



Toronto Transit Commission Transit City Open Houses

Eglinton Crosstown LRT August and September 2008 Summary Results Report

Prepared by Lura Consulting
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This summary report was prepared by Lura Consulting. Lura is providing third-party consultation management services as part of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and the City of Toronto Transit City projects. This summary captures the key comments submitted during the noted Public Information Centres. It is not intended as a verbatim transcript. If you have any questions or comments regarding the summary, please contact:

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Introduction

As part of the Transit City process, the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) are proposing ways to significantly improve transit service by building the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rapid Transit (LRT) line on Eglinton Avenue between Kennedy Station and Martin Grove Road, and potentially as far as Lester B. Pearson International Airport.

Six public information centres (PICs) were held in August and September 2008 as part of the first series of meetings the Eglinton LRT public consultation process. One open house was held jointly with the Jane Street LRT project. The purpose of the PICs was to share information about the Eglinton LRT project with the community and to gather feedback on preliminary project plans. A summary of the process of the PICs is provided in the table below.

Eglinton LRT Open Houses Summary						
Date	Thursday, August 14	Tuesday, August 19	Monday, August 25	Wednesday, August 27	Thursday, September 4	Monday, September 22 (joint open house with Jane Street LRT)
Location	6:30pm - 9:00pm Forest Hill Memorial Arena 340 Chaplin Crescent	6:30pm to 9:00pm. Leaside Arena 1073 Millwood Rd.	6:30pm to 9:00pm. Humber Valley United Church 76 Anglesey Blvd.	6:30pm to 9:00pm. Don Montgomery Community Centre 2467 Eglinton Ave E	6:30pm to 9:00pm. Richview Baptist Church 1548 Kipling Avenue	6:30pm to 9:00pm. Centennial Recreation Centre, 2694 Eglinton Ave W
# of participants (signed-in)	119	172	209	48	70	73
# of comment forms received	35	45	52	8	11	18

Each open house presented 32 detailed display boards, a Frequently Asked Questions handout (both available for download on the project web page at www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/eglinton_crosstown_lrt/index.htm), an audio-visual (AV) presentation with voice over, and an open invitation to ask questions and discuss the plan with the TTC, City and Consultant project team members present.

Participants were invited to write down their ideas and opinions on comment forms and submit them at the registration table. In addition to the comment forms, project team members and Lura staff also recorded participant comments as they arose during discussion.

The public is also able to provide comments online or via telephone. Up to October 6th, the TTC also received 148 comments via email and telephone, many of which were questions and/or requests to be added to the mailing list.

This report summarizes the comments received through the open houses and other communication channels up to and including October 6, 2008.

Comment Summary

A summary of the key issues and comments raised are presented below, with detailed comments provided in the Appendix. In general, they include:

- Expressions of both support and some opposition to the LRT line
- Suggestions on the network design, such as ensuring the LRT system interfaces with the existing subway and other transit systems (such as GO)
- Routing concerns, such as the diversion of traffic onto side streets, and suggestions
- Underground and above ground routing
- Potential impact of noise and vibrations from the LRT
- Connection of the LRT with the airport
- Suggestions on LRT stops
- Potential impact on local businesses
- Lane reductions
- Parking
- Cycling
- Accessibility
- Construction
- Suggestions for the next open house, and
- Comments on other transit initiatives.

Appendix – Aggregated Comments

A summary of all aggregated comments is presented below. They are grouped by topic and type of comment. A number in brackets is used to count duplicate comments received.

Support/Opposition for plan

In favour

- Expression of support for the plan (44).
- Don't waste money on a subway – the LRT is sufficient.
- Will reduce pollution along Eglinton and be useful for daily commuters.
- Need LRT transportation now, not by 2031.
- Affordable, accessible, dependable public transit is overdue; this will be a rejuvenating catalyst for the area.
- Hope it leads to improvements in the Eglinton corridor.

Opposed

- Generally opposed to the LRT proposal. (5)
- A subway is needed instead of the LRT. (5) Subways have greater capacity.
- Not convinced LRT is best option. (2)
- Another Spadina or St. Clair is not wanted.
- Is a waste of money and will make Eglinton ugly.
- Use electric buses instead in dedicated bus lanes.
- Use a bus trolley instead.
- Use express busses instead.
- Likely to be unpopular with Leaside residents (as was 2 years ago).
- Not convinced LRT is preferable to subway, seeing how tunnelling is still required. Would appreciate more detailed information on why LRT was selected.
- Bus service is excellent. Expand other subway lines instead.

Network Design Suggestions

- The LRT should interface with the existing subway stations. (3)
- Extend the LRT to the Renforth gateway regardless of the route to the airport. (2)
- Signal priority is required.
- Put stops after the traffic lights, in order to not impede the flow of traffic.
- Connect to the Mississauga BRT (3), so that it benefits people of Etobicoke between Martin Grove and Renforth.
- Build the hub connecting to Mississauga in Mississauga.
- Link the LRT with as many other transit options as possible (Mississauga Transit, GO, etc) (3), including the Scarborough/Malvern line and Kennedy Station.
- Provide for integration with the Davisville Subway yard via the beltline or Chaplin Crescent.
- Ensure flexible connections with Jane, Don Mills, and Scarborough-Malvern LRT lines.
- Consider connections to CNIB and other institutions along route.

Linkages with TTC Bus System

- Build a transfer station to accommodate buses at Eglinton and Keele.

- Put two exits at the Chaplin LRT station to allow access to both the Chaplin bus (#32A,B) and the Spadina Road South bus (#33).
- The Lawrence East bus should serve the underground LRT station at Laird and continue to Eglinton Station.
- The Leslie and Leaside buses should continue to serve Eglinton station.
- Connect the underground stations with bus stations.

Routing

Concerns

- Diversion of traffic onto side streets. (3)
- Where under Eglinton will the tunnel go? Directly under? (2)
- Not user friendly in Bathurst area – have to walk up the hill to get to apartments between Bathurst and Chaplin.
- Concerned that LRT will take two lanes of a four lane street at Kipling and Eglinton, which would cause traffic congestion.
- If central concept (i.e., LRT in the middle of the road) is used, then passenger crossings will delay vehicular traffic and contribute to more CO₂ and NO_x pollution.
- Concern over safety of crossing intersections – will view of cars be obstructed?
- Concern that the proposed route would create a bottleneck at Yonge and Spadina during rush hour.
- Concern over having to make “u-turns” to reach other side.
- The area where O’Connor Drive, Victoria Park and Eglinton meet requires extra care – it’s a mess already.
- Do not introduce LRT if it will slow down cars.

Suggestions

- Continue with bus routes (9)
 - Between Eglinton and Eglinton West subway stations (3), which would help mobility challenged people ascend hill between Chaplin and Bathurst.
 - Bayview to Mt. Pleasant, and Laird to Bayview (are far apart)
 - Keep the parallel bus service between Jane and Laird. At least keep reduced service between Gilbert Loop and Laird.
- Consider an express route across Eglinton. (4)
- <3 minute frequency.
- Use the Richview grass strip that is west of Scarlet Rd as a right-of-way.
- Use the green space from Islington to Martin Grove for transit and commercial buildings.
- Run the LRT from Eglinton and Highway #27 between Galaxy Blvd and Skyway Ave, or between North and Carlingview, to Dixon Rd and into Pearson Airport.
- A better spot for the Jane/Eglinton transfer point would be at Eglinton and Emmett, if the Jane LRT’s alignment were to curve west from the southern edge of the Eglinton flats. Then Northbound Jane and Westbound Eglinton could share one platform, and Southbound Jane and Eastbound Eglinton could share the other. This would serve a high-density neighbourhood, and would speed up the Eglinton LRT as it would no longer need to stop at Jane St, only Emmett.
- Put the LRT on the Blue 22 right-of-way.

Underground and Aboveground Routing

- Build rail transit under Eglinton. (6)
- Include passing lanes for express vehicles at each stop. (2)
- Aboveground is more people friendly, humane. Shoving people underground will not help shops, activities at street level. Fewer people walking on streets make them less safe.
- Underground transit along central Eglinton is needed, due to traffic and bus congestion.
- Make tunnel large enough to accommodate future subway.
- Above ground routing will be slowed down by traffic light stops.
- Due to cost, put centre portion of LRT on the surface (2 lanes for LRT and 2 for cars). Extra cost not needed given low density of the corridor.
- Should be underground all the way to the airport.
- The LRT should not come above ground by Jane Street.
- Section between Jane and Keele should be underground.
- The LRT between Black Creek and Jane should be underground, since Mt. Dennis is very narrow.
- Consider collateral development within the underground section, such as continuous pedestrian/bicycle/retail activity like the PATH.
- Build elevated LRTs so that they pass over the intersections and are not delayed by traffic. This was used in Manila, Philippines.
- Eglinton and Bayview a problem area – line would have to be above ground because of the stream there.

Nuisance Concerns

- Concerned about noise level (8) and vibrations. (5)
- Consider rubber tires in a different roadbed design to cut down on screech when subway and streetcars make turns.
- The LRT should not contribute any excess noise pollution.
- The Renforth area will be flooded with bus traffic from Mississauga Transit filling the gap between Renforth and Martin Grove.

Airport Connection

- The line should extend to the airport. (12)
- The train should be large enough for both people and their luggage, if it goes to the airport.
- LRT is better option to provide transit to the airport rather than the rail line through Weston.
- Go underground to the airport; have subway station at one of the airport terminals.

Stops and Stop Suggestions

Concerns with Stops

- Stops are far for the elderly or disabled, bus service is still needed (8). The Yonge Subway is complemented by the #97 Yonge bus.
- Concern for residents in apartments between Bathurst and Chaplin. Many are elderly or physically challenged, and depend on the bus. The hill is difficult for them to ascend.(2)
- Stops are too frequent.
- Provide innovative names for the stops, rather than street names.
- An underground station at Brentcliff is excessive.

- The underground stops are approximately 1,000 m apart. This is too far for passengers with disabilities and the elderly.
- Concern over loss of stops.
- Lack of stops between Mt. Pleasant and Bayview.
- Some stops are too far apart, while others are too close.
- Stop spacing should be at least like Eglinton West, Oakwood and Dufferin.
- If stops are too far apart, it will be too far to walk during messy winter days (more slips and falls) or hot summer ones.
- Stops at Jane and Emmett very short distance apart, even though Emmett has large apartment blocks.

Stop Suggestions

- Between Caledonia and Dufferin (5)
 - Westside Mall (2) (many seniors in this area).
- Between Keele and Caledonia. (2)
- Laird Street. (2)
- At the major intersections (Martin Grove, Kipling, Islington, Royal York, etc).
- Another stop between Warden and Birchmount.
- Rumsey Road.
- Stop at Emmett Ave. very important for West Park Health Care Centre (27 acre campus, hopes to expand facilities within Transit City timeframe, increasing demand for LRT with good connection to subway at Eglinton West).
- Have fewer stops and run a parallel bus service. Suggested stop removals include Lloyd Manor, Wincott, Russell, Mulham Place, Emmett, Swift, Lebovic, Ionview, Oakwood, Brentcliffe.

Impact on Businesses

- Businesses will suffer between Eglinton West Subway and Bathurst, as people will drive rather than walk up the hill. Provide a bus service between Eglinton West Subway and Eglinton/Yonge Subway.
- Businesses will suffer if transit is underground, as underground stops are not conducive to shopping.
- Businesses along Eglinton in very fragile state – interruption of foot and vehicular traffic, as well as construction impacts could permanently close some businesses.
- Talk with businesses early in this process.

Lane Reductions

- In above ground sections, loss of lanes will result in increased traffic congestion.
- Four lanes of traffic should be maintained on Eglinton Ave.
- LRT will encroach on motor vehicles where the roads are narrow. How can this be overcome?

Parking

- Concern about parking (5) Evaluate parking on side streets and in local plazas. Make sure there is sufficient parking to access the LRT without making people park along side streets and at malls. (4)
- Include a parking lot at Renforth.
- Concern over impact on street permit parking spaces on Soudan Ave.

- Include a “Park and Go” station to use the half-empty multi-level parking lots on Ferrand and Wynford drives.

Cycling

- Separate bike lanes from cars. (2)
- Add bike racks to LRTs. (2)
- Provide bike shelters and bike rental stations. (2)
- Put a protected bike lane on Eglinton from Keele to Leslie.
- Include bike lanes along Eglinton
- Include north/south commuter bike lane (such as along Bayview).
- Bike lanes are not needed.
- Bike lanes are needed, and designated transit lines may prevent this from happening.
- Coordinate plans with City for a system of bike paths and corridors with connections on the LRT.
- Have bike racks near the open houses.

Accessibility

- More information on accessibility is needed. (2)
- Elevators are needed in the shallow station designs in both directions (this was not shown in the design drawings).
- Provide ramps at surface stops.
- Flights of stairs would be difficult for seniors, elevator is needed.

Construction

- Construction schedule was not in the displays/info on construction timelines. (3)
- Concern about how construction will affect the neighbourhood and local businesses (2).
Consider widening Eglinton first.
- Concern over the amount of trees to be cut down for construction (2), especially at Kipling and Wincott, and along Eglinton from Martin Grove to Scarlett Rd.
- Concern over street disruption due to tunnelling – support burrowing approach. (3)
- Concerned about noise during construction.
- When building the line, avoid the mess that occurred when building the Sheppard line.
- Minimize the impact to businesses along Eglinton between Bicknell and West Line Mall during LRT construction.
- During construction, Broadway cannot bear anymore traffic or it will put risk to its residents (is already a busy street).
- Build the Eglinton line with sustained funding, at 1 or 2 stations a year, in order to give communities and developers time to prepare.
- Canadian content should be a factor when selecting LRT manufacturers.
- Bury utilities during construction, not later (as was done with St. Clair).
- City of Toronto has just completed the design of a replacement of a 600 mm watermain on Eglinton Avenue, from Bathurst Street to Gilgorm Road and from avenue to Duplex Avenue, with a plan to start construction in spring of 2009. The watermain will have 2 m of cover, except under main intersections where it will be constructed in a tunnel 6 m deep.
- Build stops before intersections where possible, to speed travel, reduce bottle necks, and allow for green-light transit sensors.

- The construction will create a lot of air pollution.
- Interest in construction timeline and the impact on accessibility to driveways
- Look at traffic calming methods for Donlea during and after construction
- Concern about traffic by-passes along Soudan during construction – consider appropriate routing signage.
- Start at Yonge and Spadina and build out.
- Concern over possible rezoning of land in Bayview to Avenue Road area (from residential to high density, as it happened with Sheppard).
- Concern over impact on nearby properties of building LRT underground.
- Growth should be gradual, not all at once.
- Consider the watershed in the Bayview/Eglinton area, is very swampy. Water has already been diverted away from buildings in this area.
- Concern over impact of construction, wondering if it will be underground.

General Comments

- LRT is too slow for the distance being travelled (3).
 - It is a 30 km long line that connects with Peel, the airport, Jane, Spadina, Yonge, Don Mills and the SRT.
 - Would rather drive than take a crosstown that goes 24 km/h.
- This should have been done years ago. (2)
- LRT is good for those wanting to traverse the city, but not for local users.
- The LRT lines are unattractive, as they are on Queens Quay, St. Clair and Spadina.
- Cars are part of the economy and cannot be treated like they are not there.
- LRT should reduce bus running on Eglinton as much as possible, which would have a positive impact on traffic.
- Remind people that average speed in tunnels will be greater than 22 kph.
- Eglinton line should be #1 Transit City priority.
- Adopt a modern European fare collection system.
- Finance project through municipal bonds.
- Glad to see bus access to Sunnybrook from Bayview stop.
- If this project increases the value of my property, then my taxes will go up.
- If the Eglinton Crosstown is built, Blue 22 should be cancelled.
- Ensure the aesthetic quality of the stations are equitable (current subway stations in affluent areas look nicer than those in less affluent neighbourhoods).
- Concern about safety in underground stations – what is planned to ensure public safety.
- Safety concern – location of stops are underground, no visibility for passengers waiting for trains, especially at night.
- Mississauga and Toronto should have the same system.
- Maintain as much of the green belt as possible from Jane to Martin Grove. Do not destroy it to widen Eglinton.
- Apply money from the land transfer tax to the LRT to ensure it is affordable.
- Prefer to have no aboveground wires.
- Set a realistic budget. Do not raise fares.
- Use crossing guards, like Calgary's C-Train.
- The TTC does not get enough funding from other levels of government.
- Pedestrian safety is an issue.

- Keep the needs of the drivers in mind as well.
- Full grade separation is a must to make transit more reliable and attractive.
- Ridership projection is over-optimistic. Is it accurate or biased?
- Concern for a quick, safe passage over such a long line.
- Allow input into naming stations, such as through a naming committee. Commemorate local history, famous people, or events.
- Provide leasable spaces for commercial activities at selected/appropriate LRT stops. Generate revenue and economic opportunities for the TTC and the public.
- Provide washroom facilities at selected stations.
- Hope the above ground sections are operating as soon as possible.
- Install GPS-feel “next streetcar” timers.
- Allow for long trains.
- Obtain funding from Metrolinx.
- Snow removal and coverage will be needed at stops.
- Stations should be at least 4 train cars long.
- Consider using a side of road right-of-way option for track construction, with ballasted ties, where traffic access is minimal (e.g., CPR overpass near Leslie East to Don Mills, or the Richview Lands).
- Concern about congestion on the roads and on the LRT.
- Transit City website does not have all of the info.
- Concerns over waiting for LRT in winter.
- Above ground rails seems to require more frequent maintenance, while subway does not.
- With western destinations of the airport and Mississauga, demand could be huge, leading to crowding on the LRT.
- To get people on Transit, it needs to be comfortable, which means less crowding.
- At signalized intersections where there are passenger loading pads, any light or hydro poles at the start of the platform need to be studied so that short-ramped concrete jersey walls are not required in front of the poles, which could become a launching pad for a vehicle (during winter or in collision). At St. Clair, some jersey walls block part of traffic island and hazard marking signs.
- Consider covering surface track line to reduce winter maintenance required.
- Use solar lighting at platforms.
- Listen to us and make changes if we e-mailed them.
- Blue 22 is not needed with diesel trains polluting the environment. Make them electric.
- This should replace the Blue 22 (2).
- Good presentation. Would be nice if it was on video as well.
- Have vehicle trade-off analysis publicly vetted by reputable independent transportation expert such as Prof. Soberman at U of T or David Gunn.
- Concerned will get bogged down in red tape.
- Be aware that school buses pick up children on Eglinton east of Bathurst.

Questions

Costs

- Will this increase taxes or fares (4)?
- How much will this cost, including budget overruns? Who will pay for it, and how much? Will it be the City/province/federal government?
- Will tokens be sold at LRT stations?
- Is council intending to finance the capital cost of the LRT through the use of development charges? If so, will the density of development increase significantly to maximize the funding (like Sheppard Subway)?
- If cost is the reason for not building a tunnel, why is the TTC wasting money replacing perfectly good TTC shelters?

LRT Trains and Tracks

- How many cars can be linked together? Will the stations be designed for two cars, or can they be expanded? (2)
- Can the cars accommodate snow/winters? (2)
- Do the cars have a design turning radius so that they can be used on existing tracks or can they only be used on the new tracks?
- Can temporary buses go on the tracks, or will they have to go on the road?
- Would like more information about train speeds. How long would a trip take between Eglinton West and Eglinton stations? How long from Eglinton West to the airport? Would it take longer than buses?

Accessibility

- Will any accommodation be made for people who would have difficulty for the longer walk between stops, such as the elderly?
- How many people using the Eglinton bus have impaired mobility?
- Will this be a 24 hour service?

Nuisance Concerns

- What is being done to minimize noise and vibrations, and how far away can they be heard and felt?
- Will there be noise barriers for those whose backyards face the new system?

Construction

- How will construction affect traffic flow where Eglinton meets Allen Rd?
- What considerations will be made for re-routing traffic during construction?
- In preparing for the Eglinton West Subway, services were relocated and soldier piles installed east of the subway station on the Spadina line halfway to Bathurst St (for the rail track). Will these be excavated and used for the Eglinton LRT?
- Will hydro lines be buried when the LRT tunnels are dug?

Network and Design

- What changes will be made for cyclists, and will bicycles be allowed on the LRT in off-peak times?
- How wide will Eglinton Ave West be between Scarlett Rd and Islington West?

- Which is the higher priority – the rail link between Union Station and the airport, or the link between the Eglinton LRT and the airport?
- How will the downtown subway system cope with the extra volume as more systems connect to it?
- Will there be a station at the empty parking lot where staff from Forretere Building park?

Community/ Environmental Impacts

- How will the LRT affect my property values (especially where the LRT is above ground)? (5)
- What is the carbon footprint of LRTs compared to buses?
- How will encroaching land uses (such a Plant World) be dealt with?
- How will expropriations take place?
- Will condo building at 797 Don Mills be expropriated?
- Will the previous decisions of council act as a precedent for decisions on land use along the LRT route?
- Will it encourage more traffic in residential areas?

Emergency

- Will an emergency phone be at each stop?
- Will there still be access for emergency vehicles?

General

- Why are condos being built on the transportation corridor right-of-way on the north side of Eglinton from Scarlett Rd to Martin Grove?
- Was Sheppard-Finch condo explosion anticipated by transit planners? If not, it should be.

Suggestions for Next Open House

- Incorporate sound videos of current systems to help get a better perception of the new system.
- Remind people that LRTs do not require changing tires or oil changes like buses would, and that the costs are not tied to changing oil prices.
- Publicize the project more.
- Use more media to let us know about the next open houses (CP24 on TV, channel 10, etc)
- Provide more snacks, food.
- Don't have so many boards.
- Louder speakers.
- Be clearer on what is meant by LRT, how they work, and why they are the best choice.
- Discuss the maintenance facilities.
- Better describe how the fare system will work.
- Provide translation at future open houses.

Comments on other Transit Initiatives

- Make the Sheppard extension a subway, not LRT.
- Eliminate airport transfer train from Union (not enough stops, low ridership).
- For the Jane LRT, use the railway corridor from the Dundas GO station to the railway overpass on Jane north of Weston. It would be less expensive and provide faster service.
- Concern that tax dollars being pent on subway to Vaughan.
- What happened to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority studies and the Richview Expressway?

- Eglinton subway station needs refurbishing, platform does not accommodate crowds in peak times.
- Need more north/south routes south of Bloor as Yonge/University cannot handle capacity.
- Consider monorail down highway 404 to the DVP in place of Don Mills LRT, with level crossings at major intersections.
- LRT is good project. Would leave my car parked, but currently do not use the Eglinton bus because it is too crowded.
- Extend the Sheppard line.
- Cover the subway line between Davisville and Eglinton.