



Toronto Transit Commission Transit City Open Houses

Waterfront West LRT May 11 and 12, 2009 Summary Results Report

Prepared by Lura Consulting

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 raised within the break-out groups in the noted public meetings and from submitted comments sheets until June 5, 2009. It is not intended as a verbatim transcript. If you have any questions or comments regarding the summary, please contact:

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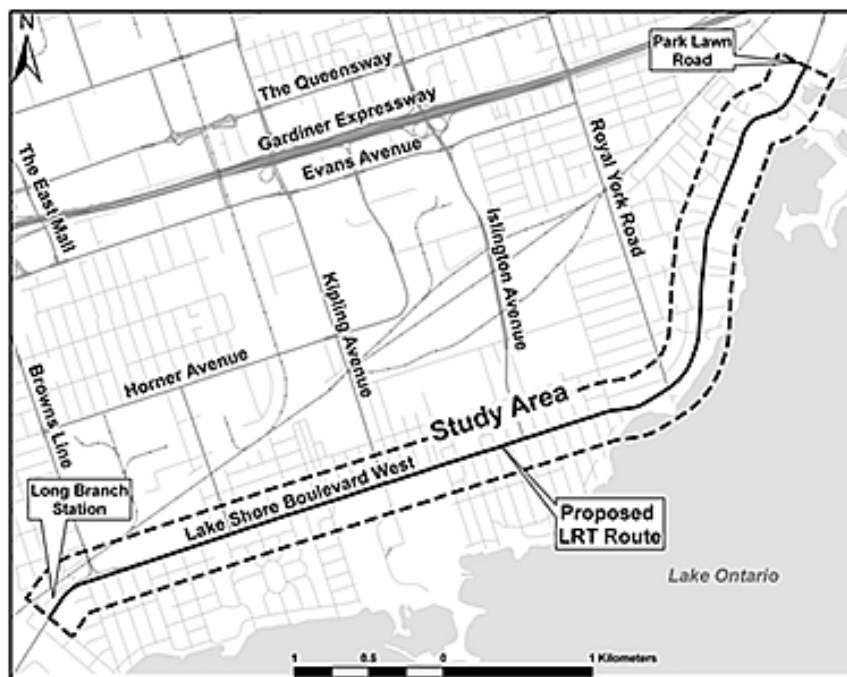
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Introduction

As part of the Transit City process, the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) are examining ways to significantly improve transit service on Lake Shore Boulevard West, between Park Lawn Road and the Long Branch GO Station. This is part of the Waterfront West Light Rail Transit (LRT) project to provide continuous higher speed, higher capacity transit service from Union Station to Long Branch.



Two public meetings were held during May 2009 as part of the second series of meetings for the Waterfront West LRT public consultation process. The purpose of the public meetings was to re-start the planning and consultation process for this section of the Waterfront West LRT. In addition, the meetings provided the opportunity for the public to learn about the Waterfront West LRT project and to provide feedback on project plans. A summary of the open house dates and locations is provided in the table below.

Waterfront West LRT PIC Summary		
Date	Monday, May 11, 2009	Tuesday, May 12, 2009
Location	Mimico Adult Learning Centre 255 Royal York Road 2:00pm - 4:00pm and 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	The Assembly Hall 1 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Dr 2:00pm - 4:00pm and 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
# of participants (signed-in)	145	182
# of comment forms received	91	

Prior to the public meeting that was held between 6:30 – 9:00 pm, there was an open house between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm. During this time, City and TTC staff was available to answer questions and residents were able to submit comments.

During both of the Public meetings that were held between 6:30 and 9:00 pm;

- 38 detailed display boards were presented;
- a 'Frequently Asked Questions' handout was provided to citizens;
- the proposed LRT concept was presented by TTC staff;
- a question and answer period was conducted, and
- facilitated small group discussions were conducted with worksheets to ensure everyone had a chance to participate.

During the meeting held on May 12th, the option was given to continue with questions and answers for the entire meeting time. The majority of the public decided that this was preferable while a small group of approximately 26 people moved to two facilitated small group discussions.

During the meeting, participants were invited to provide answers and additional comments on questionnaires that were handed out and submit them either at the registration table or by mail or e-mail. Group facilitators were also given the responsibility to focus on these questions during the break out session.

This report summarizes the comments received through the public meetings and other communication channels up to and including June 5, 2009.

Advertising

The public meetings were advertised in the Etobicoke Guardian on May 1st and May 6th and 24,000 notices were mailed out across the Lake Shore corridor.

Comment Summary

A summary of participants' key issues and comments is presented below, with detailed comments provided in the Appendix. In general, there was a mixture of support and opposition to the LRT proposal. Key concerns or issues included:

The most common concerns were:

- The impact of the LRT to businesses during construction and when operational due to loss of on-street parking, and traffic re-routing
- "Some business might close because of reduced customers during construction and afterward."
- Inconvenience of left-turn restrictions – new "U-Turns";
- Concern about losing TTC stops along the Waterfront West light rail route
- Long distance between stops being a barrier for aging population
- Providing accessibility to persons with disabilities or mobility-challenged persons;
- Maintaining or improving bicycle lanes;
- Cost of the LRT project;
- Safety and nuisance issues, specifically due to noise/vibration and the raised curb;
- Negative impact to streetscape and property including possible sidewalk cuts and expropriation
- Destruction of the "village" community environment.

- The creation of a North-South barrier with the transit right-of-way concept with a raised curb
- Increased property values due to better transit service will lead to higher taxes. The opposite view was also expressed: “Negative impact on property values”
- More accidents at intersections.

Many of the comments also included suggestions on a variety of LRT topics, including:

- Design of the LRT network and LRT routing;
- Traffic management.
- Improving or maintaining pedestrian sidewalks and access to transit;
- Stop locations; and
- How to encourage ridership;

Suggested Solutions

To address some of these concerns, participants suggested the following:

- Provide free parking and/or Green “P” parking if on-street parking is removed
- Install cross walks mid street pedestrian crossing
- Use cut or rolled curbs to make crossing more accessible in between signalized intersections (note: there was concerns about promoting jaywalking)
- Reconsider the option of putting the LRT on the Queensway

Overall Sentiment

While there was minority support expressed at the meetings --and more so in correspondence-- for an LRT, the majority of participants (particularly Business Improvement Area members and resident association representatives) indicated that there is no need for an LRT west of Park Lawn. They felt that construction disruption, changes to left turns, and any loss of on-street parking would not be justified. Many also suggested a return to the 1995 plan with a local streetcar or bus route between Humber and Long Branch.

Many participants did however express support for an LRT **east** of Park Lawn to Union Station. They also felt that adding more streetcars and potentially removing a small number of stops would be an easy way to speed up current service. The majority sentiment is that there is not the need at this time to designate a transit lane for an LRT from Park Lawn to Long Branch.

Others indicated that they would consider supporting LRT in the distant future, but only if demand for the service warrants it, which they did not foresee for many decades.

It should be noted that Community Organization “Our Lake Shore” submitted results of an online questionnaire that received 585 responses. Their results indicate that individuals were almost evenly divided between some level of support for an LRT west of Park Lawn and no support. Their results also indicate strong support for an LRT east of Park Lawn. Full results of this questionnaire are available at: <http://www.ourlakeshore.net/profiles/blogs/results-of-the-lakeshore>

The following summarizes specific responses to questions posed at the City consultations.

Topic 1 – Q 3b. Improving Streetcar Service

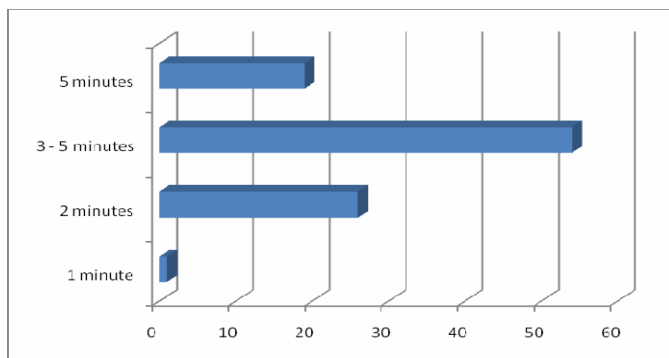
Participants generally supported all five suggested options. The responses below are ranked from highest to lowest ranking based on input from the participant’s forms. There was not a significant spread in the rankings from 1 to 5 from the comment sheets received.

1. More comfortable/accessible vehicles
2. Time based transfers to allow more shopping
3. Better transit connections to other areas
4. Faster Service
5. More frequent service

It was pointed out that GO service is infrequent, had parking limitations and required an additional fare over a TTC fare.

Topic 2 – Q. 1. Time to Walk to a Transit Stop

The participants expressed a clear time limit for the amount of time that should be spent walking to a transit stop. 54 % of participants agreed with 3-5 minutes and stressed the need for consideration of seniors and the aging population.



Graph 1: Percentage of responses for distance to stops

Topic 2 – Q. 2. Number of Stops

The majority of participants (68%) felt there was the right number of stops on Lake Shore Blvd West. 20% of participants agreed that there are currently too many stops on Lake Shore Blvd West, while only 12% felt there were too few stops.

# Stops	%
Too many stops	20
Too few stops	12
Right number of stops	68

Topic 2 – Q. 3. Acceptable to Remove any Existing Stops

Most of the participants felt there was the right number of stops along the waterfront west TTC line. Very few participants offered any suggestion on removing any particular stops and these participants suggested the removal of stops at the following streets:

1. Lake Crescent
2. 15th street, Louisa
3. 29th Street

It was noted that participants would prefer if all stops had platforms.

Topic3 – Q. 1. New Vehicles.

Participants thought the new vehicles looked good and did not express any concerns. They liked the option for a fast proof of purchase entrance at floor level through multiple doors.

Topic 4 – Q.1 Priorities for Transportation Systems of the Future

Participants suggested the following:

- Maintain a variety of alternative modes of travel.
- Ensure efficient east-west connectivity for vehicles.
- Promote easy and safe street crossing, and general pedestrian access.
- Provide safe bicycle ways.

Topic 4 – Q.2 Suggested Changes to Lake Shore Boulevard West

The business and community priorities for a transportation system of the future over the next 30 years as expressed by the participants are listed below, ranked from the most important to the least important as submitted on the comment forms.

1. Facilitate local distance trips by transit
2. Facilitate longer-distance trips by transit
3. Facilitate local walking trips
4. Facilitate local short-distance trips by automobile
5. Facilitate bicycle travel
6. Facilitate longer-distance commuter trips by automobile

Below is a list of ideas from participants for improving Lake Shore Boulevard West, in no particular order:

- Widen sidewalks
- Provide bikes lanes
- More trees
- Install benches
- Provide more public space
- Improve the facades of buildings, including larger street level windows
- Keep and clean up the heritage brick buildings
- Encourage a consistent look
- Aim to make the street a destination

Topic 5 – Q.1 Concerns about the Concept of a Transit Right-of-Way

Below is a list of concerns from participants about the LRT ROW, in no particular order:

- Curb is too high for bikes and disabled people to cross between signalized intersections
- Emergency vehicle access
- Exiting a streetcar without a platform is dangerous
- A ROW will not be able to fit in the narrow street without significant impacts
- Blockages on a one-way lane
- Continued short-turn streetcars
- Expensive project funding could be spent elsewhere
- Security on vehicles and platform
- Intensification needs matching amenities

Topic 5 – Q.2 Positive Thoughts about the Concept of a Transit Right-of-Way

Below is a list of ideas participants said they liked about the LRT ROW, in no particular order:

- Reliable and predictable service to downtown
- The right-turn only streets with u-turns at intersections could be faster than waiting for a break in traffic to make a left out of a side street
- A Proof-of-payment fare system would be much faster
- Air-conditioned vehicles is a big improvement
- Less cars
- Cameras on vehicles

Summary

Overall many participants who support LRT, felt it would work well if it included the following:

- Proof-of-payment fares
- Timed transfers
- Signalized u-turns
- Safe platforms
- Reliable and predictable service to downtown
- Faster overall service
- New Green P parking lots for convenient shopping --to replace any lost on-street spots-- possibly validated by local shops
- No on street parking during rush hour
- Be sensitive and sensible when designing changes within the narrow street
- Involve all stakeholders, beyond the public meetings, since many people do not attend

Solutions

- Curb cuts or sloped curbs could make it easier for pedestrians and bikes to cross through the ROW.
- Learn from other cities

Overall Sentiment

The majority of participants at the City consultations did not want to see an LRT implemented west of Park Lawn. Opposition was expressed by many small business owners and resident associations in particular. If a future LRT proposal is submitted, those in opposition want to see a design that has no impacts to private property, accommodates on-street parking, BIA streetscape enhancements and traffic movement.

There was support for a return to the 1995 plan with a local streetcar or bus route between Humber and Long Branch. There was also strong support for an LRT **east** of Park Lawn to Union Station, even among many of those who oppose an LRT west of Park Lawn.

It should be noted that a significant minority did express support for LRT. This demographic was also captured in the online questionnaire results submitted by the “Our Lake Shore” Association which notes an almost even split in LRT sentiment in the Lakeshore community.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Although the majority who attended the City consultations are opposed to an LRT between Park Lawn and Long Branch, the community is clearly divided. Any future design proposal must undergo a thorough consultation process with all stakeholders to ensure any final proposal takes into account the concerns of all involved.