

## **Secondary Uses in the Islington Avenue to Royal York Road Hydro One Corridor – Ward 3**

**Date:** August 12, 2025  
**To:** Etobicoke York Community Council  
**From:** General Manager, Parks and Recreation  
**Wards:** Ward 3 - Etobicoke Lakeshore

### **SUMMARY**

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The City of Toronto leases approximately 485 hectares (1200 acres) of Hydro One corridors from Infrastructure Ontario for recreation purposes across the city. Under the Master Licence Agreement, as managed by the Parks and Recreation division, these lands support a network of multi-use trails and a variety of recreational uses as well as meadow re-naturalization projects.

Parks and Recreation were directed by City Council in December 2024 to explore opportunities to improve a 7.3 ha Hydro One corridor in Ward 3 between Islington Avenue and Royal York Road, which is currently informally used by the neighbourhood, and add these lands to the Master License Agreement.

Staff have met with Hydro One to discuss formalizing access for local recreation in this corridor if all hydro infrastructure safety setbacks and maintenance access can be assured. This is a progress report on the initial investigation, potential funding sources and design and approval processes.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager Parks and Recreation recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council receives this report for information.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no immediate impacts on Parks and Recreation or Transportation Services capital and operating budgets with this report.

Etobicoke Lakeshore (Ward 3) has approximately \$2.6M in Section 37 Community Benefit funding from nearby development applications that may be available to support advancing this project through the capital budget process. Staff will work with the local councillor on the potential allocation of this funding once more detailed cost have been determined.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting December 17 and 18, 2024, City Council adopted MM24.6 increasing Green Space, Park Amenities and Local Active Transportation Connections - East West Hydro Corridor Linear Park and directed the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services and the local Councillor to explore utilizing the Hydro One corridor greenspace for active recreational and transportation connections and to report to the Etobicoke York Community Council by the third quarter of 2025.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.MM24.6>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Site Description**

The 60-metre-wide Hydro One corridor runs east-west between Islington Avenue and Royal York Road and branches into two parcels at the eastern end. A Toronto Hydro substation house is located at the end of the corridor at 714 Royal York Road, and a separate parcel connecting Hydro One lines across Castlebar Road fronts further south onto Royal York Road. See Attachment - 1 Location Map. The corridor accommodates two sets of Hydro One transmission lines down the centre of the greenspace as well as two sets of Toronto Hydro transmission lines on wooden poles along the northern and southern edges of the corridor.

This corridor bisects the Stonegate-Queensway Neighbourhood with low rise residential homes to the north and south sides. It is flanked by a vibrant commercial and industrial area on the west side of Islington Avenue, Castlebar Junior School and playing fields to the south, and the Etobicoke School of the Arts, the Karen Kain School of Arts and Bishop Allen Academy Catholic Secondary School on the east side of Royal York Road.

As noted in the Council direction, this small corridor currently provides informal pedestrian connections visible through a network of well-worn foot paths. Many of the private residential rear yard fences backing onto the corridor have gates for easy access to enjoy this quiet greenspace.

## **Opportunity to formalize recreational uses in this corridor**

Parks and Recreation and Transportation Services staff met with Hydro One to discuss the opportunities and restrictions of introducing recreational uses into this corridor while protecting access buffers around the infrastructure for Hydro maintenance.

Hydro One applies safety and maintenance access requirements in consideration of secondary uses on their lands, which can limit the area and types of activities permitted. For example, a clear 15 m setback is required from all hydro towers to ensure unencumbered service access for Hydro trucks and machinery. Toronto Hydro also requires protected, direct access to their poles and infrastructure. Staff have asked Hydro One and Toronto Hydro for any planned construction or line replacement to support project alignment. Based on these initial parameters, staff have submitted a preliminary draft concept plan to Hydro One and Toronto Hydro for review and consideration.

The preliminary draft concept site plan prepared by staff and submitted to Hydro One provides for a three-meter-wide multi-use paved trail, as outlined in the City of Toronto's Multi-Use Trail Guidelines, which would meander through the corridor between Islington Avenue and both entrances fronting Royal York Road, including paved access points north and south to Uno Drive to formalize current use of the corridor for community connections.

Given the size of the corridor and setback requirements from the multiple Hydro One and Toronto Hydro structures, there is limited opportunity for additional active recreation uses in this narrow corridor; however, a small dogs off-leash area as well as allotment garden opportunities may be considered through the public consultation process and if acceptable following Hydro One review.

### **Next Steps**

Staff are awaiting Hydro One comments on the preliminary concept plan to proceed. If Hydro One approves the plan in principle, staff will proceed with incorporating a capital budget request in a future budget submission. Once funding is approved by Council, staff will begin discussing opportunities with the community.

The project will require environmental and archaeological investigations, community consultation and full detailed plans. Once formally approved by Hydro One, these lands will be added to the Master License Agreement and construction can occur. The operating impacts of these new lands will be added to the Parks and Recreation Operating Budget through the budget submission process, including property taxes payable to Hydro One if required.

The timing of the public access to recreational opportunities will be determined by available funding, capital budget priorities and construction timelines as well as any anticipated hydro conductor replacement and upgrades in this corridor.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Tom Azouz  
General Manager  
Parks and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Location Map

Attachment 1: Location Map

