



REVISED

Member Motion

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM35.17	ACTION			Ward: 13
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Requesting the Auditor General Review the Wellington Street East Construction for Effective Collaboration, Coordination and Communication - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

A communication has been submitted on this Item.

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Auditor General to consider including an audit of the construction and utility work on Wellington Street East in her 2022 Work Plan on the following matters regarding work on Wellington Street East between Yonge Street and Church Street:
 - a. factors which led to delays on Wellington Street East that have created over five years of utility and construction activity;
 - b. improvements to the process and work that could have mitigated delays; and
 - c. recommendations to improve utility and construction management and collaboration to ensure the timely and cost-effective delivery of future streetscape work in the City of Toronto.
2. City Council direct the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services and the General Manager, Transportation Services to report back to the September 14, 2021 Infrastructure and Environment Committee on the following matters regarding work on Wellington Street East between Yonge Street and Church Street:
 - a. outstanding work to complete on Wellington Street East, including a timeline for resolution for individual pieces of work; and
 - b. potential options to accelerate outstanding work ahead of June 2022.

Summary

Since 2015, work has been underway to upgrade Wellington Street East between Yonge Street

and Church Street. The vision by local residents and businesses is reflected in the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood Business Improvement Area (BIA) Streetscape Master Plan, and represents a decade of community planning, which was supported by City Planning and the BIA Office. The intent was to bring multiple divisions and utilities together to collaborate, coordinate and build a cost-effective new street in a timely manner

By repurposing one lane of traffic on Wellington Street East, the future streetscape will boast a wider north sidewalk for pedestrians, patios and street furniture, loading and lay by improvements and new street trees. The work also would allow for intersection improvements to improve traffic and pedestrian safety at the intersection of Church Street, Wellington Street East and Front Street East. To ensure a beautiful new streetscape was not marred by future utility cuts, the work was staged to allow utilities, including Toronto Water, Toronto Hydro and Enbridge Gas to upgrade their underground infrastructure, as well as to provide an opportunity for the TTC to perform streetcar track replacement.

Following the [necessary approvals by City Council in 2016](#), work began in 2017, Residents and the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association quickly became concerned that work was not proceeding in a timely manner to allow streetscape work to begin in the summer of 2020 as had been originally desired. In 2019, by way of my Motion adopted at City Council, City staff was directed to create [a working group](#) to coordinate the Wellington work as well as other nearby projects to try and finish construction as quickly as feasible. Utility work continued to create delays, and despite best efforts, the earliest delivery that staff and utility companies could feasibly deliver was to start and finish the work in 2021.

Streetscape work along this 300 metre portion of Wellington Street East finally got underway in the spring of this year, with an anticipated September end date. The discovery of new unanticipated underground conflicts halted the contractor's work in mid-June, and prompted the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services and the General Manager, Transportation Services to jointly decide to delay further work until the Spring of 2022.

Businesses and residents on Wellington Street East have been living with construction on what is a relatively short piece of the road for four years, and have now been told to expect work to stretch into a fifth year. The impacts have been profoundly difficult for businesses on and adjacent to Wellington Street East, even before adding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The current best case scenario is for residents and businesses to live with an unfinished streetscape until the Spring of 2022, with construction bleeding into the summer yet again.

The elements that contributed to years of construction on Wellington Street East are not unique to the downtown. There are also many stretches of Toronto with similar plans and ambitions, and without a proper autopsy to determine what caused Wellington Street East to drag for five years - and how the City may have prevented it from doing so - this pattern is set to repeat.. The original aspirations of the Wellington Street East streetscape project have been lost, but the original intent of collaboration between City divisions and utilities was admirable and represented how streetscape projects should be built to minimize disruption and save the City and utilities money. It is important that the City understand what happened so the next downtown streetscape project can learn from what happened here.

There are many questions that residents, businesses and even the Councillors' offices have had for many years that require a proper autopsy, including:

1. What factors were the legitimate causes for delays on Wellington Street East?
2. Were these factors legitimately unavoidable?
3. Are there lessons that can be learned from the Wellington Street East construction work that can assist in collaboration to reduce construction impacts and construction costs for future streetscape projects?

While this work is pending, it is also critical to ensure that the remaining work on Wellington Street East be completed in an efficient and expedited manner. The current estimated timeline is for work to resume in April 2022, with construction ending July 2022. It is critical for businesses on Wellington Street East to have a functional streetscape by the summer. If there are any steps that staff can take with the contractor to resume work earlier and to consider measures such as extended hours, they should be strongly considered to avoid additional construction work slipping into June 2022 as is still feasible.

Background Information (City Council)

Revised Member Motion MM35.17

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-169082.pdf>

Communications (City Council)

(July 9, 2021) E-mail from David S. Crawford (MM.Supp)