

PORT UNION ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

In response to resident requests, traffic lights were installed at Rozell Road and Port Union Road to provide safe and accessible pedestrian and cyclist access to Adams Park.

There are new and wider sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Some trees have been removed and native tree species are being planted to replace them.

The street now has updated street lighting and hydro poles.

For improved traffic safety, the driveway into the Ravine Park Plaza was relocated to align with Tilley Drive.

The bus stops with shelters have been integrated with the design of the cycle tracks.



New retaining walls have been added.

The widening of Port Union Rd. has created room for two southbound and two northbound lanes of traffic.



There are curb extensions and raised crossings at Conference Boulevard, Tilley Drive, Clappison Boulevard/Adenmore Road, Blue Anchor Trail and Adams Park Gate.

There are now dedicated turn lanes in several areas along the street.

Roll plan section and road related graphics courtesy of the City of Toronto

The roadwork on Port Union is almost done!

Original problem statement

The widening of Port Union Road goes back to the Port Union Road Class Environmental Assessment Study that was completed in 2004. This study was undertaken to address traffic concerns on Port Union Road Between Lawrence Avenue East and Kingston Road. In 2014 an Environmental Assessment Addendum was undertaken to provide an updated alternative design for the widening of Port Union Road between Lawrence Avenue East and Island Road. A preferred option was selected that provides the best level of service to traffic in both directions and it improves the best level of safety along the roadway for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

By John Murphy

More than 20 years ago, the City of Toronto was aware of the list of issues with Port Union Rd. The big concerns were the Ravine Park Plaza entrance, missing or narrow sidewalks, no cycling infrastructure, and we all remember the traffic delays.

The city did a thorough traffic analysis with public consultations to produce a detailed design in 2021. It incorporated the combined rationales found in the city's Vision Zero, Complete Streets and the Cycle Network Plan.

Nearing the end of this project, we have been in dialogue with the city and wanted to write about our new forward-thinking infrastructure that minimizes property and tree impact, and maximizes road safety and utility for vehicles and pedestrians.

Road widening and a new northbound lane: Adding a fourth lane and a left-hand turn lane will improve traffic flow, no doubt. Practically speaking it will be easier venturing out around rush hour to get that last-minute ingredient for our dinner recipe.

Centre-turn lanes and medians: The inclusion of concrete medians is a more effective way of moderating vehicle speeds than painted medians. The raised medians serve not only as a speed management tool but they help to organize traffic flow and reduce the likelihood of unsafe manoeuvres. Raised medians are a common feature across the city. It will be less nerve-racking to be part of traffic turning left into the Metro Plaza just south of the Lawson intersection.

Narrower lanes and 50 km/h speed limit: We all know slowing down does improve safety, but do narrower lanes help? The city's adopted lane

width guidelines encourage driving at the posted speed limit. The middle lanes are tighter at 3 metres wide and the curb lane is a normal 3.3 metres to accommodate buses and the like. Side street entrances pinch in where pedestrian/cycle traffic meet (like at Dear Gate), which makes for tighter turns and will encourage drivers to slow down and be more careful.

Raised cycle tracks on both sides: Raised cycle tracks are recommended instead of multi-use trails on streets with heavy traffic, higher speeds and frequent driveway crossings. They provide safer and more convenient access. In contrast, multi-use trails are usually on one side only and can create safety risks at intersections and driveways. Several physical constraints during detailed design, primarily related to trees, required adjustments to the cycle track in places.

How will snow removal and waste collection adjust for the bike lanes? For snow maintenance, the city has specialized equipment that fits within the bikeways, and they will manoeuvre around concrete islands or other special features. The preferred location for residents to put out their waste and recycling bins is just behind the bike lane. On snowy days, the area should be cleared.

New and wider sidewalks: Going for a walk will no longer incorporate choosing which side to walk on, treading on wet grass to avoid puddles, or always looking down to avoid tripping hazards.

New traffic lights at Port Union and Rozell: These lights were added in response to resident requests for signals at the intersection to provide safe access to Adams Park for pedestrians and cyclists. The nearest existing protected crossings are about 440 metres to the north at

Island Rd. and about 250 metres to the south at Lawson Rd. Such distances have led pedestrians and cyclists to cross at the uncontrolled intersection of Rozell and Port Union.

Why move the Ravine Park Plaza entrance? We heard concerns about this from some residents so we talked to city officials and did our research. We now better understand that the purpose of the relocation will reduce vehicle conflicts at the intersection and the plaza entrance. It provides more space for cars to safely queue prior to turning into the plaza. Historical collision reporting and the 2024 TAC Access Management: Synthesis of Practice helped us understand that this is a good solution. A feature of this intersection is that traffic is prohibited from crossing directly from Tilley Dr. into the plaza or from the plaza directly into Tilley.

Why is turning right onto Conference Blvd. from Port Union so tight? This intersection has a reduced curb radius as well as curb extensions, which are designed to reduce vehicle speeds while turning and to reduce pedestrian crossing distance while improving visibility. This makes it safer for pedestrians and drivers.

Beautification: From the get-go, the city has committed to a tree replacement plan on a one-for-one ratio. They did remove many old and invasive trees and will plant new trees that match with the city's tree canopy.

Formal bus stops with new shelters: Half of the TTC bus shelters were updated, including a relocation. The shelters are integrated with the design of the cycle tracks.

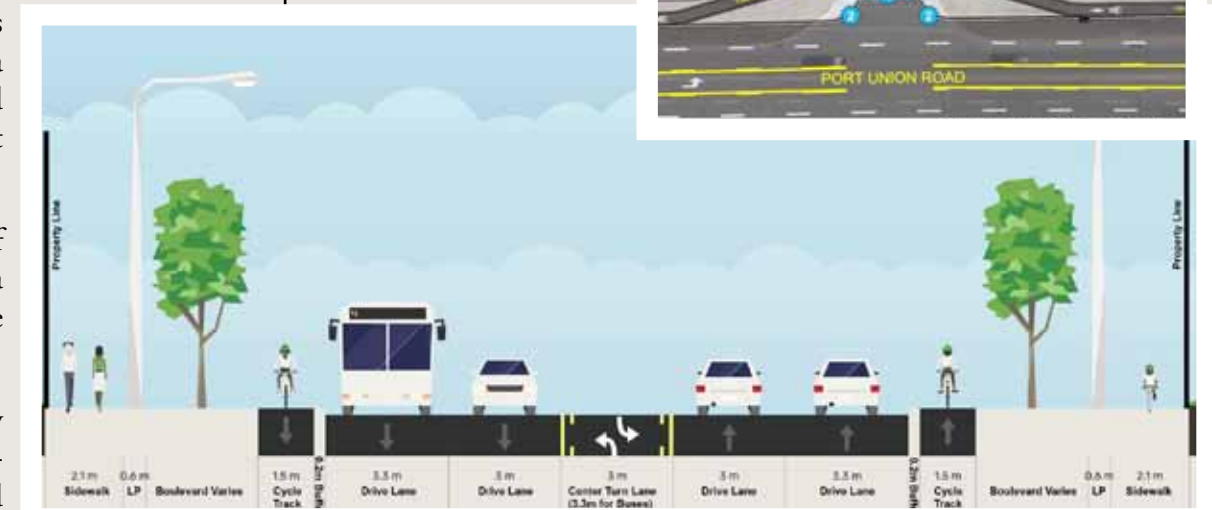
Other updated features: We are getting new street lighting and hydro poles as well as upgrades to stormwater drainage. It was weird

when the curb had those breaks in it because we did not know how the cycle path was going to be implemented. Looks good now.

When will the project be completed? The project is intended to be substantially complete by the end of this year. The City of Toronto thanks the community and residents for their patience during the construction period. There are several new changes to Port Union Rd. that may take a little time getting used to. These elements are designed to improve the function and safety of the road for area residents. Once the project is complete, there will be an update on the project webpage and it will also be emailed to project subscribers. Going forward, residents can contact 311 for non-emergency concerns.

Thank you: Centennial News would like to sincerely thank Kate Lear for providing the answers to all our questions on this story. Kate is a Communications Advisor for the City of Toronto.

Examples of road safety improvements at the intersection of Port Union Rd. and Dear Gate. Below: Cross-section of the upgraded road.



"I'm thrilled to finally see the results of this project after two years of noise and dust; primarily better traffic flow and significantly less horn honking! Nevertheless questions do linger, and the ultimate test, I believe, will come with the first major snowfall."

Dr Joseph Tabri has his dental office at Port Union and Lawson.