



GRADUATE STUDENTS' UNION

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LOCAL 19, CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

To: Councillor Adam Vaughn
UofT Area Community Liaison Committee

From: Sustainability Sub-Committee, Graduate Students' Union

Date: November 24th 2009

The Sustainability Sub-Committee of the Graduate Students' Union met for a stand-alone meeting on November 12, 2009 to discuss the Walking Strategy and pedestrianizing portions of the University of Toronto St. George Campus. In general, the Sub-Committee supports efforts in motor vehicle traffic-calming and pedestrianizing campus. We believe that a car-reduced campus is an integral component in building a strong sense of community on campus, in creating a more vibrant atmosphere and in ensuring the safety of our students, faculty and staff.

Please find below suggestions and comments on the possible pedestrian projects on campus.

Willcocks

Willcocks is a perfect street for a pedestrian pilot project as there is currently a heavy volume of pedestrians, lighter motor-vehicle traffic, few parking spaces and no deliveries. Furthermore, Willcocks Street is very narrow and would be better suited in accommodating pedestrians than it does two-way motor vehicle traffic. The Sub-Committee wishes to highlight the narrow sidewalk outside of the Lash Miller building at the corner of Willcocks and St. George; this intersection becomes crowded and dangerous for pedestrians between classes when high volumes of students are leaving the large lecture halls in Lash Miller.

Finally, Willcocks is a gateway to the pedestrianized walk-way through the Earth Sciences complex at the south-west corner of Willcocks and Huron; it is also adjacent to an existing pedestrian destination: the patio area and terrace around Sidney Smith. A pedestrianized Willcocks would significantly enhance this space on campus.

St. George

Although the Sub-Committee would like to see St. George pedestrianized as a pedestrian corridor, the Sub-Committee recognizes the difficulties in making this change, including access for food/vendor trucks and access to the many belowground parking garages.

The reason the Sub-Committee recommends a pedestrian corridor, rather than a pedestrian destination, stems from the fact that St. George is currently a heavily trafficked bicycle corridor. St. George provides one of the few safe north-south routes for cyclists with wide bike lanes. If St. George were to be transformed into a pedestrian destination, this safe bicycle route would be jeopardized. Relocating the bike lane to an adjacent street, such as Huron, would break the network of bike lanes that continue south of College along Beverley and is not advised by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee recommends that either the pedestrianization of St. George as a corridor, while keeping the bike lanes, or at least the imposition of strict traffic-calming measures, such as alternating one-way directions along St George for motor vehicle traffic with bi-directional bike lanes and wide sidewalks.

In addition, the Sub-Committee recommends that the intersection of St. George and Harbord/Hoskin be made a Pedestrian Priority Phase intersection, given the high volume of pedestrian traffic and the number of vehicles turning at this intersection.

Devonshire

The Sustainability Sub-Committee sees two major potential problems with respect to pedestrianizing Devonshire. The first concerns vehicles traveling east on Hoskin. These vehicles will not be able to turn left onto Devonshire to go north to Bloor Street. Vehicles will be forced to continue east along Hoskin until Queen's Park, where they are also unable to turn north.

The second obstacle is the lack of safe pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Devonshire and Hoskin. If Devonshire is pedestrianized, a crosswalk should be installed at this intersection to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

In General

In general, we suggest that the city does not keep the road surfaces as-is after pedestrianizing. Brick or cobblestones would be an ideal surface to encourage pedestrians using the roads, however paint is a common material used for pilot pedestrian projects.

In closing, the Sustainability Sub-Committee is excited to hear that the Walking Strategy has been adopted by the City of Toronto and that projects are being proposed for the St. George Campus. We are happy to contribute to the planning of these projects and look forward to working with Councillor Adam Vaughn's office and the UofT Area Community Liaison Committee over the next few months.

Sincerely,

Michelle St-Amour
On Behalf of the Sustainability Sub-Committee

Academic Commissioner
Sustainability Sub-Committee. Chair
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