

Road Alteration and Parking Amendment Pilot Project - Avenue Road

Date: May 24, 2017
To: Toronto and East York Community Council
From: Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District
Wards: Ward 22, St. Paul's

SUMMARY

As the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) operates a transit service on Avenue Road, City Council approval of this report is required.

Transportation Services is requesting approval from City Council to modify the section of Avenue Road, between Lynwood Avenue and Balmoral Avenue. The proposed changes will re-align the southbound lanes, providing a separation between the flow of traffic and pedestrians on the west side of the road, which includes two schools. These changes will enhance the safety for pedestrians and will be undertaken as a one-year pilot project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, recommends that:

1. City Council approve the alteration of Avenue Road, between Lynwood Avenue and Balmoral Avenue, generally as shown on Drawing No. 421G-2393, dated February 2017, attached to the May 2017 report entitled "Road Alteration and Parking Amendment Pilot Project – Avenue Road", from the Acting Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District.
2. City Council amend the existing stopping prohibition in effect between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, on the west side of Avenue Road, between Macpherson Avenue and St. Clair Avenue West, to operate between Macpherson Avenue and a point 23 metres north of Balmoral Avenue and between Lynwood Avenue and St. Clair Avenue West.

3. City Council amend the existing parking prohibition in effect at all times on the west side of Avenue Road, between Farnham Avenue and a point 38 metres south of St. Clair Avenue West, to operate between Farnham Avenue and Balmoral Avenue and between Lynwood Avenue and a point 38 metres south of St. Clair Avenue West.
4. City Council enact a stopping prohibition in effect at all times on the west of Avenue Road, between a point 23 metres north of Balmoral Avenue and Lynwood Avenue.
5. City Council direct that Avenue Road be returned to its previous conditions when the one-year trial period is completed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

All costs associated with the necessary signage, pavement marking and planter box installation are included within the Transportation Services 2017 Operating Budget.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto City Council, at its meeting on February 10, 2015, adopted Item TE3.61, which recommended the designation of a school speed zone on Avenue Road in the vicinity of Brown Junior Public School, operating from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The speed limit on this section of Avenue Road was reduced from 50 km/h to 40 km/h during this time period and motorists are alerted by flashing beacons on both sides the road on the school's approaches. The Council decision can be found at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.TE3.61>

COMMENTS

Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, was requested by Councillor Josh Matlow to report on a pilot project to implement modifications and parking amendments on Avenue Road, between Lynwood Avenue and Balmoral Avenue, to address safety concerns for pedestrians.

Existing Conditions

Avenue Road, between Lynwood Avenue and Balmoral Avenue, is a major arterial roadway which operates two-way traffic. It has a pavement width of about 19.5 metres and a daily, two-way volume of about 45,000 vehicles. The posted speed limit on this section of Avenue Road is generally 50 km/h. However, there is a 40 km/h school speed zone that is in effect from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, between a point 30 metres south of Balmoral Avenue and a point 30 metres north of Lynwood Avenue. The school speed zone only operates during the school year. Signs and flashing beacons have been posted to alert motorists of the operation of the school speed zone.

Avenue Road consists of three lanes in each direction for general traffic. Heavy trucks on Avenue Road are prohibited between the hours of 7:00 p.m. of one day to 7:00 a.m. of the next following day. TTC service in this section of Avenue Road is provided by the '5 Avenue Rd' and the '142 Downtown / Avenue Rd Express' buses. North-south transit stops on Avenue Road are located north of Balmoral Avenue.

Brown Junior Public School (No. 454 Avenue Road) and the Avenue Road Art School (No. 460 Avenue Road) are located on the west side of Avenue Road. The surrounding area is generally residential.

The following parking regulations are in effect on this section of Avenue Road:

West side

- Stopping is prohibited, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday; and
- Parking is prohibited at all times.

East side

- Stopping is prohibited, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday to Friday; and
- Parking is prohibited at all times.

Pedestrian Concerns

Transportation Services were advised of potential safety concerns due to the speed and volume of traffic using Avenue Road, in conjunction with the width and proximity of the west sidewalk to this vehicular traffic. As noted, there are two schools in this section of Avenue Road and many of the pedestrians in this area are school-age children.

Proposals

North of St. Clair Avenue West, Avenue Road consists of two southbound lanes. The third southbound lane for motorists begins just south of St. Clair Avenue West, at Lynwood Avenue. In order to address the pedestrian concerns and provide separation between the southbound curb lane of Avenue Road and pedestrians on the west sidewalk, Transportation Services investigated providing a 'buffer' area within the southbound curb lane. The beginning of the third southbound lane on Avenue Road can be relocated about 100 metres south, to Balmoral Avenue. The southbound curb lane on Avenue Road, between Lynwood Avenue and Balmoral Avenue, would be closed through the use of planter boxes, flexible posts and pavement markings. Three different options were evaluated:

Option 1. Close the southbound curb lane of Avenue Road using eight planter boxes. The closure would be 65 metres in length and would have 37.4 metre and 25.0 metre long tapers on the approach and exit, respectively. This design leaves sufficient space for a standard TTC bus to stop near-side at Balmoral Avenue.

Option 2. Close the southbound curb lane of Avenue Road using eight planter boxes. The closure would be 45 metres in length and would have 37.4 metre and 35.0 metre long tapers on the approach and exit, respectively. This design leaves sufficient space for an articulated TTC bus to stop near-side at Balmoral Avenue.

Option 3. Close the southbound curb lane of Avenue Road using ten planter boxes. The closure would be 65 metres in length and would have 37.4 metre and 25.0 metre long tapers on the approach and exit, respectively. This design leaves sufficient space for a standard TTC bus to stop near-side at Balmoral Avenue. This options leaves less room than Option 1 for motorists to park illegally and leaves sufficient space for a standard TTC bus to stop near-side at Balmoral Avenue.

Comments

Transportation Services circulated the three Avenue Road options for comments. These comments have been summarized as follows:

Solid Waste Management - There were no issues with the proposals.

Toronto Fire Services - There were no issues reported with the proposals, except a requirement that the planter boxes be positioned to ensure that fire hydrants remain visible and accessible from Avenue Road.

Toronto Paramedic Services - There were no issues with the proposals.

Toronto Police Services - Comments were requested but have not been received to date.

TTC - Option 2 is preferred, as the longer southbound lane for the near-side transit stop at Balmoral Avenue allows for articulated buses to be run on Avenue Road. These types of buses do not currently operate on Avenue Road.

Transportation Services advises that all three designs will result in concerns with snow plowing and manual cleaning and will increase costs associated with road maintenance. In all of the designs, it is recommended that stopping be prohibited at all times along the length of the block, excepting the section immediately north of Balmoral Avenue. This section can maintain the peak period stopping prohibitions and will have a standing prohibition at all times due to the TTC transit stop.

Conclusions

Based on discussions with Councillor Matlow, Brown Junior Public School and the adjacent community, it was determined that Option 3 is the preferred option. It is recommended that this installation be piloted for one year to determine the effectiveness of these measures. If successful, consideration could be given to implementing a permanent build-out of the sidewalk on the west side of Avenue Road, between Lynwood Avenue and Balmoral Avenue.

Councillor Josh Matlow has been advised of the recommendations of this staff report.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Drawing No. 421G-2393, dated February 2017

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