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## Subject: The Esplanade – Mill Street Connection: Update on the extension west of Lower Jarvis Street to Yonge Street

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your continued engagement on [The Esplanade and Mill Street Connection](#). The project team has received comments and feedback about the Phase 2 extension of the project between Lower Jarvis Street to Yonge Street. The feedback highlights concern about how passenger, accessible and commercial loading will be accommodated, access to parking garages, compliance with the planned traffic changes, and traffic congestion. Please find responses to those concerns below:

### Project Overview, Approval, and Implementation Timelines

The Esplanade and Mill Street Connection project's goals are to: Improve safety for everyone, make walking, cycling, and taking transit more attractive, and maintain access to local and citywide destinations. Changes to all segments from Bayview Avenue to Yonge Street were approved at Infrastructure and Environment Committee and City Council ([IE22.11](#)) in the spring of 2021. The approval followed public consultation that began in 2019 and culminated in series of stakeholder and public events in the winter of 2021. Phase 1 and 2a were installed in the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022, respectively. Compliance with the new traffic conditions has improved over time, and the number of people cycling has doubled compared to pre-installation counts.



The rest of Phase 2 is planned for installation in 2024 with the extension to Yonge Street. Once complete, the project will connect to planned and existing bikeways on Yonge Street, Lower Sherbourne Street, Cherry Street, Bayview Avenue, and the Don Valley trails network. The completion of Phase 2 is intended to create a safe and continuous east-west cycling route in the eastern part of downtown.

## **Phase 2b Design Yonge Street to Lower Jarvis Street**

The project follows best practices as well as City and Provincial standards and design guidelines for streets and bikeways. At the same time, a context-sensitive approach was applied block-by-block, alongside network level objectives for each mode of travel: walking, cycling, transit and driving. This included an analysis of curbside uses, such as parking, commercial, motorcoach, and accessible loading. Careful attention has been paid to maintaining access to all parking garages and loading docks on The Esplanade, Scott Street, Church Street and Market Street, as well as property access for emergency services vehicles. Please see the attached graphic for a summary of future conditions. What follows is a summary of the City Council-approved design:

- **Between Yonge Street and Scott Street**, The Esplanade will remain two-way for drivers, alongside the bi-directional bikeway on the south side. The Esplanade is currently designated as “No Parking” between Scott Street and Yonge Street. This will become “No Standing” on the north side, which allows for passenger loading, but does not allow for commercial loading or other uses where people leave the vehicle. The south side will become “No Stopping” to maintain sight lines at driveways and intersections, and to ensure the roadway is available to move vehicles such as TTC buses. However, a loading zone for people with disabilities will be added on the south side in front of 25 The Esplanade. Access for driving on this block is important for westbound TTC buses, as well as larger vehicles servicing businesses and event spaces in the area.

Deliveries to businesses and residents can be made from either the parking garages, or from Scott Street, where on-street parking and loading will remain unchanged from today, including the 20-minute loading zone, and on the north side of The Esplanade east of Church Street where parking and loading will be retained on half of the block.

- **Between Scott Street and Church Street**, The Esplanade will become one-way westbound for motor vehicles. Access will be maintained for westbound TTC buses, as well as to the Novotel and the rear Green P parking garage. Making this block one way for drivers serves three main purposes:
  1. Allows space for parking, loading, and motorcoach loading on the north side.
  2. Reduces traffic infiltration from non-local drivers seeking to access Lower Jarvis Street and the Gardiner Expressway from the central part of the city.
  3. Improves safety for vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and people cycling, who benefit from fewer interactions with motor vehicles. Moreover, people cycling can only be seen by drivers exiting the Novotel driveway if set back from the edge of the roadway. This setback means there is only space for one direction of driving on this portion of the block.

The Novotel and parking laneway east of Scott Street will be accessible from The Esplanade for westbound drivers. Allowing eastbound access on The Esplanade from Scott Street to the parking access at the Novotel laneway is not possible due to lack of roadway space. It would also create confusion for drivers at the Scott Street and laneway intersections and lead to wrong-way driving further east along the block.

- **Between Church Street and Market Street**, The Esplanade will remain two-ways for motor vehicles to maintain access to Market Street south of The Esplanade. This will maintain service for eastbound and westbound TTC buses, as well as general purpose traffic. However, to accommodate the cycle tracks, parking and loading would be removed from this block. More than 2,000 parking spaces are available in the Green P lot to the south. Commercial loading is still possible on Church Street. The accessible loading zone on the south side of The Esplanade close to Market Street will be maintained through the construction of a lay-by.
- **Between Market Street and Lower Jarvis Street**, The Esplanade will become westbound only for motor vehicles, while permitting TTC vehicles in both directions. St. Lawrence Market loading docks will continue to be served from Lower Jarvis Street, and trucks will be permitted to exit the docks in both directions – east and west.

## **Access, Accessibility and Closures**

Maintaining access to entrances, exits, loading areas and garages is critical to all street design projects. Through consultation, observation and truck turning design tools, the project team identified these areas and have maintained access across the corridor, including with the new southside bikeway and street direction changes.

Accessibility is also a priority. Based on feedback from Wheel Trans and building managers, the design maintains access to buildings with a high population of seniors and people with mobility needs. This includes adding an accessible loading zone in front of 25 The Esplanade. This design will include a raised platform across the bikeway to maintain Wheel Trans service and other passenger loading activities at sidewalk level.

Closures, including special events and large sporting, cultural and arts events were also considered by City staff in the design and development of this project. Staff consulted with special event permitting officers.

## **Consultation**

In the development of the project design, the project team consulted local businesses, multi-residential building operators, institutions and other properties along The Esplanade and Mill Street. Accessibility, loading, parking, and overall mobility needs were considered in the development, design and finalization of this project.

Emergency Services were also consulted throughout the design process. Emergency response times are not projected to increase. Emergency Services are exempt from the bus-only lanes, such as between Market Street and Lower Jarvis Street. For more information on the 2021 consultation process, please read the [consultation report](#).

### **Phase 3 – Continued Upgrades**

Phase 3 involves various upgrades along the corridor, most significantly along David Crombie Park. These include raising of the bikeway to sidewalk level, raised pedestrian and bicycle crossings of local streets, and intersection upgrades at Lower Jarvis Street and Lower Sherbourne Street. This is planned for 2025-2026. Phase 3 will also see opportunities to upgrade The Esplanade between Church Street and Yonge Street, with a planned resurfacing. Transportation Services is also working with various City agencies, including the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts Redevelopment Project and the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood Business Improvement Areas as well as with other area private development applications on their designs for the area. This collaboration is to ensure the transportation network meets the needs of current and future residents, businesses, and organizations.

Community feedback continues to shape the refinement of the installation as opportunities arise. We welcome your feedback and look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your continued interest in the project,

The Esplanade-Mill Street Connection Project Team