

Metrolinx Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit: Traffic Regulation Amendments, New Traffic Signals and Long-term Road Closures

Date: January 3, 2019
To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee
From: General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards: 5, 8, 12, 16, 20 and 21

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for traffic regulation amendments and road closures within the at-grade and below-grade sections of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (ECLRT) project corridor.

This report recommends the following permanent traffic amendments within the at-grade and below grade sections of the ECLRT:

- Implementation of new traffic control signals at the intersections of Pharmacy Avenue at Craigton Drive;
- Removal of a number of turn lanes and implementation of turn prohibitions; and
- Implementation of a northbound right-turn on red prohibition at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West and Northcliffe Boulevard.

In addition, the report seeks Council authority for two temporary long-term road closures and extension of an existing temporary lane closure in support of the ongoing construction at Caledonia Station, Forest Hill Station and Keele Station:

- Caledonia Station - Closure of the westbound diverging lane on the north side of Eglinton Avenue West, between Blackthorn Boulevard and existing access to the commercial development to the north, for a period of 20 months;
- Forest Hill Station - Closure of Peveril Hill North, between Eglinton Avenue West and the public laneway to the east, for a period of 13 months; and
- Keele Station - continuation of the closure of the westbound curb lane and adjacent sidewalk on Eglinton Avenue West, between Keele Street and the east side of Trethewey Drive and between Trethewey Drive and a point 105 metres west, for a period of 11 months.

Lastly, this report recommends a number of temporary turn prohibitions within the at-grade section of ECLRT along with a number of temporary turn restrictions and traffic bylaw amendments that would be required to accommodate safe traffic movements and the re-routing of TTC service during construction of Forest Hill Station if the medium-term closure of the intersection of Bathurst Street north and Eglinton Avenue is approved. The proposed closure of this intersection falls within delegated authority to the General Manager Transportation Services and is the subject of a public town hall to be held by Metrolinx on January 16, 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the installation of traffic control signals at the intersections of Pharmacy Avenue and Craigton Drive.
2. City Council rescind the existing northbound U-turn prohibition in effect on Pharmacy Avenue, between a point 132 metres north of Eglinton Avenue East and Craigton Drive.
3. City Council rescind the existing southbound U-turn prohibition in effect on Pharmacy Avenue, between a point 133 metres south of Eglinton Avenue East and a point 45 metres further south.
4. City Council authorize removal of the following turn lanes as part of the permanent design of the at-grade section of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit project:
 - a. Westbound right-turn lane at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Sloane Avenue.
 - b. Westbound left-turn lane at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue.
 - c. Westbound left-turn lane at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Pharmacy Avenue.
 - d. Eastbound right-turn lane at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Hakimi Avenue.
 - e. Eastbound and westbound right-turn lanes at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Warden Avenue.
 - f. Southbound left-turn lane at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Thermos Road.
 - g. Eastbound right-turn lane at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Sinnott Road.

h. Eastbound and westbound left-turn lanes at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Birchmount Road.

5. City Council authorize implementation of the following turn prohibitions as part of the permanent design of the at-grade section of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit project:

a. Westbound left-turn movement prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue.

b. Westbound left-turn movement prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Pharmacy Avenue.

c. Eastbound and westbound left-turn movements prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Birchmount Road.

6. City Council prohibit northbound right turn movement on red traffic signal at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West and Northcliffe Boulevard.

7. City Council authorize the implementation of the following temporary turn prohibitions in support of the ongoing construction activities within the at-grade section of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit Project:

a. Westbound right-turn movement prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Sloane Avenue, from April 1, 2019 to May 1, 2020.

b. Eastbound right-turn movement prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Hakimi Avenue, from July 1, 2019 to August 1, 2020.

c. Eastbound and westbound right-turn movements prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Warden Avenue, from April 1, 2019 to May 1, 2020.

d. Eastbound right-turn movement prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Sinnott Road, from April 1, 2019 to May 1, 2020.

8. City Council authorize the closure of a portion of the westbound diverging lane on the north side of Eglinton Avenue West, between Blackthorne Avenue and existing access to the commercial development to the north, from February 1, 2019 to September 30, 2021.

9. City Council authorize the closure of the portion of Peveril Hill North, between Eglinton Avenue West and the public laneway to the east, from February 1, 2019 to February 28, 2020.

10. City Council authorize implementation of the following temporary turn prohibitions in support of the road closure at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West and Bathurst Street:

- a. Eastbound right-turn movement on red traffic signal prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West and Bathurst Street from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- b. Northbound right-turn movement on red traffic signal prohibited at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West and Bathurst Street from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- c. Westbound left-turn movement prohibited, buses excepted, at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West and Bathurst Street from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.

11. City Council authorize the following traffic by-law amendments to accommodate the TTC bus detour route in support of the closure of Bathurst Street, between Eglinton Avenue West and Wembley Road:

- a. Implementation of one-way northbound traffic operations on Hilltop Road, between Eglinton Avenue West and a point 20 metres north, from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- b. Rescind the existing standing prohibition in effect on the east and west sides of Hilltop Road, between Eglinton Avenue West and a point 20 metres north, from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- c. Prohibit stopping at all times on the east and west sides of Hilltop Road, between Eglinton Avenue West and a point 20 metres north, from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- d. Rescind the existing parking prohibition in effect from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. except Sunday on the south side of Wembley Road, between Bathurst Street and Hilltop Road, from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- e. Prohibit parking at all times on the south side of Wembley Road, between Bathurst Street and Hilltop Road, from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- f. Prohibit parking at all times on the south side of Vesta Drive, between Mayfair Avenue and a point 15 metres west, from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- g. Rescind the existing parking prohibition in effect from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at all times on the west side of Mayfair Avenue, between a point 30.5 metres north of Eglinton Avenue West and Vesta Drive, from February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.
- h. Prohibit parking at all times on the west side of Mayfair Avenue, between a point 30.5 metres north of Eglinton Avenue West and Vesta Drive, February 15, 2019 to September 15, 2019.

12. City Council authorize the continuation of the closure of the westbound curb lane and adjacent sidewalk on Eglinton Avenue West, between Keele Street and the east side of Trethewey Drive, from May 1, 2019 to March 30, 2020 and require that alternative pedestrian access continue to be provided.

13. City Council authorize the continuation of the closure of a portion of the westbound curb lane and adjacent sidewalk on Eglinton Avenue West, between the west side of Trethewey Drive and a point 105 metres west of Trethewey Drive, from May 1, 2019 to March 30, 2020 and require that alternative pedestrian access continue to be provided.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the City of Toronto associated with the recommendations in this report. Metrolinx's contractor, Crosslinx Transit Solutions (CTS), is required to implement all recommendations as conditions of permit approval, funded from the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit project budget.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009, City Council adopted item CC42.7 Eglinton LRT Transit Project Assessment. The Council decision can be found at:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-25444.pdf>

At its meeting of March 31, 2016, City Council adopted item PW11.5 entitled Metrolinx LRT Projects – Delegation to the General Manager, Transportation Services, to Approve Road Closures Up To And Including 365 Consecutive Days for the Metrolinx Crosstown LRT. This authorized the General Manager, Transportation Services, to temporarily close any highway or part of a highway, until January 1, 2021, for a period up to and including 365 consecutive days as required for the purposes of construction of the Metrolinx Eglinton Crosstown LRT project. The authorization did not extend to the F. G. Gardiner Expressway, the Don Valley Parkway, the W. R. Allen Road, Black Creek Drive or Highway 27. As part of the action, it was noted that Metrolinx has developed and implemented a comprehensive communications program utilizing a variety of meeting techniques to keep City Councillors and their staff apprised of plans and developments related to the project. From this plan, the proposals outlined in this report has been developed. The Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PW11.5>

At its meeting of May 24, 25 and 26, 2017, City Council adopted item PW21.4 entitled Metrolinx LRT Projects – Eglinton Crosstown LRT Long-Term Roadway Amendments: Keele and Fairbank Stations. The Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PW21.4>

Metrolinx Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit: Traffic Regulation Amendments, New Traffic Signals and Long-term Road Closures

At its meeting of October 2, 3 and 4, 2017, City Council adopted item PW23.9 entitled Metrolinx LRT Projects – Eglinton Crosstown LRT At-grade Segment Traffic Bylaw Amendments. The Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PW23.9>

At its meeting of March 26, 2018, City Council adopted item PW27.9 entitled Metrolinx LRT Projects – Eglinton Crosstown LRT: Long-Term Temporary Traffic Amendments - Forest Hill Station. The Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PW27.9>

At its meeting of June 26, 2018, City Council adopted item MM43.6 entitled Metrolinx LRT Projects – Metrolinx Eglinton Crosstown LRT: Prohibiting Eastbound Right turns on Eglinton Avenue West at Old Forest Hill Road - correction to previous Council decision - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker. The Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.MM43.6>

At its meeting of July 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 30, 2018, City Council adopted item PW31.8 entitled Metrolinx LRT Projects – Metrolinx Eglinton Crosstown LRT: Long-Term Road Closures and Traffic Regulation Amendments. The Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PW31.8>

COMMENTS

The Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (ECLRT) line runs along Eglinton Avenue for 19 km between Mount Dennis (Weston Road) and Kennedy station, including a 10 km underground portion between Keele Street and Laird Drive. ECLRT has 25 stations and stops and is a vital addition to the City's transit network, with links to 54 bus routes, three subway stations and various GO Transit lines.

Construction work is currently being undertaken at both the below-grade and at-grade sections of the ECLRT project to achieve the in-service target date of September 2021.

This report discusses construction activities, resultant road closures and traffic amendments within the at-grade section and the below grade section at Fairbank Station, Caledonia Station, Forest Hill Station and Keele Station.

At-Grade Section - Permanent Traffic Amendments

The at-grade section of the ECLRT extends from Brentcliffe Road to Kennedy Station. With the exception of the Stations at Don Mills Road and Kennedy Road, the LRT vehicles will travel in an exclusive right-of-way in the middle of the roadway. As a result of this, various permanent traffic amendments are required to ensure the safe and efficient operation of all travel modes.

As part of the permanent ECLRT design, northbound, southbound and westbound left-turn movements will be prohibited at the intersection of Pharmacy Avenue at Eglinton Avenue East. These left-turn prohibitions are necessary to minimize delay to LRT operations and enable safe pedestrian movements. With these turning prohibitions in place, the existing U-turn prohibitions at the intersections of Pharmacy Avenue at Craigton Drive and Pharmacy Avenue at the Private Access to the Eglinton Square Shopping Centre will be rescinded. As shown on Sheet 1 of Attachment 1, the intersection of Pharmacy Avenue at Craigton Drive will be signalized. U-turn movements will be permitted at both the intersections.

The removal of a number of existing turn lanes, and the implementation of a number of turn prohibitions, are required at key intersections, as shown on Sheet 1 of Attachment 1 and listed on Attachment 2 and Attachment 3.

At-Grade Section - Temporary Traffic Amendments

Various temporary right turn prohibitions will be required at key intersections to facilitate construction activities and avoid conflicts with general traffic movements. These locations are shown on Attachment 4 and listed in Attachment 5.

Below Grade Section - Permanent Traffic Amendment

Fairbank Station

Leading Pedestrian interval (LPI) has been implemented at the signalized three-legged intersection of Northcliffe Boulevard and Eglinton Avenue West. This provides an advanced walk signal to pedestrians to enter the north-south crosswalks on Eglinton Avenue West ahead of the green traffic signal to the northbound motorists on Northcliffe Boulevard. As a result, it is necessary to prohibit the northbound right-turn movement on red traffic signal, shown on Sheet 2 of Attachment 1 and listed on Attachment 3, to avoid any conflicts with pedestrians during the advanced walk signal phase.

Below Grade Section - Temporary New Road Closures

Caledonia Station

Caledonia Station is located approximately 300 metres to the west of the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West at Caledonia Road. The ongoing construction activities at the station include construction of the station platform in the north-west corner of the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West at Blackthorn Avenue.

Construction staging for the Station has been set up within the existing sidewalk and boulevard allowance on the north side of Eglinton Avenue West abutting the station property. A closure of a portion of the westbound diverging lane on the north side of Eglinton Avenue West, between Blackthorn Avenue and existing access to the commercial development to the north, is required for 20 months, from February 1, 2019 to September 30, 2021 to maintain a 1.5 metres wide pedestrian walkway, shown on Attachment 6.

With the closure of the westbound diverge lane in place, Eglinton Avenue West will continue to operate as two eastbound and two westbound lanes. The existing sidewalk on the south side will be maintained. The existing right-in/right-out access to the commercial development to the north will also be maintained.

Forest Hill Station

A portion of the Peveril Hill Road North, between Eglinton Avenue West and the public laneway to the east as shown on Attachment 7, will be closed for a period of 13 months, from February 1, 2019 to February 28, 2020, to accommodate material deliveries and construction staging operations related to the ongoing construction of Forest Hill Station.

In order to accelerate the station construction schedule by approximately 3 months, and increase certainty of achieving the in-service target date of September 2021, a 7-month closure of Bathurst Street, between Eglinton Avenue West and Wembley Road is proposed and shown in Attachment 7. A public town hall to discuss this closure is being held on January 16, 2019.

With a closure in place, to minimize impacts to transit passengers and minimize operating kms, a detour route shown in Attachment 8 has been identified that requires modifications to the existing traffic by-laws on Hilltop Road, on-street parking removal and prohibitions on Wembley Road, Vesta Drive, and Mayfair Avenue and turning prohibitions at the intersection of Bathurst Street at Eglinton Avenue West. These proposed bylaw changes are detailed in Attachment 8.

Below Grade Section - Time Extension of Existing Road Closures

Keele Station

Construction staging areas within the westbound curb lane on Eglinton Avenue, between Keele Street and the east side of Trethewey Drive and between the west side of Trethewey Drive and a point 105 metres west of Trethewey Drive were approved by City Council from June 1, 2017 to May 1, 2019. In order to complete the remaining construction activities a 11-month extension of the approved closure, from May 1, 2019 to March 30, 2020, is required. The proposed construction staging area and associated road closure is shown in Attachment 9.

Community and Councillor Engagement Process

The Rapid Transit Community Relations team at Metrolinx undertake a wide variety of activities to engage and communicate with the community and councillors.

To inform this engagement, Metrolinx conducts public opinion surveys in the communities surrounding the project to gauge public support for the project and help them plan construction strategies and communications. A telephone survey conducted in May 2018 of 503 residents in neighbourhoods surrounding the central section of the ECLRT project found that in relation to construction activities of all respondents:

- 80% think the project is good for the community

- 67% preferred more disruption over a shorter period of time
- 62% said they would rather have the road closed completely and the work completed quicker.

(Sample of 500 carries a margin of error of +/- 4.4%, 19 times out of 20).

Metrolinx have developed and implemented a comprehensive communications program utilizing a variety of meeting techniques to keep City Councillors and their staff apprised of plans and developments related to the project. Since January of 2016, separate regularly-scheduled monthly Councillor and Stakeholder meetings (including local MPPs, local Councillors, Metrolinx, CTS Staff and City Staff) have been facilitated across the corridor. Key stakeholders, such as TTC staff, are updated and consulted frequently, often several times each week.

The Metrolinx consultation strategy includes one-on-one briefings with Councillors to address specific milestone events and emerging issues. Community outreach and Business Improvement Area meetings, plus Construction Liaison Committee meetings (which include BIAs and local businesses), will continue to be scheduled throughout the long-term construction period to provide information and address current concerns and issues as they arise. The broad construction traffic management strategies have been shared with the attendees at these meetings by way of presentations made by members of the CTS design team, Metrolinx and City staff.

Specific details of the traffic management plans are discussed with the local Councillors as they are prepared and evolve. Metrolinx, CTS and City staff will continue to work with local Councillors to address these issues in a timely manner.

Details of the complex staging at at-grade portions and discussions of closures to construct the guideway are the subject of the monthly Stakeholder meetings, routinely attended by Councillors and their staff.

Similarly, the construction phasing at various ECLRT Stations specifically Fairbank Station, Caledonia Station, Forest Hill and Keelestone Station has been an agenda item during the monthly stakeholder meetings, and the subject of direct and frequent email communication between Transit Project Unit office and the project team.

In all cases, when a significant change is planned at any of the construction sites, Metrolinx issues public notices in advance of the work, both on their website and delivered door-to-door. Major changes are also widely reported on television and radio and through social media platforms.

In addition, Metrolinx has planned a series of town hall meetings across the at-grade length of ECLRT in February 2019 to provide the public information on the approach, schedule and mitigation of impacts during construction of the LRT guideway along the at-grade section.

Metrolinx also operates two community offices, one for the eastern half and one for the western half of the project. These offices work with residents, businesses and stakeholders to identify and respond to issues and find ways to mitigate against construction impacts. The offices are manned Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and supported by a 24 hour telephone hotline.

CONTACT

Ashley Curtis
Director, Transportation Planning and Capital Program
Transportation Services
Telephone: 416-338-6583
Email: Ashley.Curtis@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Barbara Gray
General Manager, Transportation Services

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - At Grade Permanent Traffic Amendment Locations

Attachment 2 - Turn Lanes to be Removed

Attachment 3 - Permanent Turn Prohibitions to be Enacted

Attachment 4 - At Grade Temporary Traffic Amendment Locations

Attachment 5 - Temporary Right-Turn Prohibitions to be Enacted

Attachment 6 - Caledonia Station - Eglinton Avenue West Road Closures

Attachment 7 - Forest Hill Station - Peveril Hill North, Bathurst Street and Eglinton Avenue West Road Closures

Attachment 8 - Traffic Amendments and TTC Bus Detour Route

Attachment 9- Keelesdale Station - Eglinton Avenue West Road Closures

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