

Proposed Entrance Connection - Queen's Park Station

Meeting Date: April 23, 2008

Subject: Proposed Entrance Connection - Queen's Park Station

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Approve, in principle, an entrance connection between MaRS Phase 2 located at 661 University Avenue and Queen's Park Station;
2. Approve, in principle, the design concept attached as Appendix B to this report subject to the satisfaction of: requirements arising out of the technical review of the entrance connection design; the design requirements set out in the Commission's entrance connection policy; requirements arising out of the design review undertaken by the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT); and the provision of two escalators within MaRS Phase 2 as part of the entrance connection to the station; and
3. Authorize staff to negotiate an Entrance Connection Agreement with MaRS' developer for the provision of an entrance connection between MaRS Phase 2 and Queen's Park Station based on the design approved, in principle, by the Commission and in accordance with the Commission's entrance connection policy.

Funding

There are no funding requirements created by the approvals sought. The design and construction of the proposed entrance connection to Queen's Park Station will be at the expense of the developer. The new envelope and reduced size of the exterior connecting stair, forming part of the connection, are expected to result in lower maintenance costs to the Commission in both the long and short term.

Background

MaRS is an incorporated not-for-profit organization created to foster global innovation in medical research.

Two square kilometres of Toronto's urban fabric have been designated as Toronto's Discovery District, a concentration of medical and scientific research facilities anchored by the University of Toronto and the city's major teaching hospitals and affiliated research institutes situated along College Street and University Avenue. Located at the southeast corner of College and University and extending along College Street from University Avenue to Elizabeth Street, the MaRS Centre was created to physically connect the science and business communities and foster collaboration between them through the development and construction of specialized office and research facilities (see Appendix A for location of the MaRS Centre). MaRS Phase I opened in September 2005. MaRS Phase II, approximately 750,000 square feet of research and support space, is now starting into construction and is targeted for completion in 2010.

When completed, the MaRS Centre will house approximately 1.5 million square feet of space for medical research and technology transfer as well as a conference and multi-media facility.

The Centre is currently served by subway from Queen's Park Station, by streetcars from College Street and by bus along University Avenue.

MaRS has approached the Toronto Transit Commission with a proposal to provide a fully enclosed, accessible entrance connection directly to Queen's Park Station, as part of the Phase II development. The design concept is attached as Appendix B to this report.

Discussion

The conceptual design for the proposed entrance connection from MaRS to Queen's Park Station consists of a weather-enclosed exterior stair leading directly from University Avenue to the concourse level at Queen's Park Station and an accessible connection through the Centre itself.

The existing escalator and entrance to Queen's Park Station situated at the southeast corner of College and University would be demolished and replaced with a new enclosure housing a single stair. The design of the new enclosure would reflect the architecture of the exhibit space forming the northeast corner of the MaRS Centre.

Within the Centre, MaRS is proposing to link their ground and concourse levels with a fully accessible elevator, stair and escalator. Staff have identified a need for two escalators to replace the facilities currently provided at the southeast corner of College and University. Two escalators (one up and one down) would improve customer convenience by facilitating the accessibility of its hospital and conference facilities. A path would be created through the retail area at the concourse level to link the Centre at its northwest end directly to the concourse level of Queen's Park Station and at the south end

to Toronto General Hospital. The path and the entrance connection would be fully accessible. Entry to the station would occur to the unpaid side of the fare line. MaRS has also agreed to provide a path at ground level through the Centre linking the streetcar stop at College and Elizabeth to the proposed entrance connection which is shown on page 20 of Appendix B.

The MaRS proposal was brought before ACAT at their March, 2008 meeting where it received a positive reception and was referred to ACAT's Design Review Committee for detailed review and comment.

The proposed entrance connection is mutually beneficial to TTC and MaRS. It provides a direct, fully accessible connection between Queen's Park Station and the MaRS Centre through the Centre's retail and conference areas. In future, the connection has the potential to link the station southward to the hospitals adjacent to the Centre. The retention of the exterior stair maintains TTC's presence on and access directly from the street while replacing an aging building envelope which would shortly require significant maintenance work. The wayfinding signage which would form part of the connection will clearly define a weather protected path from the Centre to the subway, streetcars and buses.

Justification

The proposed entrance connection is of benefit to both TTC and its customers, providing a weather protected path to and from Queen's Park Station and an additional fully accessible entrance to the station which, in future, has the potential to link the station to the teaching hospitals to the south. The new sidewalk entrance will replace an aging structure that otherwise would shortly require extensive repair and maintenance.

April 8, 2008 22-11-10

Attachments: Appendix A – MaRS Location

Appendix B – Entrance Connection Concept Design