

Road Alteration – Steeles Avenue East

Date: June 20, 2024

To: North York Community Council

From: Director, Planning, Design and Management, Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 17 – Don Valley North

SUMMARY

As TTC operates bus service on Steeles Avenue East, City Council approval of this report is required.

Transportation Services is requesting approval, on behalf of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), to alter Steeles Avenue East (northerly westbound lane) from the Highway 404 southbound on-ramp to the east side of Don Mills Road. This is proposed in order to extend the existing reserved bus lane west of Townsend Road an additional 295 metres and would create a continuous queue jump lane of 500 metres.

This queue-jump lane would allow TTC buses to improve service reliability and travel times on Steeles Avenue East by bypassing general traffic in the area. This will benefit approximately 240 daily bus-trips and improve the journey times for approximately 24,000 daily customers. This proposal is supported by the City and TTC's established criteria for queue-jump lane warrants.

This queue-jump lane can be accommodated within the existing Steeles Avenue East right-of-way by a minor widening of the roadway by up to 2.5 metres, adjusting the centre median width, and extending existing turn lanes. As per the City standard, the queue jump lane would be identified by a red paint application. Red paint would also be applied to the existing bus lane on Steeles Avenue East, west of Townsend Road to Don Mills Road.

These modifications would not result in the loss of any travel lanes for general traffic. All current lanes would remain, including existing dedicated left-turn lanes. This queue-jump lane would also serve to extend the current westbound lane for right-turning vehicles at Townsend Road.

Note that the designs for the queue jump lane are currently under review by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). The current designs reflect MTO's first set of comments and the final design of the queue jump lane are being coordinated with MTO. Subject to

Council's approval of the recommendations of this report, the proposed changes would only be implemented upon approval from the MTO.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council designate the northerly westbound lane on Steeles Avenue East between Highway 404 Southbound On-Ramp and a point 30.5 metres east of Townsend Road as a reserved lane for public transit vehicles and bicycles at all times.
2. City Council amend the existing northerly westbound lane designation on Steeles Avenue East between Don Mills Road and Townsend Road as a reserved lane for public transit vehicles and taxicabs, at all times to be in effect as a reserved lane for public transit vehicles and bicycles, at all times.
3. City Council amend the existing northerly westbound lane designation at Don Mills Road and Steeles Avenue East between Don Mills Road and a point 30.5 metres east, for westbound right turns only at all times, buses excepted to be in effect at all times, buses and bicycles excepted.
4. City Council amend the northerly westbound lane designation on Steeles Avenue East between Townsend Road and a point 72 metres east, for westbound right turns only at all times, buses excepted to be in effect at all times, buses and bicycles excepted.
5. City Council amend the existing parking prohibition in effect at all times on the north side of Steeles Avenue East between Yonge Street and Victoria Park Avenue to be in effect from Yonge Street and a point 30.5 metres east of Don Mills Road.
6. City Council prohibit parking at all times on the north side of Steeles Avenue East between Highway 404 Southbound On-Ramp and Victoria Park Avenue.
7. City Council prohibit stopping at all times on the north side of Steeles Avenue East between the Highway 404 Southbound On-Ramp and a point 30.5 metres east of Don Mills Road.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

All costs associated with the proposed alterations westbound at the Steeles Avenue East at Townsend Road intersection will be the responsibility of the TTC. The estimated

cost to implement the proposed improvements is \$2.0 million with funding available in the TTC's Council Approved 2023-2032 Capital Budget.

DECISION HISTORY

This report addresses a new initiative.

COMMENTS

Background

Transportation Services, City Planning and the TTC are undertaking a system-wide review of locations where it is operationally feasible to provide bus queue-jump lanes that also serve as extended right-turn lanes for general traffic. The provision of these lanes, where appropriate, allows TTC customers to bypass general traffic at intersections and improves transit service reliability and journey times. The intersection of Steeles Avenue East at Townsend Road is one such location.

Existing Conditions

Steeles Avenue East is an east-west arterial road with two through lanes in each direction approaching the Townsend Road intersection. Dedicated left and right turn lanes are provided on Steeles at this intersection. Current east-west lane widths in the area vary between 3.5 metres and 3.8 metres.

TTC buses travelling westbound on Steeles Avenue East currently service a far-side stop at Townsend Road. Bus service is provided by the 53 Steeles East and 953 Steeles East Express routes, which operate at a combined frequency of every 3 to 5 minutes during the peak periods. Approximately 24,000 daily customer-trips are made on this corridor.

Westbound Queue-Jump Lane on Steeles Avenue East at Townsend Road

The proposed alteration would widen the north side of Steeles Avenue East by up to 2.5 metres within the existing road right-of-way and adjust lane widths to generally 3.3 metres (3.5 metre curb lane within MTO limits to meet their requirements) for through lanes and 3.0 metres for turn lanes. These alterations would provide sufficient room to extend the existing westbound right-turn lane at Townsend Road back to the southbound on-ramp at Highway 404. The traffic control signal poles on the median on the west side of Steeles Avenue East at Highway 404 southbound off-ramp would be modified to accommodate this road widening.

The proposed alterations are shown in Attachment 1. As part of this work, the concrete sidewalk on the north side of Steeles Avenue East will be brought to a pedestrian clearway width of 2.1 metres.

By incorporating the existing southbound Highway 404 on-ramp entrance lane into the new westbound queue jump lane, and extending the existing right turn lane from Townsend Road, the queue-jump lane would provide a new continuous westbound lane for TTC buses to bypass traffic congestion and improve transit service reliability and journey times.

The proposed designs have been developed with input from City Planning and Transportation Services staff. These designs were also coordinated with MTO staff, given the proposed changes in vicinity of the Highway 404 ramps. Subject to Council's approval of the recommendations of this report, the proposed changes would only be implemented in 2025, upon approval from the MTO. As all current travel lanes are to be maintained, no negative impacts to vehicular traffic are expected.

The Ward Councillor has been advised of the recommendations of this staff report.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Transportation Services

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Proposed Road Alterations – Steeles Avenue East at Townsend Road

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Existing Design



Proposed Design

