

Leaside Neighbourhood Transportation Plan Status Update

Date: November 9, 2022

To: North York Community Council

From: Director, Planning & Capital Program, Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 15, Don Valley West

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of the Leaside Neighbourhood Transportation Plan (LNTP). The LNTP will respond to neighbourhood concerns about traffic operations and road safety in Leaside, as well as any related items identified by City staff through the course of the study. The LNTP consists of two phases: a near-term plan and long-term plan. The near-term plan is currently underway and is being informed by traffic data and public input. The long-term planning phase is contingent on the completion of the Eglinton Crosstown and bikeway installation on Eglinton Avenue East and will begin when these works are completed and new travel patterns and neighbourhood conditions can be assessed.

Public engagement activities for the near-term plan commenced in February 2022 with an online public information session; a second round of engagement took place from July to September 2022 with an online virtual mapping and data collection tool. The near-term plan will be presented to stakeholders and the public during the third round of public engagement, which is intended to take place in Q1 2023. Staff are aiming to submit a report to North York Community Council in Q2 2023 with recommendations for near-term improvements. Subject to Community Council approval, implementation of near-term improvements will be rolled out in phases; the timing of installation will be dependent on availability of materials, funding and competing priorities.

Public consultation activities for the long-term plan will commence after the completion of the Eglinton Crosstown and the bikeway on Eglinton Avenue East between Bayview Avenue and the Don River.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. North York Community Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

In June 2022, North York Community Council adopted item 2022.NY33.61 (Request for a Status Report on the Leaside Neighbourhood Transportation Plan), directing Transportation Services to report to the first North York Community Council meeting of the 2022 to 2026 term with an update on the Leaside Neighbourhood Transportation Plan, and for such report to include an overview of:

- Engagement undertaken to-date.
- Future plans for public consultation.
- An implementation timeline for the first phase of the plan.

The North York Community Council Decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.NY33.61>

In October 2019, North York Community Council adopted item 2019.NY9.12 (Leaside Traffic Management Plan and Speed Limit Reduction) directing Transportation Services to work with the community to evaluate their traffic concerns and develop a Traffic Management Plan.

The North York Community Council item can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.NY9.12>

In August 2014, North York Community Council adopted item 2014.NY34.103 (Report Request - Proposed 30 km/h Road Speed Limit Throughout Leaside) instructing Transportation Services to investigate and report on the feasibility of implementing a 30 km/h speed limit on various roadways in Leaside.

The North York Community Council item can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.NY34.103>

COMMENTS

In response to a Community Council request ([2019.NY9.12](#)) staff have initiated a transportation study of Leaside. The study area is bounded by Glenvale Boulevard/Killdeer Crescent/Rykert Crescent to the north, Bayview Avenue to the west, the West Don River/Eglinton Avenue East/Laird Drive line to the east and the CPR line

to the south. Refer to Attachment 1 for a map of the study area. Study area boundaries for the Leaside Neighbourhood Transportation Plan (LNTP) were defined in the request for study ([2019.NY9.12](#)).

Background and Context

The Leaside area is characterized by a grid-like road network consisting of three arterial roads (Bayview Avenue, Eglinton Avenue, and Laird Drive), four collector roads (Broadway Avenue, McRae Drive, Millwood Road, and Southvale Drive), and local roads (all remaining road segments). The majority of the area is designated for residential use, however there is commercial designation fronting on the three arterial roads. There are many community destinations within the neighbourhood: nine schools; several parks and ravine access points; a library; an arena; a community centre; and other community amenities. Key destinations adjacent to the study area include the shops and Leaside Business Park on the east side of Laird Drive, Mount Pleasant Cemetery located west of Bayview Avenue, and Holland Bloorview and Toronto Rehabilitation Institute located north of Glenvale Boulevard.

The ongoing construction of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit and development activities in the neighbourhood have impacted how people travel in the area. Temporary traffic restrictions and lane reductions associated with nearby infrastructure work will be removed when construction is completed.

There is a history of community-led advocacy to improve safety and mobility conditions in the area. Over the years, members of the Leaside community have expressed concerns about transportation conditions and road user behaviour to their local Councillor and City staff. Cut-through traffic patterns, speeding by motor vehicles, the volume of motor vehicles on local roads, non-compliance with traffic regulations, road user safety, atypical geometric design of intersections and road curves are among the most frequently-cited concerns. The Leaside Residents Association (formerly Leaside Property Owners Association) and the South Leaside Traffic Committee developed several resident-led traffic calming plans and recommendations for traffic changes in the area. Residents have also submitted a series of petitions related to speed management and requests for traffic calming.

Project Description and Timeline

City staff are developing the LNTP to address the concerns about transportation conditions in the neighbourhood raised by the community, as well as any related items identified by staff through the course of the study. The LNTP is assessing local traffic operations, road design, and multi-modal travel options. The plan will identify, recommend, and prioritize changes that can be made to improve safety for all road users, with a focus on vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, people biking, children, and seniors. The LNTP consists of two phases: a near-term plan and long-term plan.

The near-term plan (Phase 1) is focused on assessing opportunities for site-specific safety improvements that mitigate traffic and safety concerns in the study area. Interventions that will be considered in the near-term plan are [traffic calming](#) measures

(e.g. speed humps), [traffic controls](#) (e.g. all-way stops and pedestrian crosswalks), by-law changes (e.g. parking regulations), and upgraded pavement markings (e.g. stop bars at intersections). The near-term plan has limited ability to consider interventions that require road redesign or reconstruction. The near-term planning phase is underway; traffic data analysis and site observations will be completed from Fall 2022 to early 2023. The final phase of consultation for the near-term plan will take place in Q1 2023. Staff plan to submit a report on the near-term plan to North York Community Council in Q2 2023.

The LNTP study area has been impacted by changes associated with transit projects, development applications and planning studies. These projects and initiatives impact existing travel behaviours and will reshape the future conditions of the neighbourhood. The long-term plan will be informed by neighbourhood changes associated with: the [Eglinton Crosstown](#); bikeway installation on Eglinton Avenue East and Millwood Road Safety Improvements (as identified in the [Cycling Network Plan's Near-Term Implementation Program](#)), planning directions of the [Ontario Line](#); the [Laird-In-Focus](#) planning area; and, proposed and potential [development sites](#).

The development of the long-term plan (Phase 2) is contingent on the completion of the Eglinton Crosstown and bikeway installation on Eglinton Avenue East. Travel behaviour changes associated with the new transit and transportation infrastructure will be studied before major network changes are considered. The long-term plan may consider road redesign elements like traffic diversions, separated cycling facilities, road narrowing, and other interventions that are typically delivered as part of road reconstruction.

Project Approach

The LNTP will align with City-wide policies and strategic priorities. The LNTP's near-term and long-term plans must contribute to the City's overarching transportation goals and Council directives. The LNTP will support the goals outlined in the [Corporate Strategic Plan](#), [Official Plan](#), and [Long-Term Vision, Plans & Strategies](#) (i.e. [Vision Zero Road Safety Plan](#), [Complete Streets Guidelines](#), [Green Streets Implementation Strategy](#) and [TransformTO](#)).

The LNTP is using an evidence-based approach to identify potential improvements. It is comprised of local traffic studies, collision data analysis, site visits and observations, and public input. Speed, volume and collision data is being analyzed to better understand areas of concern and opportunities for safety improvements. Site visits and observations are being completed by the project team to assess transportation infrastructure conditions (i.e. sightlines at intersections and pavement marking quality) and identify deficiencies.

Public consultation is a key element of the project approach; engagement with area residents and stakeholders is being facilitated continuously throughout both phases of the project. Stakeholders represent a wide range of local interests; businesses, community and resident groups, faith groups, and schools will be consulted to better understand the needs of their communities. The two objectives of public consultation are: to enrich the study team's understanding of traffic issues in the neighbourhood, and to understand the extent to which proposed changes are supported by the community.

Area residents and local stakeholders have had opportunities to participate in public consultation and will have further opportunities in the future, as outlined below. Community input will be considered in the development of project recommendations.

Implementation Timeline

Subject to approval of the final report by North York Community Council, implementation of near-term improvements will be rolled out in phases; the timing of installation will be dependent on availability of materials, funding and competing priorities. The incremental implementation of interventions, as they become available, will be used to optimize the effectiveness of the interventions. This allows some improvements (i.e. quick wins) to be implemented in advance of longer-term changes. This approach also allows for periodic monitoring and public feedback of near-term improvements before decisions are made in future about permanent changes. For example, by-law changes and improved signage can typically be installed within the same year construction season, however a new traffic signal or other intersection changes may take more than one year.

The long-term planning phase will begin after the completion of the Eglinton Crosstown and the bikeway on Eglinton Avenue East between Bayview Avenue and the Don River. These transportation projects are expected to impact travel behaviours like modal preference, travel patterns and vehicle volumes. The long-term plan will assess the impacts of the transportation network changes and consider changes that align with the new neighbourhood conditions. Data collection required to support the long-term plan cannot take place until the new infrastructure is completed and in use. The implementation timeline of the long-term plan will be determined through the course of the planning work.

Recent Improvements

Improvements to the road network have been made as opportunities arise, alongside the LNTP initiative. Safety measures have recently been implemented in the Leaside area to improve conditions for road users, with a focus on those that are vulnerable. [Speed limit reductions](#) were implemented on all arterial, collector and local roads in the area. Four [School Safety Zones](#) and six [Community Safety Zones](#) have been designated to help reduce aggressive driving and speeding in areas where vulnerable road users are likely to be present. School Safety Zones use a variety of measures such as Watch Your Speed signs, improved pavement markings, and flashing beacons to alert motorists of the presence of vulnerable road users. [Pedestrian head start signals, also known as leading pedestrian interval](#), have been added to five signalized intersections in the area. This feature provides pedestrians with the opportunity to begin crossing the street before vehicles are permitted to proceed, and thereby reduces conflicts with turning vehicles. A [curb radius reduction](#) was implemented at the intersection of Bessborough Drive, Craig Crescent and Divadale Drive to increase visibility between all road users, reduce the crossing distance for people walking and reduce vehicle turning speeds.

Community Consultation Milestones and What We Heard So Far

A variety of methods have been used to notify members of the public of the project and opportunities to participate in consultation activities, including:

- Project web page (toronto.ca/LeasideNTP)
- Notices via Canada Post Neighbourhood Mail (3,217 addresses)
- Email to project emailing list, including residents' associations, community groups, organizations, local businesses, institutions and elected officials (357 contacts)

A virtual public information session was held on February 9, 2022 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 pm and was attended by 189 participants. The session included a presentation by City staff about the project objectives, process, and toolbox of strategies. At the session, residents and stakeholders raised concerns about safety on neighbourhood streets and at intersections, identified potential locations for improvement, asked questions about the types of improvements and their implementation, and requested additional traffic enforcement in the area. In addition to the comments received at the information session, the study team received feedback through emails and calls.

In Summer 2022, a digital mapping tool was launched to collect information from the Leaside community on their transportation experiences, areas of concerns, and ideas for improvements in the study area. Public notices were distributed by mail encouraging participation. From July 18, 2022 to September 3, 2022, members of the public were able to locate areas of interest and concern using a digital mapping tool called [Social Pinpoint](#). A total of 257 unique respondents submitted 458 comments. The most frequently identified concern was high vehicle volumes, followed by safety concerns at intersections and poor compliance to traffic controls. Overall, the comments provided on the Social Pinpoint mapping tool were related to:

- Heavy congestion during peak hours;
- Aggressive driving and failure to obey speed limits, stop signs, turning restrictions and other bylaws;
- The curving road design and presence of on-street parking or other visual obstructions create poor sightlines, causing people driving and cycling to make wide turns with compromised visibility and/or risky merges into oncoming traffic;
- Need for better infrastructure for vulnerable road users;
- Concerns related to the opening of the TTC Line 5 Eglinton LRT; and
- Concerns related to residential development in the area and the impact on traffic and on-street parking conditions.

Public consultation materials, including presentations, meeting reports and comments are posted on the City's website at toronto.ca/LeasideNTP.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Map of Leaside Neighbourhood Transportation Plan Study Area

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