of the road reconstruction zone may proceed ahead of the total road reconstruction. The General Manager, Transportation Services will report on the financial implications to the Jarvis Street Corridor Reserve Fund of undertaking work in these Focus Areas once detailed design of these areas is completed.

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

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting on February 13, 14 and 15, 2002, adopted Clause No. 17 contained in Policy and Finance Committee Report No. 2 entitled "Jarvis Street Corridor Reserve Fund" and, in doing so, established a reserve fund into which Section 37 contributions could be deposited and subsequently withdrawn to implement a heritage strategy for the Jarvis Street corridor south of Isabella Street.

City Council, at its meeting on September 22, 23, 24 and 25, 2003 adopted Motion J(52) authorizing that funds in the Jarvis Street Corridor Reserve Fund be used to fund a traffic feasibility study to review the impact of reducing the number of lanes on Jarvis Street between Bloor Street East and Queen Street East.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Jarvis Street was identified as one of seven cultural corridors in the City of Toronto in the 2001 document entitled “Canada’s Urban Waterfront – Waterfront Culture and Heritage Infrastructure Plan.” The Culture Section of the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division initiated a streetscape study for Jarvis Street as one element of a heritage plan for Jarvis Street. The intent of the streetscape study was to improve the public realm along Jarvis Street in a manner that would complement the area’s existing built form and redevelopment, while recognizing the street as a cultural corridor with an emphasis on its historical significance. The conclusion of the streetscape study was that there was insufficient right-of-way space to achieve the objectives of improving the public realm, and that there was a need to narrow the Jarvis Street pavement in order to create additional boulevard space.

The Transportation Services Division completed the Jarvis Street Streetscape Traffic Feasibility Study in 2005. This study reviewed opportunities to improve the Jarvis Street streetscape to complement development and enhance the pedestrian environment along Jarvis Street. The study evaluated four options of narrowing Jarvis Street to attain these objectives, and the associated traffic impacts of these alternatives. The results of the traffic study indicated that a narrowing of Jarvis Street from five (5) lanes to four (4) lanes was feasible from a traffic perspective. The trade-offs would include a modest increase in intersection congestion and delay, an increase in transit travel time and potentially higher vehicle emissions. Transportation Services, in consultation with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and other City staff, determined that these impacts were not significant and therefore further evaluation under an Environmental Assessment Study was warranted.

COMMENTS

Study Process

A Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study was initiated to evaluate a range of options for improving the pedestrian realm on Jarvis Street. The EA study has been completed according to the requirements for a Schedule “C” project under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (The Class EA). The Class EA process requires that the City confirm the need (i.e. define the problem/opportunity), identify feasible solutions, evaluate the impact of the alternative solutions on the natural, social and economic environments, and select an alternative for construction.

As a requirement of Schedule “C” projects, if City Council endorses the recommendations of this Study, the Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be filed in the public record for a minimum 30-day review period. During this period, members of the public, and any other interested individual, interest group, or government agency, may request that a Part II Order be issued. A

Part II Order, if granted by the Minister of the Environment, elevates the status of the project from a Class EA Study to an Individual Environmental Assessment. If this occurs, the project cannot proceed until the proponent completes an Individual Environmental Assessment Study and receives approval from the Minister. If a Part II Order is not granted or if no requests or objections are received during the filing period, the project is approved under the Environmental Assessment Act and may proceed.

The ESR describes in detail the first three phases of the five-phase environmental planning process set out by the Class EA:

Phase 1 – identification of the problem or opportunity;

Phase 2 – identification and evaluation of alternative solutions; and

Phase 3 – identification and evaluation of alternative design concepts for the preferred solution.

The preparation of the ESR itself and the filing of the document in the public record constitute Phase 4 of the environmental planning process. Phase 5 is the construction and operation or implementation of the project, and monitoring of impacts, in accordance with the terms of the EA approval. The Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvement Class Environmental Assessment Study is currently at Phase 4 of the process.

The Class EA Study was carried out with the assistance of technical consultants and supported by a Technical Advisory Committee, comprised of staff from Transportation Services and City Planning.

Public Consultation

Public involvement is an integral and ongoing part of the EA Study process. The public consultation requirements of the Class EA were met and exceeded in this study. The public consultation program included two Public Information Centres (PICs), a community advisory group, a community “walkshop”, and the use of Facebook – a free-access social networking website on the internet. In addition, the City of Toronto’s website provided a link to all pertinent information related to the Study and contact information.

A Notice of Study Commencement and information pertaining to the first PIC was provided through direct mailings to stakeholders involved in the Traffic Feasibility Study, a flyer drop in the study area (bounded by Richmond Street, Church Street, Bloor Street and Sherbourne Street), newspaper advertisements in NOW Magazine on March 13, 2008, the City’s internet project website, and through the Jarvis Facebook group on the internet.

The first PIC was held on March 19, 2008 at the National Ballet School (400 Jarvis Street). The information presented included the need and justification of the study, the alternative solutions being considered, the evaluation criteria for assessing the alternative solutions, the evaluation of the alternative solutions and the selection of a preliminary preferred solution. There were 168

participants at the PIC and many other members of the public that participated through the Facebook group on the internet. The response from the public was varied with the majority of the comments in support of narrowing the Jarvis Street pavement.

On May 10, 2008, a walking tour along Jarvis Street was conducted with local residents and other stakeholders. The purpose of this “walkshop” was to identify those locations on Jarvis Street that most needed improvements to highlight the heritage of Jarvis Street. The recommendations from this “walkshop” were incorporated into the urban design component of the EA Study. Notice for the community “walkshop” was sent to all members of the public on the project mailing list, and was posted on the City’s internet project website and the Jarvis Facebook group.

The second PIC was held on January 22, 2009 at Currie Hall (105 Maitland Street) to present the preferred alternative for the modifications to Jarvis Street. The members of the public attending this meeting had an opportunity to review the recommended design, interact with the project team and provide comments on the recommendations. There were 163 registered persons at the public meeting. Notice for this PIC was placed in NOW Magazine on January 15, 2009, sent to all members of the public on the project mailing list, and was posted on the City’s internet project website and the Jarvis Facebook group. The response from the public was varied, with comments in support of narrowing Jarvis Street, opposing the narrowing, and requesting the inclusion of bicycle lanes.

A full description of the public consultation program is contained in Chapter 2 of the ESR document.

Environmental Assessment Findings

(1) Identification of the Problem or Opportunity

Jarvis Street is a north-south arterial road extending from Bloor Street East in the north to Queen’s Quay in the south. It has a 4-lane cross-section between Bloor Street East and Charles Street, a 6-lane cross-section between Charles Street and Isabella Street and a 5-lane cross-section from Isabella Street to Queen Street that includes a centre reversible lane. There are traffic signals at the following intersections with Jarvis Street; Bloor Street East, Charles Street East, Isabella Street, Gloucester Street/Earl Street, Wellesley Street, Maitland Street/Maitland Place, Carlton Street, Gerrard Street East, Dundas Street East, Shuter Street and Queen Street East.

Between Isabella Street and Queen Street East, Jarvis Street operates as 3 lanes northbound and 2 lanes southbound in the afternoon peak period and 3 lanes southbound and 2 lanes northbound at all other times. There are no left turns permitted from Jarvis Street between 7:30 am and 6:30 pm at the intersections with Queen Street East, Dundas Street East, Carlton Street and Wellesley Street.

Where the reversible lane is provided, on-street parking is available only on the west side of Jarvis Street in off-peak periods. There is also a small parking area on the east side of Jarvis Street between Bloor Street and Mount Pleasant Road.

The Study Area was bounded by Bloor Street East to the north, Queen Street East to the south, Church Street to the west and Sherbourne Street to the east. A plan of the Study Area is provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

A streetscaping study was undertaken for Jarvis Street as one element of a heritage plan that originated from the identification of Jarvis Street as a cultural corridor within the City of Toronto. A detailed analysis of the existing and projected future conditions was undertaken for Jarvis Street between Bloor Street East and Queen Street East. The following is a summary of the results of this analysis:

- a detailed analysis of streetscaping opportunities identified that, due to the limited space available in the existing right-of-way and limited opportunities to acquire property, the Jarvis Street pavement needs to be narrowed to improve the pedestrian realm through modifications within the existing right-of-way;
- the analysis of existing and projected future traffic volumes indicated that there would be no significant traffic growth in the Jarvis Street corridor and that, with minor traffic diversions to other major north-south roads, the traffic network in the study area will operate at an acceptable level of service if the number of lanes on Jarvis Street is reduced;
- the analysis of parking supply and demand indicated that for most of the corridor on-street parking is not being fully utilized and that there was sufficient available parking within close proximity to Jarvis Street to meet the parking demands; and
- the field analysis review indicated that there are locations on Jarvis Street where the sidewalks do not meet the minimum standard width of the City's accessibility guidelines.

The results of this detailed review and analysis determined that it was feasible to narrow Jarvis Street. The opportunities arising from the narrowing of Jarvis Street would be to:

- establish this section of Jarvis Street as a cultural corridor with an emphasis on its historical significance; and
- enhance the urban and pedestrian environment through fostering environmental sustainability and cultural landscapes.

A full description of the analysis of existing and projected future conditions can be found in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the ESR.

(2) Identification and Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

To address the opportunities as outlined in the Jarvis Street Streetscape Study and the Jarvis Street Streetscape Traffic Feasibility Study, five (5) alternative solutions were identified and evaluated as part of this study. A brief description of these alternatives and the results of the evaluation are provided below:

Alternative 1 – Do Nothing

The “Do Nothing” alternative was included as a benchmark for the assessment of the other planning alternatives. As the name suggests, the “Do Nothing” alternative involves leaving Jarvis Street as it currently exists with 5 lanes and the centre lane operating as a reversible lane.

Alternative 2 – Streetscaping Modifications within the Boulevard with No Modifications to the Curbline

This alternative represents no change to the existing road pavement width. It would involve implementing streetscape elements such as tree planting, street furniture and heritage elements within the existing right-of-way. Implementing these features within the existing right-of-way may require using some of the existing sidewalk space.

Alternative 3 – Streetscape Improvements – Median Option

This alternative involves removing the centre reversible lane and implementing a landscaped median. The removal of the reversible lane may facilitate some widening of the boulevards and sidewalks.

Alternative 4 – Streetscape Improvements – Boulevard Widening

This alternative involves removing the centre reversible lane and widening the boulevards and sidewalks.

Alternative 5 – Combination of Alternatives 2, 3 and 4

This alternative, as the name suggests, involves leaving some sections of Jarvis Street as existing, widening the boulevards in some areas and constructing a median in others.

Each alternative was analyzed and evaluated in detail utilizing five criteria groups:

- Social Environment;
- Transportation;
- Natural Environment;
- Economic Environment; and
- Implementation Costs.

Based on the results of the analysis and evaluation, Alternative 4 - Streetscape Improvements – Boulevard Widening was identified as the preferred solution. This solution offers the most potential to improve the pedestrian realm while offering the opportunity to implement urban design elements and street art to establish Jarvis Street as a cultural corridor with an emphasis on its heritage and historical significance. In terms of transportation impacts, the removal of the centre reversible lane will result in additional delay for vehicular traffic using Jarvis Street. However, the traffic analysis conducted indicates that

with minor redistribution of traffic to other major north-south roads, overall the network in the study area will still operate at an acceptable level of service.

A full description of the identification and evaluation of the alternative solutions can be found in Chapter 8 of the ESR document.

(3) Identification and Evaluation of Alternative Design Concepts for the Preferred Solution

As a result of feedback from the public consultation process, two main design alternatives were considered for the preferred solution of narrowing Jarvis Street by removing the centre reversible lane. These alternative designs are:

- Alternative Design 1 - Narrowing Jarvis Street by implementing bicycle lanes; and
- Alternative Design 2 - Narrowing Jarvis Street by widening the boulevards and sidewalks.

The assessment criteria for these alternative designs were the same as those used for assessing alternative solutions with the inclusion of meeting the objective of the EA study. The results of the evaluation indicated that, although it is the higher cost option, Alternative 2 is preferred for the following reasons:

- It provides the greatest opportunities to improve the historic public realm by incorporating heritage and urban design elements;
- It provides for the greatest opportunities to widen the sidewalks to improve pedestrian amenities;
- It will provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic; and
- It provides greater opportunity for environmental sustainability improvements and landscaping in the boulevard.

Full details for the identification and evaluation of alternative design concepts can be found in Chapter 9 of the ESR document.

Recommended Design

The Recommended Design for Jarvis Street between Bloor Street East and Queen Street East, illustrated in Design Plate A of the ESR, includes the following elements:

- removal of the centre reversible lane;
- widening of the east side boulevard to provide a minimum unobstructed sidewalk width of 1.7m;
- provision of four (4) general traffic lanes with 3.6 m curb lanes and 3.0 m inside lanes;
- new street trees wherever possible in continuous tree pits; and

- provision of “focus areas” at various locations along the length of Jarvis Street, where there is available space to incorporate features to reflect the heritage of Jarvis Street as well as to provide areas for people to congregate.

The following elements may also be incorporated in the detailed design phase of this project, subject to available funding and a feasibility review:

- uniform application of sidewalk material and granite curbs to create a uniform character along Jarvis Street;
- bronze sidewalk inlays at intersections and heritage locations; and
- way-finding signage and interpretive elements.

A plan of the proposed cross-section can be found in Attachment 2 of this report.

Property Impacts

There are no requirements to acquire private property for this project.

Public/Agency Concerns

Throughout the public consultation process a wide variety of valuable comments were received from the general public, adjacent property owners and review agencies which assisted in the development and evaluation of the alternatives. The primary concerns identified through the consultation process and our responses are summarized below.

(1) Provision of Exclusive Bicycle Lanes on Jarvis Street

The inclusion of bicycle lanes was reviewed after the first public meeting held in March 2008. This review detailed the road widths and sidewalk widths along Jarvis Street and determined how much room would be remaining to accommodate either bicycle lanes or pedestrian improvements or both. In the Bike Plan approved by City Council in 2001, Jarvis Street is not identified as either a signed bicycle route or for on-street bicycle lanes. The north-south bicycle route identified for this area is Sherbourne Street, where bicycle lanes currently exist.

While it is feasible to provide exclusive bicycle lanes by removing the centre reversible lane on Jarvis Street, this would preclude any widening of the boulevards. The recommendation to choose a wider boulevard was based on the study objective to improve the pedestrian realm along Jarvis Street, and that there is an existing bicycle facility in close proximity to Jarvis Street on Sherbourne Street. It is also proposed to widen the curb lanes on Jarvis Street to 3.6m from the existing 3.1m, which would improve conditions for cyclists who choose to use Jarvis Street.

(2) Increased Travel Time along Mount Pleasant Road and Jarvis Street

There were concerns from residents north of Bloor Street that a narrowing of Jarvis Street would result in increased and unacceptable travel times into the downtown core. The traffic analysis concluded that there would be an increase in delays and therefore travel time as a result of the

removal of the centre reversible lane. The increased travel time along Jarvis Street from Bloor Street to Queen Street is expected to increase from approximately 8 minutes to 10 minutes. Traffic Operations staff have reviewed these numbers and have determined that while this is a large increase on a percentage basis, the absolute change is relatively minor.

(3) Provision of a Temporary Trial Period with a 4 lane cross-section on Jarvis Street

There were also requests from residents north of Bloor Street to temporarily close the centre reversible lane for a trial period to determine the delays and increased travel time. A trial closure is possible, however, the results obtained will not necessarily replicate the conditions with a permanent closure of the reversible lane. A temporary closure of the reversible lane would require the use of construction barrels and/or concrete jersey barriers. These barriers would prevent any left-turn movements to and from properties along Jarvis Street. Transportation Services staff are not able to adequately provide for these turns while undertaking a trial closure of the centre lane. Allowing the left turns to occur with barriers in place could result in an unsafe condition along Jarvis Street. Left turns would only be possible at those signalized intersections where left turns are currently permitted. Since mid-block left turns are allowed now, and would be allowed with the permanent removal of the reversible lane, measurement of resultant delays and travel time on Jarvis Street during a temporary closure will not reflect the conditions that would result with a permanent closure. Consequently, any surveys and observations of the temporary condition would be misleading or inconclusive.

Transportation Services staff, through the feasibility study and the EA study, have concluded that there will be an increase in delays and congestion and have also determined that these projected increases are acceptable from a traffic operations perspective. Although it is possible to undertake this trial study it is staff's recommendation not to proceed with this trial study.

(4) Increased traffic infiltration through neighbourhoods north of Bloor Street

Residents north of Bloor Street expressed concerns that, as a result of increased delays, there will be traffic infiltration through their neighbourhoods. More specifically, they expressed concerns regarding Roxborough Street, Roxborough Road and Crescent Road. Transportation Services staff have reviewed these potential diversion routes and have determined that they are longer, slower and more circuitous than continuing along Mount Pleasant Road and Jarvis Street, and that based on the projected increase in travel time will not prove to be attractive options to motorists. However, staff in the Transportation Services Division will monitor these streets to determine if there are any adverse impacts resulting from the removal of the centre reversible lane and will recommend appropriate mitigating measures should this circumstance arise.

Next Steps

Pending approval of this report by City Council, the ESR will be filed in the public record for a minimum 30-day period. Once EA approval is received, detailed design of the Recommended Design may proceed.

Construction of this project will be coordinated with the rehabilitation of Jarvis Street, which is not anticipated within the next ten years. As indicated in the Financial Statement of this report, this timing may be advanced if additional funding is secured in the Jarvis Street Corridor Reserve Fund in conjunction with other development applications along Jarvis Street.

In addition, focus areas outside of the proposed limits of the work for the reconstruction of the street might be identified during the detailed design phase of this project. This work could be undertaken prior to the reconstruction of Jarvis Street. The General Manager, Transportation Services will report on the financial implications to the Jarvis Street Corridor Reserve Fund of undertaking work in these Focus Areas once costs of implementing these individual streetscape improvements are identified.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvement Environmental Assessment Study Study Area
2. Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvement Environmental Assessment Study Proposed Cross-Section
3. Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvement Environmental Assessment Study Environmental Study Report.

Attachment 1

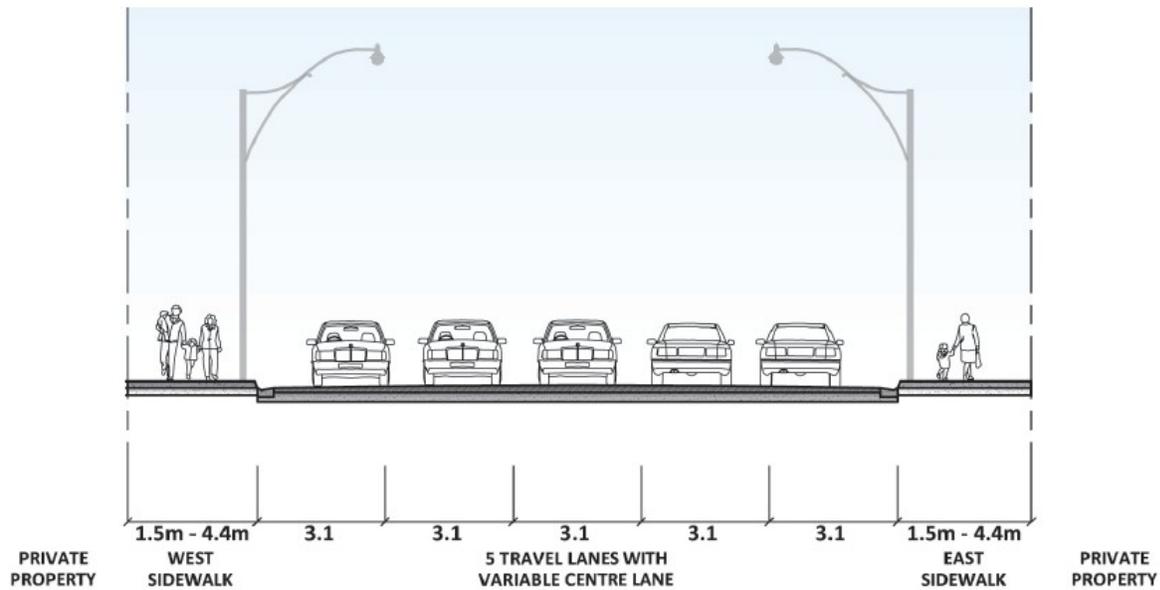
Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvements Class Environmental Assessment Study Study Area



Attachment 2

Jarvis Street Streetscape Improvements Class Environmental Assessment Study

Existing Cross-Section



Proposed Cross-Section

