

Construction Staging Area – 80 St. George Street

Date: March 13, 2024
To: Toronto and East York Community Council
From: Director, Traffic Management, Transportation Services
Wards: Ward 11, University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter that Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision.

Urbacon Buildings Group Inc. is renovating an institutional building (University of Toronto Lash Miller Laboratory) at 80 St. George Street. The site is located on the southwest corner of St. George Street and Willcocks Street. It should be noted that Willcocks Street, between St. George Street and Huron Street operates as a public walkway, with no vehicular access.

Transportation Services is requesting authorization for a temporary full closure of Willcocks Street, between St. George Street and Huron Street for a period of 25 months, from April 30, 2024 to May 31, 2026 to facilitate construction staging operations. Pedestrian movements on the south side of Willcocks Street will be restricted and pedestrians will be redirected to the north side of the roadway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Traffic Management, Transportation Services, recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council authorize the temporary full closure of Willcocks Street to all road users, between St. George Street and Huron Street, from April 30, 2024 to May 31, 2026, inclusive.
2. Toronto and East York Community Council rescind the existing southbound left-turn prohibition at the intersection on Huron Street and Willcocks Street, from April 30, 2024 to March 31, 2024, inclusive.

3. Toronto and East York Community Council rescind the existing northbound right-turn prohibition at the intersection on Huron Street and Willcocks Street, from April 30, 2024 to March 31, 2024, inclusive.
4. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to construct and maintain a fully covered, protected and unobstructed walkway for all pedestrians, including for those with mobility devices, for the entire duration of the construction staging area permit to the satisfaction of the City engineer and ensure it is compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
5. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to ensure that the existing sidewalks or the proposed pedestrian walkway have proper enhanced lighting to ensure safety and visibility at all times of the day and night.
6. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to clearly consult and communicate all construction, parking and road occupancy impacts with local business improvement areas and resident associations in advance of any physical road modifications.
7. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to install appropriate signage and request the applicant to maintain all sightlines to ensure that pedestrians, cyclists and motorists safety is considered at all times.
8. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to provide a sufficient number of traffic control persons as determined by the Work Zone Coordinator and Toronto Police Construction Liaison Officer, on a daily basis to control construction vehicle access and egress to and from the site and maintain a safe environment for the public.
9. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to provide a sufficient number of pay-duty Police Officers as determined by the Work Zone Coordinator and Toronto Police Construction Liaison Officer, during large scale concrete pours and large scale material deliveries to control vehicle access and egress to and from the site and maintain a safe environment for the public.
10. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to post a 24-hour monitored construction hotline number on the hoarding board, which must be prominently placed and legible from 20 metres and on all elevations from the construction site.
11. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to install cane detection within the covered and protected walkway to guide pedestrians who are visually impaired.
12. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to cooperate with and provide all necessary assistance to the City Engineers, staff and representatives carrying out operation, maintenance, and construction activities to municipal infrastructure within the vicinity of the construction staging area, and at no cost to the

City to remove any staging to accommodate the necessary municipal infrastructure work.

13. Toronto and East York Community Council direct that Willcocks Street be returned to its pre-construction traffic and parking regulations when the project is complete.

14. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the applicant to provide monthly community meetings, to discuss any concerns raised by the community.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the City. The developer, University of Toronto is responsible for all costs, including payment of fees to the City for the occupancy of the right-of-way. Based on the area enclosed and projected duration of the proposed closures on Willcocks Street these fees will be approximately \$2,350,000.00 including lost revenue from the parking machines (if applicable).

DECISION HISTORY

Committee of Adjustments, at its meeting held on Wednesday, September 6, 2023, issued a Notice of Decision regarding File Number A0668/23TEY. The Committee of Adjustments approved a Minor Variance/Permission regarding the address at 70 St. George Street finding that the intent and purpose of both the Official Plan and the Zoning By-law were maintained.

COMMENTS

The Development and Timeline

Urbacon Buildings Group Inc. is renovating an institutional building (University of Toronto Lash Miller Laboratory) at 80 St. George Street. The site is bounded by Willcocks Street to the north, St. George Street to the east, Ursula Franklin Street to the south, and Huron Street to the west.

A detailed review of the construction schedule was undertaken by the developer to minimize the project duration and impacts of the construction on all road users. Various options were explored by the developer to set up construction staging operations for the development within the development site. The developer has advised that, due to limited availability of space, all construction activities, including delivery and storage of construction materials, cannot be accommodated within the site.

The major construction activities and associated timeline for the development are described below:

- Demolition: from September 2023 to February 2024;
- Excavation and shoring: from February 2024 to May 2024;
- Below grade formwork: from May 2024 to July 2024;
- Above grade formwork: from July 2024 to January 2025;
- Building envelope phase: from December 2024 to September 2025, and;
- Interior finishes stage: from November 2024 to May 2025.

Existing Conditions

The subject section of Willcocks Street previously operated as a local roadway with vehicular traffic and has since been converted to a public walkway with sidewalks on both sides walkway.

Vehicular access/egress is restricted. Consequently, northbound right, and southbound left-turns are prohibited on Willcocks Street at Huron Street. Also, northbound left, and southbound right-turns are prohibited on Willcocks Street at St. George Street.

Proposed Construction Staging Area

Subject to approval, Willcocks Street between St. George Street and Huron Street will be closed to accommodate construction staging operations. Pedestrian movements on Willcocks Street, abutting the site will be restricted, thus pedestrians will be redirected to the north side sidewalk. To inform pedestrians of the closure, warning signs will be posted on each end of Willcocks Street. Overhead protection will be provided as an extra measure of safety over the bike rings located on the north side of Willcocks Street 18 metres west from St. George Street. To allow for the construction vehicles to enter the site on Willcocks Street at Huron Street, it is recommended that the existing northbound right-turn prohibition, and southbound left-turn prohibition be temporarily revoked.

A drawing of the proposed construction staging area is shown in Attachment 1.

This development site is within the Construction Hub Coordination program and has been reviewed by staff to ensure compliance with the program. This entails a coordinated review that includes construction coordination, community support, business support and communication and engagement with area residents. The guiding principles of a Construction Hub initiative include safety, equity, vibrancy, innovation and engagement. Within this Hub, staff will develop a logistical plan for all work within the right of way, coordinate resources to ensure a safe and equitable plan for all users with an emphasis on pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users.

This development site being reported upon, has been reviewed by the Construction Hub Coordination Team to ensure a coordinated approach to safety and construction is being adhered to.

Finally, a review of the City's Five-Year Major Capital Works Program from 2024 to 2028 indicates that Toronto Water has sewer rehabilitation work planned on Willcocks Street in 2025, and transmission watermain work planned on St. George Street from 2024 to 2025.

The developer was informed that the staging areas may need to be temporarily removed or modified to accommodate the above mentioned Capital Works, and failure to do so may result in the developer being responsible to cover any cost penalties incurred by the City as a result. The applicant shall cooperate with and provide all necessary assistance to the City Engineers, staff and representatives carrying out operation, maintenance, and construction activities to municipal infrastructure within the vicinity of the construction staging area at no cost to the City.

In consideration of the above details and through ongoing dialogue with the developer, Transportation Services is satisfied that University of Toronto, has looked at all options to minimize the duration and impact of the construction staging area on all road users. At the end of the approved closure period, staff will review the need for an extension and if any changes to the approval conditions are required.

If the proposed staging area is not approved, the developer's only option will be to apply for day-use permits of Willcocks Street for periods of less than 30 consecutive days over the 25-month life of the project in order to complete construction.

These permits would often contain time of day restrictions to ensure there is no road occupation during peak periods. Based on the nature of this type of construction activity, there are potential risks to the City in not allowing the staging area permit to proceed such as:

- During crane hoisting activities for a project of this scale, in considering Health and Safety regulations, the Police Act and the Highway Traffic Act give Toronto Police Service officers the discretionary authority to close all lanes of a public highway during the hoist, taking into account wind conditions, as well as both the size and nature of the load.
- Once the pouring of concrete for a structural slab or member is commenced (like a building foundation or floor), it cannot be stopped for any reason (including the commencement of a rush hour restriction) until it is completed in order to maintain its structural integrity.
- This would mean that on any given day during the construction activity, instead of having a single lane occupied 24/7 so that all hoisting would take place within the site, behind the construction hoarding, where the remaining adjacent lanes of traffic operate in a free-flow condition, all lanes of traffic may be held by the paid-duty officer on-site during the hoisting activity, including morning and afternoon peak periods at their sole discretion.
- When the constructor/developer requests the use of adjacent public highway to expand the size of their construction footprint, and bring vehicles into the site, they are also attempting to address their obligations as a constructor/employer under Ontario Regulation 213/91 "Construction Projects" pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Roger Browne, M.A.Sc., P. Eng.
Director, Traffic Management, Transportation Services

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Proposed Construction Staging Area - 80 St. George Street

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