



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

Celebrate Yonge – Post Event Review

Date:	June 11, 2013
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Toronto Centre-Rosedale - Ward 27
Reference Number:	Te2013037te.row

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a post review on the "Celebrate Yonge – Street Event", and identify the next steps and approvals required to advance the recommendations in the Greenberg/KPMB Yonge Street Planning Framework.

A post review of the event by City staff and related agencies confirmed a smooth operation undertaken by the event organizers with no concerns recorded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Services recommends that Toronto and East York Community Council:

1. Receive for information the report (June 11, 2013) from the Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, respecting "Celebrate Yonge – Post Event Review".

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the City as a result of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council at its meeting on June 6, 7 & 8, 2012, among other things, adopted a report from the Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, dated April 27, 2012 titled "Celebrate Yonge – Street Event"
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE16.52>.

This authorized the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area in conjunction with the Ward Councillor, Kristyn Wong-Tam, Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 27, to co-produce "Celebrate Yonge", a destination event scheduled for four weeks from Tuesday August 14, 2012 to Wednesday September 19, 2012.

Further, City Council at its meeting on October 2, 3 & 4, 2012, among other things adopted a report from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, dated August 8, 2012 titled "Final Report – Downtown Yonge Street Studies" <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE18.16>

In the recommendations, City Council directed the "City Planning Division, Transportation Services, Economic Development and Culture, Technical Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation Divisions, in consultation with the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area and the Ward Councillor, to evaluate the four week event "Celebrate Yonge", and report back to the Toronto and East York Community Council in the first quarter of 2013 on the findings, such report to include the identification of what next steps and approvals would be required to advance the recommendations in the Greenberg/KPMB Yonge Street Planning Framework".

BACKGROUND

The "Celebrate Yonge" event, organized by the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA), consisted of 11 themed event areas including patios, lounges, art installations and street furniture that expanded the pedestrian space into the roadway.

The event took place between August 17 and September 16, 2012 and consisted of lane reductions, from four lanes to two lanes on the portion of Yonge Street between Queen Street and Gerrard Street. The lane closures allowed for approximately 4.0 to 4.5 metres of additional pedestrian space within the roadway on Yonge Street. The pedestrian space was separated from vehicular traffic by the placement of decorative planters and other protective barricades.

The DYBIA developed a comprehensive Traffic Management Plan related to the implementation and operation of the closure, which was reviewed and approved by City staff and affected agencies. The Plan addressed the following key issues:

- temporary changes to turn prohibitions at intersections in the area to facilitate diversion of traffic movements from Yonge Street to other north-south corridors;
- temporary signage and pavement markings;
- transit stop changes for TTC;
- alternative loading/delivery locations for businesses, including lay-bys on each block;
- waste management plan, including lay-by collection points on Yonge Street to accommodate City and private collections on each block;

- emergency service requirements, including access and mobility around fire hydrants and spacing for Fire, Police and EMS vehicles in case of emergency;
- barrier delineation, including planters and decorative stone; and
- pedestrian transitions between the curb lane and existing sidewalk.

To assess the impact of the event on vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, a broad study area was identified, based on input from staff, which would be reviewed pre and post event. This area was bounded by University Avenue to the west, Gerrard Street to the north, Jarvis Street to the east and Queen Street to the south. The specific corridors that were considered included University Avenue, Bay Street, Yonge Street, Victoria Street, Church Street and Jarvis Street.

TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY

PEDESTRIANS

The DYBIA was able to provide pedestrian count information extracted from automatic counters installed at Dundas Street, Shuter Street, and Queen Street, during the event. A significant number of people were observed in the area and there was an increase from the same period a year earlier. A total of 6,865,124 pedestrian movements were observed throughout the area, for an average daily total of 221,456 peds/day. This was an increase of +10% from the same period a year earlier.

VEHICLES

Traffic data for vehicles and bicycles before and during the event was conducted in the above-noted area in mid-July and mid-September of 2012.

The summary of the average weekday morning and afternoon peak period changes in the major roadway links is summarized in the following table:

Link	Southbound	Northbound
University Avenue (south of Gerrard Street)	+ 13 percent	- 4 percent
Bay Street (south of Gerrard Street)	+ 5 percent	+ 2 percent
Yonge Street (south of Gerrard Street)	- 30 percent	- 20 percent
Church Street (south of Gerrard Street)	+ 7 percent	+ 11 percent
Jarvis Street (south of Gerrard Street)	+ 20 percent	- 3 percent
Screenline (south of Gerrard Street)	+ 7 percent	- 2 percent
University Avenue (north of Queen Street)	0 percent	-1 percent
Bay Street (north of Queen Street)	-18 percent	+ 31 percent
Yonge Street (north of Queen Street)	- 16 percent	- 3 percent
Victoria Street (north of Queen Street)	0 percent	+ 16 percent
Church Street (north of Queen Street)	+ 1 percent	+ 9 percent
Jarvis Street (north of Queen Street)	+ 21 percent	- 14 percent
Screenline (north of Queen Street)	- 1 percent	+ 3 percent

Small volume changes of less than 10 percent were deemed to be based on daily variations and were not reviewed in more detail. Traffic volumes decreased on Yonge Street and most sections experienced a reduction of 50 to 200 vehicles per hour. The most notable reduction on Yonge Street was in the southbound direction during the morning rush hour where 200 vehicles were diverted. Most of the displaced southbound traffic migrated to Jarvis Street and some diverted to University Avenue.

In the northbound direction along Yonge Street there was a reduction in traffic of about 50-100 vehicles per hour at Gerrard Street and only a minimal decrease in traffic at Queen Street. Most of the displaced northbound Yonge Street traffic diverted to Bay Street, while some traffic diverted to Church Street and Victoria Street.

There were some changes to traffic patterns in the downtown core associated with the Celebrate Yonge event. However, they were not significant because Yonge Street in this area does not carry a high volume of traffic. The hourly volumes on Yonge Street range between 375 and 600 vehicles per hour per direction which is not a high traffic volume for a major arterial roadway.

Also, speed and delay studies were done on major north-south roadways between Gerrard Street and Queen Street with and without the event. Based on the review of data there wasn't a significant change in speed and delay studies for any of the roadways, including Yonge Street. On Yonge Street the delays increased in the order of 5 to 7 percent for southbound traffic while northbound delays stayed the same.

Overall, the lane reductions associated with the Celebrate Yonge event did not have a significant impact on traffic operations in the downtown core.

CYCLISTS

Based on the observations bicycle traffic increased in the area in September during the event. However, this increase can be likely attributed to the seasonal increase in commuter bicycle traffic in September as opposed to July, rather than to the Celebrate Yonge event.

COMMENTS

This was the first opportunity in Toronto to apply the new changes to liquor licences, which allowed servers to cross the sidewalk to serve drinks to customers. This arrangement kept the sidewalks clear of seating and open to pedestrians, while also keeping the storefronts exposed and doors accessible.

The Celebrate Yonge Street Event received extensive positive media coverage across Canada and a post review of the event by City staff and related agencies confirmed a smooth operation undertaken by the event organizers with no concerns recorded.

Based on the successful operation and lessons learned from the 2012 Street Event, the Yonge Street BIA wishes to develop a permanent installation similar in scale and impact to the event. Permanent changes in the road configuration will require approval under the Environmental Assessment Act of Ontario. For a project of this type, the appropriate process to follow is that of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will examine the project's need and justification, alternatives, impacts, mitigation, and preferred plan while considering all aspects of the environment and incorporating an appropriate level of consultation with stakeholders, agencies, and the public.

All funds in the Transportation Services, Engineering Studies, budget are committed for 2013 and 2014. We would be unable to undertake this class EA study until 2015 at the earliest, unless alternate sources of funding are identified.

CONTACT

Kyp Perikleous, Manager
Right of Way Management, Toronto and East York District
Telephone: 416-392-1525
Fax: 416-392-7465
E-mail: kperikle@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jacqueline White, P.Eng.,
Acting Director
Transportation Services
Toronto and East York District

P:\2013\Cluster B\TRA\Toronto and East York\row\te2013037te.row