

Accelerating Construction of the Gardiner Expressway

Date: June 19, 2024

To: City Council

From: Mayor Olivia Chow

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager of Transportation Services and Chief Engineer and Executive Director of Engineering and Construction Services to report back, based on the results of the industry expert workshops sessions held on June 11 and 12 as well as the negotiations with the current contractor, on the plan and tangible, implementable measures to advance the construction acceleration and congestion management measures, at the July 16 meeting of the Executive Committee.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services, to include the plan to accelerate work and minimize traffic and congestion impacts requested in MM18.5 in the report requested to Executive Committee in Recommendation 1 above.

SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Traffic in Toronto has become worse in recent months due to construction of critical infrastructure – like building new subways and housing, as well as rebuilding the 60-year-old Gardiner Expressway.

Being stuck on our congested streets is frustrating. That's time taken away from friends and family. It's time spent waiting rather than doing the things you need to do.

The impact on our economy cannot be understated. The Toronto Region Board of Trade estimates that congestion costs us \$11 billion in productivity each year.

The ongoing rebuild of the Gardiner Expressway has added considerable travel time downtown. The original timeline of three years to complete construction is simply too long for this vital artery to have lane reductions. It's clear we need to do better.

That's why we're working to accelerate the work on the Gardiner Expressway Section 2 between Dufferin Street and Strachan Avenue (Gardiner Section 2) construction. Some of the steps City staff have already taken to expedite construction and improve traffic flow include:

- Allowed for some overnight demolition work
- Requested an acceleration proposal from the contractor
- Modified over 60 signal timings, with continuous monitoring and changes based on traffic patterns
- Redesigned the traffic control set up for westbound traffic to allow for opening the Jameson Gate

City staff are collaborating with industry experts and the current contractor to identify ways to accelerate the construction work and mitigate the impacts on traffic and congestion. A significant component of the collaboration with industry experts involved two workshops: a Congestion Management Workshop on June 11 and a Construction Acceleration Workshop on June 12.

City staff are reviewing the results from the Construction Acceleration Workshop and a proposal from the current Gardiner Section 2 Contractor to determine feasibility and the required budget. These measures include adding additional crews, extending work hours, supplying additional equipment and accelerating the production of materials, including the ongoing precast girder fabrication.

The Congestion Management Workshop identified some key areas for focus to improve traffic movement and reduce congestion including reassessing Gardiner on-ramp operations, improving traffic flow on north-south streets feeding into the Gardiner, and enhancing communication strategies to promote carpooling and transit use. Staff are now working to operationalize these focus areas into tangible measures that can be implemented.

SIGNATURE

Olivia Chow
Mayor