

## **Kensington Market Safe Streets Implementation: Prioritizing Pedestrians in Kensington Market**

Date: June 6, 2023

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Project Design and Management, Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 11 - University-Rosedale

### **SUMMARY**

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Kensington Market is a cultural, community and commercial centre and a destination with high pedestrian traffic and local business operations.

In 2024 and 2025, road rehabilitation and watermain replacement is programmed on several streets within Kensington Market due to the condition of the aging infrastructure:

- Augusta Avenue from College Street to Dundas Street West
- Baldwin Street from Augusta Avenue to Spadina Avenue
- Nassau Street from Bellevue Avenue to Augusta Avenue
- Kensington Avenue from Dundas Street West to Baldwin Street
- St. Andrew Street from Kensington Avenue to Spadina Avenue

The programmed work presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve safety and accessibility while supporting local businesses. Extensive feedback from local stakeholders and the public has been sought through three rounds of consultation between Fall 2021 and Spring 2023.

Transportation Services is recommending a design that will prioritize pedestrians while accommodating slow speed vehicle access for local residents and enhancing loading opportunities for businesses.

Key features include:

- Mid-block curb extensions to calm vehicular traffic and provide space for cafes, pedestrians and furnishings (bike parking, waste receptacles, etc.);
- Curb extensions and reduced corner radii at intersections wherever possible;
- Widened sidewalks on Augusta Street, Nassau Street and St. Andrew Street;
- A universally-accessible rolled curb installed on all streets;
- Concrete pavers on roadways that are permeable where possible to filter and reduce stormwater runoff;

- Dedicated Commercial Loading Areas - 160 metres of commercial loading area, providing twelve (12) spaces for large delivery trucks;
- Flexible Loading Areas - 234 metres of by-lawed no-parking areas that would allow temporary loading, deliveries and pick-up and drop-off, providing eighteen (18) spaces for large delivery trucks or forty-two (42 spaces) for passenger vehicles;
- Reduced speed limits on all streets in the project area from 30 km/h to 20 km/h;
- More bike parking and Bike Share Toronto stations;
- Pedestrian-scale street lighting in partnership with the Kensington Market BIA; and
- Street trees added where possible.

Transportation Services also proposes to pursue a pedestrianisation pilot project following the completion of construction. This would allow more time to consult with local businesses and residents, other City Divisions and the public to determine the best balance for Kensington Market that puts pedestrians first, while also keeping the Market accessible for businesses and local residents. Staff would form and work closely with a local stakeholder committee to consult on, implement and evaluate a temporary pedestrianised zone within Kensington Market. Consultation on the pedestrianisation pilot would begin in 2024 during the tendering and construction periods of the project.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Director, Project Design and Management, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council authorize the installation of the Kensington Market Safe Streets Project and all required by-law amendments to Toronto Municipal Code Chapters 903, 910, 925, 950, as generally described in Attachment 1 to the report (June 6, 2023) from the Director, Project Design and Management.
2. Toronto and East York Community Council direct staff to form and work closely with a local stakeholder committee to consult on and propose to implement a time-restricted pilot project to test and evaluate a pedestrianised zone following construction of the capital works.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The estimated cost to implement the street improvements recommended in this report is \$9.500 million. Approximately \$2.000 million is available in the approved 2023-2032 Capital Budget and Plan for Transportation Services. The remaining funding required for the project will be requested as part of the 2024-2033 capital budget submission process to be considered along with other City priorities, intergovernmental funding opportunities and City funding availability.

Funding required for ongoing maintenance costs would be considered as part of future operating budget submissions for Transportation Services.

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

The permanent removal of eighty-two (82) Pay and Display (P&D) on-street parking spaces proposed in the report would reduce Toronto Parking Authority's (TPA) annual gross revenue by an estimated \$348,000.

## DECISION HISTORY

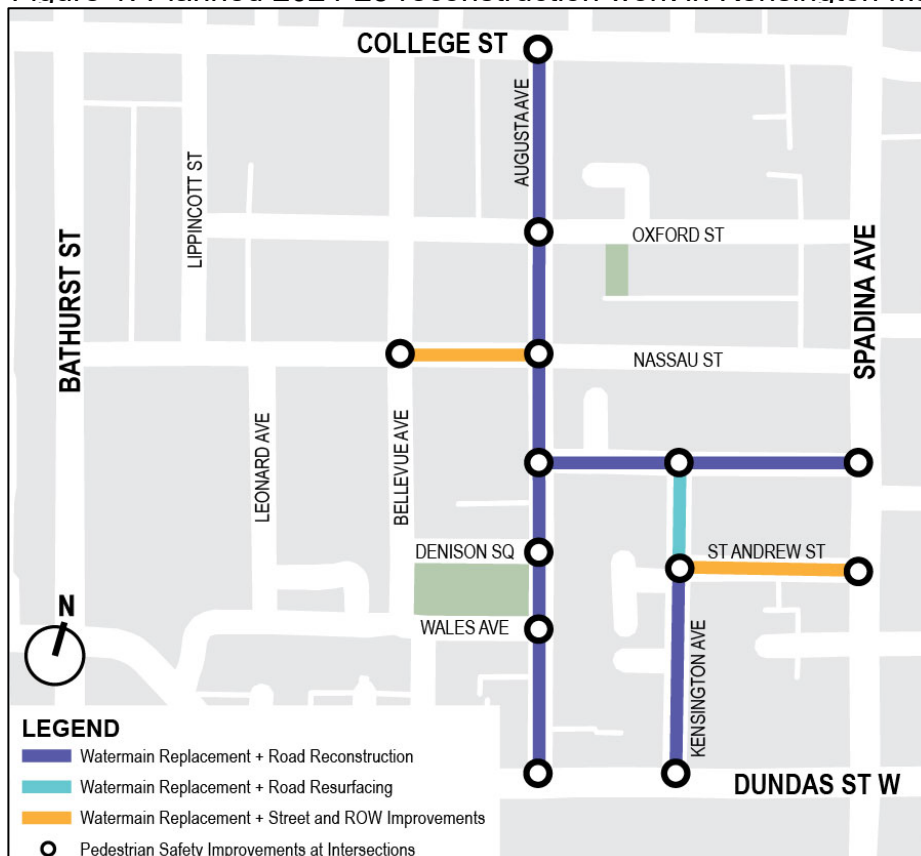
On July 23, 2018, City Council authorized the enactment of the Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Study Area By-law including a Report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning on Kensington Market Neighbourhood - Designation of Study Area By-Law.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.MM44.115>

## COMMENTS

In 2024 and 2025, road rehabilitation and watermain replacement is programmed on streets within Kensington Market due to the condition of the aging infrastructure. State-of-good-repair projects represent an important opportunity to make changes to improve road safety and infrastructure. The watermain through these sections of streets is over 148 years old and needs to be replaced as soon as possible.

Figure 1: Planned 2024-25 reconstruction work in Kensington Market



Through the public consultation and design process, the project was guided by six objectives:

- *Prioritizing Pedestrians* - Shaping a neighbourhood that prioritizes the experience of people walking and rolling;
- *Making More Public Space* - Repurposing road space to make more high-quality public space;
- *Creating Barrier-Free Streets* - Eliminating traditional curbs and other barriers throughout the market, where possible, to make a universally-accessible neighbourhood;
- *Adapting to Climate Change* - Creating a “spongy” neighbourhood with new tree plantings and permeable pavements to reduce rain water runoff and filter water;
- *Integrating Lighting for People* - Installing lights at the pedestrian scale to improve safety and vibrancy of the streets; and,
- *Reducing Construction Impacts* - Minimizing impacts on businesses and residents, by maintaining access and providing regular communication through construction.

## **Existing Conditions**

### *Transportation Network*

All existing sections of street in Kensington Market have concrete sidewalks with barrier curbs (100-150mm) and an asphalt roadway

- Augusta Avenue from College Street to Dundas Street W: Collector road classification with sub-standard width sidewalks, one-way, one-lane street going north, speed limit of 30 km/h
- Baldwin Street from Augusta Avenue to Spadina Avenue: Local road classification with sub-standard width sidewalks and roadway, one-way, one-lane street going west, two way two-lane from Spadina Avenue to parking garage exit driveway, speed limit of 30 km/h for full length
- Nassau Street from Bellevue Avenue to Augusta Avenue: Collector road classification with sub-standard width sidewalks, one-way, one-lane street going east, speed limit of 40 km/h
- Kensington Avenue from Baldwin Street to Dundas Street West: Local road classification, sidewalks and road widths meet minimum standards in most places, one-way, one-lane street going south, speed limit of 30 km/h
- St. Andrew Street from Kensington Avenue to Spadina Avenue: Local road classification with wide roadway that surpasses minimum lane width requirements, two-way, two-lane street, speed limit of 30 km/h

### *Public Realm*

Kensington Market is characterized by narrow streets and an eclectic mix of shops and restaurants that often encroach onto the public boulevard for merchandise displays and/or seating. These extended building uses are cornerstones to the character of the market and protected by Municipal Zoning By-laws. The encroachments mean that

sidewalks and protected space for pedestrians is limited and pedestrian travel and activity is frequently pushed onto the roadways.

Other public realm conditions in Kensington Market include:

- Intersections that do not meet current accessibility standards, often lacking tactile walking surface indicators and adequate safe manoeuvring space for pedestrians.
- Grading and drainage issues in some sections, resulting in ponding of water.
- 27 clamp-on pedestrian-scale lights in the Market, owned and operated by the BIA and attached to existing hydro poles.
- Three existing Bike Share Toronto stations around the project site
- Many bike racks throughout the Market area including post and ring racks, stacker racks and bike corrals
- Approximately 40 existing street trees at the back of the sidewalk throughout the neighbourhood
- There are nine (9) registered CaféTOs treatments within the project boundary. These are along Augusta Avenue and Nassau Street.

Figure 2: A CafeTO space on Augusta Avenue north of Oxford Street



### *Loading and Parking*

The streets in Kensington Market include on-street paid parking, with some permit parking and loading areas. There are also two paid off-street parking facilities in close proximity to the main Market area.

#### Toronto Parking Authority Paid Parking

- 82 spaces of on-street paid parking
- 417 spaces available in Green P Kensington Garage. 55% peak usage in 2022.
- 86 spaces available in 35 Bellevue Avenue Parking Lot. This lot is proposed to be redeveloped into affordable housing by the City in the future

#### Permit Parking

- Streets in the project areas are included in permit parking area 6C. As of February 2023, there are 260 spaces available and 207 regular permit holders.

#### Loading Zones

- 11 existing commercial loading areas: 7:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, concentrated on Baldwin Street
- Many loading vehicles get ticketed for loading on streets without loading area designation due to lack of space in the existing zones

## Public Consultation

Public consultation was a foundation of this project's design development phase. Transportation Services held three rounds of public and stakeholder consultation and heard from a diverse array of people who are interested in the future of Kensington Market. Consultation outreach included wide flyer distributions, hand-delivered postcards, addressed letters to affected properties, social media posts, and a stakeholder email list with over 350 contacts. Engagement activities included virtual meetings, two full-day drop-in events, a loading study survey, youth engagement workshops, an accessibility site walk/roll, several meetings with local stakeholder groups and online surveys with over 1,600 respondents.

During the first round of public consultation in 2021, Transportation Services presented a design option that enhanced the pedestrian experience with limited impact to motor vehicle operations. In the second round of public consultation, based on input received, the project team presented more safety enhancements and an option to pedestrianise a section of Baldwin Street between Augusta Avenue and Kensington Avenue. Through the consultation period, many who participated expressed a desire for more pedestrian safety enhancements and for the Baldwin Street pedestrianised zone option to be expanded.

In the third round of public consultation in 2023, Transportation Services proposed a mix of pedestrianised and shared street zones along two blocks of Augusta Avenue between Denison Square and Oxford Street and one block of Baldwin Street between Augusta Avenue and Kensington Avenue. The pedestrianisation proposal was extremely popular among those who visit Kensington Market (94% supportive from Phase 3 survey respondents who are visitors) and some local residents and businesses. Some who participated shared that they feel that the entire Kensington Market area should only allow pedestrian access and business loading.

While others, particularly many long-term residents and market store operators, expressed opposition to the pedestrian-only zones proposal (37% unsupportive from survey respondents who live/work/own on the affected streets). These community members shared their concerns that pedestrianisation and aesthetic upgrades like pavers would have unintended consequences on the Market. These uncertainties include making it nonviable for grocers and other non-restaurant, bar and café shops to operate, accelerating gentrification, causing disruptive noise and litter, traffic and other issues in the neighbourhood.

Throughout the consultation, Transportation Services heard consistent requests to increase space for pedestrians and business loading and decrease space for on-street paid parking and driving.

At each phase of public consultation, a public notice was delivered to approximately 19,000 households through Canada Post neighbourhood mail within the area of Harbord Street to Queen Street West, Palmerston Avenue to St. George Street / Beverley Street. Project updates and invitations were posted to the project web page also sent to the project email list, with over 350 subscribers in Phase 3. Feedback was

invited at public events (virtual in 2021-22, and in-person in 2023), through online surveys, telephone, email and postal mail.

Below is a summary of additional outreach and specific events completed for each phase of consultation (attendee numbers are exclusive of City of Toronto staff):

*Public Consultation Phase #1 - September to November 2021*

- Stakeholder meeting - October 25, 2021 (8 attendees)
- Virtual public meeting - October 28, 2021 (41 attendees)
- Door-to-door postcard drop-off (500 copies)
- Public survey (250 responses)

*Public Consultation Phase #2 - February to October 2022*

- Meeting with Kensington Market BIA - February 22, 2022 (3 attendees)
- Meeting with mural artists - March 4, 2022 (2 attendees)
- Virtual stakeholder meeting - July 7, 2022 (10 attendees)
- Virtual public meeting - July 18, 2022 (46 attendees)
- Two Youth Engagement Workshops - June/July 2022 (~40 attendees)
- Accessibility site walk/roll - August 2022 (2 attendees)
- Business Loading Study Survey - March 2022 (33 responses)
- Fire truck movement and access demonstration on-site - October 2022
- Public survey (134 responses)

*Public Consultation Phase #3 - April to May 2023*

- Virtual meeting with the Kensington Market BIA - April 5, 2023 (7 participants)
- Addressed letters sent to 611 owners and tenants on the affected streets and connecting laneways and driveways
- Multiple social media posts to Twitter by @TO\_Cycling\_Ped
- Virtual stakeholder meeting - April 25, 2023 (16 participants)
- All day public drop-in event advertised to local owners and tenants - May 2, 2023 (53 participants)
- All day public drop-in event advertised widely - May 4, 2023 (131 participants)
- Kensington Market BIA hosted meeting with project team joining - May 10, 2023 (~20 participants)
- Friends of Kensington Market hosted meeting with project team - May 23, 2023 (~40 participants)
- Public survey (over 1600 responses, including over 110 respondents who live/work/own on the affected streets).

Further details on the project, including public consultation materials and summaries, can be found at [toronto.ca/KensingtonSafeStreets](https://toronto.ca/KensingtonSafeStreets). The local Councillor has been regularly consulted on the proposed project.

## Proposed Design

Transportation Services is recommending a design that will prioritize pedestrians while accommodating slow-speed vehicle access for local residents and enhancing loading opportunities for businesses. Based on feedback heard through the public consultation, the proposed design combines components presented during all three rounds of public consultation. No portions of streets are being permanently pedestrianised as part of this report.

For a more complete overview of the proposed design, see Attachment 2: Kensington Market Safe Streets - design changes based on feedback from consultation #3.

### *Civil Design*

Transportation Services is recommending that all the streets be reconstructed with concrete sidewalks, a universally-accessible rolled curb and concrete pavers on the roadway. This would allow for the streets in Kensington Market to remain operationally flexible, while enhancing the pedestrian experience, safety, and water filtration and infiltration. Pavers on roads combined with rolled curbs will create psychological traffic calming by signaling a shared pedestrian priority space.

Road widths are minimized everywhere possible and sidewalk widths are maximized wherever possible. Curb extensions at intersections and mid-block will pinch the roadway to a narrow 4 metres while allowing for circulation of service and emergency vehicles.

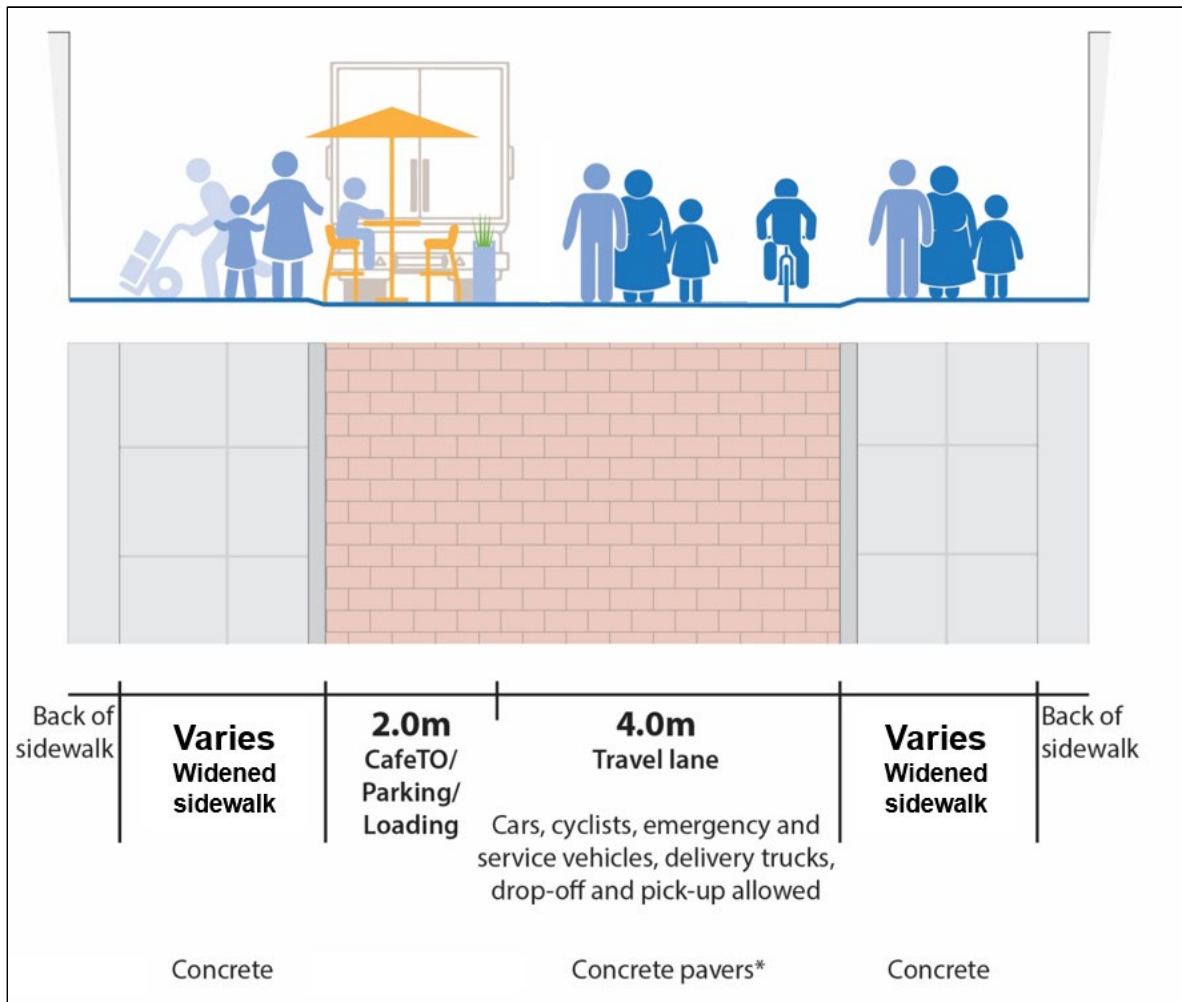
These elements (listed below) will work together reduce vehicle operating speeds and improve safety:

- Mid-block curb extensions to calm vehicular traffic and provide space for pedestrians, cafes and bike parking;
- Curb extensions and reduced corner radii at intersections wherever possible;
- Widened sidewalks on Augusta Street, Nassau Street and St. Andrew Street;
- A universally-accessible rolled curb to be installed on all streets;
- Reducing the speed limit on all streets in the project area from 30 km/h to 20 km/h;
- Reducing the speed limit on Nassau Street outside the project area from 40 km/h to 30 km/h;
- Concrete pavers on roadways that are permeable where possible to filter and reduce stormwater runoff;
- More bike parking added throughout the area as stacker racks and bike corrals;
- Two (2) new Bike Share Toronto stations added in area for a total of five (5) stations;
- Pedestrian-scale street lighting in partnership with the Kensington Market BIA; and
- Additional street trees, where possible.

It should be noted that the annual installation of the mural on Baldwin Street to celebrate Emancipation Day will not be impacted as the pavers can be painted (as the asphalt surface was in previous years).



Figure 3: The typical street section proposed for all streets



### *Parking and Loading*

Through changes to parking and loading, the design prioritizes the servicing needs of local businesses and residents. The design removes on-street paid parking to provide more space for loading, pick-up drop-off and sidewalk expansions while preserving most permit parking.

### *Toronto Parking Authority Paid Parking*

Kensington Market has ample paid parking available in the Green P Kensington Garage to serve visitors who arrive by car. As such, all eighty-two (82) on-street paid parking spaces within the project area are slated to be removed to accommodate loading, pick-up and drop-off areas, sidewalk expansions and bike parking.

### *Permit Parking*

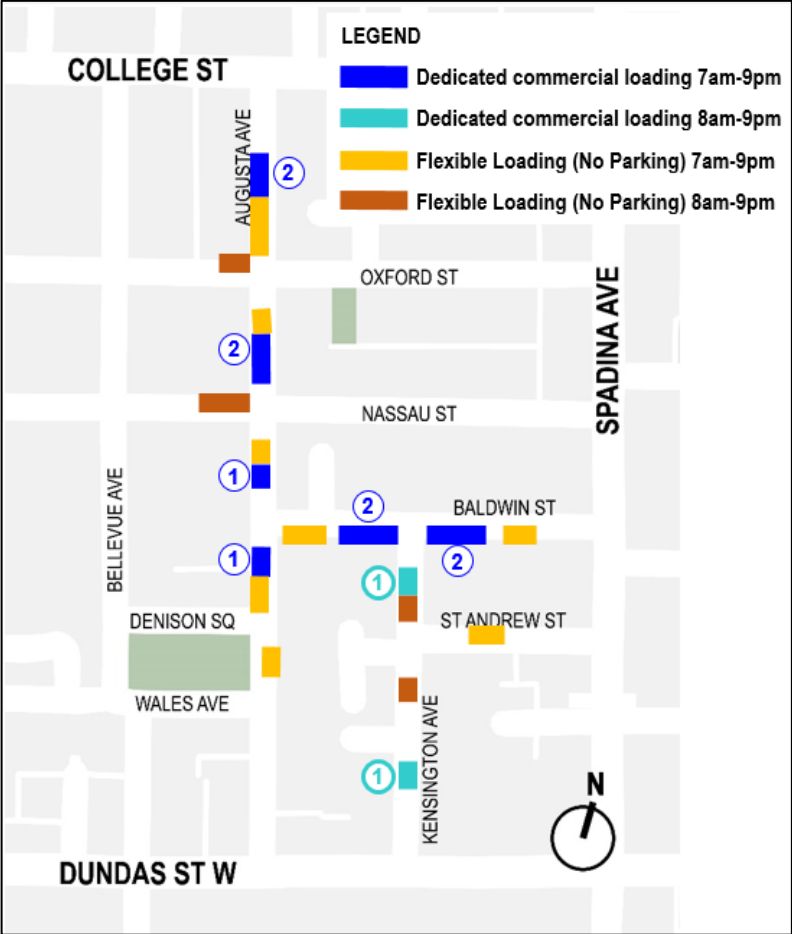
- Sixteen (16) spaces to be removed from local permit area 6C, leaving 255 spaces to serve 207 regular permit users
- The removals will provide space necessary for traffic calming, loading and drop-off zones, while maintaining adequate parking for permit holders.

- In order to preserve accessibility of permit parking for permit holders, the report proposes the following two modifications to the by-laws for permit areas on Nassau Street between Bellevue Avenue and Augusta Avenue; Kensington Avenue between St. Andrew Street and Dundas Street W; Augusta Avenue, between Wales Avenue and Dundas Street West:
  - 1) Extending the existing restricted parking period (1 hour maximum) from 7:00 p.m. to midnight; and
  - 2) Adding a permit parking only time window from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

*Loading, Pick-Up and Drop-Off*

- Dedicated Commercial Loading Areas - 160 metres of commercial loading area. Provides twelve (12) spaces for large delivery trucks. Time restrictions are Monday to Sunday and detailed in the adjacent map - see Figure 4.
- Flexible Loading Areas - 234 metres of no-parking areas that would allow temporary loading, deliveries and pick-up and drop-off. Provides eighteen (18) spaces for large delivery trucks or forty-two (42) spaces for passenger vehicles. Vehicles displaying accessible parking permits are permitted to park in areas by-lawed no-parking. Time restrictions are Monday to Sunday and detailed in the adjacent map - see Figure 4.
- All parking/loading space allocations will be reviewed once in service and can be modified as required, subject to Community Council approval.

Figure 4: Map of proposed loading areas



*Pedestrianisation Pilot*

Some local businesses and residents expressed concerns about the unintended consequences of any pedestrianisation in the Market. Despite this, there was a very high level of support (94% of participants in the consultation process) to consider pedestrianisation in Kensington Market. The many opinions are often at odds and

further consultation would be required to come to a balanced proposal for any pedestrianisation.

This report proposes a process to form and work closely with a local stakeholder committee to consult on and propose to implement a temporary pedestrianised zone pilot within Kensington Market, including a monitoring and evaluation plan.

- Staff would prepare a terms of reference for a local stakeholder committee that would be an advisory body for the potential pilot project
- Scope and location of pedestrianisation to be determined during consultation period
- Time restrictions and duration of pedestrian zones to be determined during consultation period
- Method of closure and materials for barriers to be determined during consultation and design period
- Pedestrianised zone(s) would allow time-restricted loading
- Consultation plan will be prepared and further consultation with stakeholders and public to commence by 2024
- Pilot would be proposed to Toronto and East York Community Council for implementation and evaluation following the completion of construction. Exact timing to be determined during consultation and design period

## CONTACT

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Becky Katz  
Manager, Cycling and Pedestrian Projects  
Project Design & Management, Transportation Services  
Tel: (416) 392-9065  
Email: [Becky.Katz@toronto.ca](mailto:Becky.Katz@toronto.ca)

Mateen Mahboubi  
Acting Manager, Vision Zero Projects  
Project Design & Management, Transportation Services  
Tel: (416) 392-3130  
Email: [Mateen.Mahboubi@toronto.ca](mailto:Mateen.Mahboubi@toronto.ca)

Randy McLean  
Manager, Neighbourhood Projects  
Project Design & Management, Transportation Services  
Tel: (416) 392-4628  
Email: [Randy.McLean@toronto.ca](mailto:Randy.McLean@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Jacquelyn Hayward  
Director, Project Design & Management  
Transportation Services

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Kensington Market Safe Streets Proposed By-Laws  
Attachment 2: Kensington Market Safe Streets - Design changes based on feedback  
from Consultation #3