



**King Edward Avenue Task Force /  
Groupe de travail de l'avenue King Edward**  
205-100 Boteler Street · Ottawa, ON K1N 8Y1

Councillors,  
Transportation Committee,  
City of Ottawa,  
110 Laurier Avenue West,  
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Re: City Council, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Transportation Committee Report 5A - ACS2011-ICS-CSS-0002: King Edward Avenue Lane Reduction Study – Phase 2 Results**

Dear Councillors,

Please note that four prominent community associations and Ecology Ottawa have signed on to this letter as well as 65 residents of King Edward Avenue and the surrounding Lowertown community.

Over 45 years ago, poor planning decisions led to the destruction of King Edward Avenue. Since that time, the negative consequences of those decisions have grown significantly. Over the past 25 years, the King Edward Avenue Task Force has advocated for a just resolution to this temporary truck and commuter route for the King Edward Avenue and Lowertown community. Over the past 4 years, the King Edward Lane Reductions Study has been looking at one of the primary long-term solutions to our avenue's multiple problems.

There are a number of issues that make King Edward Avenue the worst street in Ottawa. Each day, we have 3,000 trucks and about 35,000 vehicles running through the Lowertown residential area and a highly dense pedestrian business district on Rideau Street. Over 6,000 pedestrians cross at King Edward and Rideau daily where the large trucks struggle to turn. In the past 5 years, there have been 5 people killed and 67 pedestrians injured in traffic accidents. The noise levels on King Edward Avenue are an average of 20 points over the municipal and provincial health standards. Temporary noises from trucks and buses are as high as 50 points over the limit. Air pollution has been found to be 150% and 200% of maximum levels allowed for nitrous oxides and particulate matter. There are also 26 abandoned buildings and lots in the area.

Simply put, we need long-term solutions now. A bridge has been promised for decades, but has not materialized. In 2002, we asked that King Edward Avenue be reduced from 6 to 4 lanes to help rehabilitate the street. As a compromise, we were promised a study on the idea. Between 2006 and 2008, King Edward was reduced to 4 lanes for construction work. During this period, traffic congestion remained the same as when the avenue was 6 lanes. This led us to ask: why not implement the 4-lane option now?

In 2007, City Council asked city staff to undertake the study. Transportation planners at the City were of the opinion that lane reductions were not possible and refused to do the study. In 2008, City Council reprimanded staff members and ordered them to do the study. Dillon Consulting, a professional engineering and planning company, worked with city staff and the community to design and undertook the study over a 2-year period. In 2010, the results of the study were released to us and indicated that four lanes could be implemented anytime on King Edward Avenue and would have no significant negative long-term impacts. The City's transportation planners still disagreed despite the evidence and forced senior staff to delay release of the study for over a year. All together, staff had delayed the study by 2 years over a 4-year period.

The City's transportation planners, despite having no hard evidence, were able to have the conclusions of the accompanying staff report written in their favour. Essentially, the staff report states that 4 lanes can only be implemented if a number of unreasonable conditions is met including: the construction of an east-end bridge; a 43% transit split between Gatineau and Ottawa; and, removal of King Edward from the City's truck route network. None of these three conditions was listed as necessary in the independent consultant report submitted by Dillon Consulting. In fact, these conditions are essentially the same ones that staff put forward prior to the Lane Reductions Study. Accepting the staff recommendation would result in the outright rejection of the study and all the money and human resources put into that initiative. It would also put into question the professional opinion of all the experts involved in the study, which, taken together, concluded 4 lanes was possible for King Edward Avenue.

We would like you to recognize that this solution is important to the community. We have been advocating for it for a decade. Furthermore, public consultations during the Lane Reductions Study showed strong public support. In addition, city staff were involved throughout the process and agreed to the criteria developed in this study for evaluating the different lane configurations. They only turned against the study when the results were not congruent with their opinion. Their opinion of the 4-lane option for King Edward Avenue does not reflect the evidence. According to the Dillon report, drivers using King Edward Avenue during the busiest 2.5 hours of the day will only be expected to wait an additional 1 minute each to get through the corridor. As stated, this is not a significant impact on the transportation network when one also considers the amount of benefits that would be realized.

According to the study, a 4-lane configuration for King Edward Avenue would be a better fit with 24 of the City's policies. The current 6-lane configuration – the status quo – was only found to be a better fit with 2 of the City's policies. In addition, the study found that several other potential benefits would likely be realized including: less localized pollution; reduced noise levels; reduced vibrations; reduced heat; safer speeds; shorter pedestrian crossing distances; and, an improved streetscape. We believe that this option would create a better buffer zone between the heavy truck traffic and the neighbourhood and allow for an additional row of trees and bike lanes.

It is our belief that city staff members have no intention of ever implementing four lanes on King Edward Avenue. The conditions that they would like to place on the implementation are far beyond reach and contradict the conclusions of the actual study. For our part, we would like to see four lanes implemented immediately in accordance with the findings of the study. However, we recognize the concern that King Edward has just been rebuilt and propose the following adjustment to the staff recommendation as a compromise. This draft motion fairly reflects the community's desires, the conclusions of the study, and the whole of the City's policies and not just the opinions of a few transportation planners who are solely focused on the transportation aspect of this issue.

Draft Motion:

**That Transportation Committee recommend Council approve:**

- 1 – Adjusting the final recommendation to read as follows: “That the four-lane cross-section be designated the unconditional end-state configuration for King Edward Avenue” and cross out “to be implemented as outlined in this report.”**
- 2 – Direct staff to incorporate the 4-lane option, as outlined above, in the next update of both the Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan with no conditions attached to the implementation.**
- 3 – Direct staff to extend parking hours on King Edward Avenue to 24 hours per day and 7 days per week as an intermediate step towards full implementation of the 4-lane option and acting as a long-term pilot.**
- 4 – Direct staff to undertake a detailed design process, detailed cost estimates, and proposed phasing in of the 4-lane option for King Edward Avenue to be presented back at Transportation Committee no later than Oct 5th, 2011 (or 2012), and to be completed in consultation with the King Edward Avenue Task Force.**

Despite our willingness to concede immediate implementation of the 4-lane option due to concerns revolving around cost, we would like to note the following. First, King Edward Avenue was redesigned in such a way that the current 6-lane configuration could be reduced to a 4-lane configuration at minimal cost. The King Edward Avenue Task Force obtained a quote from the Delcan Corporation, which noted that about \$1 million would be needed to reconfigure the street. We consider this a very small sum given the gravity of the problems and the total cost of the work already completed on the avenue (\$60 million) and of a new east-end bridge (\$300-500 million). Secondly, in 2002, Richard Hewitt, a senior city staff member at the City, indicated that a substantial portion of land freed up in the north end of King Edward by the infrastructure renewal project was valued at between \$6-8 million. This amount has likely gone up significantly since that time. While it would be our absolute joy to have Council support an immediate implementation of the 4-lane option, we recognize the challenges involved. Nevertheless, we wanted to bring some clarity to the issue of costs.

Complex problems are not solved by passing the buck as so many city councils have over the years. True leadership is seeing a problem and finding solutions, even when those solutions seem unorthodox. Taking the courage to make a decision that is good for the long-term and based on our City's values is what counts. You have an extraordinary opportunity to make the right decision at the upcoming Transportation Committee this Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. Please do not let this opportunity pass you by. Please support the requested motion put forward by the King Edward Avenue Task Force outlined in this letter.

Sincerely yours,



Marc Aubin,  
Chair, King Edward Avenue Task Force

**Co-Signers**

Jan-Francois Grabowiecki, President, Lowertown Community Association

Charles Akben-Marchand, President, Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA)



Robert Stehle, President, Action Sandy Hill



Graham Saul, Chair, Ecology Ottawa

**Residents of King Edward and****Lowertown:**

Nicole Boilard

Phil Ozga, 255 St. Andrew Street

Elizabeth Grznar-Ozga, 255 St. Andrew Street

Bill Campbell, 2304-160 George Street

Erik Bjornson, 176 King Edward Avenue

Shannon Bjornson, 176 King Edward Avenue

Elizabeth Race

Nathan Davis

Dominique Boulais

Stephen Entwisle

Paul Williamson, 161 King Edward Avenue

Christina Ballhorn, 161 King Edward Avenue

Jacqueline Swain

Stuart Savage, 336 Cathcart Street

Brent Bauer, 124 Guigues Avenue

Marcia Almey, 88 King Edward Avenue

John Pittman, 192 Cumberland Street

Evelyn Simpson, 14 Cornwall Street

David Pyman

Brian Pirie, 1301-180 York Street

Mike Kologie, 104 Little London Private

Danielle Gagné, 259 St-Andrew

Jeannine Gagné, 259 St-Andrew

David Milman

Valerie Burton

Andrew Christie, 233 Clarence Street

Rosi Kohn

Gontran Bolduc

Alexandra Lamont

Clara Hirsch

Christine Hanson, 255 Clarence Street

Urbain Some, 255 Clarence Street

Ruth Rodger, 315 St. Andrew

Nicholas Moyer, 2-183 Guigues Street

Sophie Cathelineau, 2-183 Guigues Street

Julie Ross, 8 Michel Riel Private

Ian Burgess, 244 Bruyère Street

Megan Furi, 244 Bruyère Street

Barbara Myers, 274 King Edward Avenue

David Ewart, 65 Cathcart Street

Christine Kilfoil, 65 Carthcart Street

W. Thomas Leroux, 2-263 St. Andrew Street

Nicole Deschênes, 204-205 Boteler Street

James Angus, 204-205 Boteler Street

John Blair, 304 Cathcart Street

Sylvie Grenier, 12 Clarence Street

Norman Moyer, 12 Clarence Street

Nancy Miller Chenier, 332 Cathcart Street

Liz MacKenzie, 221 Clarence Street

Ted Lawrence, 221 Clarence Street

Bruce Baker, 901-200 Besserer Street

Louyse Chouinard, 901-200 Besserer Street

Graeme Weeks, 1205-180 York Street

Robert Massel, 273 St. Andrew Street

Joe Burpee, 203 St. Patrick Street

Candis E. Carlson, 145 Clarence Street

Nan Cudmore, 2-310 Cathcart Street

Dave Cudmore 2-310 Cathcart Street

Justine O'Brien, 8-310 Cathcart Street

Gail Molloy, 495 Clarence Street East

Michael Molloy, 495 Clarence Street East

Liz Brandon-Williams, 248 Bruyère Street

Barry Leonard, Clarence & Nelson

Michel Vallee, 158 King Edward Avenue

John Verbaas

**Attachment** – Update: 4 Lanes on King Edward Avenue – We now have proof

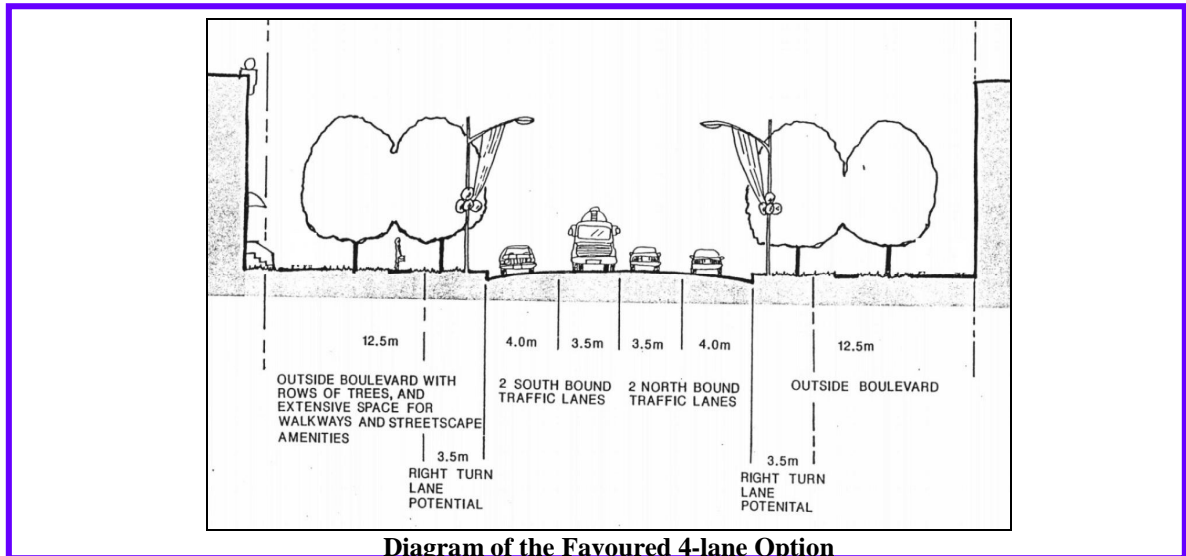
**Video** – The Four-Lane Option: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESUQBxrz\\_w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESUQBxrz_w)

# UPDATE: 4 Lanes on King Edward Avenue - We now have proof -

King Edward Avenue Task Force, 2011

## Issue

The citizens of Lowertown want King Edward Avenue to be reduced from 6 to 4 lanes between Sussex and Rideau and for the space to be reallocated to create a grand boulevard and bike lanes.



## Central Argument

Between 2006 and 2009, King Edward Avenue was reduced to 4 lanes for the duration of construction underway. There were no major traffic delays on the avenue and this conclusion is supported by the consultants of the King Edward Avenue Lane Reduction Impact Study. The consultants have recommended the four-lane option for King Edward Avenue.

## Did you know?

### ➤ **Trucks continue to use King Edward Avenue:**

Between 2,500 and 3,000 trucks, sometimes carrying very dangerous goods, use King Edward as a truck route every day. A bridge is many years away from completion and there is no guarantee the trucks will disappear. The 4-lane option is a good interim and long-term compromise between the current commuter and truck traffic needs and the quality of life needs of the community.

### ➤ **City staff have conceded that the 4 lane option is workable:**

City staff stated in 2007 that they “have been able to manage the traffic during the construction with the 4 lanes between Boteler and St. Patrick” and that “People are accustomed to driving on 2 lanes...” City staff have members also stated that they were able to manage the four lane option by increasing the signal times at major intersections.

➤ **Transit is the solution:**

Studies have proven that increasing the number of lanes on roads encourages more people to drive, while decreasing lanes discourages the use of cars. Where do people go? In the short-term, people try to find alternative routes, and leave at different hours. Others are encouraged to use the transit system, which is always in need of additional riders. Some will walk or bike. If lanes are reduced on King Edward, there will be options for commuters. Reducing lanes will encourage more people to use the region's two transit systems, and increasing ridership is a priority for both Gatineau and Ottawa. A four-lane King Edward will encourage more transit use.

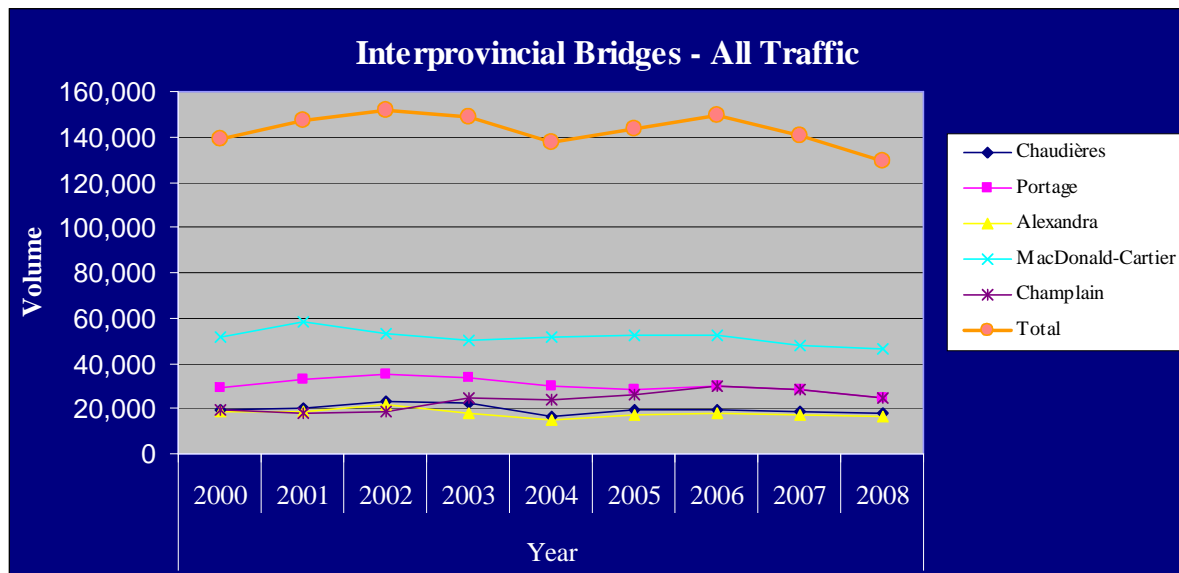
➤ **Relief is on the way:**

The future is bright and full of promises. The current Interprovincial Transit Strategy is likely to recommend a loop system between Gatineau and Ottawa, which does not include King Edward. In addition, Gatineau is currently moving ahead with its Rapibus plan to build a bus rapid transit system. At the same time, Highway 50 is currently under construction and is targeted for completion in 2011. Finally, the Interprovincial Bridge Study is also working towards the construction of a new bridge in the east end that will better balance the city's transportation network. All these plans will ensure that the four-lane option will work over the long-term.

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

### Traffic Analysis

The following table shows the decline in traffic that resulted from the lane reductions on King Edward in 2006. Total interprovincial traffic declined by 13% between 2006 and 2009.



*Prepared by the King Edward Avenue Task Force (based on counts from the City of Ottawa)*

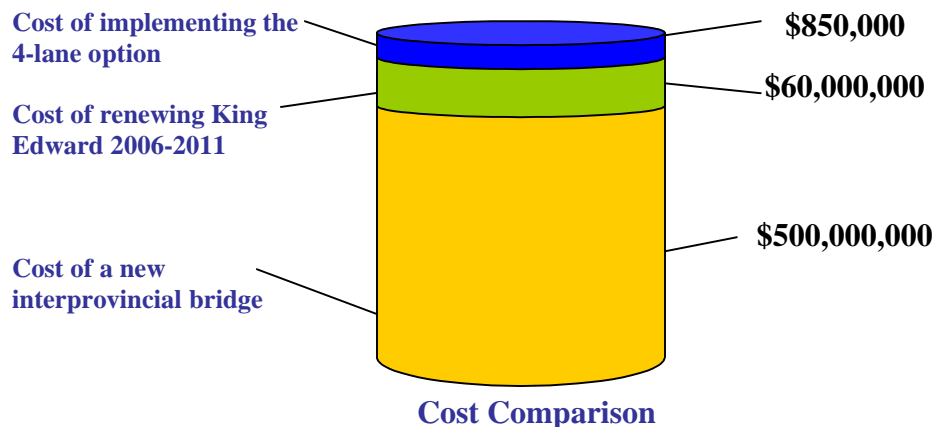
**Key Finding – Traffic was not diverted to other corridors**

### **Highlights of the consultant's quantitative analysis:**

- Infiltration of neighbourhoods by traffic was deemed negligible
- There are no significant differences in travel times in the peak morning direction (southbound) on King Edward
- The average increase in travel time per vehicle (cars, trucks, buses) in the peak afternoon direction (northbound) is about 1 minute during a 2.5 hour period each day
- The 4-lane option results in lower levels of pollution and noise along the avenue
- Public consultation showed support for the 4-lane option

### **Key Finding – Reducing lanes will not significantly affect travel times**

### **Cost Analysis: The Four-Lane Option is a Reasonable Investment**



*Notes:*

- *Estimates of reducing King Edward to four lanes have varied between \$500,000 and \$1,200,000.*
- *Reducing lanes on King Edward will result in fewer light standards and less road maintenance costs, such as street sweeping and snow removal*
- *The street was already designed to be reduced to 4 lanes offsetting some of the redesign costs*

### **The consultant's analysis included both quantitative and qualitative elements:**

From the very beginning, the consultants based their assessment of the various lane reduction options on both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Using both transportation models and planning documents, including the City of Ottawa's Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan, the consultants concluded that the 4-lane option was the best alternative for King Edward Avenue.

### **Key Finding: The 4-lane option is the most consistent with City policies**

# QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

## Pros

- Shortens distance for pedestrians to cross the street
- Allows space for bicycle lanes, and connects bike paths to the outer downtown network
- Encourages commuters to use alternative modes of transportation, such as buses, which supports the city's goal of increased transit ridership
- Has a traffic calming effect, discourages speeding, and increases safety
- Provides a buffer zone between the community and the cars and trucks by allowing for more green space
- Reduces air pollution
- Reduces noise
- Creates a spectacular entrance to the City of Ottawa and considerably enhances the street environment
- Provides some relief to the long-standing issue of large trucks and poor living conditions
- Less costly to maintain 4 lanes than 6
- Helps revitalize the community by encouraging redevelopment of empty lots, so that more people can live downtown
- Consistent with the fact that only 4 lanes come on & off of the MacDonald-Cartier Bridge and connect with King Edward
- Allows enough ground space for trees to grow and survive the salt, exhaust fumes, and dry summer conditions
- Is consistent with the designation of King Edward as a traditional mainstreet in the Official Plan

## Cons

- **Increased congestion (based on modeling)**  
*Wrong:* King Edward was reduced to 4 lanes for 3 years and there was no major congestion. The consultants have also confirmed that congestion will not be a greater problem than it has been in the past.
- **Increased pollution**  
*Wrong:* The consultants have determined that there will be a net decrease in both pollution and noise on King Edward as a result of the 4-lane option.
- **Wait for the bridge to be built**  
*Wrong:* It's time to move ahead. Lowertown has been waiting for 4 decades. Should we wait another 10 or 20 years? Also, the same old arguments will be used to dismiss the idea of reducing lanes even if a bridge is ever built.
- **The 4-lane option needs to be further studied**  
*Wrong:* The 4-lane option has been proven both in theory and in reality. No more studies are required.
- **Commerce will stop**  
*Wrong:* The majority of trucks pass during non-congested hours and, in any case, the travel times will not increase significantly with fewer lanes.
- **The 4-lane option will be expensive**  
*Wrong:* The cost of reducing lanes is minimal in comparison to the costs of rebuilding the avenue and a new bridge in the east end. Also, the current King Edward was designed so that it could be easily reduced to four lanes.

## SUMMARY

King Edward Avenue can be 4 lanes. The neighbourhood will never be what it once was, but we believe that we can do a lot better. Rebuilding King Edward Avenue was meant to bring some kind of long-lasting relief to the community, but it turned out to be mainly a renewal of the underground utilities, and the replacement of the above-ground infrastructure. The 4-lane option is the only real viable solution until a bridge is built, and the community needs it urgently. We ask for your support.