



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Pedestrian Zones – Gould Street/Victoria Street, and Willcocks Street – Maintenance Agreements

Date:	August 5, 2011
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Acting Director, Toronto and East York District, Transportation Services Director, Public Realm Section, Transportation Services
Wards:	Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 27 and Trinity-Spadina, Ward 20
Reference Number:	p:\2011\ClusterB\tra\pr\te11004pr

SUMMARY

At its meeting on August 17, 2010, Toronto and East York Community Council directed Transportation Services to implement pilot pedestrian zones on: 1) Gould and Victoria Streets at Ryerson University, 2) Willcocks Street at the University of Toronto, and 3) Devonshire Place at the University of Toronto from September 2010 to September 2011, and to report back on the pilot projects by the fourth quarter of 2011.

Two of the pedestrian zones – Gould and Victoria Streets, and Willcocks Street – have been highly successful and are recommended for extension with a view that staff will report back on proposed permanent closures to vehicular traffic. Measures of success were: creation of a new public space, safety and quality; economic, social and community impacts; and transportation and access impacts. Data included surveys, feedback from key partners, City divisions, businesses, residents and community associations; and traffic data and observational data.

To date, the universities have contributed about \$372,000 for the two pedestrian zones to provide for year-round maintenance, landscaping, street furniture set-up, storage, and security, snow removal, cleaning, litter and waste management, events programming, and area improvements for their respective pedestrian zones.

This report is seeking authority from City Council to extend the existing maintenance agreement, with each of Ryerson University and the University of Toronto for their respective pedestrian zone, which will outline the roles and responsibilities of the City and the university for six months, from October 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012. This six-

month extension would allow Transportation Services, as directed by the Toronto and East York Community Council, adequate time to report back to City Council through the Toronto and East York Community Council on the proposed permanent closure of the pedestrian zones to vehicular traffic and on the principles underlying longer-term maintenance agreements with the Universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Services recommends that City Council:

1. Authorize staff to extend the existing agreement with Ryerson University for the pedestrian zone on Gould Street, between O'Keefe Lane and Bond Street, and on Victoria Street, between Gould Street and a point approximately 64 metres south of Gould Street from October 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 on the same terms and conditions generally as set out in the existing agreement and on such other terms and conditions as may be deemed appropriate by the General Manager of Transportation Services, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, and that the General Manager of Transportation Services be authorized to execute any such agreements(s) on behalf of the City.
2. Authorize staff to extend the existing agreement with the University of Toronto for the pedestrian zone on Willcocks Street, between Huron Street and St. George Street from October 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 on the same terms and conditions generally as set out in the existing agreement and on such other terms and conditions as may be deemed appropriate by the General Manager of Transportation Services, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, and that the General Manager of Transportation Services be authorized to execute any such agreements(s) on behalf of the City.
3. Direct Transportation Services to report back to City Council through the Toronto and East York Community Council on the principles underlying the longer term maintenance agreements with Ryerson University and the University of Toronto, prior to the expiry of the six month extension period.

Financial Impact

To date, the City has received external contributions of \$240,293 from Ryerson University and \$131,500 from the University of Toronto for year-round maintenance, staff time/labour, landscaping, street furniture set-up, storage, security, snow removal, cleaning, litter/waste management, events programming, and area improvements for their respective pedestrian zones. Contributions of about 40 percent of the above figures are expected to continue annually.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council adopted the Toronto Walking Strategy in May 2009 and directed the General Manager, Transportation Services, to work with Ryerson University and the University of Toronto to design and implement two pedestrian street projects by 2010.

On September 15, 2009, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted Items TE27.59 (entitled "Lane and Sidewalk Closure – 122 Bond Street") and TE27.166 (entitled "Lane and Sidewalk Closure at University of Toronto"), and in doing so directed staff to review the feasibility of implementing pedestrian zone pilot projects at Ryerson University and at the University of Toronto respectively, and to report back on the results in the third quarter of 2010.

On August 17, 2010, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted Item TE36.111, entitled "Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects – Gould Street, Victoria Street, Willcocks Street and Devonshire Place – Community Council," granting authority to implement Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects for 12 months at Ryerson University and at the University of Toronto and to report back on the effectiveness of the pilot projects by the fourth quarter of 2011.

On August 25, 26 and 27, 2010, City Council adopted Toronto and East York Community Council Item TE36.112, entitled "Ryerson University and University of Toronto – Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects – Gould Street, Victoria Street, Willcocks Street and Devonshire Place – City Council," authorizing staff to enter into maintenance agreements, with each of Ryerson University and the University of Toronto, which outline the roles and responsibilities of the City and the respective university.

On September 12, 2011, Transportation Services will be reporting to the Toronto and East York Community Council the results of the evaluation of the pedestrian zones and seek approval to direct Transportation Services to report back to City Council through the Toronto and East York Community Council on permanently closing the pedestrian zones to vehicular traffic and on the principles underlying longer-term maintenance agreements with the Universities in six-months time.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

City Council adopted the Toronto Walking Strategy in 2009. One of the key strategic actions in the Walking Strategy is "Creating Spaces and Places for People," including steps to design gathering places for pedestrians, support a beautiful public realm and transform streets into attractive destinations.

Such initiatives are important because they enable the City of Toronto to remain vibrant, economically competitive, and attractive for residents, employees, visitors/tourists, and businesses.

Toronto's Walking Strategy won the 2011 National Award of Excellence for Transportation from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities – in part, because of the innovative and successful pilot pedestrian zones – implemented in locations with significant pedestrian activity and in partnership with universities that made substantial contributions to the zones.

The pedestrian zones on 1) Gould and Victoria Streets at Ryerson University and 2) Willcocks Street at the University of Toronto campus were highly successful during their one-year pilot period and are recommended for extension with a view that staff will report back on proposed permanent closures to vehicular traffic. A third pilot project on Devonshire Place at the University of Toronto was discontinued within two months due to low usage and is not recommended for continuation. Key measures of success for the pilots included: an improved pedestrian experience (new public space, safety and quality); economic, social and community impacts; and transportation and access impacts. The pilot projects enabled staff to determine the key factors that made these two pedestrian zones succeed, as well as how to improve them for long-term implementation.

Staff have consulted and worked closely with representatives from Ryerson University, the University of Toronto, local businesses, local councillors, and residents on making the Gould and Victoria Streets, and Willcocks Street pedestrian zones permanent. Staff from Transportation Services (in Traffic Planning, Traffic Operations and the Public Realm Section) worked with Legal Services, Insurance and Risk Management, Fire Services, Toronto Building and the Toronto Parking Authority in the preparation of this report.

COMMENTS

Pedestrian Zone Projects - Maintenance Agreement(s)

An extension of the existing maintenance agreement with each of Ryerson University and the University of Toronto for their respective pedestrian zone – on Gould and Victoria Streets, and on Willcocks Street – is recommended in this report. This six-month extension is to allow Transportation Services to report back to City Council through the Toronto and East York Community Council on the proposed permanent closure of the pedestrian zones to vehicular traffic and on the principles underlying longer-term maintenance agreements with the Universities.

In the case of the University of Toronto, the extension of the maintenance agreement applies only to the Willcocks Street pedestrian zone. The Devonshire Place pedestrian zone, extending from 1 Devonshire Avenue to 15 Devonshire Avenue, has been discontinued and will not fall within the extension.

As part of the Pedestrian Zone Pilot Projects which started in September 2010, the City has supplied chairs, tables and umbrellas which were further supplemented by the universities. This furniture will remain in the pedestrian zones for the duration of the Agreement.

The universities have and will continue to take responsibility for the set-up, storage and security of all furniture, as well as to reimburse the City for losses over and above five percent of the amount. Each of the pedestrian zones will have free WiFi access provided by and at the cost of the universities to university students and staff with valid university identification and passwords.

The universities have been and will continue to be responsible for maintaining the agreed-upon fire routes and ensuring that the conditions in the pedestrian zone are maintained to the satisfaction of Fire Services.

The universities will continue to be responsible for the year-round maintenance of the pedestrian zone and will continue to remove litter and maintain garbage containers in the area. The universities will be required to obtain special events permits (and to satisfy such conditions as are required by the City) for such activities deemed beyond the scope of those normally permitted in a city park or a public space.

Conclusion

The implementation of pedestrian zones in locations with significant pedestrian activity, such as busy downtown campuses of Ryerson University and the University of Toronto, is an important element identified in the City's Walking Strategy. In partnership with the two universities, the pilot pedestrian zones on 1) Gould and Victoria Streets, and 2) Willcocks Street have successfully added new public spaces and have significantly improved safety and a sense of community. A third pilot project on Devonshire Place at the University of Toronto had low usage and has been discontinued permanently. Maintenance of the two successful pedestrian zones has been and will continue to be the responsibility of the universities.

Staff from Transportation Services, Legal Services, Insurance and Risk Management, Fire Services, Toronto Building and the Toronto Parking Authority have been consulted in the development and improvement of the pedestrian zones and in the development of this report. Around 3,600 citizens were surveyed and consulted as a component of the

evaluation which used information from traffic data, feedback from key partners, local councillors, local businesses, residents, and community associations, and observational data.

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