



## QUEENS QUAY REVITALIZATION EA BACKGROUNDER

Queens Quay is Toronto's main waterfront street, and given its prime location the street should be a showpiece for the city, a grand boulevard that serves as a destination for locals and tourists alike. However in its current form, many consider the street to be the 'ugly duckling' of the waterfront.

In 2006, Waterfront Toronto looked to the design world for a plan to convert the central part of Toronto's lakeshore into a spectacular waterfront area that would provide the public with continuous access to the lake. Because Queens Quay runs the length of Toronto's waterfront, giving this boulevard a new life was not only an important part of the design competition but it was critical to Waterfront Toronto's overall revitalization goals as well.

The winning design from West 8 of Rotterdam and du Toit Allsopp Hillier of Toronto proposed turning Queens Quay into a signature boulevard with a stunning linear park along the south side of the street. Running the length of Queens Quay, the park would be made possible by reducing the number of lanes of traffic and shifting them to the north side of the street. It would feature a generous new pedestrian promenade, rows of trees and would also allow the Martin Goodman Trail to be extended through the central waterfront filling in the current gap of the Lake Ontario Trail.

While Waterfront Toronto was an advocate of the winning design, it fully supported the statutorily-required Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process which had to occur before any work on Queens Quay could begin.

Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto began the Queens Quay Revitalization EA in September 2007 to explore how to transform Queens Quay into an economically vibrant and scenic waterfront drive providing transit priority and a completed Martin Goodman Trail through the central part of the waterfront.

The EA followed a formal process which included data collection and the identification and analysis of several different alternative planning solutions and design concepts. The assessment of design alternatives was undertaken jointly by the project proponents. Throughout the process, the potential environmental, social, cultural, and economic impacts and benefits of each alternative have been assessed.

In addition, the EA featured extensive public consultation with both stakeholders and the public at large. Dozens of meetings with individual business and landowners were held as well as six public meetings as part of the public consultation process for these EAs.

### ***Design Alternatives for Queens Quay***

The following five alternatives were analyzed during this EA:

1. Do nothing.
2. Centre transit with one lane of traffic on the north side; one lane of traffic on the south side of the transit median and on-street bike lanes.

3. Centre transit with one lane of traffic on the north side and one lane of traffic on the south-side of the transit median and expanded public realm.
4. Two lanes of 2-way traffic on the north side with transit in the middle and expanded public realm on the south side.
5. Two lanes of 1-way traffic on the north side with transit in the middle and expanded public realm on the south side

To deliver a technically recommended alternative for Queens Quay Boulevard, Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto conducted extensive research and analysis that went above and beyond the work typically required during an EA process. The analysis included:

- Data collection including aerial and ground photography and vehicular and pedestrian volume data;
- Rigorous transportation and transit modeling including the development of a VISSIM micro simulation model of the transit corridor and research into new transit priority signalization technologies;
- Individual intersection geometries to identify where proposed changes may be required and the creation of a signal phasing plan for each intersection; and
- Extensive public consultation including regular meetings with stakeholders, the general public, property owners and condominium boards.

Working with feedback from stakeholders the project team also created formalized plans for public and bus parking along Queens Quay. In addition, servicing and access requirements for all buildings along Queens Quay were reviewed and the team continues to work closely with property owners to discuss options where changes are required.

#### *Technically Recommended Alternative for Queens Quay*

The technically recommended alternative for Queens Quay reduces the number of lanes of traffic on the street from four to two. This would provide two lanes of east-west traffic on the north side with transit in the centre and an extended Martin Goodman Trail and pedestrian promenade on the south side.

The technically recommended alternative provides the greatest opportunity for a world-class waterfront street. Extensive traffic studies show that reducing traffic to two lanes along Queens Quay is feasible and that it will be able to accommodate current and future traffic demands. In addition, it allows for dedicated transit on the south side of the street with a continuous off-street Martin Goodman Trail to fill in the current gap in the Waterfront Trail along Lake Ontario.

This approach also allows for wider pedestrian boulevards (approximately six metres on the south side of the four-metre Martin Goodman Trail and three metres between the Martin Goodman Trail and the street car tracks). These pedestrian spaces feature a vastly enhanced landscape including a double row of trees along the waterside and landscape improvements along the north side of Queens Quay. Currently, there is approximately two to three metres of sidewalk along the north and south sides of Queens Quay.

#### **Approvals**

On October 1, 2009, Toronto City Council overwhelmingly approved the recommendation to revitalize Queens Quay outlined in the Environmental Study Report (ESR) prepared by Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto.

A Notice of Completion for the Queens Quay Revitalization EA was issued on December 18, 2009. The Minister of the Environment completed its review of the Queens Quay Revitalization EA on April 14, 2010.

### **Budget and Construction**

Construction of the approximately three kilometre stretch of Queens Quay Boulevard will rollout in phases as funding permits. The first phase of work includes schematic design from Spadina Ave. to Parliament St. and the construction of an 800-metre section of the street (the exact location of which will be determined during schematic design). Phase one is funded in Waterfront Toronto's long term plan and is expected to cost \$48 million.

During schematic design which is now underway, a comprehensive layout of the street from end to end including traffic management and construction phasing strategies will be produced. Schematic design is expected to take about three months to complete and will be followed by detailed design for the first 800 metre section of the street. The first phase of construction is expected to take about 18 months to build.

Once schematic design is in place for the entire corridor, future phases of construction will move quickly as additional funding is secured.