

Port Union Road Improvements Information Session

A virtual information session was hosted by the City of Toronto on May 10, 2021 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The purpose of the event was to inform the community about the Port Union Road Improvements project, from Lawrence Avenue East to Island Road. Once complete, this project will improve conditions for people walking, cycling, and driving, and better manage traffic flow.

City Staff presented information on the design and construction timelines of the project. A copy of the presentation is available online at toronto.ca/PortUnion.

A total of 238 residents registered in advance, with 156 residents attending the event. Out of the 238 registrations, 125 provided postal codes with 110 registrations identifying their postal code as M1C.

Welcome & Introductions

Steven Ziegler gave the Land Acknowledgement and ran through meeting approach.

Councillor Jennifer McKelvie provided opening remarks.

City of Toronto Staff member Gary Papas presented the upcoming planned work in a presentation. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period.

Question and Answer Period

During the meeting, 105 comments and questions were posted in the chat and Q&A panel to City Staff. Ten written questions were answered verbally during the question and answer period. Eight questions were asked and answered verbally during the meeting.

Below is the list of questions that were answered verbally during the meeting.

Question Type	Question/Comment	Staff Reply
Written	Is any consideration being given to having a right turn lane for Island Road in addition to the 2 Northbound lanes? Also, any consideration to have and/or overhead signs for traffic to enter Eastbound Hwy 401 only.	We have not included a northbound right as part of the design. As far as signage to the 401, that is a matter for the provincial Ministry of Transportation (MTO). That request can go through the Councillor who can put you in touch with someone at MTO.
Written	Is Port Union being repaved from Island road to Lawrence?	As part of the reconstruction, we are going to install new asphalt from curb to curb.
Written	Is this project an opportunity to move the Toronto Hydro lines	Good question from an aesthetics point of view. However, it was determined all

	underground, potentially improving their reliability and definitely improving the visual aspect of Port Union Road?	overhead Hydro will remain on the west side of the corridor.
Verbal	<p>There is an opportunity to make Port Union a complete street. Missing the mark – there will be a lot of meandering of pedestrians. Also missing the mark for people cycling. Want to support people cycling for all ages and abilities. Would be better if it were separated and raised. This is popular for people cycling in Scarborough as well as GTA. Bloor/Bathurst was not a blank slate and not comparable. Speed and safety measures need to be added.</p> <p>It's great we're going from 60 to 50 km/hr. There are 7 or 8 schools nearby and it should be lower to keep people safe. The project needs a rethink to serve community priority.</p>	Thank you for your comments. For the bike facilities, we will look at opportunities to make them protected.
Verbal	Is there any way to ensure access/egress to Blue Anchor Trail is not blocked by northbound queuing.. We have a sign to not block the intersection, but it doesn't work. Could be difficult for people with accessibility issues (blind) to navigate new sidewalks.	<p>That's something we can take back. We are including a southbound left-turn lane so your car won't be blocking SB traffic as you wait for a gap in traffic to safely make your turn.</p> <p>POST MEETING NOTE: We will include two “Do Not Block Intersection” signs. One on the north and south side of Blue Anchor Trail.</p>
Verbal	<p>I don't think you're serving people from this community. Allow this GO station parking to be for this community. People from Pickering will be using free parking at the GO Station.</p> <p>If you bring it closer to our house, noise and vibration will be even worse. There was an accident in 2017/18.</p>	We can't respond to anything regarding the GO station. Parking issues need to be taken up with GO Transit. Our noise study indicates future traffic conditions will increase noise by 0.5 decibels.
Written	Are you going to be removing the north entrance of the plaza? There are currently two entrances.	We assume this question is referring to the plaza on the west side of Port Union, north of Lawrence. We typically defer to property owners to let us know how access and egress works for their site. They believe that the two access points

		are beneficial to their retail operations.
Written	Has the monies been allocated or will they have to raise taxes? Is there a possibility for cost overruns?	The funding for this project has been identified in the City's capital budget in 2020 and 2021, adopted by Council. We will find out about cost overruns once we tender and review bids.
Written	Does the bike lane provide room for a faster moving bike to pass a slower one? One disadvantage of adding stone curbs is that it makes it harder for one bike to pass another.	That's a good question. In terms of the bike lane design, that does allow for a bike to pass another. In terms of passing within a protected facility, the addition of curb stones/pour in place curbs would narrow the cycling facility to roughly 1.8 metres, making it difficult to pass other cyclists. Passing would occur at intersections, or breaks in the protected facility (i.e. bus stops, driveways, etc.) .
Verbal	Glad to hear about the crossing over the 401. Happy to see the missing link filled. Need protective barriers or bollards. People don't feel safe cycling in Scarborough without protected bike lanes.	Thank you for your comments. We'll be exploring opportunities to incorporate a protected design.
Verbal	Widening is long overdue. This is going to increase our taxes. We don't need these bells and whistles like bike lanes and sidewalks – the project will balloon.	With road reconstruction, the most nominal cost is painting lines for bike lanes and adding sidewalks. Road works are the more expensive component.
Verbal	Happy to see connected cycling infrastructure. You didn't mention the possibility of bike parking at plazas if it's in consideration.	Typically post-and-rings and bike parking infrastructure are added through developments. We haven't looked at adding post-and-rings as the space along the corridor is constrained. We can look at opportunities through redevelopment to get post-and-rings. The GO Station will also have bike parking through their access plan.
Written	Can you show on a map where the bulk of the trees being removed are located?	We will be uploading the landscape drawings and tree removal plan to the project web page, which will give you a better sense of the exact location of where the trees will be removed and planted.
Written	Any changes to signal lights? New lights?	There will not be any new signals at unsignalized intersections, but we are going to be upgrading existing signals. Signal timing will be updated and improved to allow for better northbound and southbound flow.

Verbal	I'm near Port Union and Lawrence and excited about this project. Where is the construction taking space from (west or east)? How close will it come to existing property lines? Strangely, the City won't cut the verges from Eightymore down to Lawrence. Will the City take responsibility now that they have this nice sidewalk?	We can look into the grass cutting and tree maintenance. In terms of where we're going to be installing different elements in the right-of-way, please refer to the roll plan posted on the project website. It has the proposed road alignment overlaid on the existing aerial image.
Verbal	Paint is not infrastructure. We cannot be making these mistakes in 2021. We need to have higher standards. We need to make protected bike lanes at protected intersections. If you can't send a child down there or a novice cyclist, it is not a bike lane.	Thank you for your comments. We will review that.
Written	As most residents on Port Union will lose parking space, Will there be street parking?	There's no parking on Port Union permitted today. That would be in effect in the future as well. If you're referring to driveway parking, we'll be protecting driveways as-is so that safe access and parking will be provided.
Written	Is the access to the Port Union plaza to be moved to line up with Tilley Drive?	That's correct. That was a request from the plaza owner. It would be a normalized four-way intersection.

Due to the high volume of questions received at the event, City Staff have prepared a frequently asked questions (FAQ). *Please note the FAQ does not cover all questions that were asked during the event.*

Frequently Asked Questions

Background

How did this project come about?

Traffic studies in the 1990s indicated significant congestion and delays in certain sections of Port Union Road during peak periods, particularly in the northbound direction. An Environmental Assessment (EA) study completed in 2004 considered a range of possible solutions, and with public input, recommended a widening of the road to include an additional northbound travel lane between Island Road and Lawrence Avenue East, and intersection improvements at Kingston Road and Port Union Road. City Council directed the improvements to be made at the Kingston Road intersection in 2005, but deferred the widening to a future time, with additional public consultation, design work, and funding commitment.

Where does the authority to carry out this work come from?

The Environmental Study Report (ESR) for this project was completed and approved in 2004. The Addendum (update) to the 2004 Environmental Study Report was approved by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (Now known as the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks) in August 2015.

Why has it taken 5 years to complete the design, and 20 years since the EA to begin construction?

The initial 2004 EA identified a two-phased implementation strategy. Phase 1 would see intersection improvements at Kingston Rd/Port Union Rd, which City Council adopted in April 2004. Phase 2, would see the additional northbound lane added to Port Union Rd, between Island Rd and Lawrence Ave. E. Phase 2 was seen as a more long term solution, and City staff had recommended revisiting the Phase 2 work in 2014, with updated analysis (traffic needs assessment) and community consultation. Further, the initial design of Phase 2 developed during the 2004 EA study called for property acquisition. Following the 2014 EA Addendum, the project team updated the design to better align with existing design standards and looked at modifying the alignment to minimize property impacts.

The initial timeline for design and construction was 2021-2022 for completion, however, timelines for construction are subject to change. There were some aspects of the design work that required more unanticipated attention, including the investigation and relocation of infrastructure owned by utility providers. There are certain elements of a project that are outside the City's control.

Has this project been approved?

Yes, City Council adopted Transportation Services' Capital Budget which includes Port Union Road Widening, planned for later this year.

How much will this project cost?

Approximately \$10 million.

Where is the funding for the road reconstruction coming from?

Funding for infrastructure projects (capital project funding) like road reconstruction and watermain replacement is allocated through the City's capital program, which draws on an array of sources including reserves, development charges, and provincial and federal subsidies.

What are the benefits of this project?

The road widening provides the opportunity to relieve traffic congestion and improve road conditions and safety for all users by:

- adding a northbound traffic lane and improving vehicular movement northbound and at key intersections
- providing northbound/southbound cycling lanes within the project limits thereby improving cycling connectivity to the Waterfront Trail and cycling facilities to the north as well as better access to local destinations
- completing sidewalks on both sides of Port Union Road

Why hasn't the road work happened yet?

The first phase of the work – improvements at the intersection of Port Union Road and Kingston Road – was completed in 2005. When the project was approved in 2004, City Council directed that the

second phase (widening Port Union Road) be carried out in the future, with available funding, after another round of public consultation. The Environmental Assessment Addendum (2015) addressed Council's direction, to ensure that the recommended design addresses the needs and concerns of the community given the changes that have occurred along the Port Union Road corridor since approval in 2004.

Traffic, Speed and Noise

How will speed on Port Union Road be addressed?

Staff will be making a recommendation to City Council in the Fall 2021 to reduce the posted speed limit from 60 km/h to 50 km/h.

Currently, long queues on Port Union Road hamper access to local roads and driveways during rush hour. How will this problem be addressed?

The widening of Port Union Road will reduce queuing at intersections, particularly in the northbound direction. Access to driveways will also be improved with sections of two-way centre left turn lanes to reduce traffic back-ups due to left-turning vehicles.

Will there be more noise as a result of road widening?

As referenced in Section 7.4 of the Environmental Study Report Addendum (available on the project webpage), a Noise Investigation was completed as part of the original 2002-2004 Environmental Assessment (Section 6.4.2 of that report). It was determined, using Ministry of Environment/Ministry of Transportation modelling techniques and thresholds, that noise from the additional traffic lane would be minimal (under 0.5 dB), and would not require mitigation.

As a source of traffic congestion and confusion, why isn't the Island Road/Hwy 401/Kingston Road interchange part of this work?

The initial EA recommended two phases of work, with the first consisting of intersection modifications to Kingston Road and Port Union Road, which was carried out in 2005. The section of Port Union, between Kingston and Island Rd, is owned by the provincial Ministry of Transportation (MTO). MTO is currently undertaking modifications to the bridge, which will include a multi-use trail.

Can anything be done to ensure local residents have efficient access/egress to Blue Anchor Trail from Port Union Rd?

There is currently a "Do Not Block Intersection" sign on Port Union Road, south of Blue Anchor Trail. The Project Team is exploring opportunities to mitigate northbound queuing from blocking this intersection.

POST MEETING NOTE: We will include two "Do Not Block Intersection" signs. One on the north and south side of Blue Anchor.

How are emergency vehicles' going to be impacted?

We do not anticipate any impacts on emergency vehicles. The addition of a northbound travel lane, coupled with a continuous left-turn lane, will help provide additional capacity and flow.

Bike Lanes

Why are bike lanes being added on Port Union Road?

The City is designing streets to be “Complete Streets” which accommodate all road users. The widening presented an opportunity to install dedicated cycling facilities, and to improve the cycling network in Scarborough. Today, there are cycling facilities along Sheppard Ave E and Kingston Rd to the north, and along Lawrence Ave E to the south. Installing cycling facilities along Port Union would connect these existing corridors.

Further, bike lanes were identified as part of the city-wide Bike Network included in the Bike Plan adopted by Council in 2001. These bike lanes have been reaffirmed in the Council-approved 2016 Cycling Network Plan.

Can the bike lanes be protected?

The Project Team will be reviewing opportunities to install curb stones or other forms of protective barriers to the proposed bike lanes.

Trees

How many trees will be removed for this project?

Tree removals were identified in the Council-approved Environmental Study Report (2004) and have been updated. The alignment of the preferred design, identified in the updated Addendum (2015), was in part guided by the goal of reducing the impacts to existing trees, where possible.

Removal of large and mature trees is avoided whenever possible. 173 trees will require removal to accommodate the construction.

Will new trees be planted along Port Union Road?

City of Toronto's Urban Forestry has by-laws that require permits to remove trees and policies which require new tree planting. For every tree removed, Urban Forestry requires 3 replacement trees to be planted. The location of these new trees may be along Port Union Rd, if space permits.

GO and TTC Service

Will any TTC stops be removed or relocated?

No TTC stops will be removed through the road widening. However, the TTC will be relocating the existing northbound Winter Gardens bus stop approximately 100 metres north to Conference Blvd.

Construction

When will construction start and how long will it take?

Overhead Utility Relocation: October 2021 work commences (subject to securing of property easements)

Road Works: April 2022 – November 2022 (subject to securing of property easements and weather conditions)

How will construction be coordinated with 401 interchange construction?

The Ministry of Transportation has started bridge rehabilitation work, and are currently scheduled to complete work by the end of 2021.

What will be the impacts from construction?

There will be lane reductions and potential short-term road closures during construction, but access to driveways will be maintained at all times.

Advance warning traffic signage will be installed to notify drivers, cyclists and pedestrians of lane reductions, and indicate alternative detours, etc. Where necessary, signs will be installed discouraging drivers from using the side streets as detours. The City will make every effort to minimize the amount of traffic disturbance on local streets due to the construction activity.

TTC transit service will also be maintained. Temporary relocations of bus stops may be required to suit construction work zones. TTC will issue notice of changes at the stops.

Construction updates will be distributed to area businesses, residents and to the mailing list as well as posted on the project website.

Staff Attendees

Staff from the following City Divisions were in attendance for the meeting:

Engineering & Construction Services

Scott Mitchell

Kimmo Hamalainen

Transportation Services

Gary Papas

Cassidy Ritz

Public Consultation Unit

Steven Ziegler

Alyssa Cerbu

Tracy Manolakakis