



**St. Lawrence
Neighbourhood
Streetscape Transformation Strategy**

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Acronyms:

AOR: As-Of-Right

BIA: Business Improvement Area (Old Town Toronto)

CP: City Planning, Urban Design

GI: Green Infrastructure

PRMP: Public Realm Master Plan

PF&R: Parks Forestry and Recreation

ROW: Right-Of-Way

SLNA: St Lawrence Neighbourhood Association

SNMP: Street Network Master Plan

STS: Streetscape Transformation Strategy

SWM: Storm Water Management

TS: Transportation Services (City of Toronto)

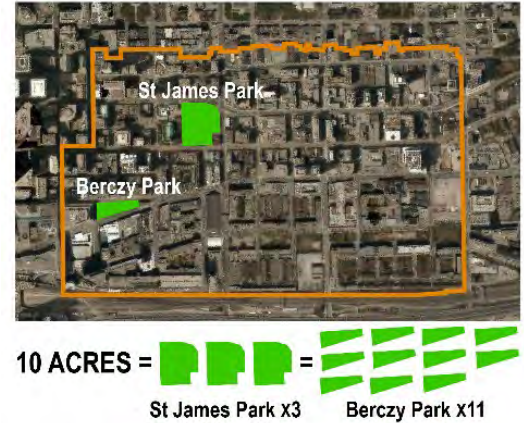
TSATP: TS Area Transportation Planning

1.0 Introduction: Creating a Strategy for rebuilding our ROWS

The St Lawrence Market Neighbourhood Public Realm Master Plan (PRMP) was released in 2015 and adopted by City council in 2021. It was informed by extensive community research and consultation and provided a vision for the neighbourhood's public spaces to be realized through private and public investments. While inspirational, the PRMP has proven difficult to implement at street level.

The Streetscape Transformation Strategy aims to establish a clear, predictable process that builds on existing City policies and structures and leverages redevelopment opportunities to rebalance our streets. This strategy **unlocks the potential to transform over 10 acres of excess road space into a vibrant public realm** that meets the community's evolving needs.

The strategy is broken down into 3 distinct steps that build upon each other to streamline decision-making and advance critical approvals that will enable the City to leverage partnerships to realize the community vision:



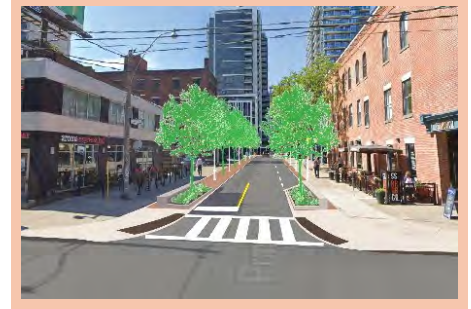
Step 1 - Street Network Master Plan (SNMP): Clarifies the amount of road space that is required along every street and intersection in the neighbourhood to maintain traffic capacities, while liberating excess pavement that can be reallocated to achieve other transportation and public realm priorities.

Step 2 - Block Plan Process: Optimizes the SNMP findings at the block level, responding to local conditions and development opportunities.

Step 3 - Incremental Implementation Approach: Develops strategies and design details to ensure that all development and investment opportunities can be leveraged to incrementally realize the block plan vision.



The goal of this document is to advance the adoption of the SNMP, the first step of the strategy, that has been developed in collaboration with Transportation Services. This will lay the groundwork for the development of the remaining 2 steps of the strategy, encouraging partnerships with other City divisions and external stakeholders to collaborate on the approach and participate in the reimagination of the neighbourhood's streets.



1.1 The Need for a Public Realm Transformation Strategy in the St Lawrence Neighbourhood

Rapid Intensification:

The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood and surrounding areas are rapidly intensifying; private development continues at a high level alongside Provincial investment in major transit infrastructure and the planning of associated transit-oriented communities. This intensification places growing pressure on the neighbourhood’s car-centric streets, heightening safety and accessibility concerns. The SNMP clarifies opportunities for all agents of change to right-size roadways and rebalance streets to provide safe, efficient, and equitable transportation alternatives. The remainder of the strategy will ensure that all streetscapes are optimized into inviting, green, vibrant public spaces that support local businesses and enhance the experience of those living, working, and visiting the community.

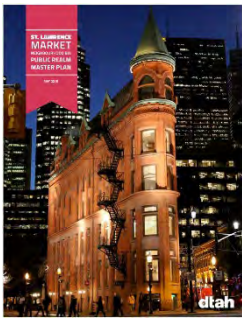
Evolving City Policies and Standards:

Since 2015, new planning policies, guidelines, and street design standards¹ have been developed, such as Complete Streets, Vision Zero, signifying a shift towards human-centred design. These policies have been successfully implemented in master planned projects such as the West Donlands and East Bayfront but have not had the same success in the transformation of established communities, such as the St Lawrence Neighbourhood, where change must occur incrementally. Transforming the existing street network from car-centric to human-centred spaces requires a community-led approach. By leveraging the knowledge and expertise of local stakeholders, such as the BIA and the SLNA, public realm improvements can be planned and implemented to respond effectively to the evolving needs of the neighbourhood, while prioritizing the values and needs of the existing community.

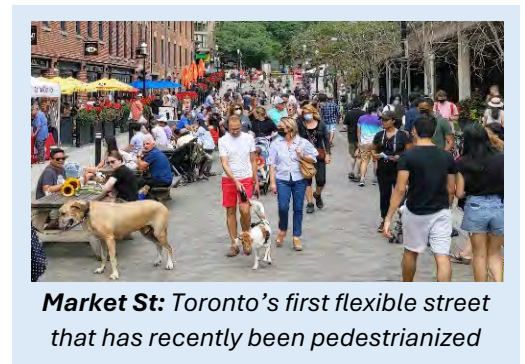


Building on the 2015 Public Realm Master Plan by Leveraging Community Expertise:

The 2015 PRMP was the first of its kind in Toronto that, through sustained BIA and SLNA efforts, has guided a number of precedent-setting street transformation projects², such as Market St and the Wellington St. transformation. These successes have been accomplished largely through close collaboration and co-operation between numerous City Divisions the BIA and the community, supported by targeted BIA investments. Approaching a decade since its’ original release, the BIA has recognized the need to update the 2015 vision and assess its impacts to respond more effectively to the specific challenges and opportunities facing the neighbourhood today.



The BIA and SLNA are the local experts, advocates, and stewards of the community, deeply knowledgeable about the neighbourhood’s unique opportunities and challenges and committed to its ongoing betterment. The Streetscape Transformation Strategy is being developed to ensure the efforts of local experts can be effectively utilized to support City divisions and collaborate with all agents of change to not only design and implement our future vision, but to ensure it is maintained over time. Adopting the SNMP, the first step of the strategy, will provide a standardized and predictable ‘future-state’ starting point for the involvement of all stakeholders – City, developer, BIA and community – all resulting in much desired improvement to the public realm.



¹ See [Appendix ___](#) for more comprehensive list of key planning documents that this strategy aims to support

² A more comprehensive list of BIA contributions and achievements can be found in [Appendix 7.0](#)

1.2 The 2022 Project Charter – A Productive Partnership between TS and the BIA

The key to unlocking the ability for others to participate in the transformation of our public realm starts with defining how much road space (pavement) is required for traffic operations. The design standards, the evaluation processes and the approvals to alter existing pavement within each ROW are solely the jurisdiction of Transportation Services (TS).

Recognizing the need to rebalance our streets, the BIA engaged TS' Area Transportation Planning unit (TSATP) to remove many of the roadblocks prohibiting other City Divisions and city builders from transforming the neighbourhood's antiquated ROWS.

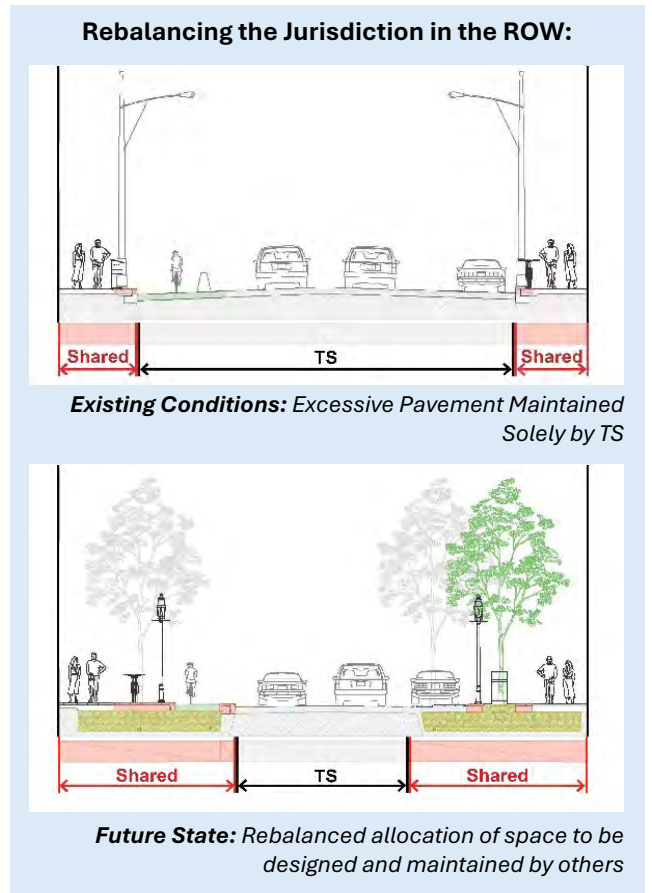
The Project Charter for the *St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA Streetscape Implementation Plan* was initiated between the BIA and TS ATP in April 2022. This partnership marked a significant shift in the traditional relationship between the BIA and the City - from advocate to partner - allowing the BIA to collaborate directly with City divisions, contributing consulting resources and local expertise to guide and inform the TS decision-making process.

The shared goal(s) stated in the Project Charter are:

"...to identify the short and medium term priorities and opportunities for street improvements in the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood, and to undertake preliminary due diligence and consensus building between the City and the [BIA] to achieve a mutually agreeable design (up to 10%) and identify opportunities for synergy".



Project Charter Result: SNMP - 10% Design



The Charter set out a series of objectives and deliverables which has allowed BIA and Transportation Services to achieve these goals. This partnership enabled the BIA to access to current city data to provide enhanced consulting resources to clarify design assumptions and conduct detailed corridor analysis relying on the guidance provided by TSATP staff. These efforts have clarified road design and capacity assumptions on how best to reduce excess road space in the St Lawrence Community. The objectives outlined in the Charter have largely been achieved³, culminating in the creation of the 10% design, the SNMP.

³ A break down of Project Charter objectives and BIA work to date provided in [Appendix 2.0](#).

1.3 The Opportunity to Act is NOW

The SNMP clearly identifies the potential for change along every corridor and intersection in our neighbourhood. Its approval and adoption will ensure that these recommendations can be used to inform all development and infrastructure planning decisions in the area – unlocking the ability for others to realize this potential.

Leveraging Private development:

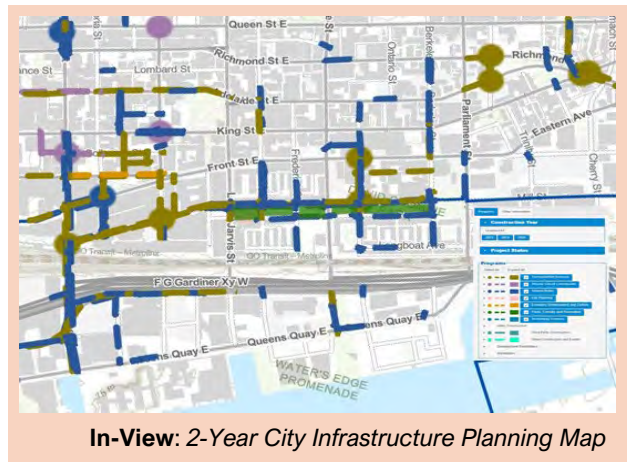
There are currently more than **45 active redevelopment applications** that the planning process can leverage to transform more than **28% of our city boulevards in the next 5 years**. These opportunities are time-sensitive and growing in number as new sites are assembled. Adopting the SNMP now will permit immediate actions to secure millions of dollars of investment into the public realm at little to no cost to the city.



Current Redevelopment Opportunities

Partnering on Public Sector Investments and Infrastructure Upgrades:

The potential to achieve streetscape improvements leveraging the funds of City Capital projects and provincially-mandated infrastructure upgrades to the one of the most under-utilized opportunities this strategy hopes to unlock. The current practice of individually upgrading assets and reinstating the status quo must not be permitted. The Street Transformation strategy will clarify mechanisms for partnerships and expediting approvals and will increase funding to build to the 'future state'. This collaboration will fast track neighbourhood improvements, minimize construction-related impacts on local businesses and the community and reduce inefficiencies saving the city and its partners money while expediting change.



In-View: 2-Year City Infrastructure Planning Map

Wellington Transformation Precedent: *Partnering on Public Sector Investments and Infrastructure Upgrades*



Collaboration with multiple stakeholders to achieve:

- The removal of excess road space and optimized for transit efficiency
- improved safety and accessibility,
- Coordinated relocation of utilities to maximize storm water management and forestry assets,
- Expanded activation space and increased foot traffic to support businesses, and,
- \$750,000 in federal infrastructure funding.

2.0 Breaking Down the 3 Step Streetscape Transformation Strategy (STS)

The Streetscape Transformation Strategy is divided into 3 consecutive steps, each building upon the work of the last. Each step clarifies the key decision makers and the decisions that must be made with in the ROW before the input of other decision makers are required. This approach will unlock the opportunity for more stakeholders to participate in the transformation of our public ROWs and at a stage where their input is most effective. The Strategy will continue to be developed in collaboration with City divisions and relevant stakeholders to ensure compliance with current City standards and planning processes and ensure support for all those seeking to contribute to positive change.



2.1 Step 1: The Street Network Master Plan (SNMP)

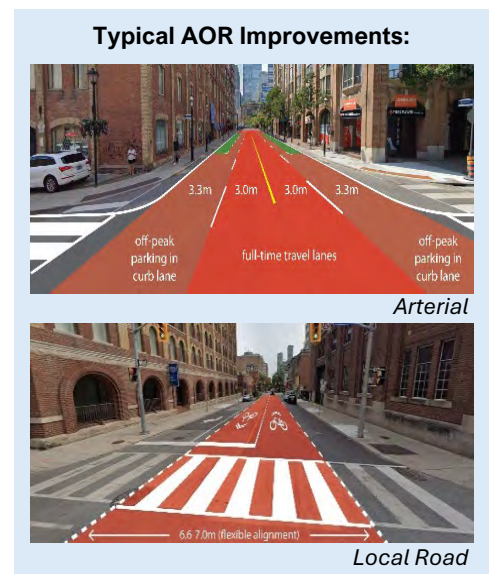
Transportation Services Lead

The SNMP is a neighbourhood-wide road diet and multimodal transportation plan focused on reclaiming excess road space and rebalancing every street to respond to evolving transportation demands within community and larger city networks. The SNMP proactively responds to recent and planned changes to the local context that have, and will continue to impact mobility patterns and demands, such as the new Ontario Line alignment and related transit-oriented development. The SNMP has been informed by current city standards and planning guidelines, supported by corridor traffic modelling and network analysis to identify solutions to address critical safety concerns, gaps in the cycling network, multimodal connectivity issues, and opportunities to build on transit improvements.

Types of Proposed ROW Improvements⁴

A preliminary assessment of our streets revealed a critical finding: by applying current City lane width and corner radii standards to the existing number of active travel lanes within our roadways, **a significant amount of excess road space can be reclaimed without reducing vehicle capacities.** Through consultation with Transportation Services, it was verified that this type of right-sizing improvement can be applied to every street ‘as-of-right’ (AOR), without the need for extensive corridor review.

In addition to AOR improvements, the work resulting from the Project Charter identified a number of ‘Study Areas’ along certain corridors where more significant ROW transformations could be applied to achieve multimodal network improvements and/or support city building initiatives and community-oriented enhancements. These corridors require further study and review to remove excess lane capacities, enhancing cycling



⁴ See Appendix 3.0 for clarification on AOR Improvements & Study Area overviews

network and transit corridor improvements and maximizing the potential to expand opportunities for others to transform the public realm.

Advancing the SNMP:

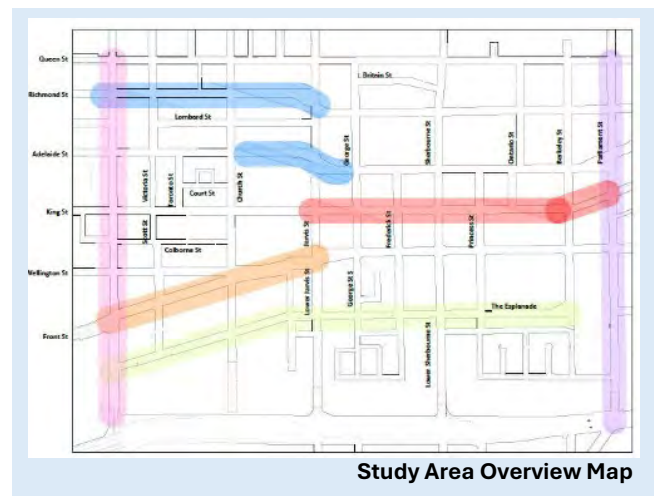
Through consultation with Transportation Services, it has been determined that the most effective path forward is to advance the SNMP in 2 phases to ensure that we can begin to capitalize on time-sensitive development opportunities to develop the remaining steps of the strategy, while simultaneously protecting for, and advancing the review of more complex ROW improvements:

i. Phase 1: Adopting the ‘As-of-Right’ (AOR) Plan:

The AOR plan applies as-of-right improvements to every street in the neighbourhood to provide a right-sizing plan that can be used to guide developments immediately. *Streets where as-of-right improvements conflict with proposed Study Area transformations have been excluded from this plan until a decision is made regarding the future of the corridor (Parliament St and Yonge St).*

ii. Phase 2: Advancing each Study Area:

Each Study Area requires further review and consultation with Transportation Services, the BIA, and all other relevant parties to come to a decision on next steps. Separate Study Area documents clarify the BIA and SLNA’s suggested integration of local opportunities which have been tested to understand the impact on vehicular traffic and to highlight the potential benefit to other modes and local initiatives. Once a plan for each Study Area has been finalized and approved, it will be updated in the official SNMP that will be used to inform all planning and development decisions along the respective corridors.

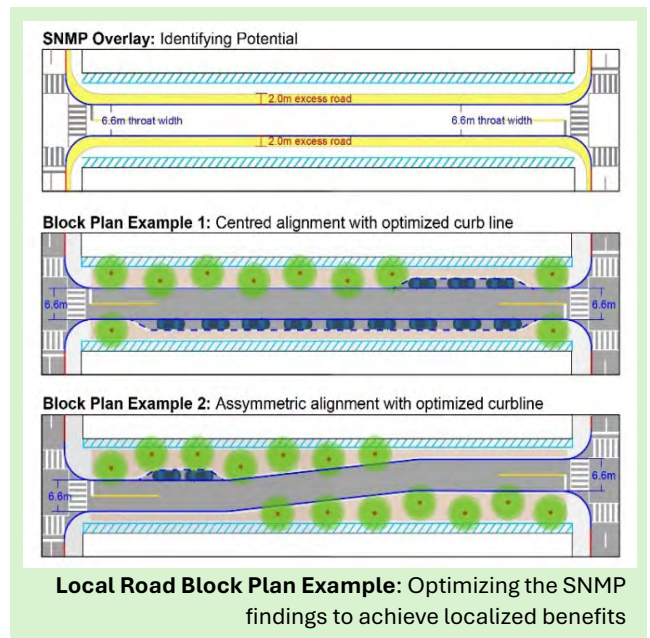


2.2 Step 2: The Block Plan Process

City Planning Lead – Integrating all other stakeholder issues

The Block Plan Process will serve as a collaborative forum where City planners, developers, the community and local stakeholders can work together to establish "Block Plans". The process will optimize the alignment of the SNMP along each block, ensuring that all modes of transportation are safely and efficiently accommodated while providing space for localized activities and public realm improvements. These plans will refine the future vision for the public that can be incrementally implemented over time, as opportunities present themselves.

As each Block Plan is finalized, optimized curb locations will be updated in the official SNMP, gradually building a cohesive public realm vision for the entire community. This approach will maximize the benefits of the SNMP and unlock opportunities for new building and maintenance partnerships. This step builds on previous successful City capital projects



and can continue to be applied to leverage investments secured through redevelopment within the ROW, while simultaneously revising the process.

2.3 Step 3: Incremental Implementation Approach

Engagement with external agencies and other levels of government

Step 3 focuses on the development of strategies and design details to support the implementation of the optimized Block Plans established in Step 2. This approach incorporates follows a ‘Good, Better, Best’ model to ensure that all development and investment opportunities can be leveraged and maximized to incrementally build out the neighbourhood vision. This step aims to provide the tools and guidance required for stakeholders to participate in local streetscape transformations, using both interim and permanent measures to achieve gradual improvements that progress towards the ‘future state’.

A key outcome of this step will be the creation of a **BIA/St. Lawrence specific Streetscape Manual**/reference resource for the St Lawrence Neighbourhood. This manual will serve as an extension of the City’s Streetscape Manual, detailing the following:

- ***BIA-Specific Streetscape Details:*** Consistent design elements across the public realm to enhance neighbourhood identity and placemaking. ROW design assemblies that integrate preferred City and utility standards to achieve community focused objectives.
- ***Transitional Implementation Strategies:*** Design solutions which facilitate transitions between the existing and future state, allowing for partial block improvements to proceed. Interim paint and technical solutions to address short term challenges.
- ***Interim Safety and Activation Strategies:*** Design solutions that can be implemented quickly and low-cost to reclaim excess road space, alter driver behaviour, and enhance safety, while creating opportunities for local businesses and the community to activate reclaimed space for alternative uses.

This BIA Streetscape Manual will complement existing City resources (built on City and industry standards) by clarifying preferred boulevard assemblies that integrate City and utility standards to overcome potential conflicts and maximize community improvements, while ensuring consistent and cohesive outcomes in the St Lawrence Neighbourhood.

In addition to this Streetscape Manual, this step aims to encourage collaborative partnerships with external agencies and other levels of government in the development of joint standards and funding strategies. The BIA has previously secured federal infrastructure funding for “shovel-ready” projects and continues to engage with all levels of government to build on these successes. The Block Plans, supported by the developed standards, will create shovel-ready designs that leverage redevelopment to complete significant portions of the block to achieve the priorities of the community, developers, external agencies, and all levels of government.



3.0 Benefits of Adopting the STS approach

Collaborative partnerships between City divisions and community stakeholders are key to creating a safe, vibrant, sustainable, and inviting public realm. Great streets benefit everyone – residents, businesses, visitors, developers, and the City, alike. The Streetscape Transformation Strategy unlocks the potential to repurpose over 10 acres of excess road space that can be reimagined and rebuilt, largely through private development, to deliver significant benefits to the public realm, while maintaining, and in some instances, enhancing the function of the City’s transportation networks. This strategy will enable these benefits to be incrementally realized by a variety of stakeholders, using a blend of temporary and permanent solutions to fast-track improvements and maximize the impact of all investment and redevelopment opportunities.

Key benefits of the Strategy include:

- Enhancing safety and accessibility for all ROW users, particularly the most vulnerable.
- Divesting responsibilities and maintenance costs for TS by reallocating excess road space to be shared with others.
- Optimizing corridor operations, achieving traffic calming, and providing dedicated facilities to support curbside activities.
- Improving and expanding active transportation and public transit facilities to reduce vehicle reliance and promote equitable, sustainable, and safe transportation alternatives.
- Expanding boulevard space that can be activated to support local businesses, cultural institutions and street furniture/art initiatives.
- Leveraging investments and redevelopments to implement high quality public realm improvements at little to no additional cost to the City.
- Increasing green infrastructure (GI) and stormwater management to boost urban resiliency.

Intersection Safety Improvements:



George St: Built-out bump-outs with integration of GI & public seating



Front-Church: Interim bump-outs using paint & planters – later made permanent

Activation Space:



King St Pilot: Interim boulevard extensions to expand park-effect & animate the street



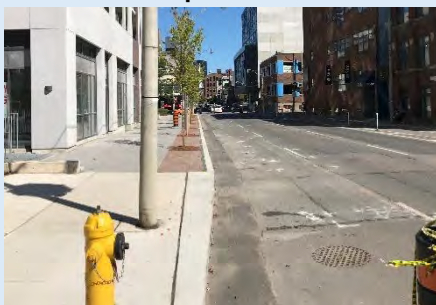
Wellington: Boulevard expansions with tree-lined café space, achieved through private-public partnerships

Curbside Activity:



Wellington: Dedicated laybys for full-time parking & bicycle parking

Incremental Improvements:



Adelaide: Portion of block built out by private developer to realize future state

Cycling Infrastructure:



Sherbourne: On-boulevard cycle track w/ integrated layby & Green Infrastructure

See Appendix 6.0 For expanded list of benefits

4.0 MM19.26 “Towards a Beautiful City”

City Council adopted Councillor Matlow’s Motion MM19.26 (Towards a Beautiful City) on June 26, 2024. It asks City Staff to explore a number of feasibilities:

- a. creating inter-divisional design standards for public realm and urban design on City of Toronto property, including roads, sidewalks, municipal buildings, and parks
- b. creating design standards for the public and urban design of new private developments, including streetscaping, frontage, and Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces
- c. creating an Office of a City Designer and Architect, responsible for the design, coordination and implementation of these design standards and the overall beautification of the City’s public realm.

There are clear similarities between this motion and our Streetscape Transformation Strategy, underscoring the need for a new approach to change, and presenting an opportunity for collaboration. The strategy has been designed to achieve the results in step a) and b) above and can contribute significantly to the success of step c). The Streetscape Transformation Strategy can become a pilot in the St Lawrence Neighbourhood that can be studied and optimized to provide a replicable template for other City neighbourhoods.

However, the motion overlooks a critical element that is outlined in this strategy: the inclusion of local experts, such as the BIA and SLNA, who are vital to ensuring these efforts’ success. Achieving the level of change required to keep up with rapid growth and development taking place requires a level of investment and attention that is not possible without collaborative partnerships. For the proposed Office of a City Designer and Architect to succeed, it must be empowered to work with all levels of government, private sector partners, and – most crucially – local experts like the BIA and the SLNA.

BIAs are agents of the City, funded in part by Economic Development and Culture, that are uniquely positioned to advocate for local businesses, while helping City divisions design and maintain streetscapes that reflect the unique character of each community. By partnering with BIAs and local communities, the City can strengthen its investment in public realm improvements to create vibrant, locally inspired streetscapes that will be sustained and successful in the long term.

5.0 Recommendations to achieve the STS

The BIA has dedicated substantial time and resources to developing this strategy in collaboration with various City divisions and stakeholders. To advance this plan and leverage redevelopment investments and capital infrastructure funding to transform our public ROWs, we seek the support of City divisions and Councillors in adopting the first step, the SNMP, and moving forward with the next phases to maximize its benefits.

Review and adopt the draft SNMP into policy to unlock next steps in the Streetscape Transformation Strategy:

- Transportation Services Area Transportation Planning approve the as-of-right guidance and protect for the recommended Study Areas enhancements depicted in the of the BIA Street Network Master Plan
- Transportation Services Area Transportation Planning work with the office of Councillor Moise to prepare a motion for Council approval of SNMP and the advancement of the next steps of the overall strategy,
 - Request staff review and consideration of a pilot or similar project charter approach with key City Divisions to complete the strategy
- The BIA offer support as needed to TS ATP staff to finalize Study Areas review and to make recommendations to expedite approvals for identified projects

Develop approaches to refine the remaining 2 steps of the Streetscape Transformation Strategy to influence change in the St Lawrence Neighbourhood BIA:

- The Community work with City Divisions and developers to ensure that streetscape implementations developed through the Block Plan Process reflect the SNMP recommendations.
 - TSROW to request revision of site plans before release of Streetscape permits
 - Development Review process adjust all applications currently under review
 - Promoted and shared publicly SNMP to inform all future development applications
 - Clarify TS requirements for interim road reconfigurations
- The BIA to collaborate with City Divisions and external agencies to improve the Streetscape Manual guidance to ensure expedited approvals
 - clarify preferred standards and assemblies to be applied in the Block Plan Process
 - identify standards required by external agencies
 - i. identify preferred elements and standard that align with Streetscape manual priorities
 - ii. collaborate on the development of specific details and protocols that address traditional conflicts between stakeholders
 - develop standards, practices and agreements for joint maintenance and management of the ROW
 - develop incremental transformation practices and standards to facilitate interim boulevard transitions between existing and planned streetscapes