

Improvements to Pedestrian Boulevards on Front Street East

Date: December 14, 2021

To: Toronto & East York Community Council

From: Director, Planning and Capital Program, Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 13, Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to City Council's request for staff to initiate a study to improve pedestrian boulevards on Front Street East, with the implementation of improvements to be paid for and constructed by development applications.

This report provides an update regarding planned improvements to the pedestrian boulevards on Front Street East between Sherbourne Street and Parliament Street, intended to be achieved through forthcoming land developments.

City staff have worked to determine permissible curb realignments for multiple site plans along this corridor. Additional boulevard space will be added by adhering to latest guidelines for lane widths and by implementing adjustments to dedicated turn lanes, without affecting through lanes or changing any turning regulations.

As a result, upcoming redevelopment opportunities will vastly improve existing substandard sidewalks to provide increased accessibility and comfort for pedestrians, and improved safety for all road users.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director Planning and Capital Program, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Transportation Services confirms that there are no financial impacts resulting from this report in the current budget year, or in future years.

DECISION HISTORY

On September 30, October 1 and 2, 2020, City Council adopted Item TE18.6, entitled "176-178 Front Street East and 33 Sherbourne Street - Zoning Amendment Application - Final report," and in doing so, requested that the General Manager, Transportation Services initiate a study to improve pedestrian boulevards on Front Street East, with the implementation of improvements to be paid and constructed by development applications.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.TE18.6>

COMMENTS

A major street in the King-Parliament Secondary Plan, Front Street East is undergoing considerable changes with more than 6 large scale redevelopment sites including the new Ontario Line Corktown Station at Front Street East and Berkeley Street. These changes will bring increased demand for pedestrian space as more people walk to homes, employment and transit.

The existing sidewalk conditions on Front Street East do not meet the latest standards, with inadequate pedestrian clearway widths. This is especially concerning given the number of anticipated pedestrians, and existing accessibility issues at pinch points. In order to improve the sidewalk conditions and align Front Street East with the King-Parliament Secondary Plan, both public rights-of-way and privately owned lands must be designed holistically by providing streetscape improvements that promote a healthy and vibrant pedestrian environment.

Creating additional space for Pedestrians

Transportation Services staff have analysed Front Street East from George Street to Parliament Street and identified opportunities to improve sidewalk widths, while maintaining existing vehicle through lanes, turning permissions, and access to driveways and laneways.

Staff have completed their re-design of this section of Front Street East, and the new design will result in up to 2.5 metres of additional sidewalk space for each block. This additional space has been carefully allocated to both north and south sides of Front Street East in order to ensure a consistent, accessible pedestrian boulevard for all users on both sides of the street, as well as to maximize the opportunity for animated street

frontages and ground floor uses on the new development sites. Attachment 1 shows the new layout plan, illustrating curb realignments and additional sidewalk space.

Traffic Impact

To accommodate the increase in sidewalk widths, minor changes will be made to dedicated turning lanes along the corridor. Changes will only affect the dedicated turn lanes and not alter any applicable turn restrictions or permissions to make turns at these intersections.

Existing through lanes will mostly stay the same width with no functional or operational changes. However small increases in the curb lanes will be made in some cases to bring them into compliance with current standards. For example the curb lanes at Front Street and Princess Street are 3.0m and will be realigned at 3.3m. The one exception is at Front and Berkley on the northwest side where the existing curb lane is oversized at 5.2m and will be realigned to 3.4m.

These changes include the following alterations:

- Sherbourne Street and Front Street East: shortening the westbound left-turn lane from 55 metres to 40 metres.
- Princess Street and Front Street East: removal of the eastbound left-turn lane and westbound left-turn lane
- Parliament Street and Front Street East: shortening the eastbound turn-lane taper from 82 metres to 42 metres.

These alterations will not significantly alter vehicle capacity at these intersections. The analysis and approval of these alterations has taken into account the full changes anticipated as part of [The Esplanade and Mill Street Connection](#) works.

Implementation

The presence of so many redevelopments along Front Street East creates an important opportunity to significantly improve the pedestrian environment and incorporate these changes into the site plans of each new building to achieve a consistent realignment of the corridor.

This approach has many benefits including:

- ensures that new developments are able to maximize the full potential of their sites, rather than reconstruct sidewalks using existing substandard curblines
- future proofs the curb alignment for each development, preventing the need to reconstruct at a later date
- removes the need for the City to bear the capital cost and project complexity of implementing corridor-wide changes as a separate construction project, after development construction

City staff are working with applicants to incorporate these curb alignment changes into their site plans, in particular for 33 Sherbourne Street, 200 Front Street East, 250 Front Street East, and 271 Front Street East.

While the majority of these changes will be implemented through the above site plans incrementally, there may be segments that fall between the scopes of each development site. Any sections that are not included in this process are anticipated to be implemented by the St. Lawrence Market Business Improvement Area, with necessary support from the City.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Final Layout Plan