



**STAFF REPORT  
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Traffic Management Plan – Leslie Street Connection Track**

<b>Date:</b>	June 12, 2013
<b>To:</b>	Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District
<b>Wards:</b>	Toronto-Danforth, Ward 30 Beaches-East York, Ward 32
<b>Reference Number:</b>	Ts2013133te.top

**SUMMARY**

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Transportation Services is responding to a request from Toronto and East York Community Council to submit a traffic management plan for the construction of the Leslie Street connection track.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Transportation Services recommends that Toronto and East York Community Council:**

1. Receive this report for information.

**Financial Impact**

All costs associated with the traffic management plan will be the responsibility of the TTC.

**ISSUE BACKGROUND**

Toronto and East York Community Council, at its meeting of February 26, 2013, amended Item TE22.66 (Road Alteration-Leslie Street), and requested that the Acting Director, Transportation Services, submit a traffic management plan for: South of Eastern Avenue employment area and the Port Lands; and the surrounding neighbourhood streets and intersections including Lake Shore Boulevard East.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Project Scope**

The Leslie Street connection track, approximately 800 metres in length, extends from Commissioners Street, through the Lake Shore Boulevard East and Eastern Avenue intersections, to Queen Street East. Completion of the track will allow the new low-floor streetcars to access the streetcar network from the new storage and maintenance facility (known as Leslie Barns) currently under construction on the south-east corner of Leslie Street and Lake Shore Boulevard East.

In addition to the construction of the track, a number of improvements will be made to the area. Aging sewers, water mains and various communication utilities will be upgraded and installed in the Leslie Street corridor. Streetscape improvements will be made along Leslie Street, between Queen Street East and Tommy Thompson Park, including wider sidewalks, customized street lights and hundreds of native tree plantings around the future facility. Streetscape improvements will also be made on Queen Street East, between Rushbrooke Avenue and Hastings Avenue.

The first phase of construction work will be focused on Leslie Street, between Lake Shore Boulevard East and Commissioners Street. There will be lane reductions on Leslie Street with a minimum of one traffic lane in each direction maintained south of Lake Shore Boulevard East. In future phases, Leslie Street will undergo segmented closures.

### **Proposed Traffic Management Plan**

The traffic management plan for the Leslie Street connection track project has evolved from a plan which was originally prepared by TTC staff in consultation with Transportation Services staff, to a plan submitted by the prime contractor, Pomerlau. Area residents and business owners/operators have had an opportunity to review and comment on the principles of the original plan in a series of recent consultation events, and the feedback received through these events has been incorporated into the current version of the traffic management plan.

The consultation events held recently with area residents and business owners/operators were aimed at soliciting comments on the proposed traffic management plan. Meetings were held with residents on March 27 and May 21, 2013, with the Leslieville BIA and businesses north of Lake Shore Boulevard East on April 9 and May 22, 2013, as well as with Port Lands businesses on April 12 and 23, 2013. Suggestions that were made in the initial meetings were reviewed by staff, and where appropriate, modifications were made to the traffic management plan which was presented at the subsequent meetings. Pomerlau staff was present at all of the consultation sessions and their traffic management plan has been updated accordingly. Pomerlau made an initial submission dated May 8, 2013 and at the time of writing of this report, Pomerlau is updating the plan based on comments received from the consultation sessions as well as Transportation Services staff.

The main goal of the traffic management plan for the area south of Eastern Avenue and the Port Lands is to maintain access for businesses and mitigate delays for vehicles destined to/from this area. The main goal of the plan for neighbourhood streets is to protect them from non-local traffic and to keep through traffic on main arterial roadways.

The main aspects of the traffic management plan are as follows:

### **Pedestrians and Cyclists**

The plan ensures that the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists will be always fully maintained. Sidewalks and cycle paths will be maintained to the greatest extent possible and any disruption to pedestrian and cycle movements will be minimized. Existing sidewalks will be available throughout the project, except during periods of sidewalk reconstruction or utility work when the utility is beneath the sidewalk. During these construction activities the sidewalk on the other side of the road will be available, with appropriate notification to pedestrians. Cycling facilities will be maintained throughout the project, either in their existing location or in their replacement location. Where there are no cycling facilities provided cyclists will be accommodated under normal protocols for construction projects.

### **Local Roads**

Local roads will be protected from displaced Leslie Street traffic. In order to accomplish this goal, we will place a priority on maintaining east-west traffic capacity as much as possible so that traffic will make use of Dundas Street East, Queen Street East, Eastern Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard East as opposed to using local streets. The volumes of east-west through traffic on these major east-west routes is significantly higher than any of the north-south or turning movements in the area. By minimizing the disruption of the east-west through movements we will minimize the potential for that traffic diverting to local roads. Throughout the project, east-west traffic capacity crossing Leslie Street (on Lake Shore Boulevard East, Eastern Avenue and Queen Street East) will be maintained with 5 out of 6 lanes in operation, except when the intersection of Queen Street East and Leslie Street is closed when there will be 4 out of 6 lanes in operation. When work is taking place at one of the three major east-west crossings of Leslie Street we will ensure that the other two crossings will retain their full capacity in the east-west direction.

There are a number of existing peak period turn restrictions in the area which keep traffic on arterial roads as opposed to local roads, during peak periods. During the consultation events, some residents advocated for additional turn restrictions as a means of protecting local roads from displaced traffic. However, there were many residents concerned about this approach as the restrictions would apply to all motorists and these restrictions would result in inconvenience for local residents as well as motorists destined to facilities on local roads such as schools. In addition, residents on parallel roads not protected by turn restrictions would be subject to increased traffic volumes. As per the monitoring program described below, we will monitor traffic volumes on local roads, as well as feedback from residents, and we will carefully consider the implementation of any proposed turn restrictions in consultation with residents and the local Councillors.

## **Signing**

There are two components as part of signing plan for this project. Eight static advisory signs located on the roads approaching the construction site will be installed to give drivers advance notice of the project. Generally, the wording on these signs will remain constant for the project duration.

Twenty Portable Variable Message Signs will be located on roads approaching the construction site to provide drivers with real-time information regarding planned and possibly emergency disruptions. Locations for 14 of the signs have been selected and the remaining 6 signs are available for operation as required.

## **Traffic Monitoring**

Because it is very difficult to accurately predict how traffic patterns will be impacted by this project, a comprehensive traffic monitoring program will be implemented with the following features:

- Five traffic monitoring cameras will be installed. Four will be located on Leslie Street, at Queen Street East, Eastern Avenue, Lake Shore Boulevard East and at Commissioners Street. One will be installed at the intersection of Lake Shore Boulevard East and Carlaw Avenue. These cameras will provide live video of traffic conditions to the Transportation Services Traffic Management Centre Control Room where staff will monitor and suggest temporary signal timings and/or turn prohibitions, if required, based on their observations of traffic conditions.
- Traffic volume counts throughout the area will be taken under existing conditions and then under construction conditions for comparison purposes.
- An independent audit will be taken at regular intervals to ensure that the contractor is complying with all of the contract conditions and to identify any required adjustments to the traffic management plan.
- A local community liaison office will be established to stay “in-touch” with businesses and residents, and to be available to address any concerns. This office will also be responsible for ensuring that businesses and residents are properly informed in advance of all planned disruptions.
- Transportation Services will respond to traffic comments and concerns during construction from all possible sources (Councillors offices, 311, public, other agencies, etc.)

## **Access for Motorists**

Access to all businesses and residents will be maintained at all times. When there are temporary disruptions reasonable alternative accesses will be provided. In the case of the plazas on either side of Leslie Street, just north of Lake Shore Boulevard East (Tim Hortons/Price Chopper on the west and Loblaws/Burger King on the east) temporary right-in/right-out accesses will be constructed from Lake Shore Boulevard East to the respective plazas. The traffic management and access plans will have consistent long-term traffic arrangements in effect, since it is often counter-productive to have frequent route and access changes which can confuse the travelling public.

## **Traffic Signal Timing Modifications**

A number of traffic signal timing modifications will be implemented for the duration of the project as a means of mitigating the impacts of construction for area traffic. A northbound left-turn green arrow will be implemented at the intersection of Carlaw Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard East as a means of assisting vehicles, particularly heavy trucks originating from the Port Lands, to access westbound Lake Shore Boulevard East and ultimately the Gardiner Expressway. As part of traffic monitoring we will also be evaluating the extension of existing left-turn green arrows and possible implementation of new left-turn features as required. As an additional means of promoting the use of east-west arterials, and as discussed earlier, traffic signal cycles will be increased along major east-west routes and the additional green time will be added to east-west movements.

## **Parking Restrictions**

As a means of maximizing capacity along north-south arterials such as Carlaw Avenue and Coxwell Avenue, the extension of existing peak period parking restrictions will be reviewed and implemented as required.

## **Communication Strategy**

A communications strategy for the area signs, distributed literature, and media releases will be implemented that creates the correct balance between the need to divert through traffic away from the area and yet at the same time indicate that businesses are still open for business.

## **Transit Impacts**

The work on Leslie Street will impact the operation of the 83 Jones bus and the 31B Greenwood bus, both of which use Leslie Street. TTC is working on temporary re-routings for both of these bus routes.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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