

## McCowan Precinct & Span McCowan Update

Planning Staff asked Iain and I in for a meeting last week re their McCowan Precinct Study and our ideas for Span McCowan.

Looks like City Council's decision to support a subway along Eglinton and up McCowan to Sheppard has made it difficult for Planning Staff to bring their McCowan Precinct Study to a conclusion. The proposal to scrap the RT and build the subway has to go through a very lengthy Environmental Assessment. That process must look at the proposed subway and every alternative from doing nothing to all possible alternative routes/technologies such as replacing the RT in its present alignment. EA's take a very long time to reach a decision: my estimate, 2 years. Until the EA is complete we won't know if the City-TTC will need to retain the RT service yard north of Ellesmere which in turn affects possible new public streets in the area.

Planning Staff appear to accept that extending Bushby to Markham Road, as has been called for in the Official Plan for 25 years, is important to the success of the Scarborough Centre. However they do not know which route it will take. Any route east from its present terminus at Grangeway is tied up in whether the city will keep the RT or go with the subway up McCowan. They will be recommending to Council that consulting engineers be hired to do a thorough traffic-transportation study of our Centre which will determine the route and design for this important road. Until this is determined Staff cannot recommend a plan for all the local roads needed inside McCowan Precinct when developments come in for large properties such as the Simpson's stamping plant lands or the four factories on the north side of Progress. In my experience it will take a minimum 18 months before a traffic engineer's study can be reported to Council and even more time for a decision.

Planning Staff will be hosting one more community information meeting on February 18th and then reporting to Scarborough Community Council sometime this Spring. With Bushby, the RT and Subway all up in the air, I think all they can bring forward from their Precinct Study is some urban design guidelines.

As for our Scarborough Market, we have suggested that since the City has sold its land on McCowan Road which was our preferred site, perhaps the best we can do is to get the market started using the City lands on Progress east of Simpson's stamping plant. The site is outlined in red in the image on Page 3 of this document.

The City and the Board of Education bought this property decades ago in case our Centre needed a park and/or a school. There are four single story buildings with multiple small units on site, presently leased out to yoga studios, office and community services. There appear to be a lot of vacancies. Our suggestion is that the City manage the vacancies over the next year such that two buildings facing each other become completely vacant, build a roof structure over the parking area between these two, dress it up make it attractive and lease out the units to food retailers, cafes, flower shops, spice merchants, bakeries, LCBO, etc plus day care...and grow our market over time. We asked Staff to consider rezoning the property to permit food retailing and restaurants as part of their McCowan Precinct Study to get things started. It's not as good as the McCowan property. Not as

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visible. Not as good bus service. Not as much parking. But it could be a start and not very expensive.

Planning Staff do not know who would operate a Scarborough Market if it were ever built. We expect there would have to be a Board appointed by Council which would then hire a Manager and approve a budget etc. There are tons of such Boards appointed for public facilities all over the City. Not only the large facilities such as the Zoo, Casa Loma, Exhibition Place. Unknown to most Scarborough residents there are 8 arenas and 10 community centre, all in the old City of Toronto, run by Council appointed Boards, <http://www.toronto.ca/abcc/spc-community-centres.htm#communitycentre55>. If they can manage public buildings delivering public services, so can Scarborough residents!

We asked Staff to recommend that funding for the Scarborough Market be endorsed as a "community benefit" such that when they negotiate with developers in our Centre, they can seek funding under Section 37 for the market's capital costs.

We are disappointed that City Planning Staff have not retained an engineer to do a preliminary design, feasibility study and cost estimate for our deck over McCowan. Unless Council retains a consulting engineer to do this work Council will never know if our concept is practical and at what cost. We asked them to make this recommendation when they report this Spring.

I read the traffic report prepared as part of McCowan Precinct study. They forecast future traffic volumes at City Centre intersections and quantify it as Level of Service 'A' [very good] to 'F' [think trying to get across Yonge at maybe Dundas]. All intersections on McCowan Road from Ellesmere up to the signals on the south side of the bridge over 401 are forecast to become 'F'. If-when Bushby is extended even to Bellamy let alone to Markham Road it will carry a lot more vehicles than it does today...right into the intersection with McCowan. If-when more development takes place east of McCowan, a lot more pedestrians, cyclists, people with strollers etc will be trying to get across McCowan at Bushby. Which to us means it is even more important to build our proposed pedestrian deck and let people cross the McCowan Road ditch safely.

So: our ideas for improving our Centre are not dead yet...just making their way ever so slowly through the city planning processes!

Iain and I are asking Councillor DeBaeremaeker and Acting Mayor Kelly for a meeting to see if they can help us get the right responses and expedite things.

Happy to have your comments and suggestions.

Lorne and Iain.

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