

Construction Staging Area – 7 Hart House Circle

Date: October 7, 2024
To: Toronto and East York Community Council
From: Director, Traffic Management, Transportation Services
Wards: Ward 11, University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

As Queens Park Crescent West is classified as a major arterial street, City Council approval of this report is required.

Pomerleau Inc. has undertaken a renovations project for the University of Toronto, Hart House academic building at 7 Hart House Circle. The site is located on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West, south of Hoskin Avenue.

Transportation Services is requesting authorization to close the west sidewalk, a portion of the southbound bicycle lane, and one southbound vehicle traffic lane on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West for a period of 13 months, from December 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025, to accommodate a construction staging area.

Pedestrian operations on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West will be maintained in a protected walkway within the closed portion of the existing bike lane. Bicycle lanes on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West will be maintained within the closed portion of the southbound curb lane. The existing bike operations on the east side of Queens Park Crescent West will be maintained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council authorize the closure of the southbound curb lane, the sidewalk, and cycle track on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West, between a point 27 metres south of Hoskins Avenue and a point 110 metres further south, and provision of a temporary pedestrian walkway within the closed portion of the southbound, west side vehicle traffic lane, from December 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025 inclusive.

2. City Council direct the applicant to construct and maintain a 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).
3. City 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.
4. City 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.
5. City 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.
6. City 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.
7. City 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.
8. City 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.
9. City Council direct the applicant to provide and install public art, including mural artwork, onto every elevation of the hoarding board with adequate spotlighting for night-time illumination, at their sole cost, to the satisfaction of the Ward Councillor.
10. City Council direct the applicant, in consultation with Transportation Services, to maintain any bicycle lanes, and install appropriate signage to inform drivers and cyclists of any changes to the cycling lanes.
11. City 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.

12. City Council direct that Queens Park Crescent West be returned to its pre-construction traffic and parking regulations when the project is complete.

13. City 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. Pomerleau Inc. 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 Queens Park Crescent West these fees will be approximately \$463,500.00 including lost revenue from the parking machines (if applicable).

DECISION HISTORY

This report addresses a new initiative.

COMMENTS

The Development and Timeline

Pomerleau Inc. has undertaken to do the work for University of Toronto renovations project at the Hart House building located at 7 Hart House Circle. Upon completion, the building will be noticeably unchanged as the major activities for this project is one level below grade. All permanent loading area access will remain as existing from Queen's Park Crescent West. The site is bounded by University of Toronto property adjacent to the north, Hart House Circle to the south, Queen's Park Crescent West to the east, and Tower Road to the west.

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

- Demolition: from November 2024 to December 2024;
- Excavation and shoring: from December 2024 to March 2025;
- Below grade formwork: from March 2025 to November 2025;
- Above grade formwork: Not applicable;
- Building envelope phase: Not applicable;
- Interior finishes stage: from January 2026 to July 2026.

Existing Conditions

Queens Park Crescent West is characterized by the following conditions:

- It is a two-lane, southbound, major arterial roadway
- It operates one-way traffic on a pavement width of approximately 6.4 metres
- The daily one-way traffic volume is approximately 14,000 vehicles
- The speed limit is 40 km/h
- TTC service is provided by bus number 13A, and 13B
- There are sidewalks located on both sides of the street
- There are bicycle lanes provided on both sides of Queens Park Crescent West
- The surrounding land use consists of academic buildings located on the west side of the road, and a park located on the east side of the road
- There is no stopping anytime on both sides Queens Park Crescent West
- Approximately 300 metres northeast from Hoskins Avenue there is an ongoing construction project by TTC on Queens Park at the TTC Museum Station where Queens Park has been reduced from two, to one northbound and one southbound lane in the vicinity of the work area. The project is expected to be completed by December 31, 2025.

Based on the information provided by the developer, the excavation depth from the street level is approximately 6 metres and extends 1.1 metre from the east property line. 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, safe vehicles movements within the hoarding area, storage of construction materials, and worker facilities cannot be accommodated within the site. Therefore, occupation of the road right-of-way on Hillsdale Avenue West will be essential to set up construction staging operations for the development. The proposed construction staging area will be utilized to provide a secure and controlled enclosure for the material deliveries, pickup location for the tower crane.

Subject to approval, the sidewalk, the cycle track, and the southbound traffic lane on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West, between a point 27 metres south of Hoskins Avenue and a point 110 metres further south will be closed to accommodate construction staging operations. With the construction staging area in place, Queens Park Crescent West, in the immediate vicinity of the site, will operate as one southbound traffic lane. Pedestrian operations on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West, abutting the site, will be maintained in a 1.5 metre wide covered and protected walkway located within the closed portion of the existing cycle track. Cyclists on the west side of the roadway will be directed to a 1.2 metre wide bike lane located within the closed portion of the southbound curb lane. Pedestrian and the cycle track on the east side of Queens Park Crescent West will be maintained on the existing sidewalk and cycle track. The existing TTC bus stop on the west side of Queens Park Crescent West just south from work area will not require re-location.

Traffic Mitigation Measures

To maintain efficient flow of traffic during construction, the developer will set up traffic control devices in advance of the work area informing approaching motorists of the construction ahead, and gradually narrowing the roadway from two southbound to a single southbound lane leading up to the work zone. Additionally, signs will be posted for pedestrians and bicyclists advising of the sidewalk and bike lane closure and leading them to the detour route provided.

Transportation Services staff will monitor the traffic control signal during construction on Queens Park Crescent West and Hoskins Avenue and if necessary, will make adjustments to the signal timing plans to improve its performance.

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.

A review of the City's Five-Year Major Capital Works Program indicates that Transportation Services have bridge rehab work planned in 2027 on Queen's Park Crescent West at Wellesley Street West. Furthermore, on Hoskin Avenue there is on-street bikeway construction and major road resurfacing works planned by Transportation Services in 2024 and 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 Pomerleau Inc., 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 Queens Park Crescent West for periods of less than 30 consecutive days over the 13-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 - 7 Hart House Circle

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