



Gerrard East Complete Street Public Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Meeting Type: WeBex

Start time: 6:30 pm **End Time:** 8:30 pm

Project Overview:

The City of Toronto is proposing changes on Gerrard Street East between Sherbourne Street and Parliament Street, as part of scheduled 2023 road reconstruction and to fulfill the City's commitment to the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan. The City is also exploring changes to Gerrard Street East between Parliament Street and Blackburn Street, as part of the on-going redevelopment of Regent Park.

A public meeting was held on May 17, 2022 at 6:30 pm to introduce the proposed project to the public.

Meeting Objectives:

- Share Information on the proposed project and answer questions.
- Receive feedback on the 10% proposed project design, which includes two options at each signalized intersection as well as the Anniversary Park slip lane.

There is currently a Public Input Survey on the website. The deadline to complete the survey is June 2, 2022.

Contact Dominic Cobran via email at Dominic.Cobran3@toronto.ca or by phone at 416-338-2986 with any questions.

Meeting Overview:

The meeting was facilitated by Dominic Cobran, Senior Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit.

There was a joint presentation by Maili Sedore, Senior Project Manager, Cycling & Pedestrian Projects and Sami Khaled, Project Engineer Transportation Services followed by an opportunity for participants to ask questions and hear responses from City staff leading the project.

Discussion

Following the presentation, there was an opportunity for comments and discussion. Below is a record of key points, concerns and follow up. The discussion captured is summarized below: **Q:** Question/ **A:** Answer/ **C:** Comment/ **Action:** Action items, along with attendee initials.

C: I am concerned about removing left turn lane at Sherbourne Street and Ontario Street due to the significant traffic congestion it will cause along Gerrard Street East
A: There will be breaks to provide access to vehicles for left hand turns.



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Q: There is a lack of car wiggle room for cars or TTC, congested, lack of bike lanes being used. Traffic can be unbearable at Bayview Avenue and Dundas Street East. Many of the bike lanes I see hardly have a handful of bikers using the lanes, with Toronto temperatures so frigid in the winter there is less than that. Laneways blocked off with cement blocks, this stops EMS. The bike lanes are not utilized on a regular basis. Is there any data outlining if bike lanes being used or not.

A: We are using the lane-width guidelines prescribed for every type of vehicle. Excessively wide lanes encourage speeding especially in the off hours. That is a good point raised concerning the increase in population and how will be managed. Our road system is confined as it is, our goal is to: 1) manage traffic as it is today and to get operational improvements, 2) encourage more people to walk, bike or cycle for 75% of trips. The best way to do this is to provide safe facilities for all different modes of transportation. We have heard the concerns about Bayview and some of the other corridors, we are hoping to encourage more cycling with a great network of bike lanes and transit. Intersections are definitely the places where the most congestion can happen. Sherbourne Street and Parliament Street do not have regular transit service. EMS reviews all plans including the Bayview Avenue and the River Street projects.

Q: Will there be a weight limit on the types of trucks that can use Gerrard St East between Sherbourne and Parliament? Heavy trucks run through and voids under the pavement create a lot of vibration.

A: Gerrard Street is classified as a minor arterial roadway and trucks are typically not restricted along arterial roads. We will be accommodating existing truck turns that are currently feasible at intersections. However, the corridor will be narrower to control speeds along the corridor in order to enhance safety, which may also help reduce vibrations from truck traffic. With the corridor reconstruction, the pavement structure will be reviewed to ensure the road can accommodate current traffic and truck volumes.

Q: This is a fantastic project and much needed to improve the roads and sidewalk. I live on Gerrard and wanted to confirm if all sidewalk will be replaced, if not how will this be determined?

A: As this is a road reconstruction, sidewalks will be replaced. We will also be making efforts to widen sidewalks wherever possible from 1.5 metres to 2.1 metres across the entire corridor as well as incorporating accessibility improvements such as tactile plates and depressed curbs, will be implemented at all intersections. There will be 'pinch points' in the sidewalks at locations where existing utilities cannot be relocated, but we are striving to remove all redundant street furniture including utility poles.

Q: Both of the intersections at Parliament St and at Sherbourne St are very well used. What are the next steps? Bike boxes at these locations are wider and bigger than others but some cyclist don't follow the rules. In Anniversary Park the BIA wants to do something with the park and the odd shape of the street – have you considered revamping the park?



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A: We will use protected intersection elements to create a safety zone for cyclists. There will be an interim uni-directional cycle track on the north side. Accommodation for the future increase in the number of cyclists are in the plans and we are thinking about what elements would make it easier for people to use the corridor. Regarding Anniversary Park, a strategy to determine necessary improvements within the park is being undertaken by Parks Forestry & Recreation in 2022/2023.

Q: I would like to hear more about quantitative data for left turn lanes. A lot of gig workers need to turn when getting home or delivering stuff, backing up traffic does not help.

A: The presentation slides are online so that you can review in detail at your convenience. The Sherbourne Street intersection and Ontario Street intersection have some different design options. The reason why these options are presented is because the traffic data supports the ability to move traffic while keeping people moving. Lots of gig workers use cycling as an option and we want to keep them safe as well, we are trying to balance things. In our research we simulated traffic and made data counts for both pre-pandemic and post pandemic data.

As an example, data collected in 2022 showed there were under 15 vehicles making left turns within the a.m. peak hours. In an older count there were between 25-30 vehicles making left hand turns, which are still relatively low volumes. Sherbourne Street volumes were 28-40 left turns in the a.m. peak hours.

More data about this will be provided on the project website.

There is also a fact sheet posted on the Gerrard East Complete Street project webpage which we will continue to update with facts, information & commonly asked questions.

Q: Regarding curbside access for all businesses on the south side being affected by removal of parking: The issue is that this is being done based on safety and to accommodate the Regent Park development. Can the City have a uni-directional bike lane on the south side and do the transition on north side?

A: Due to the streetcar track complications we can't do it on the north side.

We are preserving the loading and pickup/drop off spaces in front of the businesses identified – there are 16 business in total. The seven parking spaces existing there today will remain but as loading instead of parking. Even a uni-directional bike lane would not maintain all parking on Gerrard since City and Ontario design standards require protection for people cycling on this type of street. This will mean more safety for all users. These types of change have been implemented on a number of corridors with improved safety results. Curbside access will still be there for loading and pickup and drop off purposes. People exiting their vehicles will just need to cross the bike lane, where the chances of a fatality occurring are very low.

There will still be parking opportunities on local streets and we will be reintroducing parking along some segments in the final condition.

Q: Has a traffic study been performed? At the intersection of Carlton Street and Sherbourne Street, Option 2 removes the left turn will cause congestion during peak hours.

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A: Can you confirm that your comment is in reference to Sherbourne Street & Gerrard Street East? We are not proposing any changes at Carlton Street and Sherbourne Street. Traffic analysis is under way for all of the options using Synchro (an industry standard software) and we are looking at strategies to minimize impacts to motor vehicle traffic.

Q: Do you know when the construction for 227 Gerrard condo will be starting, are they co-ordinating with this project?

A: We don't have any specifics of the construction timeline for 227 Gerrard Street East. We have been in contact with development engineer however no specific dates have been provided as yet.

Q: Is the city aware of the design that the Cabbagetown BIA have commissioned for the park at Gerrard St and Parliament St?

A: We are aware of the Cabbagetown BIA proposal for the slip lane and are coordinating with the BIA through our stakeholder engagement process. We are aware of the Cabbagetown BIA Masterplan and hope to meet with the Cabbagetown BIA in short order. Regarding the Anniversary Park Slip Lane option to fully close the road, we are not proposing the option to fully close at this time. One of the reasons is that at Gerrard Street and Parliament Street there are TTC poles that can't be moved, and it is a tight environment where trucks can't make a right turn. For businesses on the south side, access needs to be further discussed and reviewed. With the Anniversary Park Slip Lane option we are proposing, motor vehicle traffic can still access the route but we are introducing ways to slow motor vehicles down and provide access for garbage pickup and emergency services. We want to have a design that can be flexible enough to meet that need if one day the road can be closed.

Q: What is the differences between the "sidewalk" and "store frontage" on the cross-section diagram? Is the city acquiring the "store frontage" land for sidewalk widening?

A: The difference is that the sidewalk is for pedestrians to use and store frontage is a buffer zone for safety between the sidewalk users and the store. We are not acquiring any land for this project. We are staying within the public property.

Q: Regarding the number of cyclists, I noticed it was 1000 in 2016. Is this number expected to have increased since then? (Otherwise, I support of the direction of this plan :)

A: Yes, this number is expected to increase. We are currently conducting updated counts on this corridor as part of this project. Gerrard is a heavily utilized bike route – we are going to be looking at more current data to support our options. The options shown will be making more new cycling connections so we definitely anticipate more cyclists will use this bike route. Typically we can see between 30-300% increases in use after the installation of cycle tracks, although it is hard to predict. Cycling network connections are the biggest drivers to increased use, and this project has several of them. Typically we see 20-30% of peak summer volumes continuing on the cycle tracks through winter.



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Q: I would like to know more about the sidewalks, which are pretty narrow right now. Will the City ask people to remove their fences?

A: We are looking at the cross section to determine the best way. Along most of the corridor, we can accommodate a 2.1 metre width for the sidewalk. To do this we will be narrowing the road. We are not asking anybody to move their fence or change the frontage of their property. We are not acquiring any private property for this project.

Q: If things don't work out do you have a plan to revise what you have done?

A: This is a part of a major road reconstruction so we are trying as much as possible to 'get things right' the first time – however, it is always possible for certain types of changes to be considered including things like minor civil modifications.

Q: How are cyclists going to transition from single track to bi-directional-track coming from and going to the west at Sherbourne Street and Gerrard Street?

A: We are suggesting for both options to have cross rides, but we will still maintain the flow. This type of transition is easier to understand visually, you can see one in action at Wellesley Street and Queens Park for an example of this transition.

Q: To accommodate left-turn lane removal would a signalized left-turn preference be considered?

A: Advance left arrows have not been considered at this time. We are giving some thought to restricting left turns during peak hours, however no decisions have been made yet.

Q: What month in 2023 will construction start?

A: We cannot say at this time exactly when this part of the road reconstruction will start but we will put this information on our website as soon as we have those details.

Q: If homes across this area are planning to upgrade their own water mains, would it be better to wait until this project is completed to do that?

A: The City will upgrade substandard water main infrastructure up to the property line connection to each property. The property owners are responsible to upgrade anything on their property; however if there are any lead services people can be provided with filters.

Attendees:

Councillor's Office: Issaq Buchanan, Constituency Advisor

City of Toronto: Maili Sedore, Project Manager; Sami Khaled, Project Engineer; Becky Katz, Manager of Cycling and Pedestrian Safety Unit; Basil Tsomokos, Project Manager- Vision Zero; Dominic Cobran, Senior Coordinator of Public Consultation; Michele Blackwood, Coordinator- Public Consultation Unit; Nathalie Forde- Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit

Consultants: Zibby Petch, IBI Group