



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Status Report: Feasibility of Closing the Waterfront Trail Gap along Lake Shore Blvd. West from Norris Crescent to First Street

<b>Date:</b>	May 9, 2014
<b>To:</b>	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Transportation Services
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 6 (Etobicoke-Lakeshore)
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2014\Cluster B\TRA\TIM\pw14013tim.docx

#### SUMMARY

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The Waterfront Trail stretches over 1,400 kilometres along the Ontario shores of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and Lake St. Clair, as well as the Niagara, Detroit, and St. Lawrence Rivers. It connects 68 communities and over 405 parks and natural areas. The Waterfront Trail follows Toronto's waterfront on a combination of multi-use trails, quiet residential streets and in a few locations along major arterial roads. The long-term goal is to relocate the Waterfront Trail from these arterial roads wherever feasible and to provide a continuous route on multi-use trails and quiet residential streets. The Waterfront Trail was recently extended from just west of Humber Bay Park to Norris Crescent. However, there is no opportunity to provide a continuous Waterfront Trail route further west, between Norris Crescent and First Street, because there are no connecting streets south of Lake Shore Boulevard and no public access along the Lake Ontario shore line. To continue west, trail users must travel along Lake Shore Boulevard to First Street to connect with the Waterfront Trail, continuing along quiet residential streets and multi-use trails to connect with the Mississauga section of the trail.

The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee has requested Transportation Services to investigate the feasibility of providing a cycling facility along Lake Shore Boulevard West to connect the Etobicoke sections of the Waterfront Trail. This report provides an update on the ongoing investigation. A final report on a proposed solution will be submitted to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee in the first quarter of 2015.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:**

1. Public Works and Infrastructure Committee receive this report for information.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial impacts associated with the receipt of this report. A proposed solution, including the estimated implementation cost, will be included in a final report to be submitted to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee in the first quarter of 2015.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting on March 4, 2014, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee referred a communication, "Feasibility of Closing Gap on Waterfront Trail – Etobicoke Section, Lake Shore Boulevard West, between Norris Crescent and First Street," to the General Manager, Transportation Services, for a progress report to the June 18, 2014 Public Works and Infrastructure Committee meeting (PW29.10). The Committee also requested that a final report be submitted to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee in the first quarter of 2015.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.PW29.10>

### **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The 1,400 kilometre Waterfront Trail follows the shores of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St Lawrence River, connecting communities from Windsor to the Quebec border. Development of the Waterfront Trail is coordinated by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, working in partnership with the many municipalities and regions along the route. The Waterfront Trail route is a combination of off-street trails, linked by on-street routes, where necessary, to provide a continuous course. The municipalities and regional governments along the route continue to add new segments of off-street trail and improve on-street connections to close the gaps in the Waterfront Trail.

The majority of the Waterfront Trail through Etobicoke is on multi-use trails and quiet residential streets south of Lake Shore Boulevard West. The Waterfront Trail was recently extended from just west of Humber Bay Park further west to Norris Crescent. To continue west from this point, trail users must travel 1.3 kilometres along Lake Shore Boulevard West, from Norris Crescent to First Street. West of First Street the Waterfront Trail continues along quiet residential streets and multi-use trails to connect with the Mississauga section of the Trail. There is no opportunity to provide a continuous Waterfront Trail route between Norris Crescent and First Street because there are no connecting streets or public access along the Lake Ontario shore line. Walkers and runners can use the sidewalk on the

south side of Lake Shore Boulevard West to make the connection; however, cyclists must ride on Lake Shore Boulevard West in mixed traffic.

The location of the Lake Shore Boulevard West section of the Waterfront Trail is illustrated in Appendix 1 attached to this report.

## **COMMENTS**

Lake Shore Boulevard West operates as a two-way major arterial roadway, with two traffic lanes in each direction. The TTC operates the 508 Lake Shore streetcar route westbound and eastbound on this section of Lake Shore Boulevard West. The road is approximately 19.5 metres wide and has an average 8-hour traffic volume of approximately 6,700 motor vehicles. On-street parking is permitted on both sides of Lake Shore Boulevard West. Between Norris Crescent and First Street there is space to park approximately 97 motor vehicles on the north side and 80 motor vehicles on the south side, for a total of 177 parking spaces. Four parking surveys were conducted during the mid-week morning, afternoon and evening periods; and on a weekend afternoon. The number of parked cars observed during the parking study ranged from a low of 21 vehicles (mid-week afternoon) to a high of 79 vehicles (mid-week evening) on both sides of the street.

This section of Lake Shore Boulevard West is very wide for the traffic volume and parking demand that it accommodates. There are a few potential design options for re-allocating road space to improve cycling conditions and providing a better Waterfront Trail connection. The options include bicycle lanes or cycle tracks along both sides of the street or a two-way separated cycle track along the south side of the street. Bicycle lanes or cycle tracks along both sides of the street could potentially be implemented with painted markings only and might provide better service for cyclists travelling along Lake Shore Boulevard West. This option would provide a more comfortable connection for eastbound cyclists following the Waterfront Trail; however, westbound cyclists would be required to cross Lake Shore Boulevard twice - at Norris Crescent and again at First Street. Providing a two-way separated cycle track along the south side of the street would provide a better Waterfront Trail cycling connection for both eastbound and westbound cyclists as there would be no requirement to cross Lake Shore Boulevard West. The "two-way" design option would require some type of physical separation to protect cyclists, particularly cyclists travelling in the westbound direction.

A public meeting for cycling and Waterfront Trail improvements in Ward 6, including potential cycling improvements along Lake Shore Boulevard West, was held on April 16, 2014, at the Polish Cultural Centre, at 2282 Lake Shore Boulevard West. The meeting was attended by approximately 50 people. Community participants were asked to provide initial feedback on options for improving cycling along Lake Shore Boulevard West and a few comment sheets were submitted. The community meeting participants generally preferred a two-way cycle track or trail along the south side rather than one-way bicycle lanes or cycle tracks along both sides of the street because it would provide greater benefit to Waterfront Trail users.

The preliminary assessment suggests that it may be feasible to provide a two-way cycle track on the south side; however, this option may require some reconstruction to accommodate a continuous cycle track and potentially removal of all parking on the south side. Based on the parking surveys conducted to date, the peak observed parking demand could be accommodated entirely on the north side of the street.

Transportation Services will conduct a more comprehensive evaluation of both the one-way and two-way bicycle facility options to determine the benefits and impacts of each option as well as the costs. The evaluation would assess the impacts of reducing the parking supply, consolidating parking on one side of the street, narrowing the existing lanes, and reducing the number of traffic lanes, during the peak and off-peak periods.

The assessment of the design options will be undertaken in consultation with the Ward Councillor, the community and affected stakeholders such as the T.T.C. A second community consultation meeting will be scheduled following the October municipal election to present a proposed solution. A final report on a proposed solution will be submitted to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee in the first quarter of 2015.

The Councillor for Ward 6 – Etobicoke-Lakeshore has been consulted in the preparation of this status report.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Stephen M. Buckley  
General Manager  
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## **ATTACHMENT**

APPENDIX 1 – Context Map: Waterfront Trail – Lake Shore Blvd West from Norris Crescent to First Street