

Update on planned improvements to the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail in Ward 8

Date: June 23, 2022

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 8 Eglinton-Lawrence

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on planned cycling and safety improvements to the York Beltline Trail and the Kay Gardner Beltline Trail segments in Ward 8, including planned connections between the two trails and to the future Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations, improved crossings where the trails meet city roadways, and new or improved wayfinding signs.

The Cycling Network Plan (CNP) Near-Term Implementation Program (2022-2024) identifies the implementation and study of several bikeways (trails, cycle tracks, contra-flow bike lanes) that connect to the future Eglinton Crosstown LRT and its stations, as well as opportunities for an improved connection between the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail.

Beyond the larger capital projects included in the CNP, Transportation Services conducted a review of locations where the trails intersect with city roadways and have recommended improved pedestrian and cycling crossings at Caledonia Road, Ronald Avenue and Old Park Road.

Further, a full review and upgrade of bicycle wayfinding signage for the North York area is planned to be undertaken in 2023, including portions of the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation, as part of an ongoing maintenance program, continues to monitor the trails to address specific issues of graffiti and trip hazards, and has plans for a pedestrian extension of the York Beltline Trail between Marlee Avenue and Allen Road in 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. Infrastructure and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the recommendations contained in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

On December 15, 2021, City Council requested that the General Manager, Transportation Services, undertake a preliminary review to understand the feasibility, constraints/impacts of a pedestrian cycling bridge over Allen Road to connect the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE26.24>

On December 15, 2021, City Council City Council endorsed, in principle, the new bikeway projects contained in the Cycling Network Plan Near-Term Implementation Program (2022 – 2024).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE26.9>

On November 9, 2021, City Council requested that the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, together with the General Manager, Transportation Services, address cycling and user-safety improvements to the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE25.22>

On July 16, 17 and 18, 2019, City Council requested that the General Manager, Transportation Services, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation review opportunities to better connect the York Beltline Trail with the Kay Gardner Beltline Trail, with consideration for the feasibility of an active transportation bridge at this location or through improvements to the existing bridge 50 metres north of the trail on Elm Ridge Drive.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM9.18>

On July 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 30, 2018, City Council requested that the Director, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the Director, Transportation Services, North York District and the Director, Community Planning, North York District coordinate improvements along the York Beltline Trail.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.NY32.86>

COMMENTS

York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail

The York Beltline Trail is a 2.4 km east-west multi-use trail that runs along the former rail corridor of the old Toronto Belt Line Railway. The trail begins at Bowie Avenue and, in recent years, was extended eastwards to Marlee Avenue.

The Kay Gardner Beltline Trail is a 4.5 km trail that begins at the Allen Greenway ("the Greenway"), east of Allen Road, and follows the old Toronto Belt Line Railway line south-east to Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

This report focuses on the section of the York Beltline and Kay Gardner Beltline Trails north of Eglinton Avenue West to Caledonia Road as seen in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 The York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trails, north of Eglinton Avenue West

The Greenway

The Lawrence-Allen Secondary Plan and Lawrence Allen Public Realm Master Plan contemplate a linear open space and park system, the Allen Greenway ("the Greenway"). Once fully completed, the Greenway will be located on both the east and west sides of Allen Road starting from Highway 401 and going south to Eglinton Avenue West. The Greenway is being implemented through development applications in the Secondary Plan area for Yorkdale Shopping Centre and Lawrence Heights, and the Baycrest Park Master Plan. Between Lawrence Avenue West and Eglinton Avenue West, the area in which the Greenway is envisioned is comprised of publicly owned land on the east side of Allen Road, and a combination of publicly and privately owned land on the west side of Allen Road. On March 9, 2022 City Council adopted Item [NY30.41](#) which directed the Director, Community Planning, North York District to initiate and

complete, by the end of 2023, a Zoning by-law amendment for a number of properties on the east side and west side of Allen Road to protect for the Greenway.

The existing shared pedestrian and cycling path of the Greenway, on the east of Allen Road, between Elm Ridge Drive and Wembley Road, connects to the Kay Gardner Beltline Trail.

Better Integration between the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail

The York Beltline Trail terminates at Marlee Avenue. Today, people cycling must dismount or merge with traffic to travel north on Marlee Avenue and follow the signed wayfinding route along Roselawn Avenue and Elm Ridge Drive. From there, they can continue east connecting with the Greenway east of Allen Road and to the Kay Gardner Beltline Trail.

The Cycling Network Plan Near-Term Implementation Program (2022-2024) includes a proposed dedicated bikeway on Roselawn Avenue and Elm Ridge Drive from Marlee Avenue to the Greenway and a multi-use trail along the Greenway from Elm Ridge Drive to Aldburn Road. Also to be studied as part of the Near-Term Implementation Program is a dedicated bikeway along Marlee Avenue, between Roselawn Avenue and Eglinton Avenue West, and a connection of the Greenway to Eglinton Avenue West. These projects, currently in the study phase, will provide safer cycling connections between the York Beltline and Kay Gardner Beltline Trails.

A map of the 2022-2024 Cycling Program for Ward 8 is provided in Attachment 1.

Transportation Services will be undertaking a preliminary review to consider the feasibility of a pedestrian cycling bridge over Allen Road to provide a direct connection between the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail. It is expected that a report will be brought forward to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee at the end of 2023 on its findings.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation is planning a pedestrian extension of the York Beltline Trail between Marlee Avenue and Allen Road, with community engagement to begin in 2022. A map of the area is provided in Attachment 2.

Cycling Connections to Eglinton Crosstown LRT Stations

The Eglinton Crosstown LRT is expected to be substantially completed by the end of September 2022 and in service several months later. Transportation Services, through the Eglinton Today Complete Street project, proposes to implement complete street features, including bikeways and public realm upgrades, on Eglinton Avenue between York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail in Ward 8



Figure 2: The Cycling Network Plan proposes new dedicated bikeways on Marlee Ave, Roselawn Ave, Elm Ridge Drive and improvements to the Allen Greenway for delivery in 2022-2024.

Keele Street and Mount Pleasant Road with the first series of community consultation events held in June 2022. Table 1 outlines the existing and proposed cycling connections between the York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail and the future LRT stations.

Table 1: Proposed Cycling Trail Connections to Eglinton Crosstown LRT Stations

LRT Station	Cycling Connection from York Beltline/Kay Gardner Trails
Caledonia	Via Croham Road to Eglinton Avenue West (near-term cycling program)
Fairbank	Via Jimmy Wisdom Way (formerly Locksley Ave) to Eglinton Avenue West (near-term cycling program)
Oakwood	Via Marlee Avenue to Eglinton Avenue West (for further study in near-term cycling program)
Cedarvale	Via Allen Greenway (for further study in near-term cycling program)
Forest Hill	Via Old Park Road, Old Forest Hill Road, to Eglinton Avenue West (existing signed route)
Chaplin (at Chaplin Crescent)	Direct connection from Kay Gardner Trail via new staircase with wheel ramp for cyclists being constructed as part of LRT station construction

Crossings at City Streets

Curb depressions (i.e. a gradual slope at the transition between a sidewalk and a roadway) have been requested to facilitate connections between trail segments where the York Beltline and Kay Gardner Beltline trails intersect with city streets.

Transportation Services is considering improvements to crossings where the York Beltline Trail meets Caledonia Road and Ronald Avenue, and where the Kay Gardner Beltline Trail meets Old Park Road. At the time of writing this report, reports recommending that a crossing with a refuge island be provided where the York Beltline Trail meets Ronald Avenue, and that traffic control signals be provided where the York Beltline Trail meets Caledonia Road, will be considered by North York Community Council on June 28, 2022.

Transportation Services continues to work together with Parks, Forestry and Recreation to implement a trail crossing where the Kay Gardner Beltline Trail meets Old Park Road. Due to the close proximity of the trail with the intersection of Old Park Road and Elm Ridge Circle, a slight realignment at the approach to Old Park Road will be necessary.

Transportation Services was also asked to review the existing crossing of the Kay Gardner Beltline Trail at Bathurst Street and opportunities for a crossing of the York Beltline Trail at Marlee Avenue. There are no changes proposed at these locations at this time.

Wayfinding Signage

A wayfinding system enables people to orient themselves and navigate from place to place with confidence. Wayfinding includes the consistent use and presentation of information such as landmarks, neighbourhoods, destinations and connections that help residents and visitors navigate a city. Launched in 2011, the Toronto 360 ("TO360") Wayfinding project is a pedestrian wayfinding system that provides consistent wayfinding information through unified signage and mapping. As part of the TO360 work plan, a full review and upgrade of bicycle wayfinding for the North York area is planned to be undertaken in 2023. As part of this review, and as part of Parks, Forestry and Recreation's Parks and Trails Wayfinding Strategy, improvements to the existing wayfinding signage along the York Beltline and Kay Gardner Beltline Trails will be considered.

Additional Opportunities for Improvement

On April 13, 2022 Transportation Services staff attended a cycling tour of the Kay Gardner Beltline and York Beltline Trails with the local Councillor where concerns regarding graffiti and trip hazards were identified. These concerns were referred to Parks, Forestry and Recreation who have since taken the appropriate actions to address them and will continue to monitor. Parks, Forestry and Recreation will also review the content on the information boards posted along the trails and will update the material where necessary.

Along the Greenway, east of Allen Road, an opportunity for a mural along the noise wall was identified. Transportation Services, through the StreetARToronto suite of programs, will initiate planning for a community mural project in Fall/Winter 2022, with delivery anticipated in 2023/2024. It is proposed that the mural will be partially funded through the use of Section 37 funds and supported by the StreetARToronto Program.

In addition to the above, the orientation of the litter/recycling bins at the trail entrances at Old Park Road and at the entrance to the Greenway from Elm Ridge Drive were raised as a concern. The bins are oriented towards the sidewalk and concerns were raised that they obstruct access points to these trails. The City's street furniture, including waste receptacles, are placed in accordance with Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Program Design and Policy Guidelines and no changes to the orientation are proposed at this time. It is anticipated that the future widening of the Greenway may necessitate the relocation of the litter/recycling bin at Elm Ridge Drive.

Community Consultation

On May 10, 2022, representatives from Transportation Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation participated in a virtual community meeting, hosted by the local Councillor, to discuss the above initiatives currently underway or planned to provide York Beltline Trail and Kay Gardner Beltline Trail in Ward 8

cycling and user-safety improvements to the York Beltline Trail and the Kay Gardner Beltline Trails. Approximately 32 community members attended the public meeting. The feedback received was positive overall, with comments received regarding necessary refinements to the proposed crossing at Old Park Road to maintain the existing crossing to Nicol MacNicol Parkette. These comments will be incorporated as Transportation Services finalizes the design for a crossing at this location.

CONTACT

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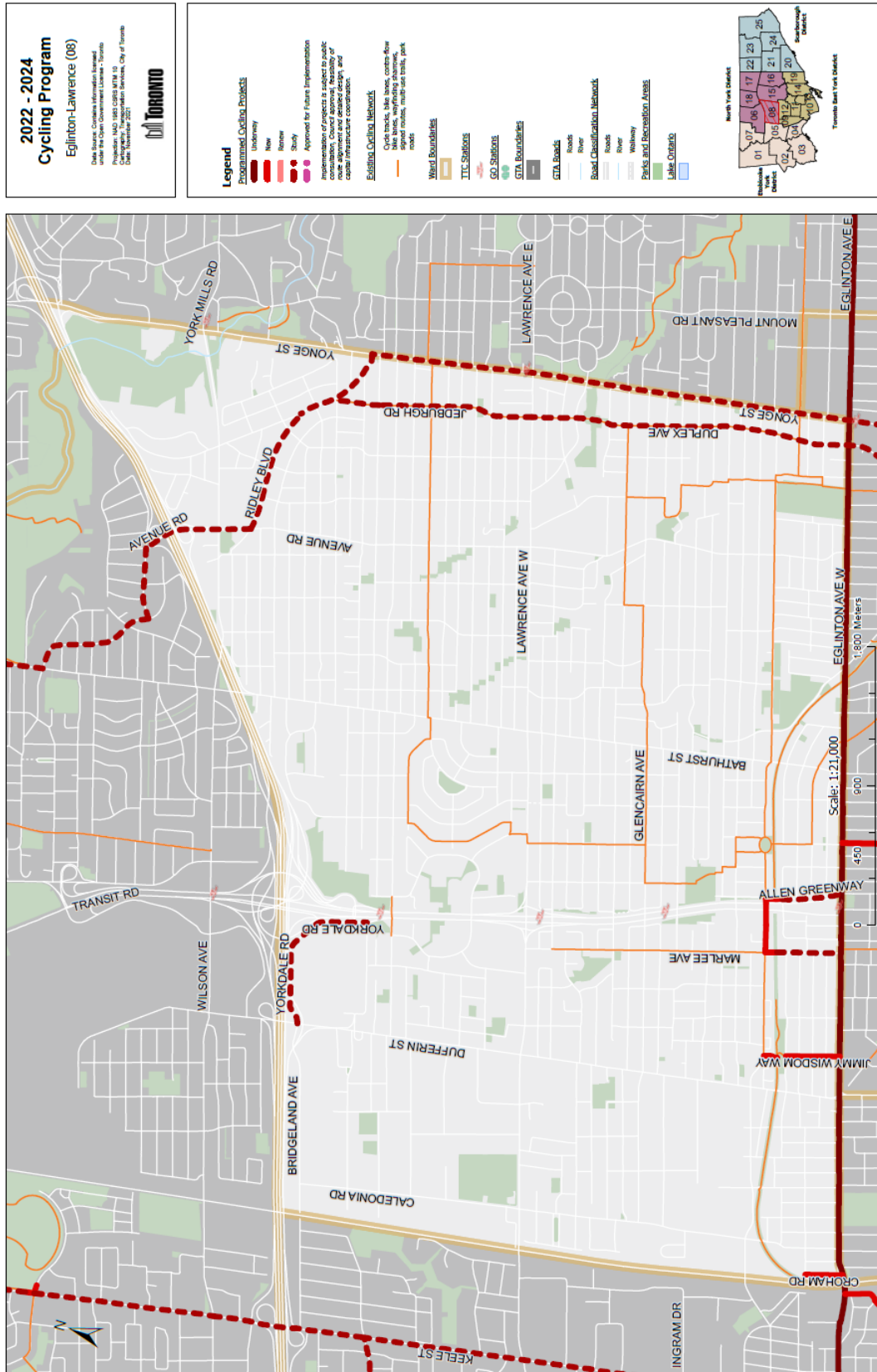
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Barbara Gray
General Manager, Transportation Services

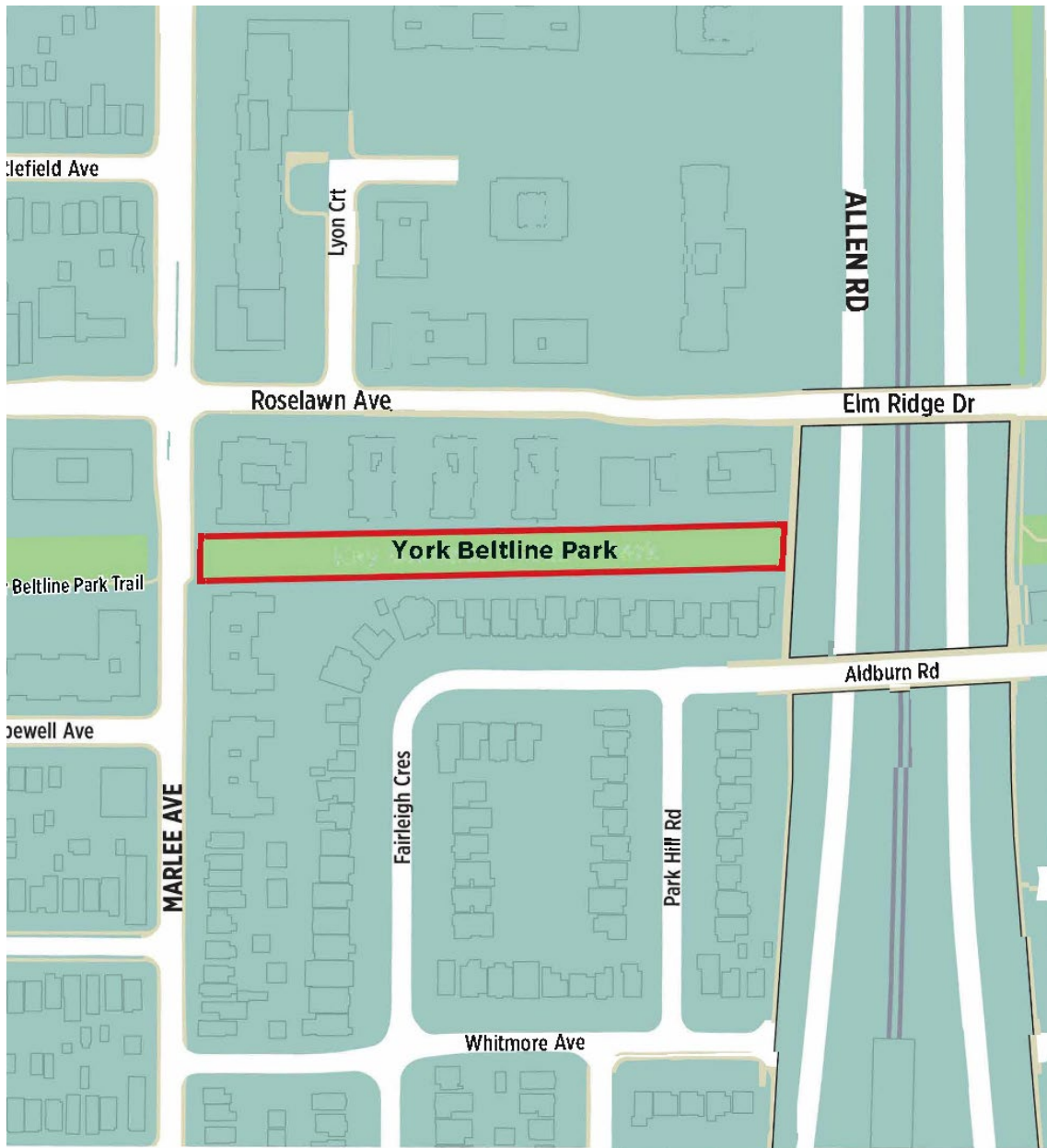
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Ward 8 Cycling Network Plan Near-Term Implementation Program (2022-2024)
Attachment 2 – York Beltline Trail Extension

Attachment 1: Ward 8 Cycling Network Plan Near-Term Implementation Program (2022-2024)



Attachment 2: York Beltline Trail Extension



 Project site

